

# Annexation and Regional Planning

## Introduction

The Annexation and Regional Planning element includes policies that identify ways that the City of Redmond coordinates planning with neighboring jurisdictions and regional bodies. It also guides how the city should annex territory that is beyond its city limits and how it should preserve the Urban Growth Area (UGA).

## State & Regional Planning Context

### Growth Management Act Requirements

The Growth Management Act (GMA, RCW 36.70A) is the primary land use planning legislation in Washington state. Some of the main goals of the GMA are to reduce urban sprawl and to preserve the long-term sustainability of rural and resource lands by encouraging development inside urban areas. To implement this goal, the GMA requires that counties designate and maintain Urban Growth Areas (RCW 36.70A.110(1)) where projected 20-year population growth must be accommodated. The land inside Urban Growth Areas (UGA) is designated for urban uses, while the land outside of UGAs is set aside for rural and natural resources lands.

The City of Redmond is expected to annex areas that are within the UGA but remain in unincorporated King County. The GMA promotes county-city planning coordination in the form of interlocal agreements that result in the eventual annexation of urban unincorporated areas.

The GMA also specifies that the cities are responsible for providing high quality facilities and services to meet the needs of the people that live and work in urban areas.

### State Annexation Law

There are 5 major methods that cities can use to annex land ([Chapter 35.13 RCW](#)):

- **Election Method Annexation:** The legislative body of a city or towns adopts a resolution calling for the annexation of a certain territory, and files the resolution with the County

## Fast Facts

- Annexation by cities or towns is a legislative action whereby a city or town adds territory beyond its existing city limits.
- Redmond may only annex area that is within its designated Urban Growth Area.
- Redmond has annexed much of its Potential Annexation Areas.
- There are four Potential Annexation Areas in Redmond.
- 555 acres have the potential to be annexed to the City of Redmond.
- The last land annexation was in 2017.

Council. The Council adopts an ordinance setting the date for an election on the question of annexation. The Annexation is finalized by a vote of the qualified voters in the annexation area.

- **Direct Petition Method Annexation:** The annexation is initiated by ten percent of the residents of the annexation area or by the owners of the properties representing ten percent of the assessed valuation of the area. The initiators then notify the legislative body of the city in writing of their intention to start the annexation proceeding. The legislative body then accepts, rejects, or modifies the proposed annexation. The petition must then be signed by the owners of the properties that represent between 60 and 75 percent of the assessed valuation of the area.
- **Annexation for Municipal Purposes:** cities annex unincorporated territory for park, cemeteries, or other municipal purposes when the territory is owned by the city.
- **Annexation of Unincorporated Islands:** The local jurisdiction determines to annex unincorporated islands containing less than one hundred acres and having at least 60 percent of the boundaries of the area contiguous to the city (if the area existed before June 30, 1994). Then a public hearing must be held. The annexation is subject to referendum for 45 days after the resolution is adopted, which is initiated by a petition signed by ten percent of the area residents.
- **Interlocal Agreements** (two options):
  - **Option 1:** An Interlocal Agreement to annex specific territory is adopted by King County, a city, and a Fire District. The proposal must be submitted to the Boundary Review Board for administrative review (and public information) but there is no opportunity for a full public hearing for this proposed action, but there is opportunity for a public referendum.
  - **Option 2:** An Interlocal Agreement to annex specific territory is adopted by King County, a city, and a Fire District. The proposal must be submitted to the Boundary Review Board for administrative review (and public information) but there is no opportunity for a full public hearing for this proposed action. There is no opportunity for the public to vote or to take other action with respect to this annexation.

### Puget Sound Regional Council - VISION 2050

One of the goals of [VISION 2050](#) is that over time the unincorporated area inside Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) will be fully annexed or incorporated as cities. It also emphasizes the need for careful planning and permitting in coordination between counties and adjacent cities to successfully manage growth in Urban Areas and Unincorporated Areas.

In VISION 2050, there are two goals that refer to Regional Planning and Annexation:

- The Regional Growth Strategy Goal is to accommodate growth within urban areas, focused in designated centers and near transit stations, to create healthy, equitable, vibrant communities well-served by infrastructure and services. Rural and resource lands continue to be vital parts of the region that retain important cultural, economic, and rural lifestyle opportunities over the long term.

- The Development Patterns Goal states that the region must create healthy, walkable, compact, and equitable transit-oriented communities that maintain unique character and local culture, while conserving rural areas and creating and preserving open space and natural areas.

