

Statewide Land Use Planning

Since 1973, Oregon has maintained a strong statewide program for land use planning. The foundation of the program is a set of 19 statewide planning goals. The goals express the state’s policies on land use and related topics, such as citizen involvement, housing, and natural resources, and carry the weight of law. Most of the goals are accompanied by “guidelines,” which are recommendations about how a goal may be applied. Following the guidelines is not mandatory, but observing the goals is critical to the success of the planning program. The goals are listed at right.

Oregon’s statewide goals are achieved through local comprehensive planning. State law requires each city and county to develop a comprehensive plan and the implementing policies needed to put the plan into effect. In effect, the planning program becomes a partnership between state and local governments. Local governments do the planning and administer most of the land use regulations and the state sets the standards for such planning. The resulting mosaic of state-approved local comprehensive plans covers all of Oregon.

Local Comprehensive Plans

A local comprehensive plan guides a community’s land use, conservation of natural resources, economic development, and public services. As citizens play a crucial role in all aspects of planning in the state, the plan reflects the objectives citizens have for their community. Each plan has two main parts: a factual base and a policy element.

The factual base is a body of data and information that inventories and describes a community’s resources and features. It must address all of the topics specified in the applicable statewide goals. The policy element sets forth the community’s long-range objectives and the policies by which it intends to achieve them. The policy element of each community’s plan is adopted by ordinance and has the force of law. Every comprehensive plan is accompanied by a set of implementing measures. There are many different kinds. The most common measures are land-division ordinances, zoning, and urban growth boundary (UGB) agreements.

Local plans may be changed through plan amendments or periodic review. Plan amendments are small, unscheduled adjustments to a plan. Periodic reviews are broad evaluations of an entire plan that occur every four to ten years. A plan may be modified extensively after such a review.

Review of Local Plans

Because local comprehensive plans must be consistent with the statewide planning goals, plans are reviewed by the state’s Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC). LCDC directs Oregon’s statewide planning program. The commission’s seven members are unsalaried volunteers, appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate. The term of appointment is four years. When LCDC officially approves a local government’s plan, the plan is said to be “acknowledged.” It then acts as the controlling document for land use in the area covered by that plan.

Mapped Representations

Map 18 depicts LCDC’s summary classification of the zoning in the Willamette River Basin. Land use zoning determines the types of activities that can occur on the land, such as density of housing or timber harvesting activities. While an area may be zoned for a particular type of use, some or all of that area may not be used as zoned (an example would be an area zoned for residential use that is still partially in agricultural use). As such, the zoning designations the map portrays reflect both current conditions and anticipated conditions.

As these zoning classifications are developed at the county and metropolitan levels, zoning classifications vary from county to county. This results in several analogous classifications on the map, as well as some unique ones. All counties have “exclusive farm use” (EFU) categories, though the specific regulations of these categories may vary. The Tangent EFU represents a

