

Frequently Asked Questions: Urban Reserves Technical Analysis

How was the Urban Reserves Study Area determined?

The Urban Reserves Study Area was developed consistent with state guidelines. In general, it includes all land within at least a one-mile radius of the urban growth boundary, with a few notable exceptions: the study area ends at Interstate 5 and at the McKenzie River, and extends up to 1.5 miles where there are contiguous Priority 1 Exception Areas/Non-Resource Land that go beyond the one-mile radius. The study area also extends beyond 1.5 miles where the Metro Plan Boundary, or contiguous public lands are present. In November 2019 the study area was expanded to include additional land when suitability analysis results showed there was not enough developable land identified in the study area for a 30-year Urban Reserve option. Staff evaluated possible expansion areas and with input from a variety of stakeholder groups identified the area around Fisher Road and Highway 126 as a logical expansion of the study area. See the [project page](#) for more information.

What is the Land Supply Model?

Staff has developed a geospatial model that categorizes all the land in the study area in order to determine which land is developable, and to what degree. There are three categories of land that we are removing from consideration for future urbanization: Protected, Committed, and fully developed. In total, approximately **15,000 acres** of land in the study area are being excluded from further analysis, as they are not considered to have future development potential. Approximately **42 percent** of the study area has development potential – on partially vacant and undeveloped taxlots. An immense amount of detail is included in the model, and more information can be found on the [Urban Reserves project page](#).

What types of land are considered ‘protected’ and ‘committed’?

Protected lands are reserved to protect natural resources or prevent the impact of natural hazards. They include: Lane County Goal 5 riparian corridors; National Wetland Inventory and West Eugene Wetlands; critical habitat for federal and state-listed threatened and endangered species; historic and cultural resources; natural resources plan designations; designated Natural Areas on the Oregon State Register of Natural Heritage Resources; Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodway and 100-year flood plain; prohibitively steep slopes (>30 percent); and state-identified high-risk landslide areas (DOGAMI). **Committed lands** include public lands and other lands that have no development potential because they are committed to other uses. They include public parks and open spaces; non-surplus properties owned by schools, utilities, cemeteries, the airport; transportation rights-of-way; and Bonneville Power Administration easements.

If land is categorized as ‘protected,’ does that mean it is protected from future development?

As described above, ‘protected’ and ‘committed’ lands were categorized as such to help us estimate the amount of land within the study area where future homes and jobs could be built. These categories do not place any additional restrictions on the land or change any restrictions that may already be in place.

What do the priority categories in the Study Area mean?

To help protect farm and forest land (sometimes called “resource land”), state law has specific requirements about how to prioritize land to study for inclusion in Urban Reserves, similar to the analysis required for urban growth boundary expansion. Eugene’s **first consideration** for urban reserve analysis must be land that Lane County has identified as **exception areas** (or *non-resource land*). Exception areas are places outside of the urban growth boundary where Lane County allows residential,

commercial, or industrial uses. In the Study Area, they mostly include rural residential land, but also include the airport, Lane Community College, and commercial uses north of 30th Ave. Many of these areas are already developed to some degree. If there is not enough exception land to accommodate the amount needed for Urban Reserves, the **second consideration** is land that Lane County has designated as **marginal lands**. Marginal lands are lands designated for non-resource use due to having marginal value for farm or forest production. The **third consideration** are **agricultural or forest resource lands**, with higher priority given to land of lower resource value. See the [Open House FAQ](#) for more information on how farm and forest land is analyzed.

Urban Reserves is planning as far out as 2062. Won't your projections and analysis be outdated by then?

Eugene's future rate of population growth is uncertain, and our best predictions are likely to be wrong. Urban Reserves help us plan for that uncertainty by identifying land for *potential* future UGB expansion. Urban Reserves land is not assigned a specific use at this time; it is simply identified now so that we can incrementally bring it into the UGB in the future, as needed.

How would the Urban Growth Boundary expansion process be different with Urban Reserves in place? Would we still need to go through all that analysis?

Designating Urban Reserves does not change if and when the urban growth boundary gets expanded. The process for UGB expansion is tightly controlled by State law and we would still need to complete the required analysis, including identifying ways to grow more compact inside the current UGB. If that analysis does find a need to expand, City Council could then initiate the UGB expansion process. Once Urban Reserves are designated (by the City and County), they automatically become the first priority of land to analyze when it is time to determine where to expand the UGB. The final step is bringing urban reserve land into the UGB to meet the type of land needs identified. Urban reserve land will be further analyzed and planned based on our expansion needs, then brought into the UGB for those specific uses, such as housing or jobs. The Urban Reserves technical analysis will help streamline the UGB process, such as the development of the study area and land supply model, which will also be used for UGB expansion analysis.

Does designating Urban Reserves limit our options for future UGB expansions?

No; by undertaking urban reserves planning now our goal is to provide better options for any necessary UGB expansions later. Urban Reserves planning analyzes and ultimately designates land that is most suitable for future urbanization according to state rules. These large areas of land will then become the first priority lands we can select from for future UGB expansions. So, the planning we are doing today will help us grow into areas better suited for future neighborhoods later--areas with land for homes, jobs, parks and schools that can be efficiently served by roads, transit, water, sewer, fire protection, and other important utilities and services.