Relevant Regional Growth Strategy policies include:

MPP-RGS-4 Accommodate the region’s growth first and foremost in the urban growth area. Ensure that development in rural areas is consistent with the regional vision and the goals of the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan.

MPP-RGS-6 Encourage efficient use of urban land optimizing the development potential of existing urban lands and increasing density in urban growth locations consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy.

MPP-RGS-14 Manage and reduce rural growth rates over time, consistent with the Rural Growth Strategy, to maintain rural landscapes and lifestyles and protect resource lands and the environment.

Relevant Development Pattern and Annexation actions and policies include:

DP-Action-6 Coordinated Planning in Unincorporated Urban Areas: PSRC will support communication with the state Legislature regarding necessary changes to state laws that hinder progress towards annexation and incorporation and opportunities for state and local incentives, organize forums to highlight annexation, incorporation, and joint planning best practices, and provide other resources that address the barriers to joint planning, annexation, and incorporation.

MPP-RGS-16 Identify strategies, incentives, and approaches to facilitate the annexation or incorporation of unincorporated areas within the urban growth areas into cities.

MPP-DP-27 Affiliate all urban unincorporated lands appropriate for annexation with an adjacent city or identify those that may be feasible for incorporation. To fulfill the Regional Growth Strategy, while promoting economical administration and services, annexation is preferred over incorporation.

MPP-DP-28 Support joint planning between cities, counties, and service providers to work cooperatively in planning for urban unincorporated areas to ensure an orderly transition to city governance, including efforts such as:

- (a) establishing urban development standards,
- (b) addressing service and infrastructure financing, and
- (c) transferring permitting authority.

MPP-DP-29 Support annexation and incorporation in urban unincorporated areas by planning for phased growth of communities to be economically viable, supported by the urban infrastructure, and served by public transit.

### Countywide Planning Policies

King County Countywide Policies were updated in 2021 and includes the following regarding regional planning and annexation policies:

The overarching goal of the Development Patterns Chapter is the following:

- Growth in King County occurs in a compact, centers-focused pattern that uses land and infrastructure efficiently, connects people to opportunity, and protects Rural and Natural Resource Lands.

Regional Planning Policies:

DP-1 Designate all lands within King County as one of the following. In each of these designations, critical areas may exist, and these are to be conserved through regulations, incentives, and programs.

- Urban land within the Urban Growth Area, where new growth is focused and accommodated.
- Rural land, where farming, forestry, and other resource uses are protected, and very low-density residential uses and small-scale non-residential uses are allowed; or
- Natural Resource land, where permanent regionally significant agricultural, forestry, and mining lands are preserved.

DP-2 Prioritize housing and employment growth in cities and centers within the Urban Growth Area, where residents and workers have higher access to opportunity and high-capacity transit. Promote a pattern of compact development within the Urban Growth Area that includes housing at a range of urban densities, commercial and industrial development, and other urban facilities, including medical, governmental, institutional, and educational uses and schools, and parks and open space. The Urban Growth Area will include a mix of uses that are convenient to and support public transportation to reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicle travel for most daily activities.

DP-12 GMPC shall allocate residential and employment growth to each city and urban unincorporated area in the county. This allocation is predicated on:

- Accommodating the most recent 20-year population projection from the state Office of Financial Management and the most recent 20-year regional employment forecast from the Puget Sound Regional Council, informed by the 20-year projection of housing units from the state Department of Commerce.
- Planning for a pattern of growth that is consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy including focused growth within cities and Potential Annexation Areas with designated centers and within high-capacity transit station areas, limited development in the Rural Area, and protection of designated Natural Resource Lands.
- Efficiently using existing zoned and future planned development capacity as well as the capacity of existing and planned infrastructure, including sewer, water, and stormwater systems.
- Improving jobs/housing balance consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy, both between counties in the region and within subareas in the county.
- Promoting opportunities for housing and employment throughout the Urban Growth Area and within all jurisdictions in a manner that ensures racial and social equity.
- Allocating growth to Potential Annexation Areas within the urban unincorporated area proportionate to their share of unincorporated capacity for housing and employment growth.
- Promoting a land use pattern that can be served by a connected network of public transportation services and facilities and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and amenities;

U-101 Development within the Urban Growth Area should create and maintain safe, healthy and diverse communities. These communities should contain a range of affordable, healthy housing and

employment opportunities, as well as school and recreational facilities, and should be designed to protect the natural environment and significant cultural resources.

