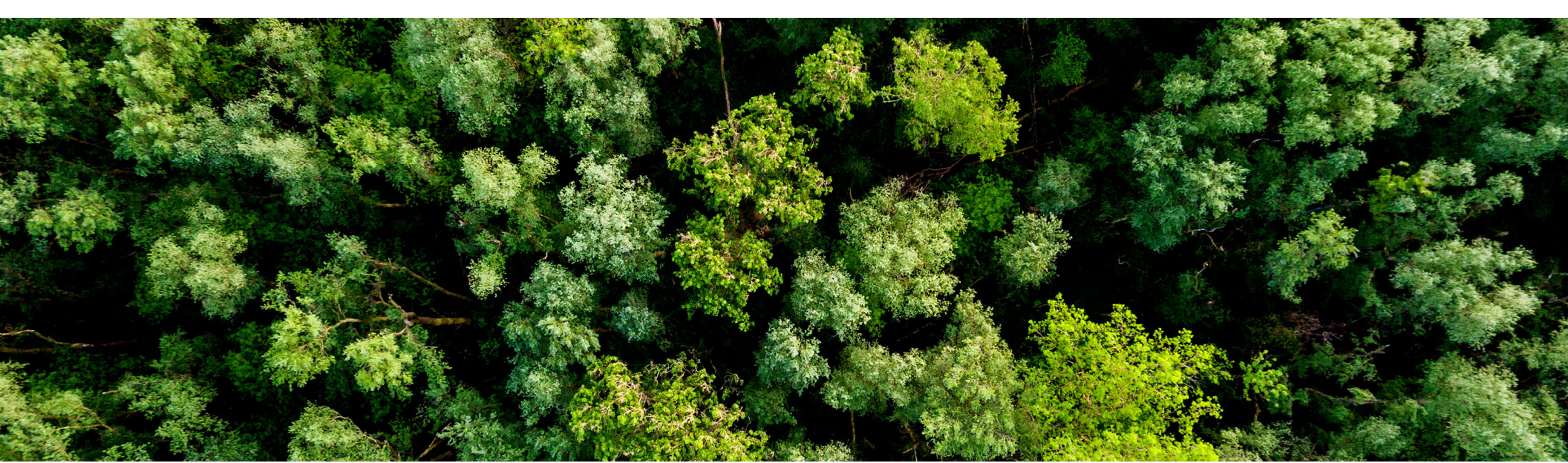


Thurston Healthy Forests

Planning Commission Concept Discussion

August 3, 2022





Conversation Overview

- Forest Conversions and Tree Protection Today
- Project Scope & Timeline
 - One project--four inter-related planning efforts
- **Feedback requested**
 - Refreshing Forest Conversion Ordinance (17.25)



Current Policies & Codes

Thurston County Comprehensive Plan contains policies for:

- Protecting rural land uses and preserving natural vegetation
- Improving community resilience to climate change
- Enhancing tree canopy across urban and rural areas

Thurston County Development Code contains provisions for:

- *Converting forestlands to non-forestry use*
- Open Space, landscaping and planting standards
- Tree retention / replanting in sensitive environmental areas
- Protections for oak woodlands

DDECM (Drainage Manual) contains:

- Best management practices for stormwater management and low impact development
- Incentives for tree preservation during development / redevelopment



Project Scope & Timeline

Priority 7 on Development Code Docket



Managing Forest Conversions (Spring 2022 – Spring 2023)

Update forest conversion ordinance (TCC Chapter 17.25 and Title 18) to clarify review processes and make provisions easier to understand and implement

Studying our Forest Canopy (Summer 2022 - Summer 2023)

Complete detailed geospatial analysis to better understand extent and composition of county's forest resources

Growing our Forest Canopy (Spring 2023 – Winter 2023)

Update county tree planting standards for rural areas (Titles 18 and 20) and review forest conservation programs with aim of growing and restoring healthy forests

Planning for our Urban Forests (Spring 2023 – Summer 2024)

Update urban forest management provisions as part of Joint Code Update projects with Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater



Forest Cutting Permits

State Forest Cutting Permits

- Forestry operations
- Low-cost
- Local CAO regulations do not apply
- Conditions include reforestation within 3 years
- Subject to 6-year development moratorium

County Forest Conversion Permits

- Converting property to non-forestry use
- Permit costs reflect staff review time
- Local CAO regulations apply
- Tree preservation / planting required in North County UGAs



Forest Conversion Regulations

Inside North County UGAs

- Tree removal permits exempt on developed properties or on undeveloped properties when disturbed area is <5,000 sf
- Concurrent development application required
- Residential subdivisions require 5% tree tract, planting in common areas and 1 tree per every 4,000 sf of lot area
- Multifamily, Industrial & Commercial Projects require tree preservation plan

Outside North County UGAs

- Tree removal permits exempt for removing <5,000 board feet in 12-month period or on properties <2 acres in size



Moratorium Releases

- Waiver

- Single-family home on lots >20 acres
- Home site limited to 2 acres
- Harvesting / reforestation complies with State forest practices act

- Administrative Release from Moratorium

- Single-family home on lots <20 acres
- Applicant did not attempt to avoid county forest conversion requirements
- Critical Areas / Shorelines not damaged during harvest or such damage can be restored

- Hearing Examiner Release from Moratorium

- Non-single-family homes
- Applicant did not attempt to avoid county forest conversion requirements
- Critical Areas / Shorelines not damaged during harvest or such damage can be restored

6-year development moratorium applies to any state forest cutting permits or unauthorized clearing



What do other counties do?

