



CITY OF
UNION GAP
1883

Arlene Fisher
City Manager, ICMA-CM

(509) 249-9201 *work*
(509) 406-6052 *mobile*
arlene.fisher@uniongapwa.gov

July 6, 2022

Dear Candidate,

Congratulations on your decision to run for elected office. Serving the citizens of this great community is truly an honor. The purpose of my letter is to share information with you, as you journey through the election process.

I have enclosed the following: 1) Association of Washington Cities (AWC) election information, 2) City of Union Gap Ordinance, and 3) A city map identifying correct placement of your signs. This information is being provided to assist you in running a successful election.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, please email me at Arlene.Fisher@uniongapwa.gov. or call (509) 249-9201. Good luck with your campaign.

Very truly yours,

Arlene Fisher, ICMA-CM
City Manager

Cc: Union Gap City Council

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So you want to be an elected official guide

Contact: [Tonia Sugarman](#), [Karen Tanner](#)

Introduction

Why are you running for election to a local office?

This is a question that every candidate will be asked – and a question that every candidate must carefully consider.

Most often, people run for office because they are deeply committed to their city or town and want to influence the community's direction. At times, people run because they are passionate about a single issue or problem. A single controversy – such as a land use or zoning decision – could dominate an entire election campaign.

But once the election is over, things change. Candidates who have won an election based on their position on a single issue soon discover that they are responsible for a much broader array of challenges. The platform they ran on may not even be on the council's agenda. Getting it placed there will only be possible if they are willing and able to work cooperatively with other members of the council, many of whom will have their own issues to champion.

In order to be effective, elected officials must work as part of a team to establish a shared vision for the future, develop goals and plans that make that future possible, and work with their colleagues and constituents to enact the local policies and laws that will ultimately lead to accomplishment.

Holding a public office is an act of service to the public – that is, service to all the residents of a city or town, not just those who share your views or those who voted for you. It is a challenge that requires every office holder to rise above the fray, to reach beyond comfort zones, and to work with others with whom they may have significant differences.

Rising to that challenge is what makes democracy work. It's what makes shaping our shared future possible. It's what others have done before us. And it's what has made our cities and towns places we can be proud of.

Working as part of a team

Getting elected as a councilmember or mayor brings a special status. It also comes with the obligation to look beyond yourself and cultivate the qualities of collaboration, teamwork, and civility.

Elected officials set the tone for the civic life of their community. When elected officials demonstrate how to differ with one another respectfully, find principled compromises, and focus on the common good, community members often will too. When elected officials get mired in blame, recrimination, or division, civic progress can grind to a halt, and the city's sense of common purpose can fracture.

To govern well, elected leaders must help each other and the public stay focused on the future and on the common good. That can be an uphill struggle when the passions of the moment lead to demands for instant solutions, or when there is a deep division over a single issue that threatens to push longer-term problems aside. There will always be occasions when elected officials differ among themselves. But the mark of leadership is the ability to handle those differences in ways that move the agenda forward, build trust, and create a civic culture of mutual respect that makes progress possible.

When elected officials get mired in blame, recrimination, or division, civic progress can grind to a halt.

Roles and responsibilities

Cities provide services that are vital to community health, safety, and economic activity. While specific city-provided services may vary, most cities provide public safety, land use and planning, parks, and public works such as street maintenance and construction, water, sewer, and/or stormwater management. Understanding the role of elected officials is critical to ensure proper planning, oversight, and delivery.

Policymaking vs. administration

Councils are legislative bodies – that is, they are elected to make major policy decisions and pass budgets. The basic job of councilmembers is to find the

balance among themselves that represents the best interests of the majority of residents, while respecting the rights of all.

Councilmembers make policies, but mayors (in mayor-council cities) and city managers (in council-manager cities) are responsible for their implementation and administration. Learning the difference between these two key functions – policymaking and administration – and respecting the boundaries between them is critical to a well-run government.

The separation of powers between legislative and administrative functions serves not only as a check on the exercise of authority between the two branches of local government, but also as a way to promote their efficient day-to-day operation and staff direction.

Understanding your city's form of government and classification

Different cities have different forms of government. The most common form of government is the mayor-council form. This form consists of an elected mayor (elected at-large) who serves as the city's chief executive officer and a council (elected either at-large or from districts) that is responsible for formulating and adopting policies. In mayor-council cities, a professional administrator may assist the mayor with day-to-day operations.

Cities by classification & form

Class	Mayor-council	Council-manager	Total
First	6	4	10
Second	5	0	5
Town	68	0	68
Code	147	50	197
N/A	1	0	1
Total	227	54	281

The second most common form of city government is the council-manager form. The council-manager form consists of an elected council, which is

responsible for policymaking, and a professional city manager (appointed by the council) who is responsible for administration. The city manager is accountable to the council and is responsible for implementing the council's policies. Although mayors in council-manager cities have no administrative or executive duties, they do serve as the chair of the council and often play a prominent political leadership role.