U-106 Most population and employment growth should locate in the contiguous Urban Growth Area in western King County, especially in cities and their Potential Annexation Areas.

Annexation Policies:

DP-24 Designate Potential Annexation Areas in city comprehensive plans and adopt them in the countywide Planning Policies. Affiliate all Potential Annexation Areas with adjacent cities and ensure they do not overlap or leave urban unincorporated areas between cities. Except for parcel or block-level annexations that facilitate service provision, commercial areas, and low- and high-income residential areas shall be annexed holistically rather than in a manner that leaves residential urban unincorporated areas stranded. Annexation is preferred over incorporation.

DP-25 Cities and the County shall work to establish timeframes for annexation of roadways and shared streets within or between cities, but still under King County jurisdiction.

DP-26 Facilitate the annexation of unincorporated areas within the Urban Growth Area that are already urbanized and are within a city's Potential Annexation Area in order to increase the provision of urban services to those areas. To move Potential Annexation Areas towards annexation, cities, and the county shall work to establish pre-annexation agreements that identify mutual interests and ensure coordinated planning and compatible developments, until annexation is feasible.

DP-27 Cities with Potential Annexation Areas and the County shall work to establish pre-annexation agreements that identify mutual interests and ensure coordinated planning and compatible development until annexation is feasible.

DP-28 Allow cities to annex territory only within their designated Potential Annexation Areas as shown in the Potential Annexation Areas Map. Phase annexations to coincide with the ability of cities or existing special purpose districts to coordinate the provision of a full range of urban services to areas to be annexed.

a) For areas that have received approval for annexation from the King County Boundary Review Board, the City shall include a process that includes collaboration with King County for annexation in the next statutory update of their Comprehensive Plan.

b) Jurisdictions may negotiate with one another regarding changing boundaries or affiliations of Potential Annexation Areas and may propose such changes to GMPC as an amendment to Appendix 2. In proposing any new or revised PAA boundaries or city affiliation, jurisdictions should consider the criteria in DP-27. In order to ensure that any changes can be included in local comprehensive plans, any proposals resulting from such negotiation should be brought to GMPC for action no later than two years prior to the statutory deadline for the major plan update.

DP-30 Evaluate proposals to annex or incorporate urban unincorporated land based on the following criteria, as applicable:

a) Conformance with Countywide Planning Policies including the Urban Growth Area boundary;

- b) The ability of the annexing or incorporating jurisdiction to efficiently provide urban services at standards equal to or better than the current service providers;
- c) The effect of the annexation or incorporation in avoiding or creating unincorporated islands of development;
- d) The ability of the annexing or incorporating jurisdiction to serve the area in a manner that addresses racial and social equity and promotes access to opportunity; and
- e) Outreach to community, the interest of the community in moving forward with a timely annexation or incorporation of the area

Even though it is King county's policy to support and promote annexation, its ability to do so is very limited. Washington revised code provides the cities, county residents and property owners with the authority to initiate the annexation process.

### **King County Potential Annexation Area Plan**

In 2016, the King County Council adopted the 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan, which included in its Implementation chapter a series of workplan action items, one of which is action 14. This action strives to develop a countywide plan to move remaining unincorporated urban potential annexation areas toward annexation. As part of Action plan 14, King County created an Annexation Area Databook which is used to provide information on all the annexation areas in the county, and a map of the remaining urban unincorporated areas.

Orphan Roads and Rights of Ways: Orphaned roads are King County roads rights-of-way that include half-streets, parts or entire roads completely surrounded by cities, and small segments of road located on or within the Urban Growth Boundary but have not been transferred from county responsibility to a city as part of past annexation or incorporation. [RCW 35A.21.210](#) provides a method by which cities can revise their boundaries to annex road rights-of-way referred to as orphan roads. These roads are included in the Annexation Area Databook.

## **Local Planning & Regulatory Context**

### **Local Planning Context**

In addition to planning for areas within city limits, Redmond is expected to annex unincorporated areas within the Urban Growth Area that are adjacent to the city. These are referred to as Potential Annexation Areas (PAA).

Potential Annexation Areas are identified as a part of broader regional planning efforts. The Annexation and Regional Planning Element, in conjunction with the Utilities Element and the Land Use Element, establishes how to handle the facility and service provision within the PAAs.