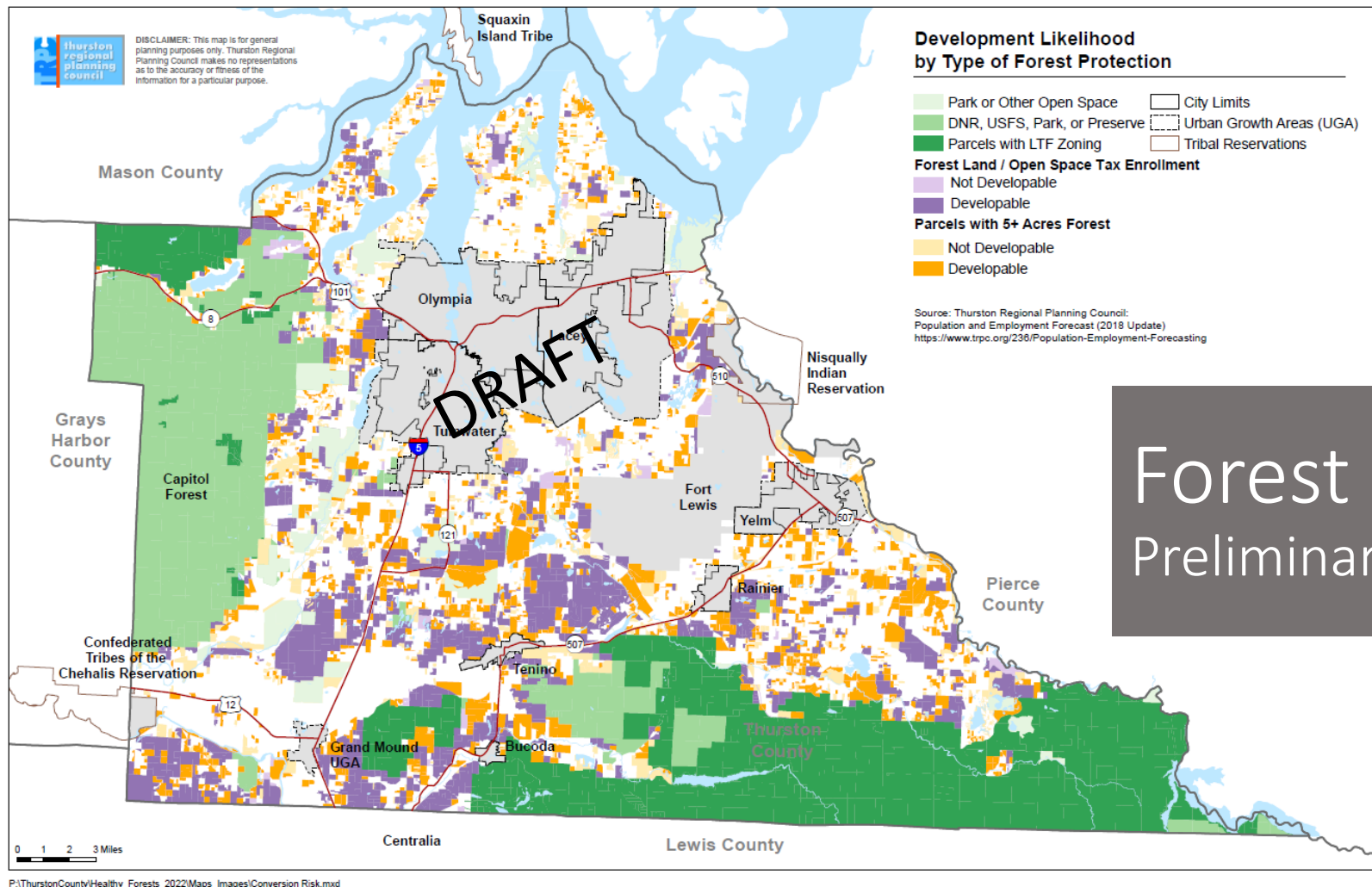
Forest Conversions

- Same for inside / outside UGA
- Concurrent development applications
- Protections for significant trees
- Requirements for tree replanting

Moratorium Releases

- No moratorium waivers
- Restrict eligibility – min. 3-year waiting period; releases granted only for public facilities or single-family homes
- Requirements for reforestation
- Restrictions for homesite size





Forest Analysis Preliminary Results

- Long-Term Forestry zoning protects forest lands
- Parcels enrolled in designated forest land or open space tax programs are less likely to convert to another use
- Historical forest loss occurring on smaller parcels zoned RRR 1/5
- Majority of forested acres with highest likelihood to develop are zoned RRR 1/5



Forest Conversions - Ideas

Conversion Requirements

- Simplify standards - same for inside / outside UGA
- Require concurrent development application
- Tree protections in place for significant trees and/or mature stands
- Require replanting for any protected trees that are removed

Moratorium Releases

- Limit eligibility to single-family homes after 3-years, once DNR permit is closed

Incentives

- Preserving / replanting more trees than the minimum
- Using climate-smart forestry practices
- Participating in regional reforestation effort



Next steps and a big thank you!

- Continued community stakeholder and small forest landowner outreach
- Outreach to other counties
- Planning Commission briefing on draft code amendments

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