Oregon’s Statewide Planning Goals

- 1. Citizen Involvement**—Goal 1 calls for “the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process.” It requires each city and county to have a citizen involvement program with six components specified in the goal. It also requires local governments to have a committee for citizen involvement (CCI) to monitor and encourage public participation in planning.
- 2. Land Use Planning**—Goal 2 outlines the basic procedures of Oregon’s statewide planning program. It says that land-use decisions are to be made in accordance with a comprehensive plan, and that suitable “implementation ordinances” to put the plan’s policies into effect must be adopted. It requires that plans be based on “factual information”; that local plans and ordinances be coordinated with those of other jurisdictions and agencies; and that plans be reviewed periodically and amended as needed. Goal 2 also contains standards for taking exceptions to statewide goals. An exception may be taken when a statewide goal cannot or should not be applied to a particular area or situation.
- 3. Agricultural Lands**—Goal 3 defines “agricultural lands.” It then requires counties to inventory such lands and to “preserve and maintain” them through exclusive farm use (EFU) zoning.
- 4. Forest Lands**—This goal defines forest lands and requires counties to inventory them and adopt policies and ordinances that will “conserve forest lands for forest uses.”
- 5. Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Natural Resources**—Goal 5 encompasses 12 different types of resources, including wildlife habitats, mineral resources, wetlands, and waterways. It establishes a process through which resources must be inventoried and evaluated. If a resource or site is found to be important, the local government has three policy choices: to preserve the resource, to allow the proposed uses that conflict with it, or to establish some sort of a balance between the resource and those uses that would conflict with it.
- 6. Air, Water, and Land Resources Quality** —This goal requires local comprehensive plans and implementing measures to be consistent with state and federal regulations on matters such as groundwater pollution.
- 7. Areas Subject to Natural Disasters and Hazards** —Goal 7 deals with development in places subject to natural hazards such as floods or landslides. It requires that jurisdictions apply “appropriate safeguards” (floodplain zoning, for example) when planning for development there.
- 8. Recreation Needs** —This goal calls for each community to evaluate its areas and facilities for recreation and develop plans to deal with the projected demand for them. It also sets forth detailed standards for expedited siting of destination resorts.
- 9. Economy of the State** —Goal 9 calls for diversification and improvement of the economy. It asks communities to inventory commercial and industrial lands, project future needs for such lands, and plan and zone enough land to meet those needs.
- 10. Housing**—This goal specifies that each city must plan for and accommodate needed housing types (typically, multifamily and manufactured housing). It requires each city to inventory its buildable residential lands, project future needs for such lands, and plan and zone enough buildable land to meet those needs. It also prohibits local plans from discriminating against needed housing types.
- 11. Public Facilities and Services** —Goal 11 calls for efficient planning of public services such as sewers, water, law enforcement, and fire protection. The goal’s central concept is that public services should be planned in accordance with a community’s needs and capacities rather than be forced to respond to development as it occurs.
- 12. Transportation** —The goal aims to provide “a safe, convenient and economic transportation system.” It asks for communities to address the needs of the “transportation disadvantaged.”
- 13. Energy** —Goal 13 declares that “land and uses developed on the land shall be managed and controlled so as to maximize the conservation of all forms of energy, based upon sound economic principles.”
- 14. Urbanization** —This goal requires all cities to estimate future growth and needs for land and then plan and zone enough land to meet those needs. It calls for each city to establish an “urban growth boundary” (UGB) to “identify and separate urbanizable land from rural land.” It specifies seven factors that must be considered in drawing up a UGB. It also lists four criteria to be applied when undeveloped land within a UGB is to be converted to urban uses.
- 15. Willamette Greenway** —Goal 15 sets forth procedures for administering the 300 miles of greenway that protects the Willamette River.
- 16. Estuarine Resources** —This goal requires local governments to classify Oregon’s 22 major estuaries in four categories: natural, conservation, shallow-draft development, and deep-draft development. It then describes types of land uses and activities that are permissible in those “management units.”
- 17. Coastal Shorelands** —The goal defines a planning area bounded by the ocean beaches on the west and the coast highway (State Route 101) on the east. It specifies how certain types of land and resources there are to be managed: major marshes, for example, are to be protected. Sites best suited for unique coastal land uses (port facilities, for example) are reserved for “water-dependent” or “water-related” uses.
- 18. Beaches and Dunes** —Goal 18 sets planning standards for development on various types of dunes. It prohibits residential development on beaches and active foredunes, but allows other types of development if they meet key criteria. The goal also deals with dune grading, groundwater drawdown in dunal aquifers, and the breaching of foredunes.
- 19. Ocean Resources** —Goal 19 aims “to conserve the long-term values, benefits, and natural resources of the nearshore ocean and the continental shelf.” It deals with matters such as dumping of dredge spoils and discharging of waste products into the open sea. Goal 19’s main requirements are for state agencies rather than cities and counties.

unique occurrence of an EFU zoning, occurring within Tangent’s urban growth boundary (UGB) (Fig. 91). Maps 19, 20, 21 and 22 depict finer subdivisions of the summary zoning categories shown on Map 18 (some categories in the DLCD data base which differed by a small amount, e.g., forest zone v. forest zones, have been aggregated). This finer level of articulation emphasizes the local-to-state pathway that land use planning has developed in Oregon, and can be seen in the breaks between zoning classifications along county borders. At both levels of resolution, these zoning maps inform our understanding of adopted present and possible future preferences for conservation and development, and therefore aid in decision-making for such uses on a regional level.