The current Comprehensive Plan establishes the following Regional Planning and Annexation Framework regulations:

FW-48 Develop and support regional policies, strategies and investments that reflect the vision and policies of the Redmond Comprehensive Plan. Achieve local goals and values by participating fully in implementation of the Growth Management Act, VISION 2040, and the King County Countywide Planning Policies.

FW-49 Work with other jurisdictions and agencies, educational and other organizations, and the business community to develop and carry out a coordinated, regional approach for meeting the various needs of Eastside communities, including housing, human services, economic vitality, parks and recreation, transportation, and environmental protection.

FW-50 Work cooperatively with residents and property owners to annex all land within the designated Potential Annexation Area

In the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, the Annexation and Regional Planning Element guides the annexation and City interaction within the regional context. There are also a few policies regarding Annexation in the Land Use element and the Utilities Element, that pertain specifically to the extension of services and facilities to the annexed areas.

The procedures under which the City annexes unincorporated territory are defined in the [Title 1 Chapter 16](#) of the Redmond Municipal code and are established as provided in the Revised Code of Washington ([Chapter 35A.14RCW](#)). This Chapter details how the public outreach and meetings shall be conducted prior to public hearings on annexation matters.

## Redmond Partnerships

Redmond is part of the following partnerships to plan for Regional Growth:

- [Puget Sound Regional Council](#) (PSRC).
- [Sound Cities Association](#) (SCA).

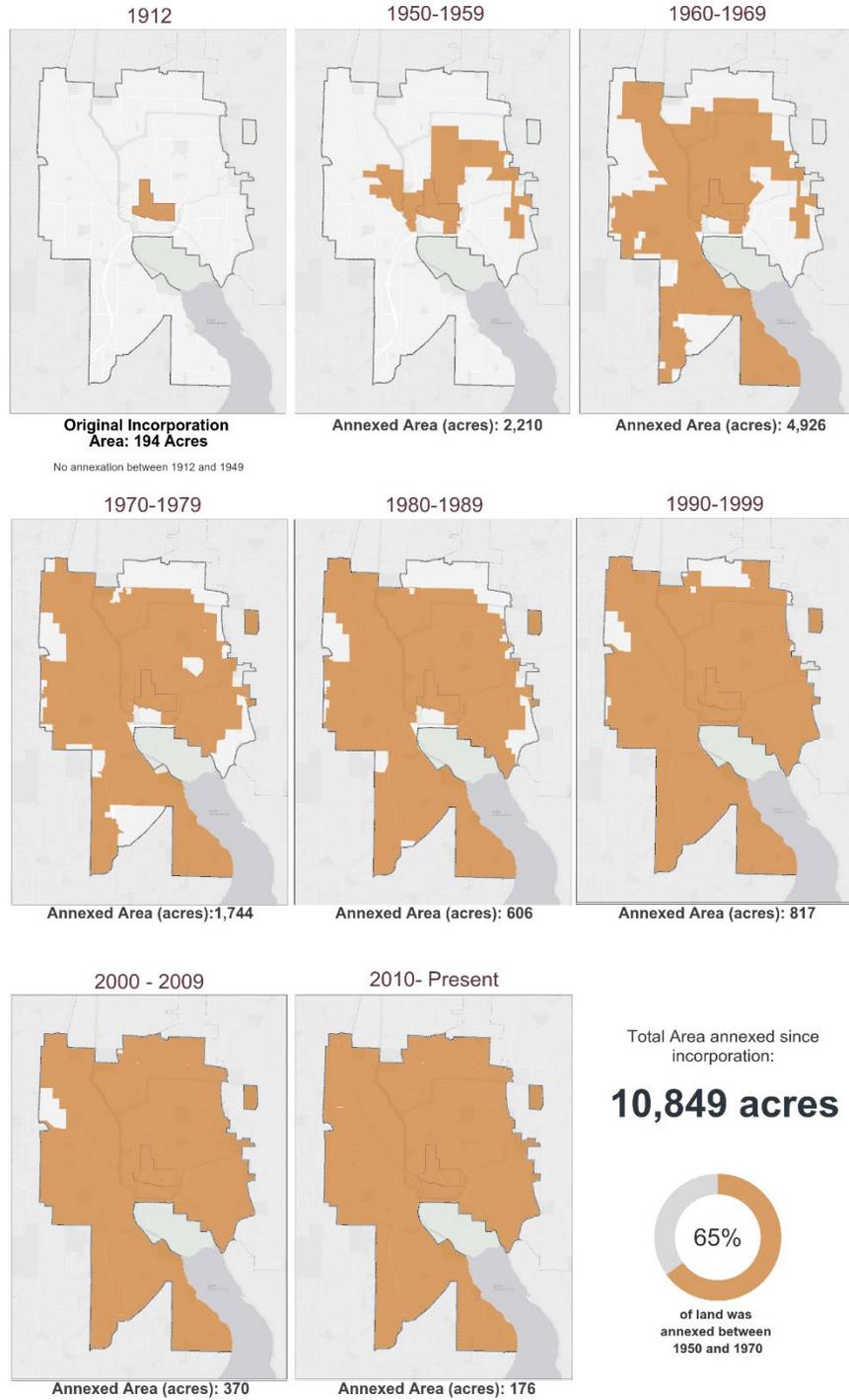
In addition, the City is represented by elected officials and staff on many countywide and regional boards and committees that shape regional planning policy. The city partners with residents, King County, and the King County Boundary Review Board to coordinate annexation efforts.