It is also important to know your city's classification – first class city, second class city, town, or code city. Many state laws differ depending upon the classification, such as the specific powers and responsibilities of a mayor.

First class and code cities have broad home rule powers granted in both the state constitution and statute. Cities may determine their structure and regulate under their police powers, as long as they do not conflict with the state constitution or laws. In Washington, more than 200 code and first class cities have broad home rule powers and have been granted all powers available to other classes of cities.

The third branch

Cities can choose to run their own municipal courts or contract with the county or another city to provide court services. Approximately one-third of cities run their own courts with elected or appointed judges. Full-time judges are elected. Part-time judges are either appointed by the mayor (mayor- council cities) or the manager (council- manager cities), and may be subject to council confirmation. Although the city council may determine the court's budget, the judge is responsible for running the court, including supervising court staff, and is not subject to council or executive oversight.

Working with other jurisdictions

City elected officials' jobs don't stop at the city limits. The city's streets must connect with county roads and state highways. Similarly, cities must work with other jurisdictions and many levels of government to achieve collective goals. In some cases, this can involve complex, technical inter-jurisdictional agreements for services such as public safety, sewage treatment, or other utilities.

Cities must abide by state and federal laws and regulations, and can benefit from state and federal funding programs. There may also be special purpose districts for fire protection, ports, transit, sewer and water, cemeteries, libraries, and a host of other specific functions that interact with city government. Residents have the right to expect that these relationships are well-managed, efficient, and collaborative—and it's up to elected officials to make this happen.

Celebrating community achievements and promoting civic pride

City elected officials also serve as champions for civic achievement. By appearing at ribbon-cutting ceremonies, participating in charity events, and attending celebrations of student achievement, elected officials bring recognition and attention to the values of civic engagement and individual accomplishment. This might not be in the elected leader's official job description, but it is an important part of how elected leaders can bring out the best in their communities and strengthen the traditions that build civic pride.

Knowing the law

Ethics

You may think of yourself as an ethical and law-abiding person, but that may not be enough to keep you on the right side of the law once you are elected. There are specific laws and high ethical standards of conduct for elected officials, and becoming thoroughly informed about them is important.

All city officials must abide by strict laws regarding ethics in government. These laws aim to prevent favoritism and ensure that elected officials are truly serving the public rather than reaping personal benefits from their positions.

State laws that city elected officials must abide by include:

No special privileges – Elected officials must pay the same fees for permits or services as any other resident. They cannot receive or give any special privileges, discounts, or exemptions or use any city resources for private purposes. For example, a city official cannot borrow a city pickup truck for the weekend or arrange for it to be used by a friend or relative.

No gifts or rewards from private sources – Elected officials may not receive gifts that are in any way connected to their public service. For instance, if a councilmember votes for a specific project and a constituent sends a thank you gift of tickets to a concert or game, the tickets must be returned.

No disclosure of confidential information – Elected officials may not disclose confidential information or use it for personal gain. This means that you may not accept a job or engage in a business that might require you to disclose confidential information you gained from your city position.

No conflicts of interest – Elected officials may not have any financial interest in any public contracts made through their office with the city they serve. This

includes contracts for employment, sales, leases, and purchases. (There are limited exceptions to this rule in small cities with a population under 10,000.)

In addition, elected officials may not vote on any matter that would have a personal direct financial impact on them. This prohibition does not include matters that have a general impact, such as taxes or utility rates.

Conflicts of interest can also include “remote” interests – interests that would not personally benefit you, but might benefit people or organizations with whom you have a special relationship. For instance, if you are on the governing board of a nonprofit organization seeking a contract with the city, you must disclose your interest and you may not vote on that contract or attempt to influence the votes of others.

Open public meetings

The Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) requires that all council meetings (and meetings of planning commissions, library boards, and other public bodies) be open to the public, except under special circumstances, such as discussing a lawsuit, a confidential personnel issue, or a real estate transaction.

This also means that elected officials cannot meet informally and make decisions out of the public eye.

Whenever a quorum of the council is present, city business cannot be the topic of discussion unless the public has been notified and the meeting is open to them.

If this act is violated, there may be personal penalties for the elected officials involved. In addition, any final action that is taken in a meeting which did not comply with the Open Public Meetings Act is null and void.

Public access to records

The Public Records Act (PRA) gives any person full access to a wide range of information about how government does business. Most information relating to the conduct of government that is prepared, owned, used, or retained by a city is presumed to be a public record that must be made available to the public for inspection and copying. This includes papers, photos, maps, videos, and electronic records (such as email, text messages, and social networking sites). It also includes reports that are prepared for government by hired contractors.