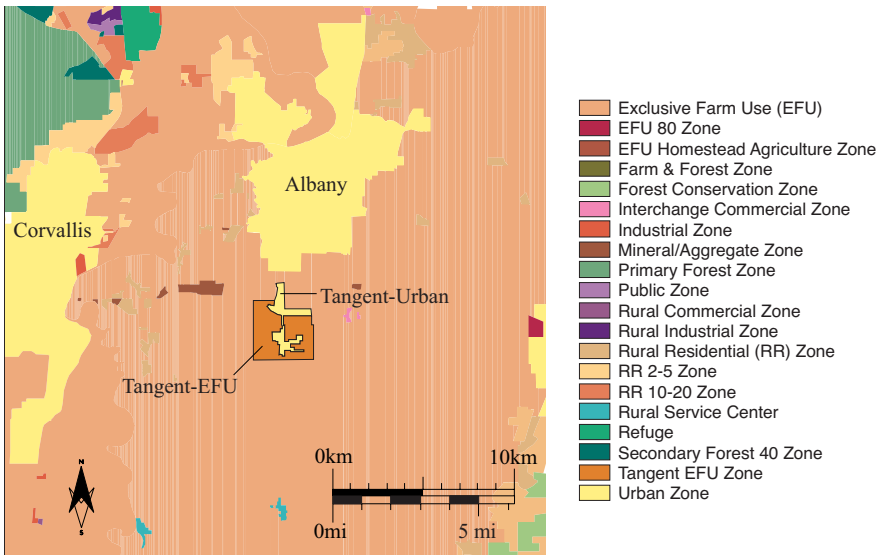
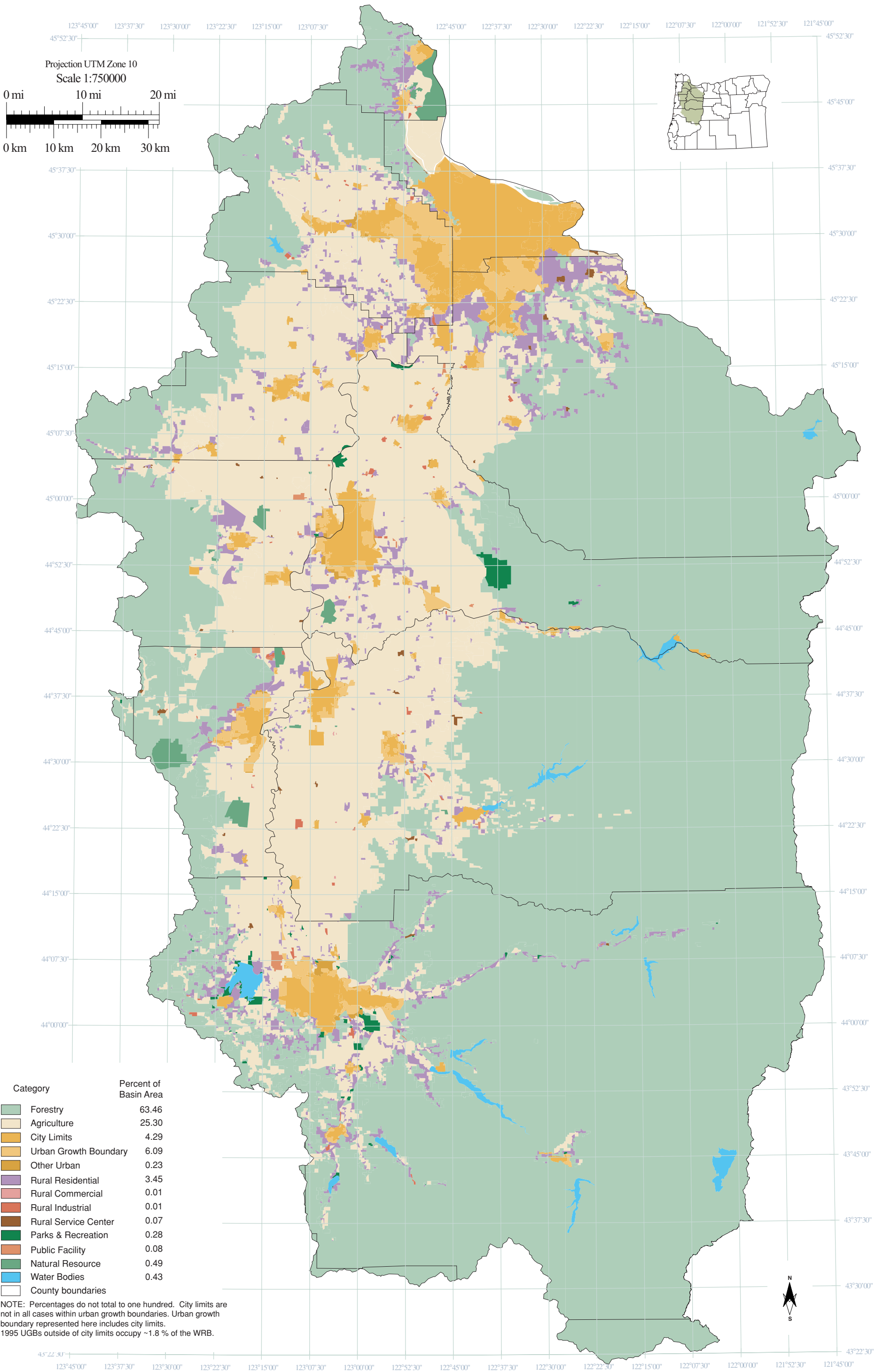