## Current Conditions

### Inventory of Existing Conditions

More than sixty percent of all the city's land was annexed between 1950 and 1970 and the annexations have consistently decreased after that. The last annexation was completed in 2017, in which the city annexed 54 acres of unincorporated land along 132<sup>nd</sup> Ave NE in the Willows-Rose Hill neighborhood. 200 people lived in this area in 84 dwelling units.

# City of Redmond annexation history



The city of Redmond occupies an area of 17.25 square miles (around 11,000 acres). There is relatively little unincorporated land contiguous to the City of Redmond available to annex. There are four remaining Potential Annexation Areas:

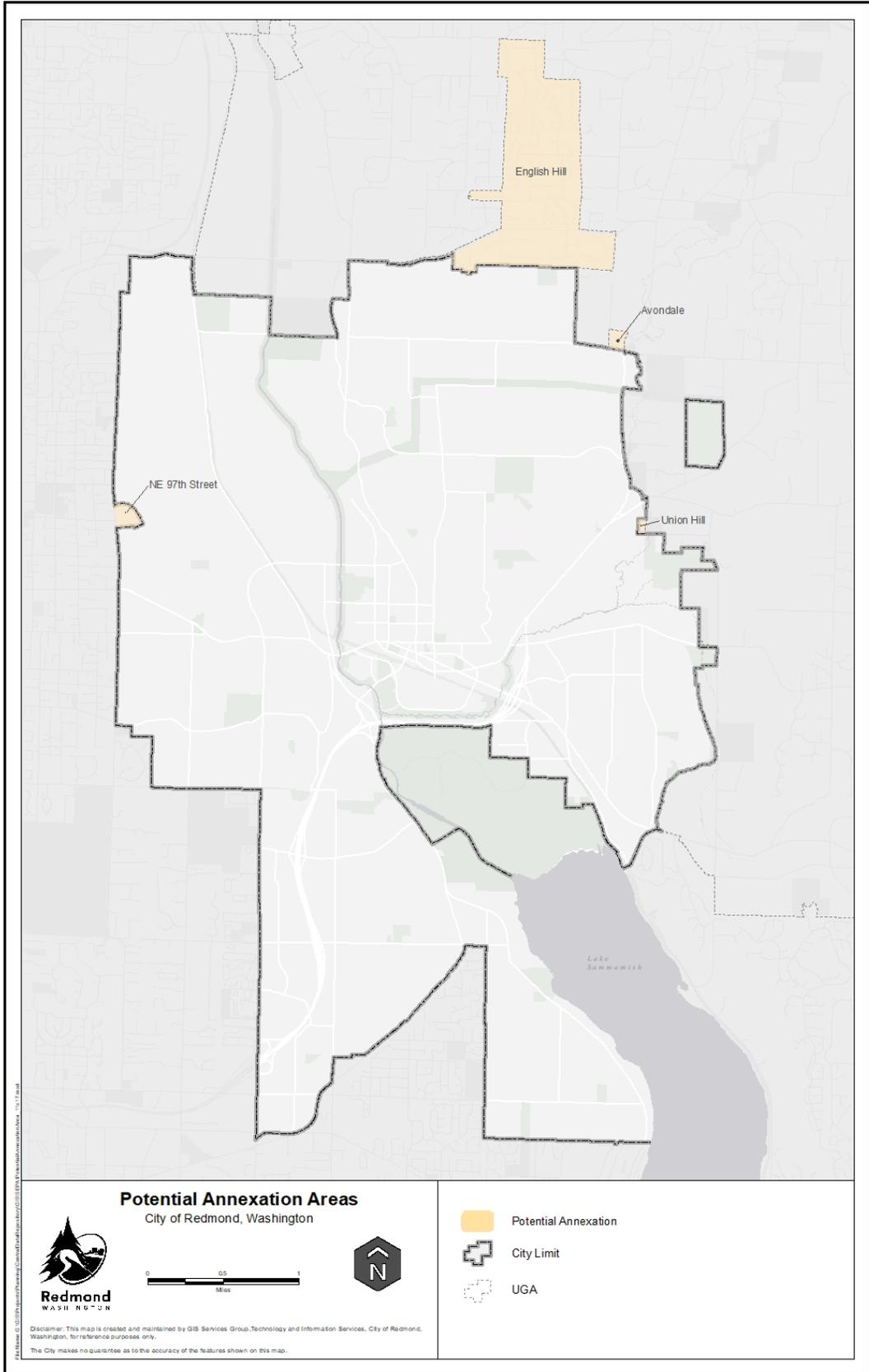
1. NE 97<sup>th</sup> Street (Rose Hill), 14 acres
2. Union Hill Road, 3 acres
3. Avondale, 8 acres
4. English Hill, 530 acres

