CHAPTER 2

Land Use **Element**

OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2016 to 2036)

LAND USE ELEMENT VISION: *Mount Vernon is committed to being proactive, rather than reactive, in managing growth within the City. The City will adopt and emphasize strategies that promote the City's rich history, natural and man-made beauty, along with its environmental and cultural resources. Emphasis will be placed on creating and promoting land uses that will help to balance land uses where people live, work, and recreate.*

Adopted September 14, 2016 with Ordinance 3690

City of MOUNT VERNON

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City of MOUNT VERNON

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the City Councils, Planning Commissions and Citizens from 1960 to the present that have contributed to comprehensive planning efforts of the City. This Land Use Element is built upon the foundation of these original plans.

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1.0
LAND USE PLANNING: WHY & HOW

Mount Vernon's
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Mount Vernon's
DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS:

- Zoning Code
- Subdivision Code
- Other

Mount Vernon's first Comprehensive Plan was prepared in 1960. The City updated this first Plan many times up to 1990 when the Growth Management Act (GMA) was enacted by the Washington State Legislature. The GMA fundamentally changed the way jurisdictions planned. The GMA was proposed in response to (among other things) rapid population growth and concerns about lack of environmental protection, deteriorating quality of life, and a desire to limit suburban sprawl.

The creation of a Land Use Element is one of the key components of the GMA. The City is required, per the GMA, to show how the next 20-years' worth of growth (in terms of homes, jobs, and other necessary land uses) can be accommodated in the City through sufficient buildable land designated and able to allow such growth.

Land use decisions have historically, and will continue to, influence the City's appearance, shape and function. The Goals, Objectives and Policies contained in this Element create the framework within which development regulations (mainly the City's zoning code) can be adopted to ensure the City's high quality of life and desired character is maintained and enhanced over time.

The City uses two different mapping tools as an extension of the Land Use Element. The first map is the City's Comprehensive Plan map. This map identifies in a general way where broad categories of different land uses can be located in the City such as, medium density single family residential uses, high density multi-family uses, and commercial uses.

The second mapping tool is the City's zoning map that identifies site-specific zoning designations for property throughout the City. The zoning map takes the broader Comprehensive Plan map and narrows it to a specific zoning types. **Section 6** of this document provides greater detail on all of the City's Comprehensive Plan and zoning designations.

The zoning map is implemented with the City's zoning code that is adopted as Mount Vernon Municipal Code Title 17. Regulating land uses by zones ensures that an adequate supply of land is available to accommodate future growth while maintaining the planned character within, and between, different zoning designations.

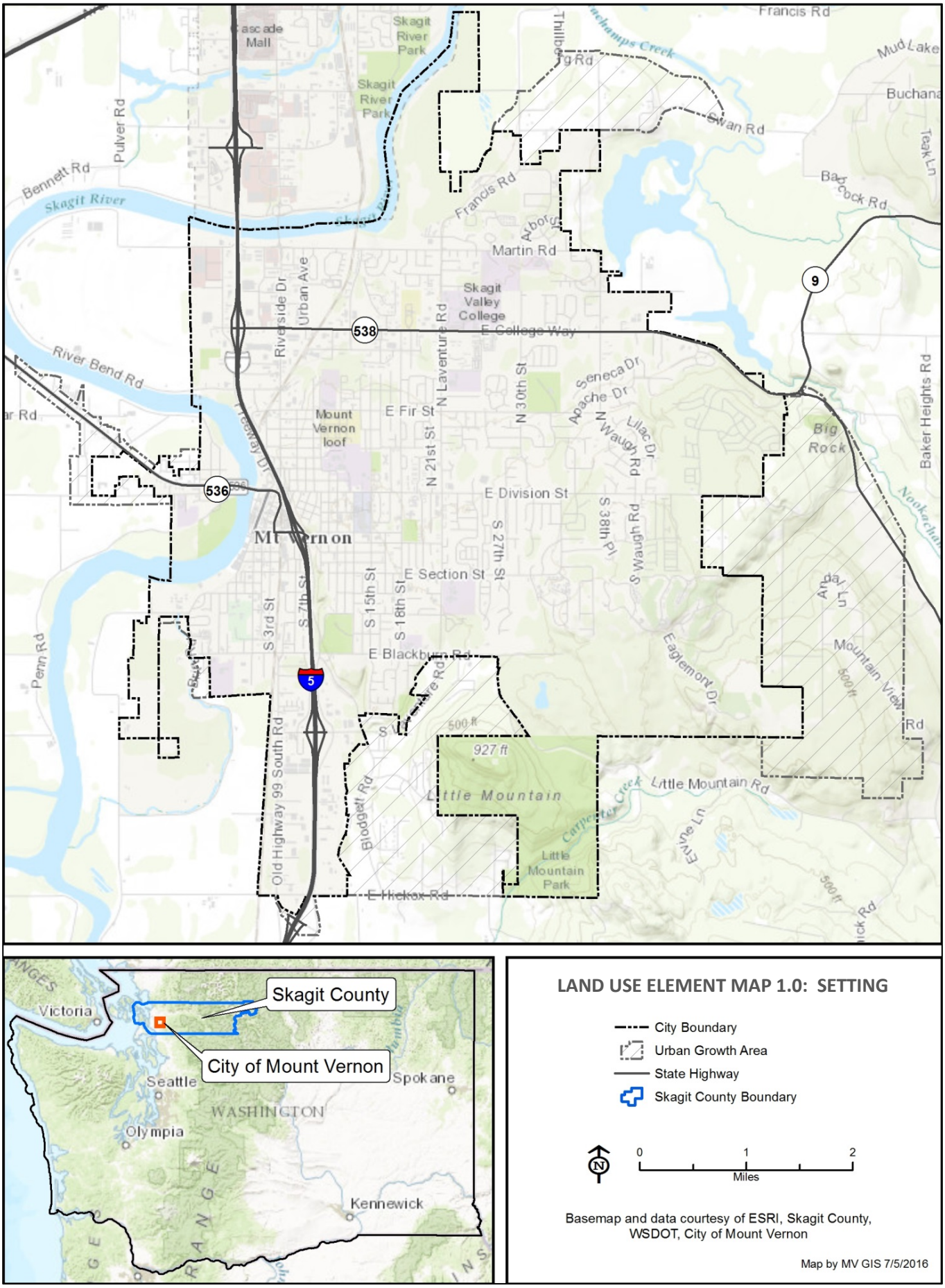
2.0 SETTING & PHYSICAL FORM

With the Seattle metropolitan area a short distance to the south, Vancouver B.C. to the north, the San Juan Islands to the west, and the foothills of the Cascades to the east, the City is regionally situated to take advantage of both urban and rural amenities. The City is just six (6) miles east of Puget Sound and has Interstate-5 running north/south through the City and State Routes 20, 536 and 538 running east/west through the City as shown on Map 1.0.

Mount Vernon's climate is similar to that of the Puget Sound Region, consisting of temperate winters with frequent light rain and cool, sunny summers. The warmest month of the year is August with an average temperature of 74.10 degrees Fahrenheit; with January being the coldest month of the year with an average temperature of 34.1 degrees Fahrenheit. The annual average precipitation for the City is approximately 32.7-inches with rainfall fairly evenly distributed throughout the year.

Located on the left and right bank of the Skagit River Valley, elevations within Mount Vernon range from approximately 10 feet in the southwestern part of the city along the river to 180 plus feet in the eastern part of the city.

Mount Vernon is located in the heart of a rich agricultural area with a mild climate and good soils well suited to vegetable, seed, berry and bulb production. Mount Vernon is made up of two main groups of soil, near the river are alluvial soils consisting of fine sandy loam and loam, and away from the river are glaciated, upland soils consisting of gravelly loam. Due to agriculture and the alluvial area the valley the limits of the city have been cleared of native vegetation. The areas that are undeveloped are predominately grass, blackberry vines and deciduous trees such as alder, vine maple, with second growth evergreens in the lowlands and the higher elevations.



LAND USE ELEMENT MAP 1.0: SETTING

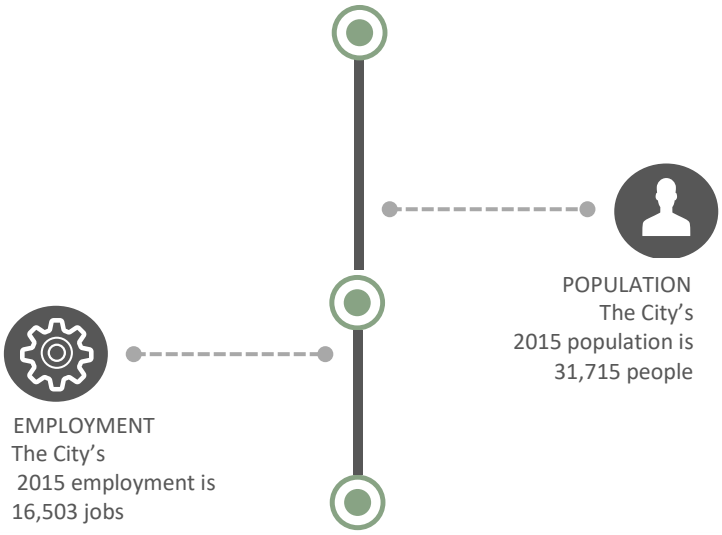
City Boundary
Urban Growth Area
State Highway
Skagit County Boundary

N
0 1 2
Miles

Basemap and data courtesy of ESRI, Skagit County, WSDOT, City of Mount Vernon

Map by MV GIS 7/5/2016

3.0
EXISTING POPULATION & EMPLOYMENT DEMOGRAPHICS



The numbers of people both living and working within the City's corporate boundaries are arguably the most fundamental demographics that must be known and tracked because the City is required to provide services and plan for future housing and employment growth.

The City's existing population and jobs are discussed in the following sections beginning with population growth. Following the population growth analysis **Sections 4.0** and **5.0** examine the future growth the City is anticipated to accommodate over the next 20-years and evaluates how this growth could be accommodated in the City and its associated Urban Growth Areas (UGAs).

3.1 HISTORIC/EXISTING POPULATION

TABLE 3.0: MOUNT VERNON'S POPULATION GROWTH OVER TIME[1]

1970's		1980's		1990's		2000's		2010's	
1970	8,804	1980	13,009	1990	17,647	2000	26,232	2010	31,743
1971	8,804	1981	13,300	1991	18,720	2001	26,460	2011	31,940
1972	8,900	1982	13,625	1992	19,550	2002	26,670	2012	32,250
1973	9,000	1983	13,600	1993	20,450	2003	27,060	2013	32,710
1974	9,270	1984	13,730	1994	20,950	2004	27,720	2014	33,170
1975	10,021	1985	14,210	1995	21,580	2005	28,210	2015	33,530
1976	10,300	1986	14,260	1996	21,820	2006	28,710		
1977	11,021	1987	14,400	1997	22,280	2007	29,390		
1978	11,600	1988	14,590	1998	22,540	2008	30,150		
1979	12,600	1989	14,790	1999	22,700	2009	30,800		

TABLE 3.1: GROWTH RATES COMPARED TO NEARBY JURISDICTIONS[1]

	1970 to 1980	1980 to 1990	1990 to 2000	2000 to 2010	2010 to 2014
Mount Vernon	3.9%	3.1%	4%	1.9%	1.1%
Skagit County	1.4%	2.3%	1.7%	.8%	.3%
Burlington	2.2%	1.2%	4.7%	2.2%	.2%
Sedro-Woolley	2.9%	.4%	3.2%	2.0%	.2%
Anacortes	1.6%	2.4%	2.4%	.8%	.6%
Bellingham	1.5%	1.4%	2.6%	1.9%	.6%
Everett	.2%	2.6%	2.7%	1.2%	.5%