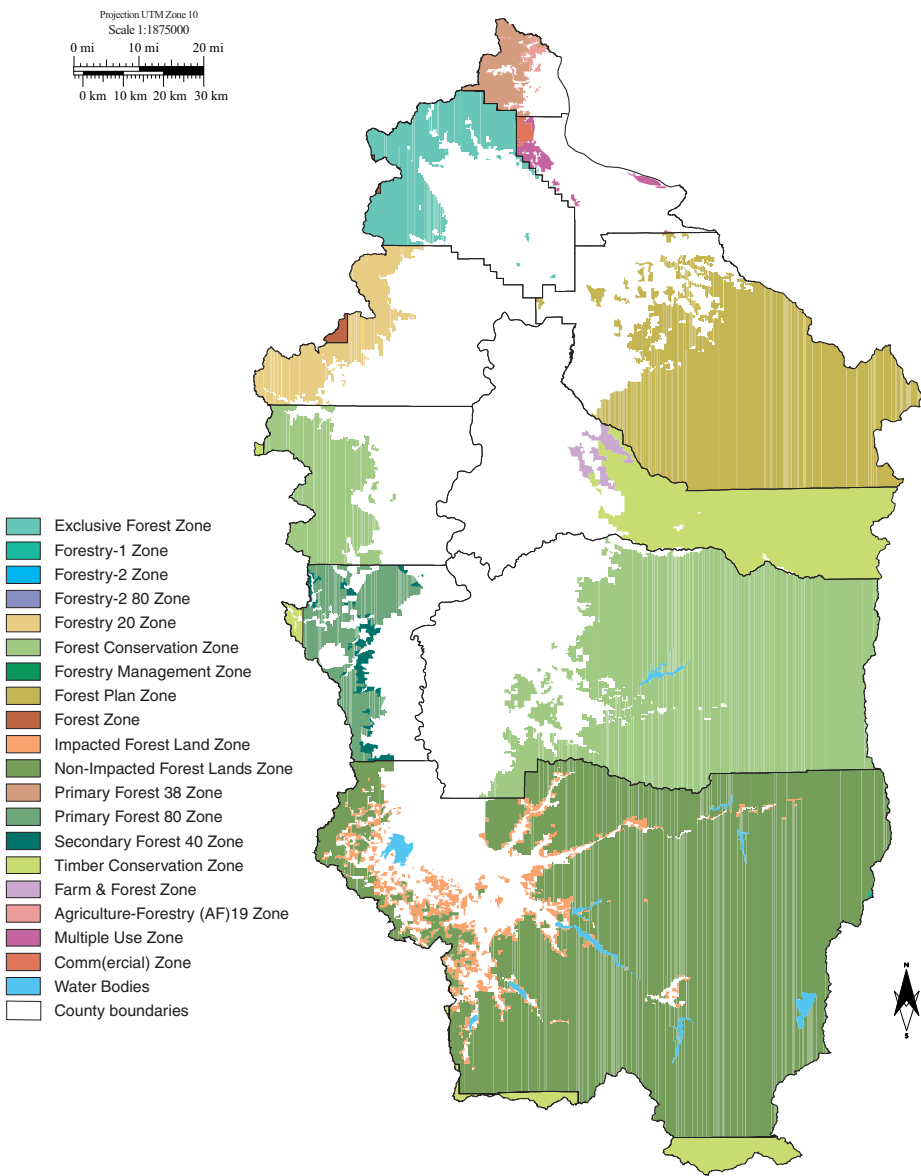


