

Frequently Asked Questions: Urban Reserves Overview

What are Urban Reserves?

Urban Reserves are a special designation, allowed by state law, for lands outside the urban growth boundary (UGB) that can be considered a first priority if and when a city needs to expand for a growing population. The goal of Urban Reserves planning is to identify where Eugene may grow to serve up to 30 years of population growth beyond the 2032 UGB, or as late as 2062. Similar to a UGB, Urban Reserves are supposed to include enough land needed for housing and jobs, as well as public lands such as parks, schools and other services. However, Urban Reserve lands remain rural, and cannot be urbanized, unless they are brought into a city's UGB through the formal process for expansion. Urban Reserves must be jointly agreed upon and designated by the Eugene City Council and Lane County Board of Commissioners.

What is the urban growth boundary (UGB)?

The urban growth boundary (UGB) is the cornerstone of land use planning in Oregon. It is the line that separates urban uses from rural uses with the aim of protecting our farm and forest lands while making sure we have enough space for the needs of a growing urban population to live, work and play. Every city in Oregon is required to have an urban growth boundary, which must contain enough land for housing, employment, parks and schools for the next 20 years of projected population growth.

Why are we planning for Urban Reserves?

Eugene's future rate of population growth is uncertain, and our best predictions are likely to be wrong. If we grow faster than anticipated, we need to be prepared. This means having options identified, like Urban Reserves, so we are able to respond once we know how quickly we are growing and what type of land we will need. Urban Reserves can also help land owners surrounding the UGB plan for their future by clarifying which properties will be reserved for possible urban use and which ones will not. Similarly, with Urban Reserves in place, Eugene, Lane County and service providers like EWEB, LTD, and others will be better able to plan for the costs and coordination needed to serve future neighborhoods with public facilities and services.

What's the timeline?

Urban Reserves planning has been underway since 2018. The Eugene City Council and the Lane County Board of Commissioners have directed staff to have urban reserves in place by the time we have our first growth monitoring report ready. Our goal is to bring a proposal to the Eugene City Council and the Lane County Board of Commissioners for direction in September 2020, with adoption consideration in Spring 2021. The growth monitoring report will likely show a need to begin the next round of UGB analysis, and we want to be prepared to grow into the best places and in the ways that best align with our community's values.

Why are Urban Reserves important now?

Housing supply and affordability is a critically important issue for our community. We are coordinating our Urban Reserves planning with the work of our Growth Monitoring program, so that Urban Reserves are in place before the UGB is re-examined in January 2021. This is important, because without Urban Reserves in place, future UGB expansions for housing would likely be limited by state law to exception areas and non-resource lands. These include properties like the airport, LCC, and rural residential lands scattered around the City. The problem is, many of these areas are already developed to some degree

and have a low likelihood of redevelopment if brought into the UGB. You may remember from the UGB process, that our studies showed most of these lands are extremely expensive to serve, and may not meet our community's needs. This is a key point, because if we don't have Urban Reserves in place when there is a need to expand our UGB, then our choices will be limited to only these areas. Urban Reserves gives us additional options for smart growth and for meeting the goals of Envision Eugene if and when there is a need to expand.

Will Urban Reserves change the current Urban Growth Boundary?

Planning for Urban Reserves will not change Eugene's current Urban Growth Boundary. Urban Reserves planning simply identifies first priority land for if and when Eugene needs to expand. Any future UGB expansion onto urban reserve lands will go through the same state-guided process, which requires a rigorous study of 20 year land needs using the most up-to-date population forecasts.

Will this process include planning for Rural Reserves?

State law currently only allows communities to designate Rural Reserves in the Portland Metro area. Even though Rural Reserves will not be designated as part of Urban Reserves planning, rural residents should benefit from the greater clarity over what land will potentially be brought into the UGB in the future. By default, any land that is not included in Urban Reserves should remain rural for at least the next 50 years. In addition, rural landowners could work with land trusts to put conservation easements on their property which would limit the future development potential of their land in perpetuity.

How many people are we planning for?

The 2019 draft Portland State University (PSU) population forecast for Eugene shows a 2062 population of 262,411 people. Urban Reserves will plan for *up to* approximately 49,000 additional people expected between 2032 and 2062. Determining the time frame for urban reserves – whether we set aside enough land for 10 years of growth, 30 years of growth, or somewhere in between, will be a **key policy choice** that will affect both the size and location of our urban reserves. Our City Council and the Board of Commissioners will decide how much land, within those parameters, will be included in urban reserves.

So, how large will Urban Reserves be?

Staff and consultants have developed a Land Need Model to tell us, generally, how much land we will need for Urban Reserves to accommodate between ten and thirty years of population growth. The Land Need Model is based on the latest population projections from Portland State University, employment forecasts from the Oregon Employment Department, and policy and density assumptions from Envision Eugene. The high-level summary shows that the amount of land we will need for Urban Reserves, based on the land currently identified in the suitability analysis, is between **1,900 acres** (for 2032-2042 population growth) and **6,300 acres** (for 2032-2062 population growth). This is between 3 and 10 square miles of land. For comparison, Eugene's current UGB includes 35,568 acres, or 55.6 square miles of land. ***It's important to note that these need estimates change based on the potential density of the actual land identified for Urban Reserves.***

Where will we find this much land for Urban Reserves?

Good question! See the [Urban Reserves Technical Analysis FAQ](#).