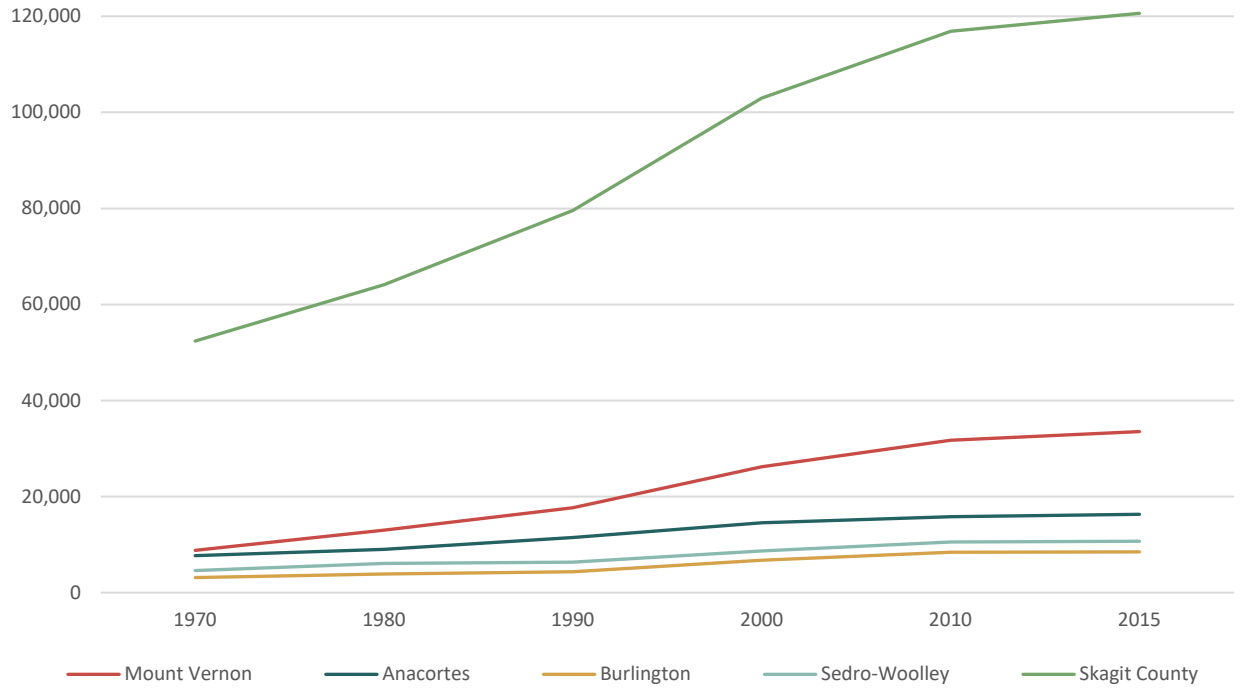
[1] WA State Department of Financial Management (last update December 10, 2012) Decennial Census Counts of Population for the State, Counties, Cities and Towns. Retrieved February 11, 2016, from http://www.ofm.wa.gov; and, U.S. Census Bureau; Census 1970, 1980, and 1990. *Population of Mount Vernon;* and, WA State Department of Financial Management. (April 1, 2015) Population of Cities, Towns and Counties Used for Allocation of Selected State Revenues. Retrieved February 11, 2016, from http://www.ofm.wa.gov

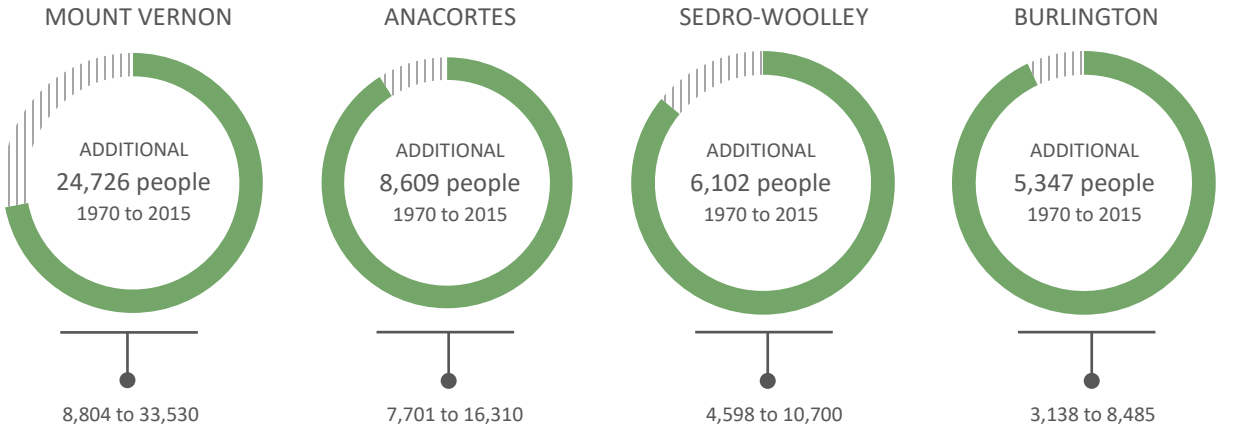
The most reliable data sources for population in Washington State includes the decennial (10-year) census from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Washington State Office of Financial Management's (OFM) population estimates that are released for the years in-between the decennial census.

Table 3.0 and **Graph 3.2** list and illustrate the population growth Mount Vernon has experienced from 1970 to 2015. Evident is that Mount Vernon has historically, and continues to, have a larger population than any of the other incorporated cities in Skagit County.

Table 3.1 provides decade specific growth rates (versus overall population counts) for Mount Vernon and nearby jurisdictions. This table shows that between 1970 and 1990 Mount Vernon's decade specific growth rates outpaced nearby cities but that between 1990 and 2010 Burlington's growth rate surpassed Mount Vernon's.

GRAPH 3.2: MOUNT VERNON'S POPULATION GROWTH COMPARED[1]





ALL OF SKAGIT COUNTY

AN ADDITIONAL 68,239 PEOPLE FROM 1970 TO 2015

52,381 to 120,620

[1] WA State Department of Financial Management (last update December 10, 2012) Decennial Census Counts of Population for the State, Counties, Cities and Towns. Retrieved February 11, 2016, from http://www.ofm.wa.gov; and, U.S. Census Bureau; Census 1970, 1980, and 1990. *Population of Mount Vernon;* and, WA State Department of Financial Management. (April 1, 2015) Population of Cities, Towns and Counties Used for Allocation of Selected State Revenues. Retrieved February 11, 2016, from http://www.ofm.wa.gov

Similar to Statewide trends, migration to Skagit County – versus natural increase (births minus deaths) has accounted for more half of the new population growth for a majority of the years between 2000 to 2014 as shown in **Table 3.3** and **Graph 3.4**.

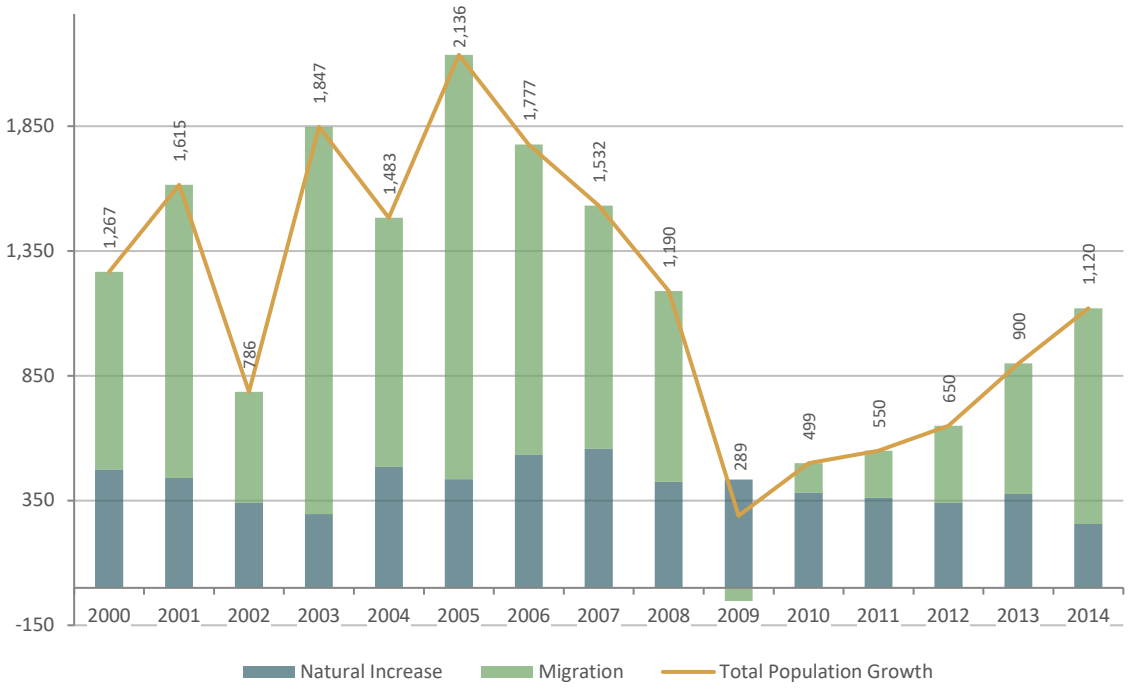
Unfortunately, Mount Vernon specific data is not available due to the way in which birth and death rates are tabulated; however, it is likely that a majority of Mount Vernon's growth is due to migration similar to Skagit County's trend.

TABLE 3.3: SKAGIT COUNTY POPULATION GROWTH COMPOSITION

YEAR	BIRTHS	DEATHS	NATURAL INCREASE	MIGRATION	TOTAL
2000	1,413	939	474	793	1,267
2001	1,405	965	440	1,175	1,615
2002	1,336	996	340	446	786
2003	1,364	1,068	296	1,551	1,847
2004	1,444	958	486	997	1,483
2005	1,468	1,033	435	1,701	2,136
2006	1,517	983	534	1,243	1,777
2007	1,568	1,011	557	975	1,532
2008	1,601	1,176	425	765	1,190
2009	1,498	1,064	434	-145	289
2010	1,476	1,095	381	118	499
2011	1,463	1,102	361	189	550
2012	1,445	1,104	341	309	650
2013	1,453	1,076	377	523	900
2014	1,405	1,149	256	864	1,120

[1] WA State Department of Financial Management (last update June 30, 2015) Population and Components of Change, 1960 to Present. Retrieved April 4, 2016, from http://www.ofm.wa.gov

GRAPH 3.4: SKAGIT COUNTY POPULATION GROWTH: NATURAL & MITRATION[1]



[1] See reference information found within Table 3.3

3.2 HISTORIC/EXISTING EMPLOYMENT

GRAPH 3.5 SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES[1]

[1] See reference information found within Table 3.6

TABLE 3.6 SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR MOUNT VERNON MSA[1]

YEAR	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
2000	6.5
2001	7.5
2002	8.4
2003	8.2
2004	7.1
2005	6.2
2006	5.6
2007	5.3
2008	6.1
2009	10.2
2010	10.9
2011	10.4
2012	9.6
2013	8.6
2014	7.4
2015	6.7

[1] WA State Employment Security Department (March 9, 2016) Historical Resident Labor Force and Employment, Seasonally Adjusted. Retrieved March 22, 2016, from http://www.esd.wa.gov

The most reliable source for employment data that can be compared across different timeframes is from the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD). **Graph 3.5** and **Table 3.6** contain information on the seasonally adjusted average yearly unemployment rates for the Mount Vernon Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) from 2000 to 2015.

Table 3.7 and **Graph 3.8** contain the seasonally adjusted unemployment rates for the Mount Vernon MSA and several nearby jurisdictions along with the overall national rates. The Mount Vernon MSA has historically had higher unemployment rates than nearby jurisdictions.