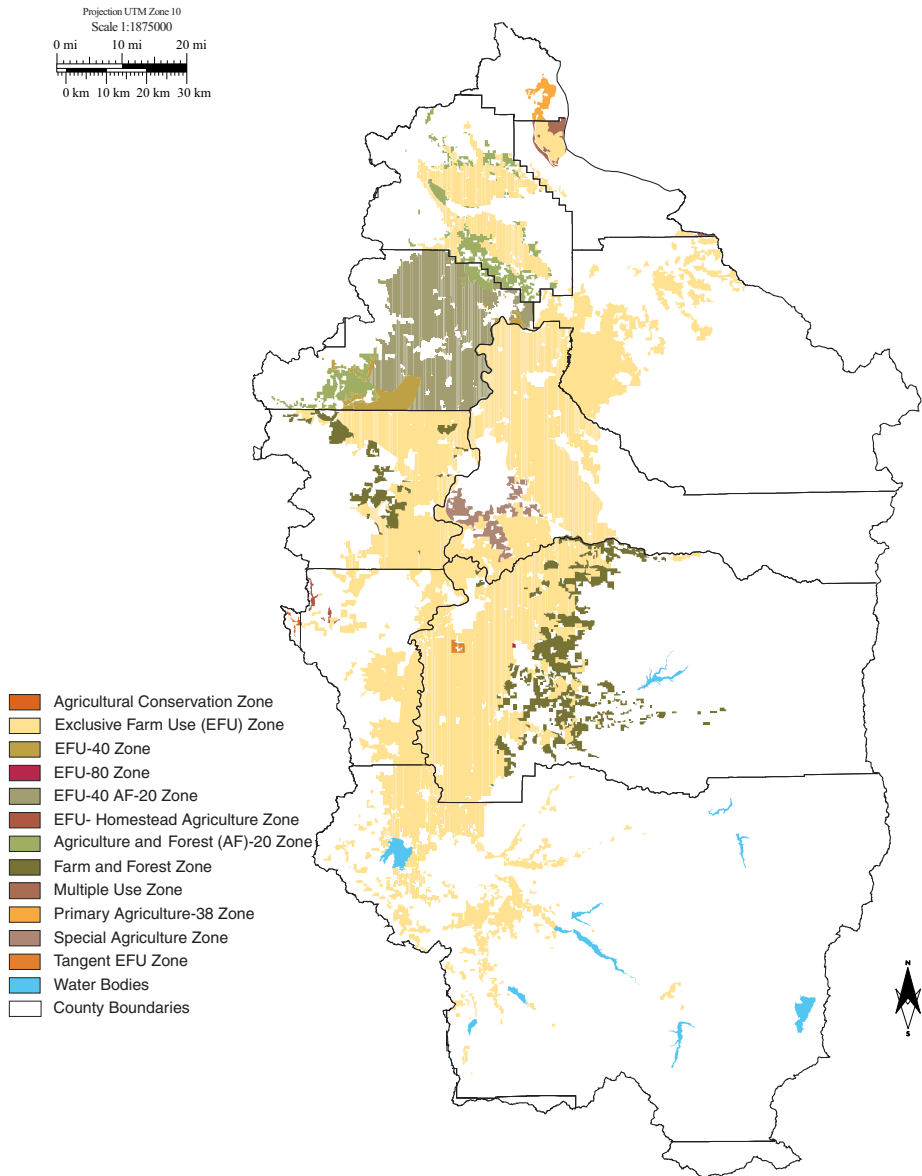
Figure 91. The exclusive farm use zone within the urban growth boundary of the City of Tangent. The EFU and urban zone are bordered in black.