According to the [2018 King County Annexation Data book](#) these PAAs are home to approximately 2,856 residents, and about 510 covered jobs. There are approximately 1,000 housing units in these areas in a total area of around 555 acres. (See Figure X-2 Potential Annexation Areas Map).

Most of the available areas are small islands except for English Hill. This area is 100% residential largely developed with single-family homes and has around 2,700 residents, 950 housing units and approximately 500 jobs. It has 980 parcels in 530 acres, with most of them designated as urban residential medium land use (4-12 du / acre). While there has been some interest from residents in portions of this area, the challenge has been to gain sufficient support for annexation. For the rest of the PAAs there have been sporadic inquiries for many years, but no formal annexation process has begun.

There are four orphan roads and Right of Way PAAs that the City of Redmond could consider annexing:

- Union Hill Road
- 154<sup>th</sup> PI NE
- NE 124<sup>th</sup> St., and
- NE 116<sup>th</sup> St.



## Level of Service Analysis

The policies that support annexation in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan establish that the city will actively pursue the annexation of all land inside the Potential Annexation Areas in collaboration with the property owners.

Prior to extending utilities in unincorporated areas, it is necessary for the areas to be annexed, except when there is a preexisting service agreement or there is a septic failure and immediate annexation is not possible; if this is the case, the property owner then must sign an agreement to annex the property in a timely manner. The annexed areas must have logical boundaries and strive to retain neighborhood integrity and avoid individual annexations that create islands of unincorporated land. Finally, the newly annexed territories must accept its equitable share of the City's bonded indebtedness.

## Trends Analysis

According to the [VISION 2050 Annexation Briefing Paper](#) many cities in the PSRC have been successful in completely annexing their potential annexation areas. Some of the largest areas were successfully annexed with the assistance of a sales tax credit instituted by the state Legislature in 2006 ([RCW 82.14.415](#)). The tax credit, which expired in 2015, allowed cities that were annexing communities with at least 10,000 residents to receive a larger share of their sales tax revenue for up to ten years. In 2004 King County also set aside \$10 million to further incentivize annexation efforts.

According to data from the Office of Financial Management, from 2000-2017 the urban unincorporated area steadily decreased until around 2012, when annexation activity slowed due to the loss of sales tax credit incentives and the Great Recession. By 2016, the population in King county's unincorporated urban areas dropped by more than 110,000 people from its 2007 level to an estimated population of 119,000. Much of the remaining urban unincorporated area is made up of isolated islands adjacent to the urban growth boundary or surrounded by cities.

## Policy Considerations

Annexation and regional planning policy has changed little since the last time the Annexation and Regional Planning element was updated. What has changed is that there is less land remaining in Redmond's potential annexation area, and state law has changed, with new annexation methods now available. The Redmond 2050 update should review this element in light of those changes.

#	Policy Consideration	Themes Supported
ARP-A	Update annexation policies to reflect changes in state law and changes in the amount and nature of Redmond's remaining potential annexation area.	Sustainability