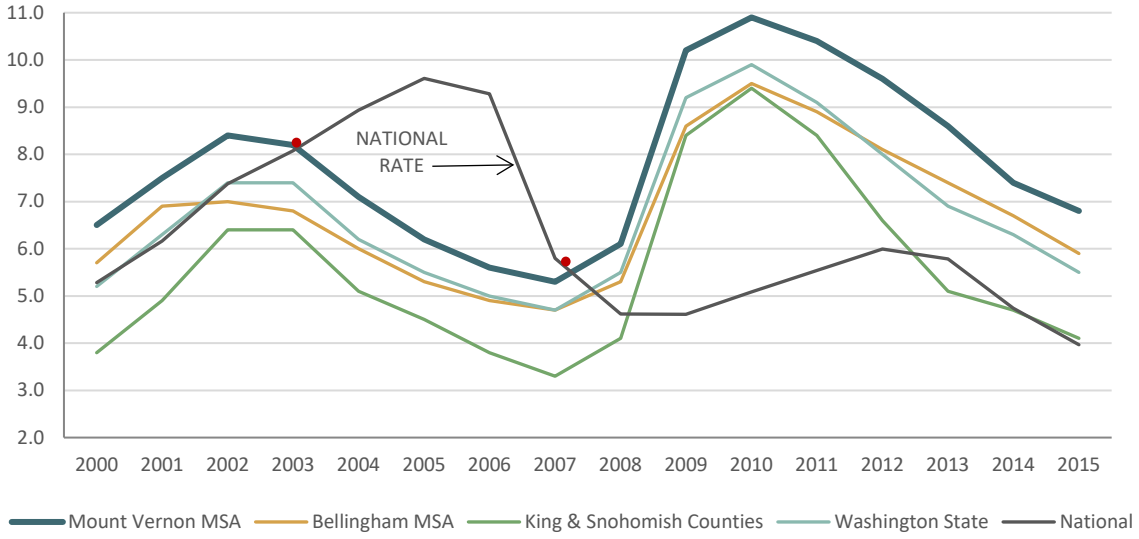
However, between 2003 to 2007 the Mount Vernon MSA (along with the other jurisdictions) had much lower unemployment rates than the national rates, which is best illustrated in **Graph 3.8**. It is important to point out that, overall, Mount Vernon's unemployment rates are consistent with the trends of neighboring jurisdictions.

TABLE 3.7 SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR IDENTIFIED AREAS[1]

YEAR	MOUNT VERNON MSA	BELLINGHAM MSA	KING AND SNOHOMISH COUNTIES	WASHINGTON STATE	NATIONAL
2000	6.5	5.7	3.8	5.2	5.3
2001	7.5	6.9	4.9	6.3	6.2
2002	8.4	7.0	6.4	7.4	7.4
2003	8.2	6.8	6.4	7.4	8.1
2004	7.1	6.0	5.1	6.2	8.9
2005	6.2	5.3	4.5	5.5	9.6
2006	5.6	4.9	3.8	5.0	9.3
2007	5.3	4.7	3.3	4.7	5.8
2008	6.1	5.3	4.1	5.5	4.6
2009	10.2	8.6	8.4	9.2	4.6
2010	10.9	9.5	9.4	9.9	5.1
2011	10.4	8.9	8.4	9.1	5.5
2012	9.6	8.1	6.6	8.0	6.0
2013	8.6	7.4	5.1	6.9	5.8
2014	7.4	6.7	4.7	6.3	4.7
2015	6.8	5.9	4.1	5.5	4.0

[1] WA State Employment Security Department (March 9, 2016) Historical Resident Labor Force and Employment, Seasonally Adjusted. Retrieved March 22, 2016, from http://www.esd.wa.gov

GRAPH 3.8 SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR IDENTIFIED AREAS[1]



[1] See reference information found within Table 3.7

4.0
PROJECTED POPULATION & EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

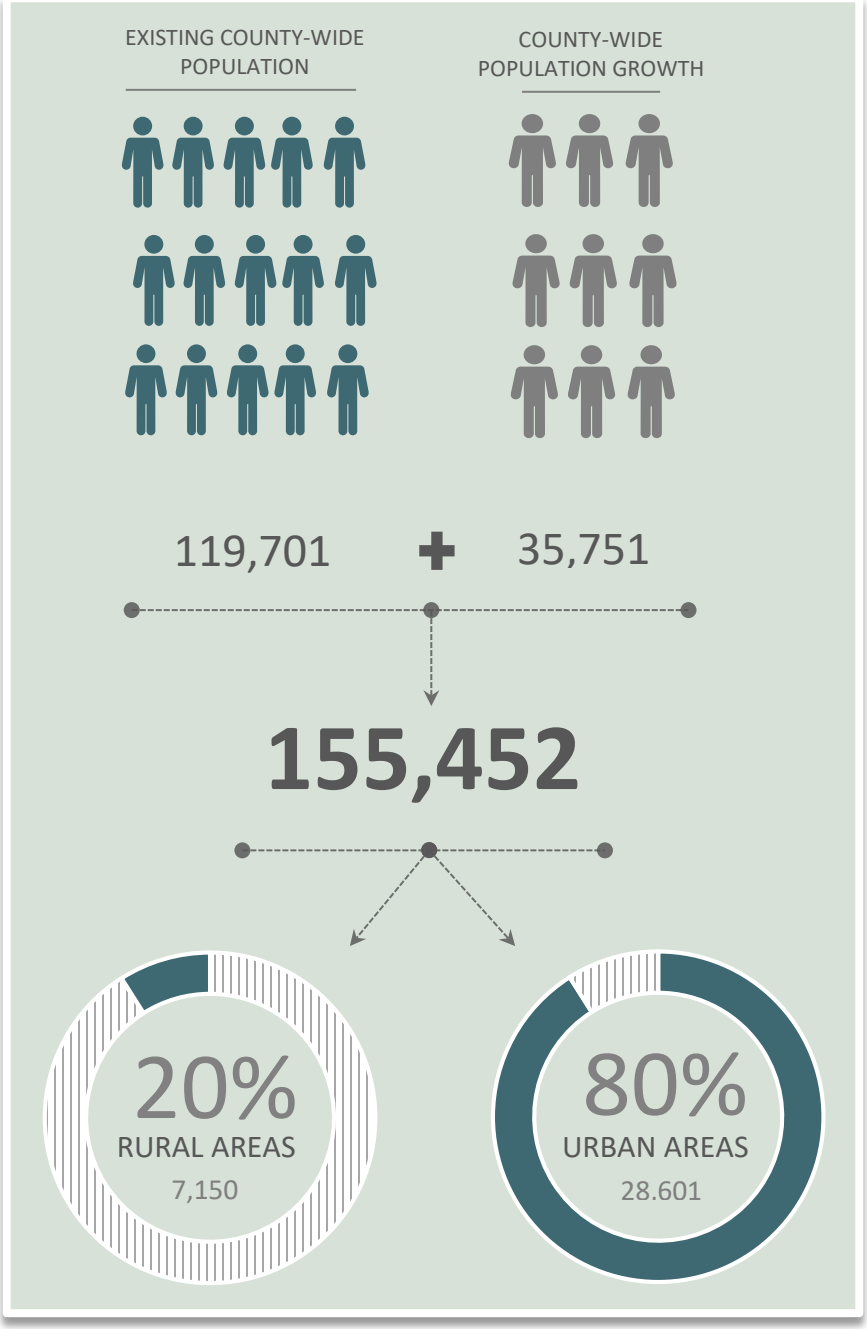
The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that counties and cities consult to allocate both population and employment growth expected over the 20-year timeframe in which jurisdictions are expected to plan. With the population and employment allocations is work that each jurisdiction must do to make sure they can accommodate the growth they agree to accommodate.

The initial analysis of overall population and employment to be distributed to Skagit County was done by the GMA Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) which is a committee that reports to the Mayors of each City (or appointed Council members) and the County Commissioners as set forth in the adopted and recorded Framework Agreement (A.F. #: 200211270010) that Mount Vernon, Skagit County, and other County jurisdictions are party to.

Once these overall County-wide numbers and the 80/20 urban-to-rural distributions were preliminarily agreed upon allocations to each 'urban' jurisdiction/area was analyzed, debated, and eventually agreed upon. The urban allocations proved to be more difficult to allocate due to a timing issue. This timing issue was created because on one hand each jurisdiction needed a target to plan for; while at the same time, they were updating or creating the information they needed to show that they could accommodate their population and employment allocations.

To overcome this challenge the GMA TAC agreed it would be best to consider initial allocations that would be finalized after each jurisdiction completed their Buildable Lands work.

4.1 PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH



After an analysis of the population growth trends and development capacity measures the countywide target population was placed at 155,452 people; a countywide increase in population of 35,751 people. The urban/rural split for this population remained at 80/20, which means that an additional 28,601 people were allocated to the urban areas and 7,150 were allocated to the rural areas.

The Skagit County overall population projections were arrived at using the Office of Financial Management's medium population projections. OFM describes the 'medium population projections' as the most likely to occur. This initial multi-jurisdictional work and process is memorialized in the BERK Consulting report titled, "Skagit County Growth Projections" dated July 2014, that is contained in **Appendix C**.

The next step in the allocation process was for the cities to take the 80% urban split and allocate it to the urban areas. **Table 4.0** details and **Graph 4.1** illustrates how the urban population was distributed to each of the listed jurisdictions.

Noteworthy is the fact that Mount Vernon was allocated 43% of the total 'urban' allocation - significantly more than any other 'urban' area – and expects to see a 35% increase in population over the 20-year planning horizon.

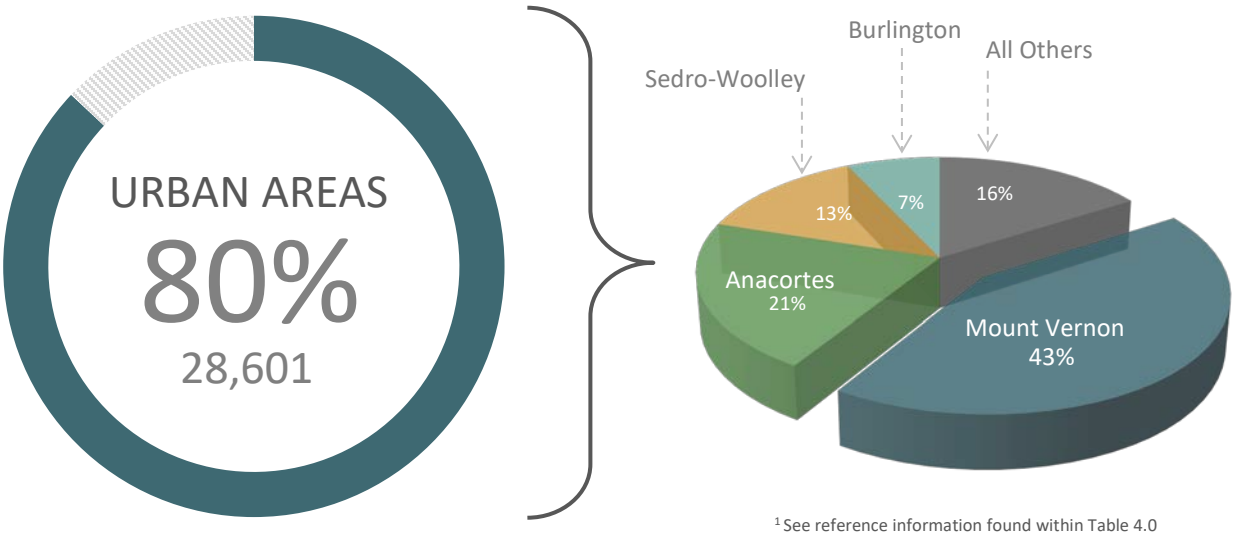
TABLE 4.0 POPULATION GROWTH THROUGH 2036[1]

JURISDICTION (CITY & UGAS)	2012 POPULATION	2012 TO 2015 POPULATION GROWTH	2015 TO 2036 POPULATION FORECAST	2036 POPULATION GROWTH ALLOCATION	2036 POPULATION ALLOCATION PERCENTAGE
Anacortes	16,090	308	5,895	22,293	16.5%
Burlington	10,393	71	3,808	14,272	10.7%
Mount Vernon	**33,935**	**1,034**	**12,434**	**47,403**	**34.8%**
Sedro-Woolley	12,431	83	4,555	17,069	12.7%
Concrete	873	0	320	1,193	.9%
Hamilton	310	3	114	427	.3%
LaConner	898	-1	329	1,226	.9%
Lyman	441	2	162	605	.5%
Bayview Ridge	1,812	-1	72	1,883	.2%
Swinomish	2,489	15	912	3,416	2.6%
Rural *(outside UGAs)*	38,277	238	7,150	45,665	20%
TOTAL	**117,949**	**1,752**	**35,751**	**155,452**	**100%**