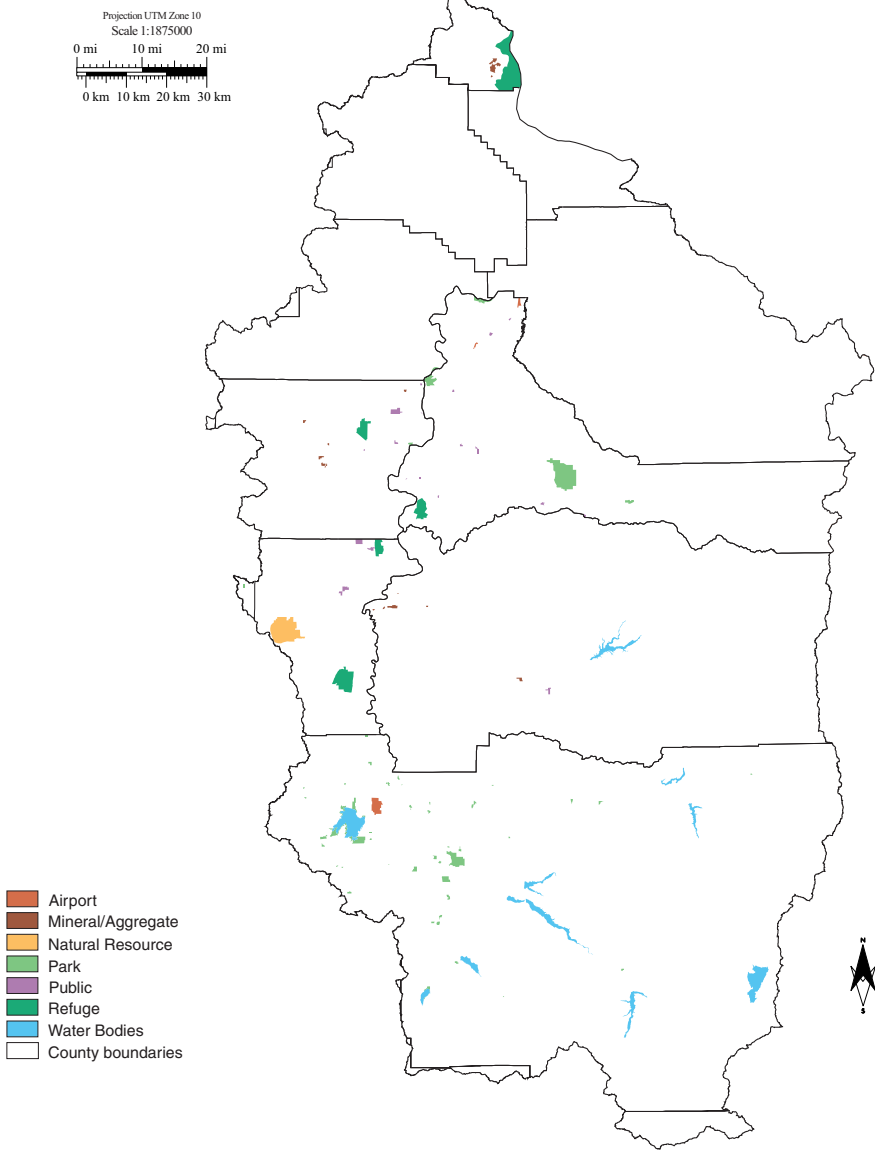
Map 19. Forestry Zoning⁸⁶



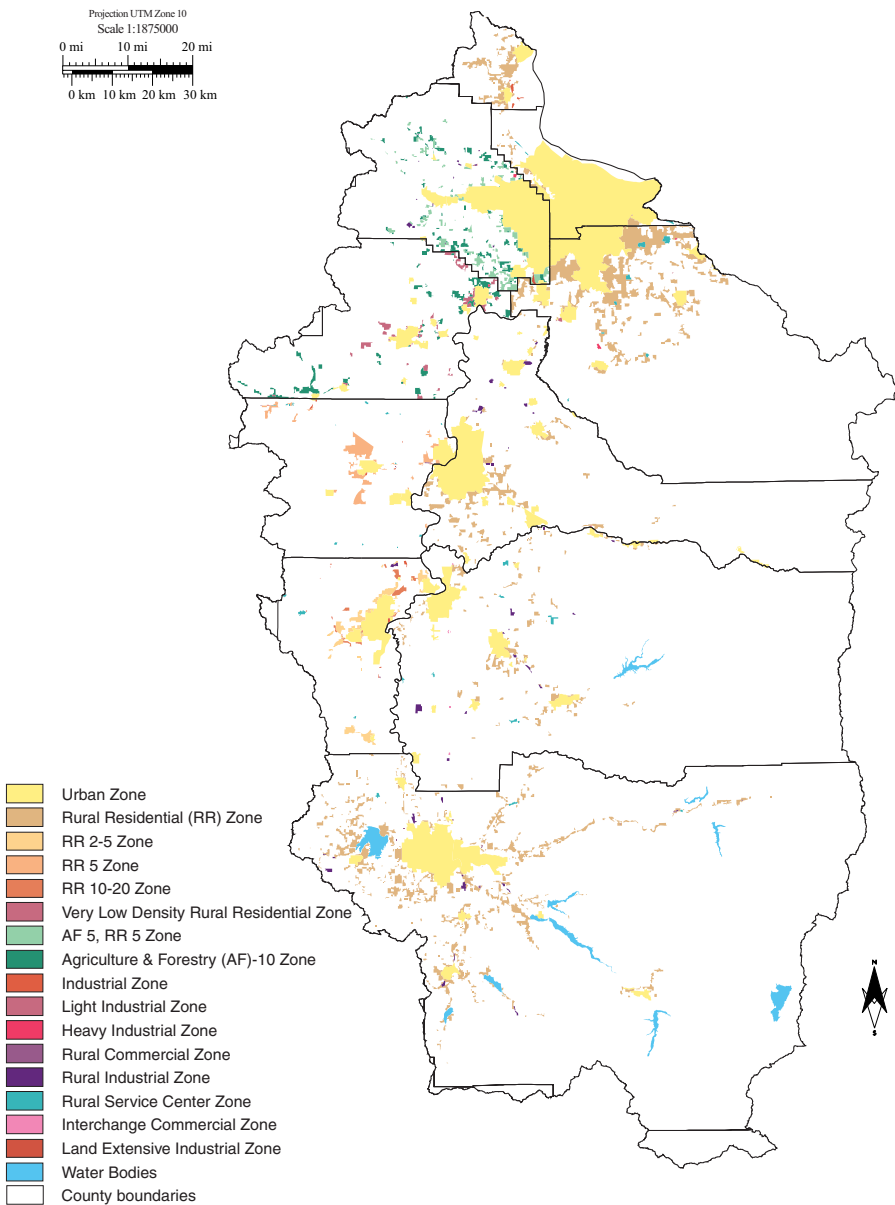
Map 20. Agricultural Zoning⁸⁶



Map 21. Miscellaneous Zoning⁸⁶



Map 22. Urban & Rural Zoning⁸⁶





Finley Wildlife Refuge, Benton County
Photo: Mike Flaxman



Brice Creek Road, Lane County
Photo: Allan Branscomb



Covered Bridge over Marys River at Harris Road, Benton County Photo: Allan Branscomb



Tualatin River Watershed, Washington County
Photo: Allan Branscomb



Downtown Portland, Multnomah County
Photo: Kenny Helphand



South Santiam River Watershed, Linn County
Photo: Allan Branscomb



Main Street Cottage Grove near Old River, Lane County Photo: Allan Branscomb



Clackamas River, Clackamas County
Photo: Allan Branscomb