80% URBAN ALLOCATION

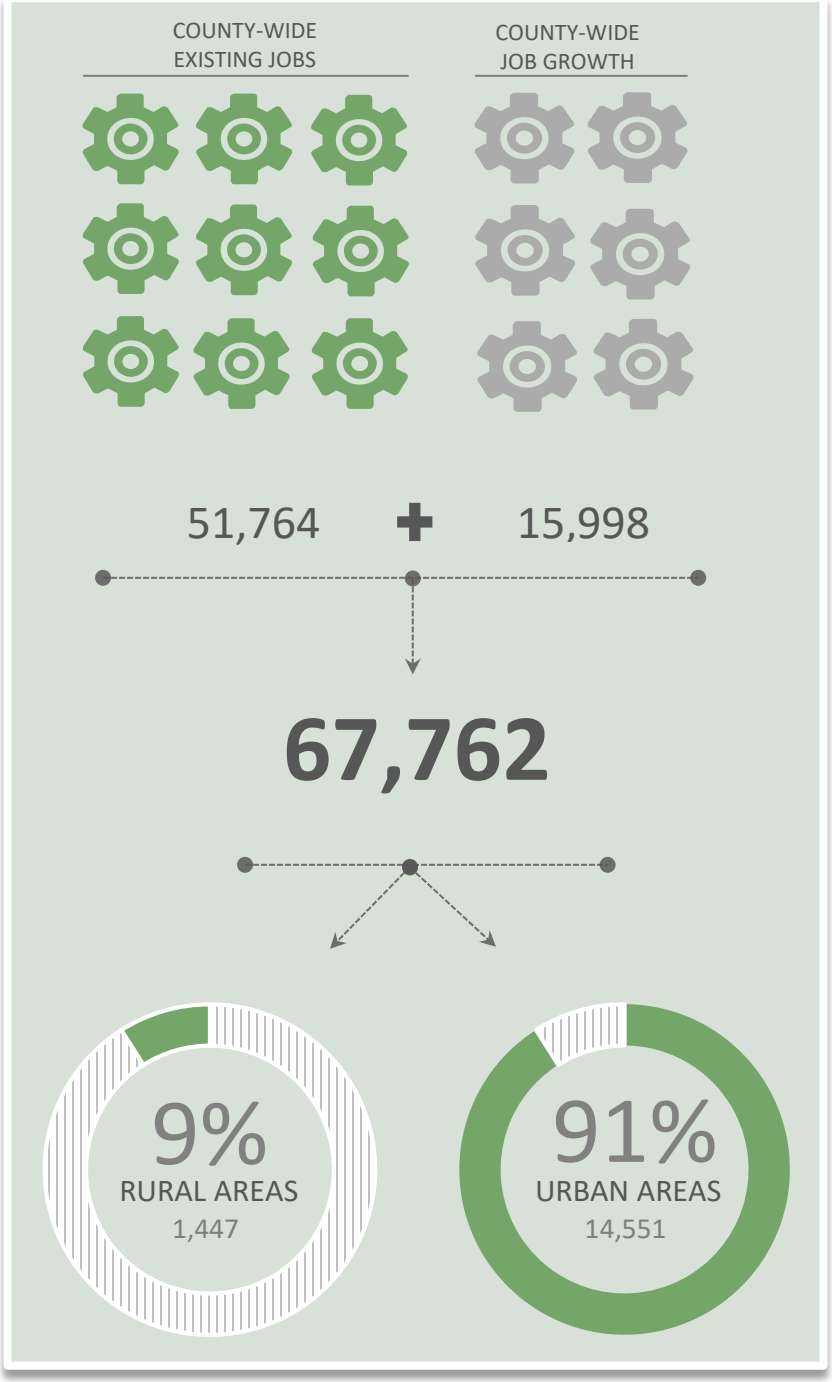
[1] BERK Consulting for Skagit County. Skagit County Growth Projections Summary of Methods and Results. (2014, July.) Document is appended as Appendix D.

GRAPH 4.1: POPULATION ALLOCATION TO 'URBAN' AREAS[1]



[1] See reference information found within Table 4.0

4.2 PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT GROWTH



The Countywide employment projections for the 20-year planning horizon were developed by BERK Consulting based on population and employment ratio assumptions and some Employment Security Department (ESD) growth rates applied to the 2012 job base independent of population growth.

The industry split was determined by considering factors such as: current industry distributions, recent trends, industry shifts, ESD mid-term projections, and other related factors.

Once these baseline projections were completed different methods for allocating the projected jobs were created and analyzed. Through this process the GMA Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommended that a projection similar to, but slightly more than, the ESD growth rates be adopted reflecting the desire to further a policy choice that would increase family wage jobs and industrial growth over the 20-year planning horizon.

The total employment projection that was initially adopted by the GMA Steering Committee would add approximately 16,000 jobs to Skagit County, as a whole, between 2015 and 2036.

Allocating these jobs to the different jurisdictions was done after review of several different scenarios. The final GMA TAC recommendation was to adopted allocations that reflect trends with the Rural areas receiving 9%, the I-5 corridor receiving 73%, the City of Anacortes receiving 13% and the remaining 5% being allocated to the remaining jurisdictions (see **Table 4.2** and **Graph 4.3**).

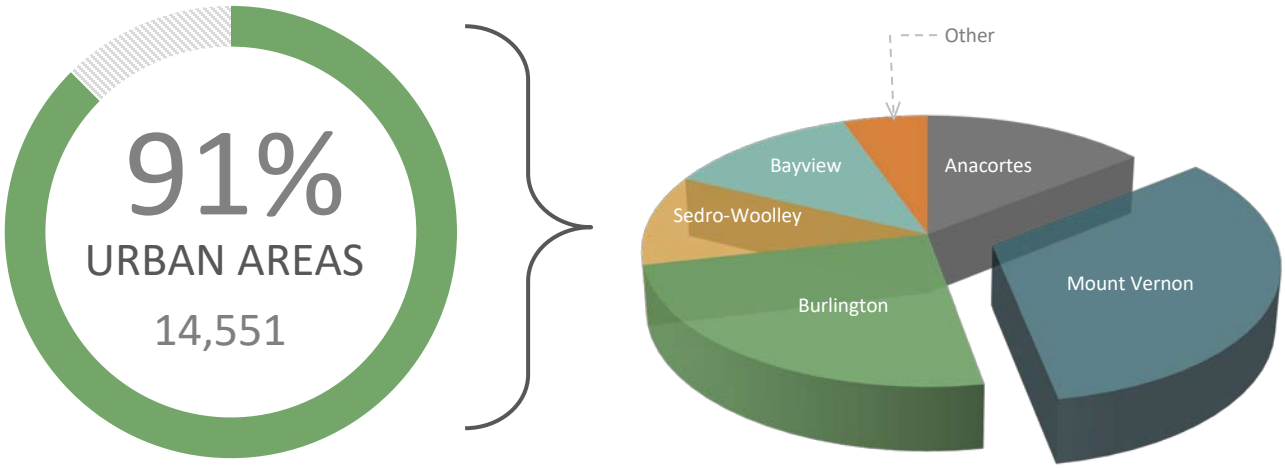
TABLE 4.2 EMPLOYMENT GROWTH THROUGH 2036[1]

JURISDICTION (CITY & UGAS)	2015 EXISTING JOBS	2036 JOB ALLOCATION	2036 TOTAL JOBS	2036 JOB GROWTH ALLOCATION PERCENTAGE
Anacortes	8,404	2,076	10,480	13%
Burlington	9,896	3,516	13,412	22%
Mount Vernon	**16,503**	**4,785**	**21,288**	**29.9%**
Sedro-Woolley	4,752	1,572	6,324	9.8%
Concrete	358	109	467	.7%
Hamilton	222	66	288	.4%
LaConner	1,091	329	1,420	2.1%
Lyman	29	9	38	.1%
Bayview Ridge	1,656	1,799	3,455	11.2%
Swinomish	957	290	1,247	1.8%
Rural (outside UGAs)	7,896	1,447	9,343	9%
TOTAL	**51,764**	**15,998**	**67,762**	**100%**

91% URBAN ALLOCATION

[1] BERK Consulting for Skagit County. Skagit County Growth Projections Summary of Methods and Results. (2014, July.) Document is appended as Appendix D.

GRAPH 4.3: EMPLOYMENT ALLOCATION TO 'URBAN' AREAS[1]



[1] See reference information found within Table 4.2

5.0 ACCOMMODATING FUTURE GROWTH

To ensure the City has lands available to support both the population and employment allocated to the City over the next 20-years the City updated its Buildable Lands & Land Capacity Analysis (BLLCA) before the Land Use Element was finalized. The BLLCA identifies the amount of land in each of the City's existing zoning designations and estimates the amount of buildable land not encumbered by things like structures, infrastructure, critical areas, et cetera. **Table 5.0** summarizes the BLLCA and the entire document can be found in **Appendix B.**

The BLLCA takes into account the existing development within the City, and has made conservative assumptions with regard to the location and extent of future street systems, stormwater facilities, critical areas (wetlands, streams, steep slopes, floodways), and future lands that will be developed with public uses such as municipal facilities, schools, parks, open spaces, and churches.

The BLLCA proves the City will be able to accommodate the number of homes necessary to meet the population that was allocated to the City for the current planning horizon of 2016 to 2036. In fact, over 90% of the homes necessary to house this population could be located within the *existing* City limits.

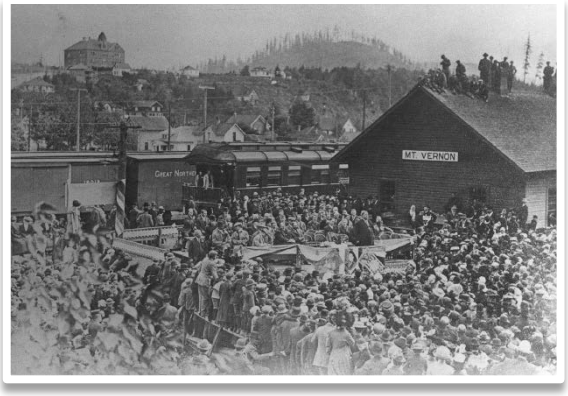
Evident from the BLLCA is the lack of commercial and industrial lands available for development within the City. In total the City only has 71.2 acres of commercial/industrial land less than one (1) acre in size; and only 125.8 acres that is greater than one (1) acre in size. The City has been very concerned for some time about not having enough commercial/industrial lands to provide jobs and local tax revenue. See **Appendices B and C** for more in-depth data and analysis on this issue.

TABLE 5.0: BUILDABLE LANDS SUMMARY

RESIDENTIAL			COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL		
TYPE	**CITY UNITS[2]**	**UGAS UNITS**	**TYPE**	**< 1 ACRE**	**> 1 ACRES**
Single-Family[1] Residential	1,025	4,284	Commercial[5]	31	53
Multi-Family Residential[3]	276	NA	Industrial[6]	40.2	72.8
Existing 'Pipeline' Developments[4]	2,338	NA			
Transfer of Development Rights	135	NA			
Totals:	**3,774**	**4,284**		**71.2**	**125.8**

[1] Includes all existing or future R-1 zones. Existing R-A zoned properties have been assigned to a zoning category consistent with their existing Comprehensive Plan designations. See Appendix B for additional details.
[2] See Appendix B for the methodology utilized in determining the number of additional lots that could be created.
[3] Includes all R-2, R-3, and R-4 zones
[4] See Appendix B for a list of the existing pipeline developments and their associated lot counts.
[5] Includes C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, LC and P-O zones.
[6] Includes C-L, M-1 and M-2.

6.0
LAND USE PATTERNS



Top aerial photo taken in 1960 looking north with the Interstate-5 and College Way intersection near the middle of the photo.

Bottom photo shows a crowd gathered in 1911 to hear President Taft at what was then the Mount Vernon Depot. This is the current day Skagit River Brewery. Bottom photo courtesy of Roger Fox – Historical data Dick Fallis' "Walking Tour of Historic Mount Vernon" 1986.

The City's land use patterns have, over time, been heavily influenced by the location of the Skagit River, the Burlington Northern Railroad, Interstate-5, State Routes 536 and 538, and the topographic changes that occur as one heads east and southeast through the City.

The City's first business district was formed on the east side of the river where the City's historic downtown district still exists today (generally between Division and Kincaid Streets).

Additional business, commercial, and industrial areas have development around major transportation corridors such as Interstate-5, Riverside Drive, College Way (SR 536) and more recently in the South Mount Vernon area where both Old Highway 99 and Interstate-5 run north/south.

Historically natural disasters such as floods and fires spurred residential growth at higher elevations on the east side of the City moving away from the Skagit River and Interstate-5. In large part these land use patterns still exist today.

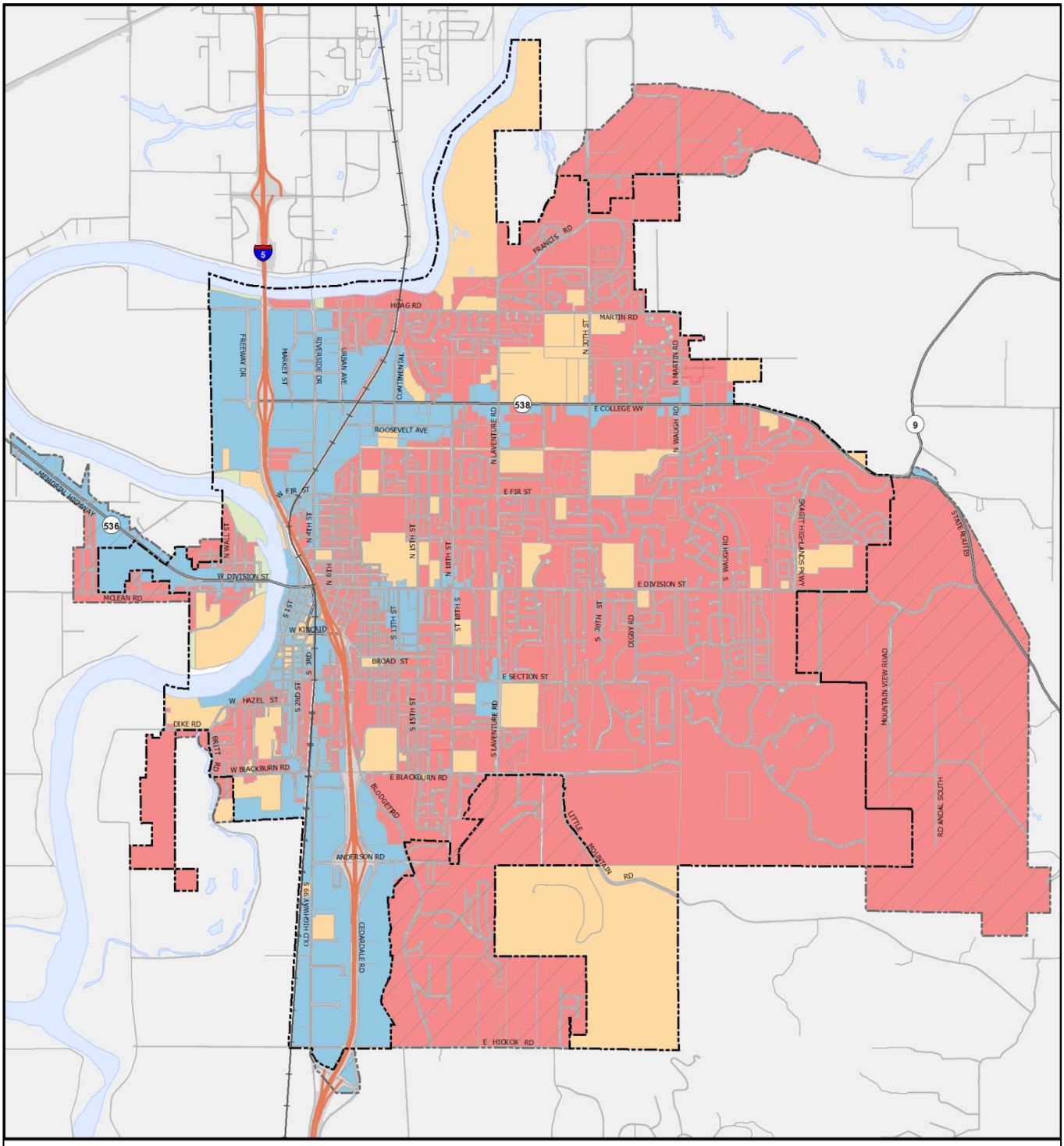
6.1 OVERALL LAND USE TYPES

As of January 1, 2016, there are 6,798 acres that have land use designations within the current City limits and 2,387 acres within the City's UGAs; for a total UGA plus City of 9,185 acres. This acreage is categorized into the zoning designations outlined in **Table 6.0.** In addition to the 9,185 acres of property zoned within the City and its associated UGAs, there is 1,431 acres of property such as rights-of-way and the river that are not zoned.

To illustrate the City's overall land use designations following is **Map 2.0** that shows overall land use types; e.g., commercial, residential, public, and open spaces. In addition to this map **Table 6.0** and **Graph 6.1** outline and illustrate the City's broader land use designations. Evident from this map and graph is that the City is composed predominately of areas designated for residential purposes.

The City's zoning code has evolved over the years, but remains largely rooted in a Euclidean zoning scheme. Euclidean zoning is characterized by the separation of land uses into specified districts with associated development regulations. As the City's zoning code was changed and updated through the decades the uses allowed within the different zoning designations have been modified such that the current uses allowed within different zones are much different than what the original zoning allowed.

This has created a situation where analyzing zoning designations in the City can be very misleading due to the mix of uses that many of the City's zoning districts allow. For example, looking only at the zoning summaries found **in Table 6.0** one could assume that the City had very few multi-family structures since just three percent (3%) of the City is zoned for multi-family residential uses. However, contrary to the zoning summary, 28% of all of the existing residential structures are developed with multi-family units.



LAND USE ELEMENT MAP 2.0: LAND USES

City of MOUNT VERNON

- Floodplain
- Residential
- Commercial
- Public
- Public Right of Way
- City Boundary
- Urban Growth Area
- Railroad
- Water Body

N

0 0.5 1
Miles

Map by MV GIS 7/5/2016

6.2 ZONING DESIGNATIONS

Table 6.0 and **Graph 6.1** identify and depict the different zoning designations found in the City and the acreage that exists within each of these designations on March 1, 2016.

Table 6.2 contains a list of the City's existing Comprehensive Plan designations and lists the zoning designation(s) that they are consistent with along with the minimum and maximum net densities allowed within each of the listed zoning designations.

Map 3.0 identifies the existing Comprehensive Plan designations throughout the City as of January 1, 2016. **Map 4.0** identifies Skagit County's zoning designations within the City's Urban Growth Areas (UGAs). **Map 5.0** identifies areas that are zoned R-1, 3.0 that have an overlay restricting their density to a maximum of 3.23 dwelling unit per acre. This overlay means that these areas cannot be zoned to R-1, 4.0 without amending **Map 5.0.**

Appendix A provides additional details with regard to minimum and maximum densities within the City.

TABLE 6.0: ZONING ACREAGES

RESIDENTIAL		COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL		OTHER	
ZONING DESIGNATION	ACRES	ZONING DESIGNATION	ACRES	ZONING DESIGNATION	ACRES
Single-Family Residential (R-1, 7.0)	442	C-1	46	H-D	29
Single-Family Residential (R-1, 5.0)	418	C-2	510	Dike	4
Single-Family Residential (R-1, 4.0)	1,298	C-3	15	F-1	35
Single-Family Residential (R-1, 3.0)	731	C-4	15	R-O	2
High Density in UGA	70	C-L	416	RR	43
Medium Density in UGA	2,234	L-C	.5	Public	1376
Multi-Family Residential (R-4)	36	M-1	40	Public in UGA	8
Multi-Family Residential (R-3)	247	M-2	72	Skagit River	201
Duplex and Townhomes (R-2)	28	P-O	33	Public Rights-of-Way (City + UGAs)	1,230
Mobile Home Park (MHP)	126	C-L in UGA	66		
Residential Agricultural (R-A)	183	Commercial UGA	9		
Eaglemont PUD	653				
TOTAL	**6,466**	**TOTAL**	**1,222.5**	**TOTAL**	**2,928**

GRAPH 6.1: ZONING/LAND USE PERCENTAGES

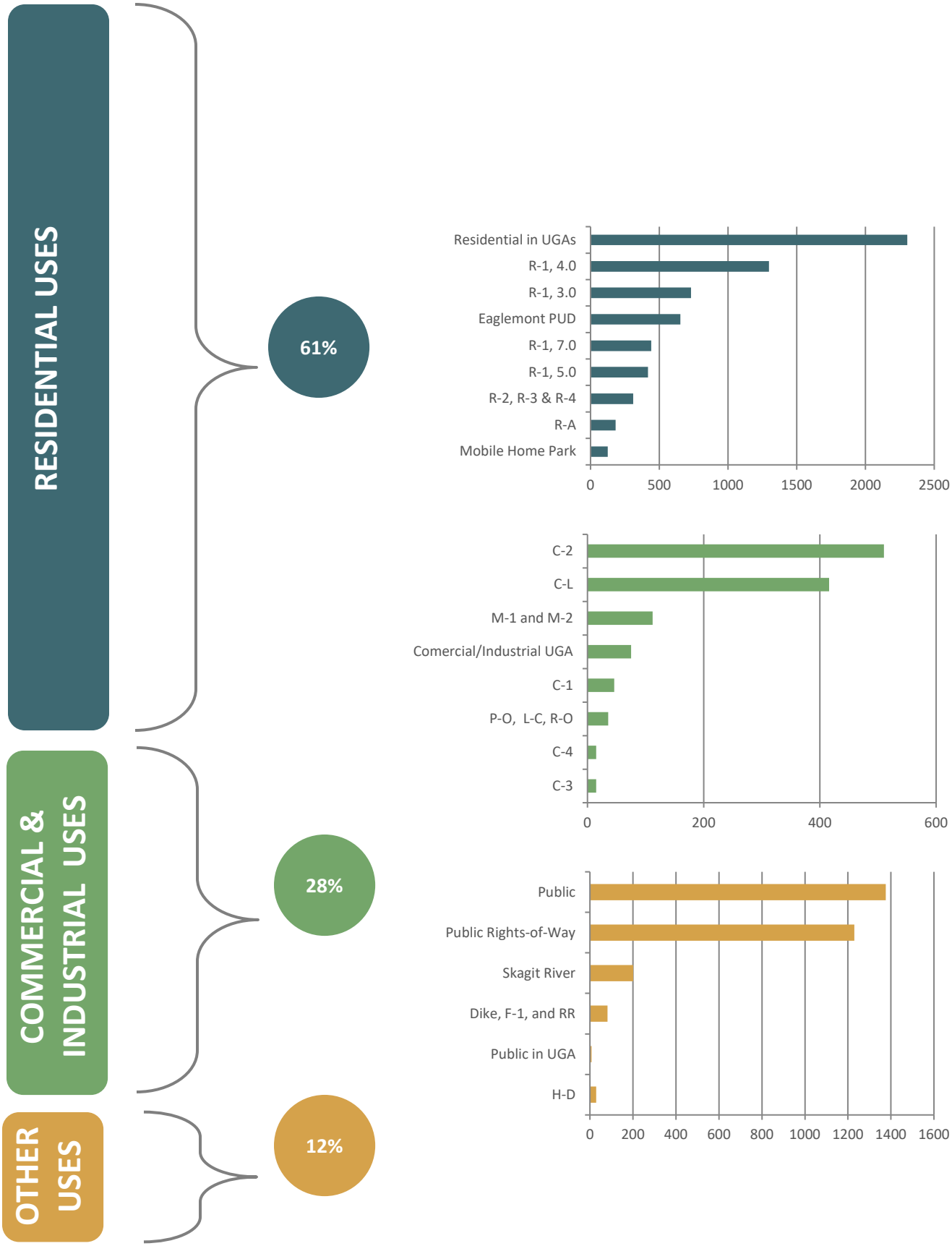


TABLE 6.2: EXISTING RESIDENTIAL ZONING DENSITIES WITH DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS[5]

ZONING DESIGNATION	COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DESIGNATION	MINIMUM NET DENSITY (DU/ACRE)	MAXIMUM NET DENSITY (DU/ACRE)	POTENTIAL DENSITY INCREASES? (TDR, PUD, ETC) YES OR NO
R-1, 7.0 [1] Single-Family Residential	High Density Single-Family (SF-HI)	4.0	7.26	YES
R-1, 5.0 [1] Single-Family Residential	High Density Single-Family (SF-HI)	4.0	5.73	YES
R-1, 4.0 [1] Single-Family Residential	Medium Density Single-Family (SF-MED)	4.0	4.54	YES
R-1, 3.0 [1] Single-Family Residential	Medium Density Single-Family (SF-MED)	3.23	3.23	OVERLAY ZONE ONLY (NO PUD OR TDR)
R-2 Two-Family Residential	Low Density Multi-Family (MF-LO)	8.0	10	YES
R-3 Multi-Family Residential	Medium-High Density Multi-Family (MF-MH)	10.0	12 or 15[2]	YES
R-4 Multi-Family Residential	Medium-High Density Multi-Family (MF-MH)	10.0	15 or 20[3]	YES
R-A Residential Agricultural [4]	Agricultural with Density Transfer (AG)	1.24	1.24	NA

[1] A minimum net density of 4 dwelling units per acre (du/acre) is required in this zone unless documented critical areas including areas of special flood risk designation, resource lands, restriction on access or other physical site constraints limit the ability to achieve this density. Due to the unique characteristics of the existing neighborhoods identified on Map LU-5 these areas shall not have densities exceeding 3.23 du/acre; and thus are not required to meet the minimum net density of 4 du/acre.

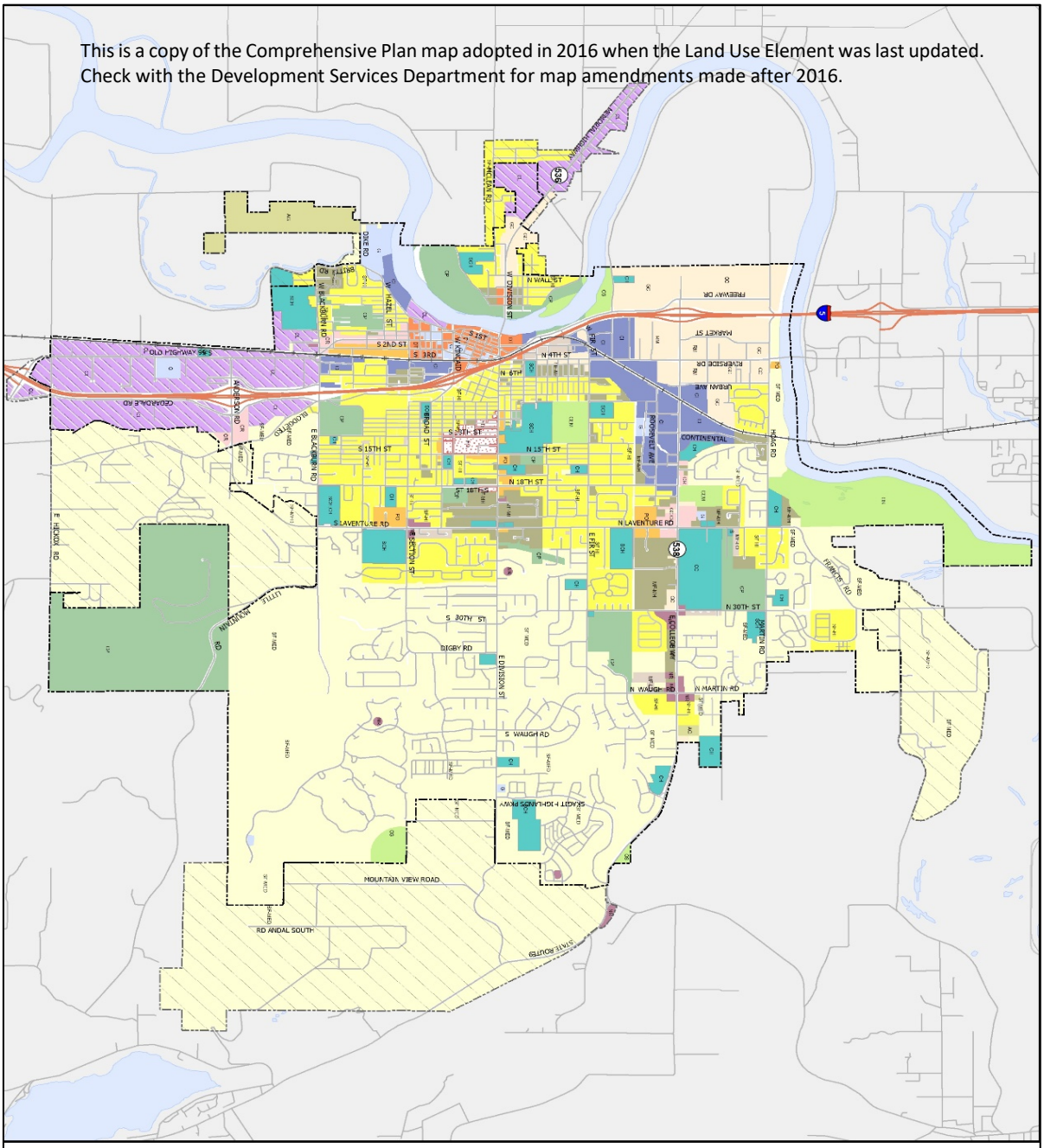
[2] 15 du/acre may be achieved if at least 50% of the required parking spaces are located in an enclosed area beneath the habitable floors of the building or complex.

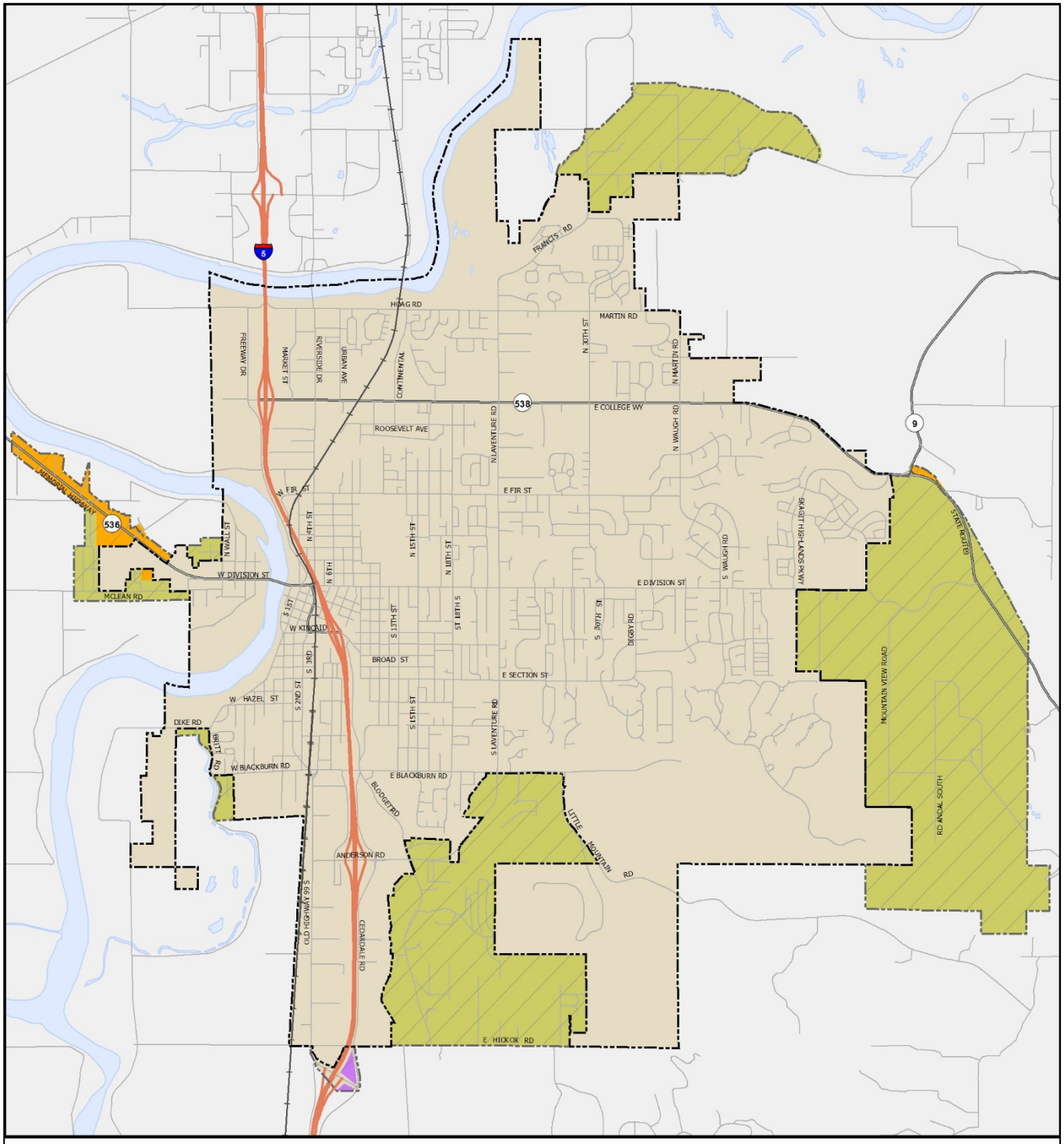
[3] 20 du/acre may be achieved if at least 50% of the required parking spaces are located in an enclosed area beneath the habitable floors of the building or complex.

[4] The City has put policies into place to require the re-designation of parcels zoned R-A where the Comprehensive Plan designation is not consistent with the zoning of the parcel.

[5] The City could adopt new zoning designations and associated development regulations following the adoption of this Element of the Comprehensive Plan consistent with Land Use Policy LU-1.1.8.

This is a copy of the Comprehensive Plan map adopted in 2016 when the Land Use Element was last updated. Check with the Development Services Department for map amendments made after 2016.





LAND USE ELEMENT MAP 4.0: SKAGIT COUNTY ZONING OF UGAs

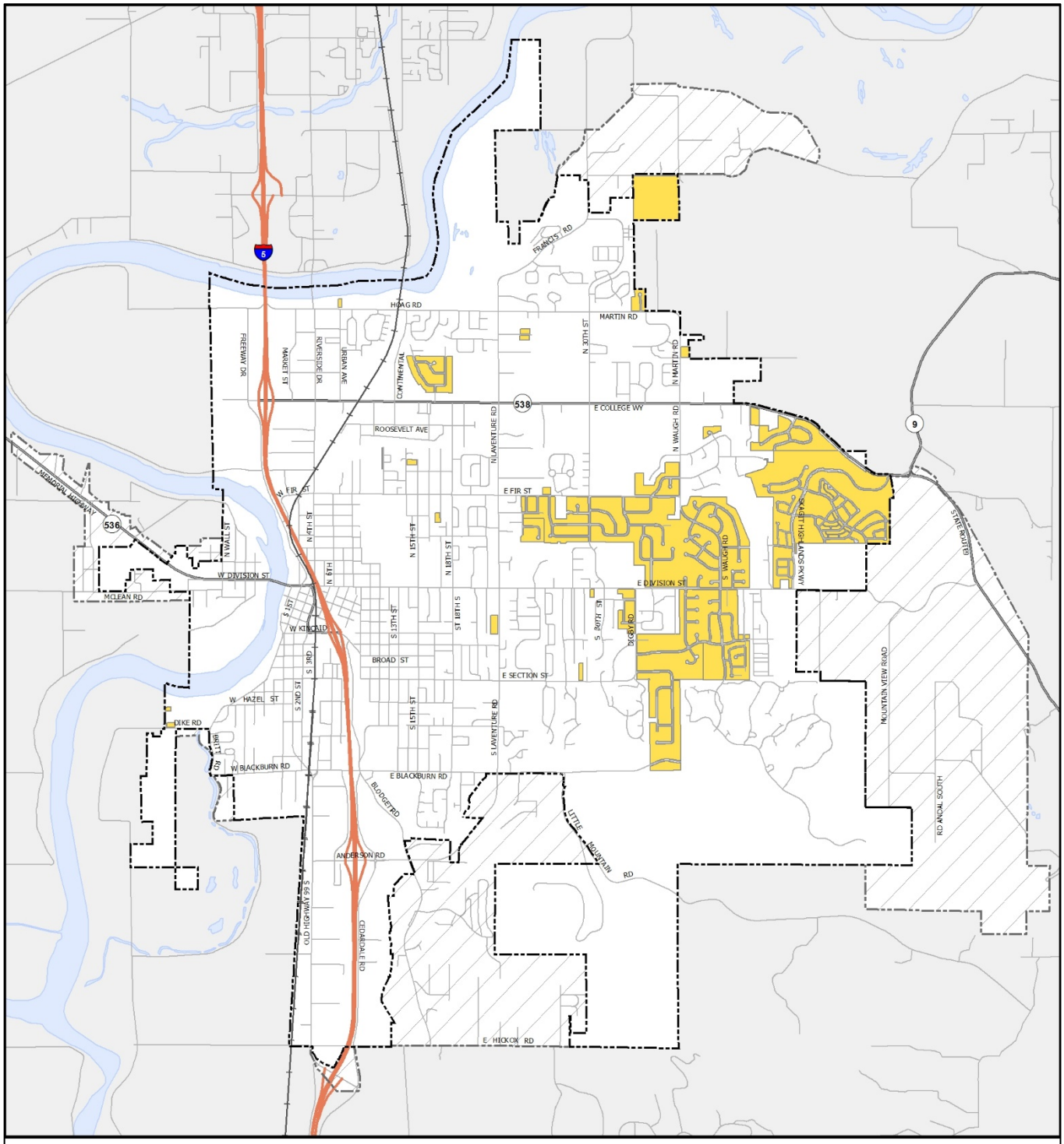
City of MOUNT VERNON

- [MV-UD] Mount Vernon UGA Urban Development District
- [URC-I] Urban Reserve Commercial Industrial
- [URR] Urban Reserve Residential
- City Boundary
- Incorporated City of Mount Vernon
- City of Mount Vernon Urban Growth Area
- Railroad
- Water Body

N

0 0.5 1
Miles

Map by MV GIS 7/5/2016



LAND USE ELEMENT MAP 5.0: MAXIMUM DENSITY OVERLAY ZONE

City of MOUNT VERNON

- Parcels zoned R-1, 3.0 that shall have a maximum density of 3.23 dwelling units per acre
- City Boundary
- City of Mount Vernon Urban Growth Area
- Railroad
- Water Body

N

0 0.5 1
Miles

Map by MV GIS 7/5/2016

6.3 URBAN GROWTH AREAS

The City's Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) are areas that the City expects to grow into overtime through the annexation process.

The City has provided all of its UGAs with Comprehensive Plan designations that guide the City when determining what the zoning of property will be when the City chooses to annex it into the City.

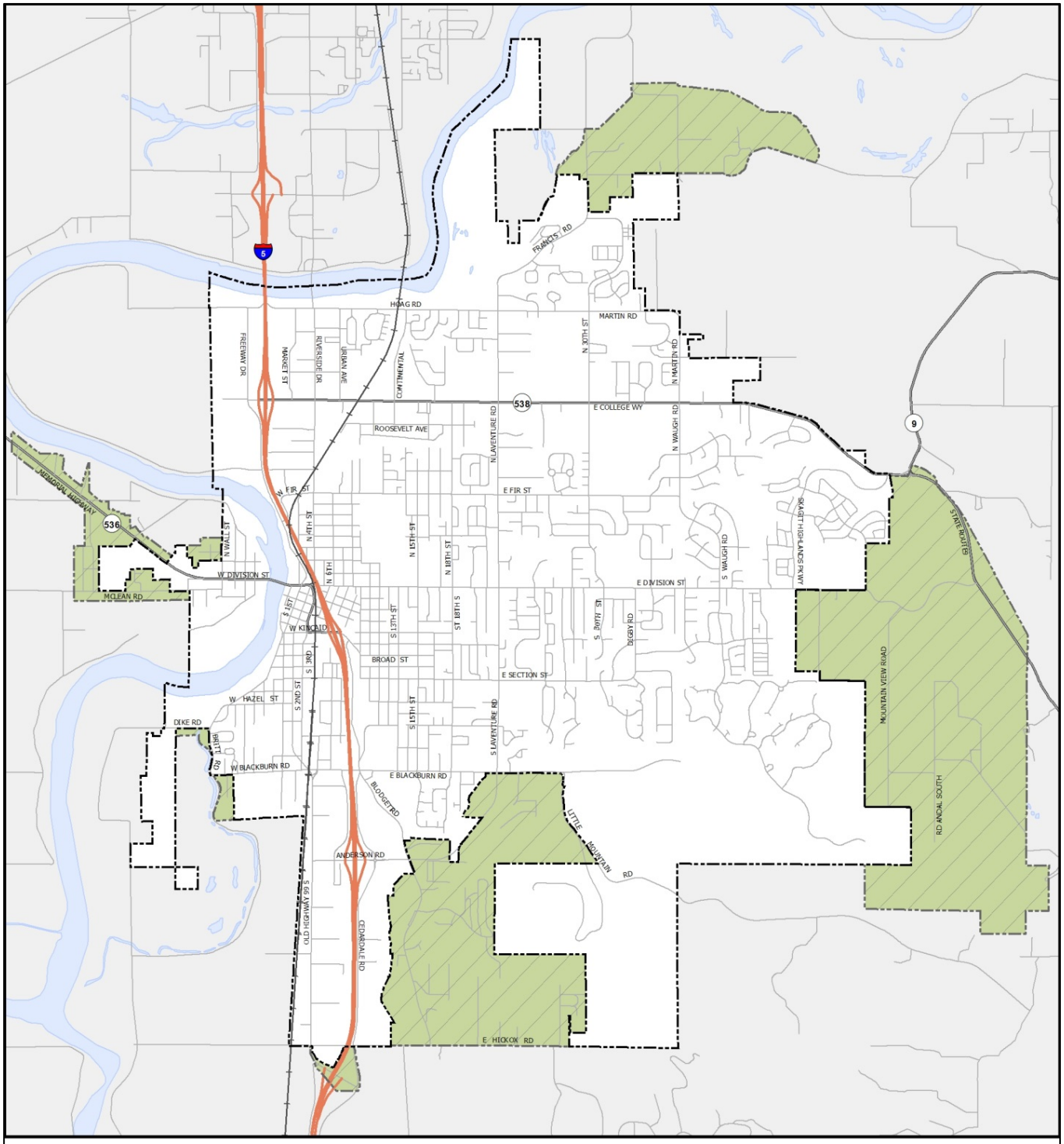
Table 6.3 outlines the City's Comprehensive Plan designations that have already been chosen for its UGAs, the City's zoning that is associated with the Comprehensive Plan designations, and the Skagit County Zoning/Comprehensive Plan designation of these areas.

Property within the City's UGAs are not subject to the City's development regulations until such time they are annexed into the City. Even so, because these areas are anticipated to become part of the City at some point in time the City and County negotiated a set of development regulations specific to UGAs in 2005 that the County administers.

These UGA specific development regulations were originally adopted by Skagit County with Ordinance 020050007. This ordinance gives Mount Vernon the option of amending its Comprehensive Plan designations within residentially designated UGA areas to allow for a one-acre lot overlay zone if certain conditions can be met. Mount Vernon has opted not to allow such an overlay in its UGAs.

TABLE 6.3 UGA ZONING

CITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DESIGNATIONS	CITY ZONING	CORRESPONDING COUNTY ZONING
Single-Family High	Single-Family Residential R-1,5.0 or 7.0	Urban Reserve Residential (URR)
Single-Family Medium	Single-Family Residential R-1,3.0 or 4.0	Urban Reserve Residential (URR)
Commercial/Limited Industrial (C-L)	Commercial/Limited Industrial (C-L)	Urban Reserve Commercial-Industrial (URC-I)
To be Determined	To be Determined	Urban Development District



LAND USE ELEMENT MAP 6.0: MOUNT VERNON URBAN GROWTH AREAS

City of MOUNT VERNON

- City Boundary
- City of Mount Vernon Urban Growth Area
- Railroad
- Water Body

N

0 0.5 1
Miles

Map by MV GIS 7/5/2016

7.0

CRITICAL AREAS

Mount Vernon is home to an incredible array of natural resources. The City is located within the Skagit River watershed just six (6) miles east of Puget Sound. The Skagit River is identified as a "shoreline of statewide significance" and is a major salmon system that flows through the City along with 22 other primary streams and many wetland areas.

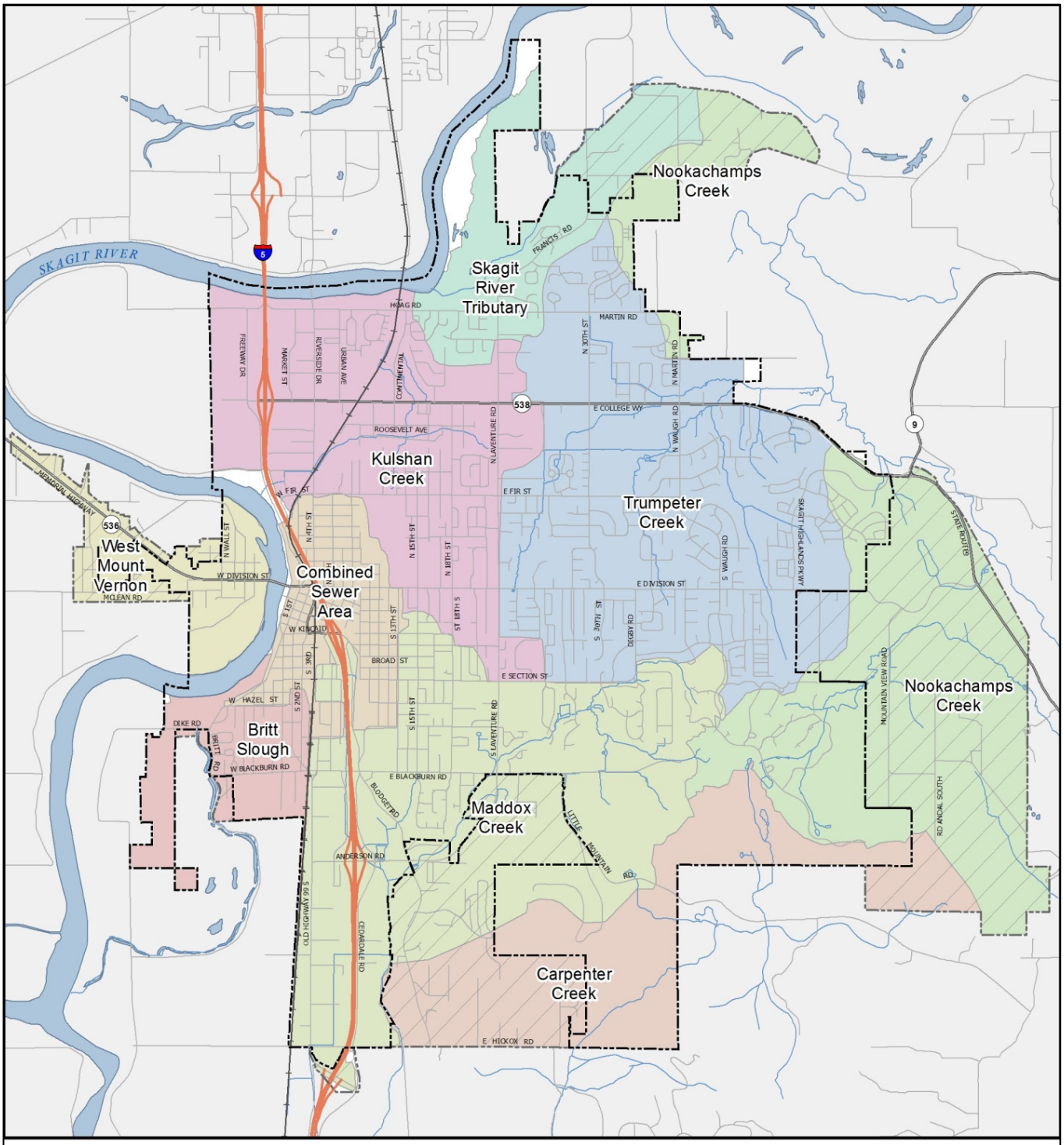
In 2007 the City adopted a critical areas ordinance based on, and supported by, best available science as required by the Growth Management Act (GMA).

The City's critical areas ordinance is based on the most current, preeminent science of how to preserve the functions and values of critical areas through examination of existing local conditions and the identification of critical habitat with its specific functions and values.

Similar to most other jurisdictions in Washington State that are administering and enforcing GMA compliant critical areas ordinances, those choosing to develop in Mount Vernon can bear greater development costs when critical areas are on or near their property due to loss of developable land to buffers, the cost of reports/analysis by qualified critical area professionals that must be prepared, and other critical area specific best management practices that are required.

Following are sub-sections that describe the different critical areas found in the City, including: streams, wetlands, priority habitat areas, floodplains, shorelines, and steep slopes.

Map 7.0 identifies the overall basins that the City has been delineated into to assist with identification of basin specific functions and values, among other characteristics.



LAND USE ELEMENT MAP 7.0: HYDROLOGIC OVERVIEW

City of MOUNT VERNON

Drainage Basins

- Britt Slough
- Carpenter Creek Basin
- Combined Sewer Area
- Kulshan Creek Basin
- Maddox Creek Basin
- Nookachamps Creek
- Skagit River Tributary
- Trumpeter Creek Basin
- West Mount Vernon

- Stream
- Water Body
- City Boundary
- Urban Growth Area
- Railroad

N

0 0.5 1 Miles

Map by MV GIS 7/5/2016

7.1 STREAMS

"Wild Salmon did not become endangered or threatened overnight. Their plight is the result of many decades of decline caused by more than a century of activities in a growing state. But just as the cumulative actions has damaged the prospects for wild salmon survival, the cumulative benefit of new decisions and actions can work to save wild salmon"

- The State of the Salmon Report., former Washington State Governor Gary Locke

There are 22 distinct streams in the City that extend approximately 25 miles within the City limits with an additional approximate 11 miles that extends through the City's Urban Growth Areas (UGA).

The Skagit River drains an area of 3,140 square miles, and flows for 162 miles from its headwaters in the Cascade Mountains in the United State and Canada, through low-lying valleys, and finally through the broad Skagit delta to Skagit Bay, which is located in Puget Sound.

The Skagit River is the largest basin in the Puget Sound and possesses the most abundant and diverse populations of salmon, steelhead trout, and bull trout in the region. It is the sixth largest drainage on the west coast of the continental United States. Major tributaries of the Skagit River include the Sauk, Baker and Cascade rivers.

Other fish bearing streams within the City include parts of: Kulshan, Trumpeter, Logan, Thunderbird, Lindgren, Kiowa, Edgemont, Carpenter, Maddox, Monte Vista, Flowers, Martha Washington, and Little Mountain (tributary to Maddox) Creeks.

The City's first stream inventory was completed in 2001 and has been updated a number of times with the last major update in 2008. These inventories and mapping enable the City to determine if additional site specific review is necessary when development is proposed; and they provide information on a number of physical attributes such as fish presence, hydrology, the existence of culverts, et cetera.

7.2 WETLANDS

Wetlands help to maintain water quality, store and convey stormwater and floodwater, recharge groundwater, provide important fish and wildlife habitat, and serve as areas for recreation, education, scientific study and aesthetic appreciation.

The City had reconnaissance level wetland mapping done by Shannon & Wilson (S&W) in 2000. The S&W wetland mapping is a compilation of soil information from the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, the National Wetland Inventory maps, the Department of Natural Resources mapping, and a handful of actual delineation reports that had been previously submitted to the City, aerial photography and windshield surveys by S&W biologists.

Additionally, the City collects and saves wetland reconnaissance and delineation reports submitted as part of development projects and uses these as background information when reviewing new projects.

The City has one (1) wetland mitigation bank located in the northern portion of the City. In its entirely this bank is approximately 310 acres in size (a portion of the bank is located outside of the City's corporate boundaries). The Washington State Department of Ecology approved this bank in 2009.

7.3 PRIORITY HABITAT AREAS

In addition to streams, riparian areas, and wetlands, the City of Mount Vernon and its UGA contain habitats supporting other wildlife species.

A key source of information about wildlife, including those endangered, threatened, and sensitive, is available from the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Priority Habitat and Species (PHS) Program. Through this program the State provides information on fish and wildlife habitat location, and priorities for species and habitat management and conservation, including measures to protect resources as land use decisions are made. WDFW uses the information to screen forest practices permits and SEPA reviews, for landscape planning and ecosystem management, and other purposes. It is a source of information for GMA planning efforts by counties and cities as well.

The City's current development regulations state that priority habitat for the protection of fish and wildlife include: federally or state listed threatened, endangered, or sensitive or priority species or those proposed for listing, or outstanding potential habitat for those species, large blocks of habitat extending outside the City limits and providing a travel corridor for those species, and areas adjacent or contiguous with wetlands and streams which enhance the value of those areas for fish and wildlife.

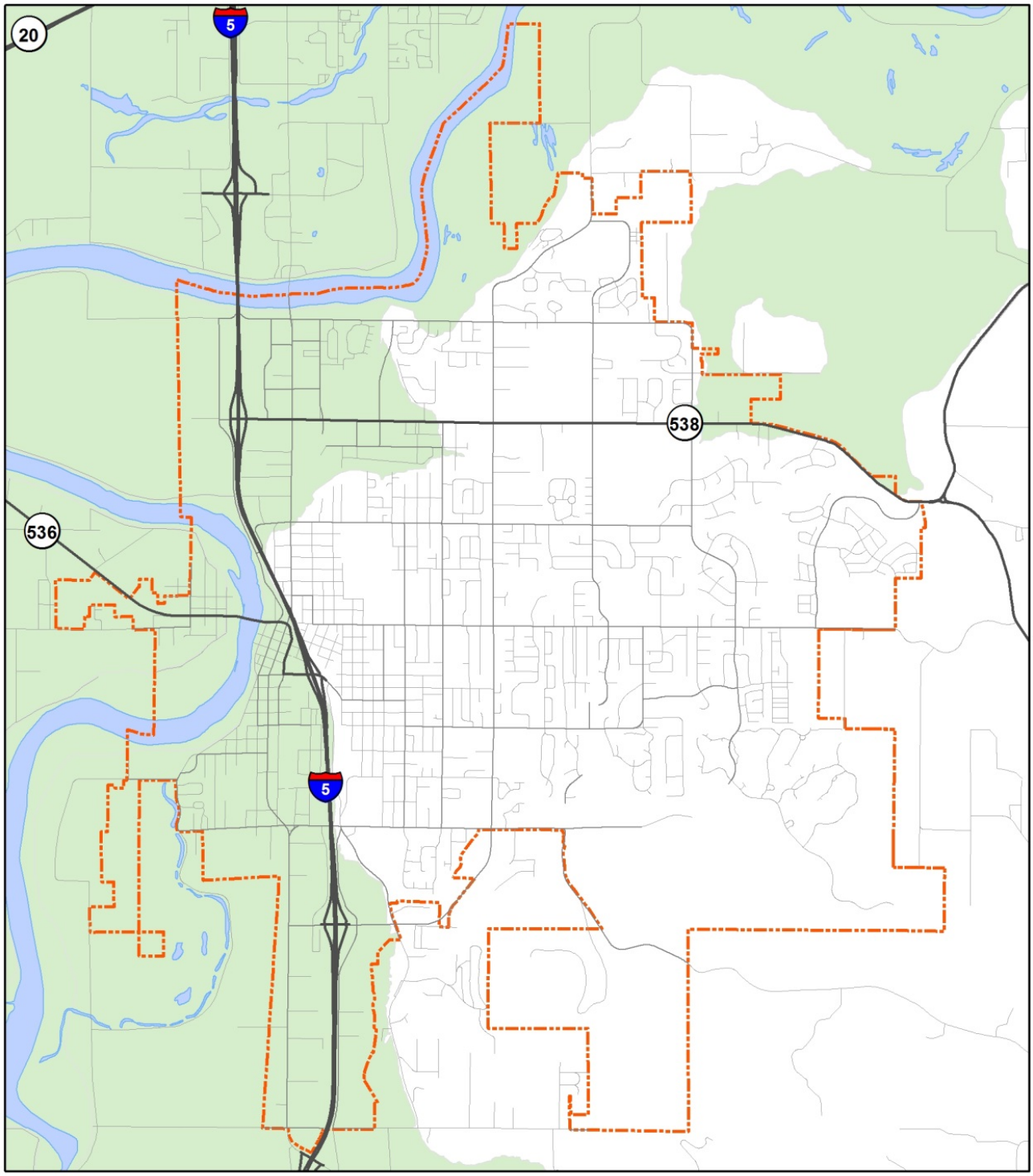
7.4 FLOOD AREAS

The City utilizes maps created by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which are called Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) to determine where flood areas are located and what the minimum elevation requirement for structures needs to be. The location of these areas is shown on **Map 5.0.**

The City recognizes that flooding of the Skagit River continues to cause damage to the land and critical infrastructure of communities along the Skagit River. Human life, transportation infrastructure, natural resources, commercial and industrial areas, and private property are at risk each flood season. The City is working towards finding cost effective, long term and environmentally responsible methods to reduce the risk from flood damage.

The City is aware of the importance of working together with Skagit County, other cities, and the diking and drainage districts to coordinate and fund the development and implementation of measures to reduce flood hazards.

Top photo courtesy of the Skagit County Historical Museum – showing the City's 1913 flood event looking across the Skagit River to the west side of Mount Vernon. Middle photo is from a flood event in 2003 taken from the west side of Mount Vernon looking at Edgewater park. The bottom photo is from a 2006 flood event and is taken looking south down the Skagit River near Main Street.



LAND USE ELEMENT MAP 8.0: 100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN

City of MOUNT VERNON

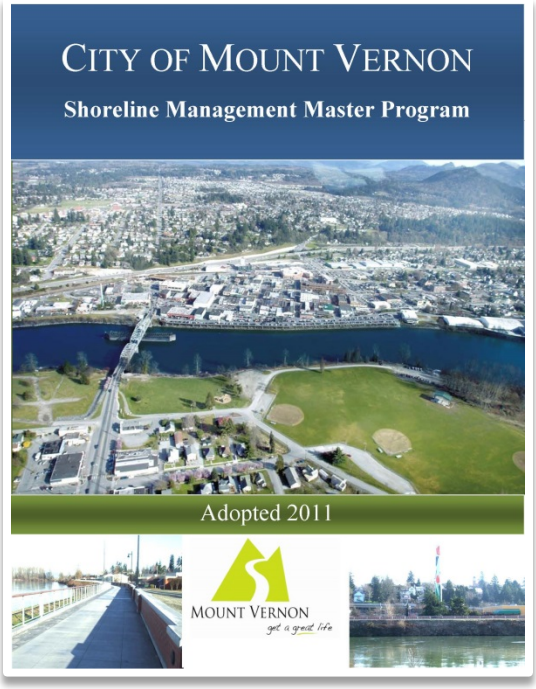
100-Year Flood Zone
Water Body
City Boundary
State Highway
Road

0 0.5 1 2
Miles

N

MV GIS 3/21/16

7.5 SHORELINES



Mount Vernon initiated development of a city Shoreline Management Program (SMP) in early 2009 and the final SMP was adopted by City Council in July of 2011. Up to this time the City had used Skagit County's SMP to regulate activities within areas of SMP jurisdiction.

Mount Vernon's new SMP or "Master Program" consists of environmental designations for the shoreline segments and goals, policies, and regulations applicable to uses and modifications within the Shoreline Management Zone. Appendices to the SMP include an inventory of existing shoreline conditions; analysis and characterization of the shorelines of the city; a cumulative impacts report; a shorelines restoration planning report; shoreline wetland regulations; and a compilation of resources available.

7.6 STEEP SLOPES

Digital orthophotographic mapping was created for the City in the summer of 2000 by Entranco and Triathlon Mapping. This mapping was then used to create topographic maps for the City.

The City requires detailed topographic mapping when development applications are submitted for areas that have slopes in excess of ten percent (10%) or where there are suspected land slide hazards.