All cities must make these records available for everyone. There are a limited number of exemptions from disclosure for some personnel records and other confidential matters.

Required OPMA and PRA training

Under the Open Government Trainings Act, every elected local or statewide official that is also a member of a “governing body,” must receive both open public meetings and records trainings. This must occur no later than 90 days after taking the oath of office or assuming duties. “Refresher” training must occur at intervals of no more than four years.

Implementing policy

Adopting a city budget

One of the most challenging tasks for local elected officials is developing and adopting annual city budgets.

They can be complex and technical documents that are important expressions of a city’s vision, values, priorities, and strategic goals. Budgets are also a tool for evaluating past performance, as elected leaders and staff make note of what was accomplished in the past year and how actual costs compared to estimated projections.

Mastering the budget process can be a steep learning curve for newly-elected leaders. There are guiding state laws about the timing and content of city budgets. Once in office, elected officials soon find that the budget is such an important policy document that they can’t be effective unless they fully understand it, and can explain it to their constituents.

Budgets are important expressions of a city’s vision, values, priorities, and strategic goals.

Comprehensive planning, growth management, and environmental protection

Every city needs to plan for growth in order to provide a healthy future for its residents. Cities adopt comprehensive plans that spell out a specific vision for how the city will develop, while protecting critical natural resources and open space. Engaging the community in the process of developing a comprehensive plan ensures that everyone works together to create a shared vision for the future, and that everyone takes part in the work of achieving it.

Twenty-nine counties and the cities within them are required to or have chosen to create plans that conform to the state Growth Management Act

(GMA). Once adopted, a city's comprehensive plan is used to guide decisions about zoning, subdivisions, and other regulatory matters. Local codes can create incentives for the kind of growth a city wants by providing such things as density bonuses for projects that provide affordable housing or preserve natural areas.

State and federal environmental laws and regulations also affect local comprehensive planning, because they require protection of certain natural resources such as clean drinking water and critical wildlife habitat. Learning about these laws and how they affect your city is an important part of an elected leader's job.

Keeping the comprehensive plan in mind – and keeping it in the public eye – ensures that the city stays focused on creating the future residents want for the next generation and beyond.

Publications and resources

Publications

You can find many materials, publications, and other resources online. Below are a few highlighted publications that may be of value to you even before becoming an elected leader.

Association of Washington Cities

- *Mayor & Councilmember Handbook*
- *Small City Resource Manual: A guide for Washington's small cities and towns*

Municipal Research and Services Center

- *Getting Into Office: Being Elected or Appointed into Office in Washington Counties, Cities and Towns, and Special Districts*
- *Knowing the Territory: Basic Legal Guidelines for Washington City, County, and Special District Officials*

Training opportunities

After getting elected, there are regional workshops, statewide conferences, and eLearning opportunities to help you learn important laws and hone skills to become a more effective leader.

Highlighted trainings include:

- **OPMA and PRA eLearnings** AWC and MRSC have two eLearnings available 24/7: [Open Public Meetings Act](#) and [Public Records Act](#)

Certificate of Municipal Leadership

AWC's [Certificate of Municipal Leadership](#) (CML) program recognizes mayors and councilmembers for accomplishing training in four core areas:

- Roles, responsibilities, and legal requirements
- Public sector resource management
- Community planning and development
- Effective local leadership

CITY OF UNION GAP, WASHINGTON
ORDINANCE NO. 2388

AN ORDINANCE regulating political signs in public street rights of way, adding new Section 8.16.020, entitled Political Signs, to the Union Gap Municipal Code.

WHEREAS, City ordinances have previously prohibited political signs in public street rights of way, and;

WHEREAS, political signs are often placed in public rights of way regardless of local regulations, and;

WHEREAS, standards for regulating such signs are desirable;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF UNION GAP DOES ORDAIN as follows:

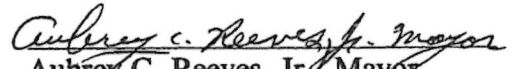
The following is hereby adopted as Union Gap Municipal Code Section 8.16.020:

8.16.020 Political Signs.

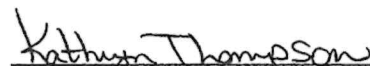
- (A) "Political sign" is defined in Section 17.08.020, and is exempt from the application, permit and fee requirements of Title 17, Zoning, when the standards of Chapter 17.08, Signs, are met. The temporary sign provisions of Section 17.08.110 do not apply to exempt political signs.
- (B) Notwithstanding any other provision of the Union Gap Municipal Code, political signs may be placed in public street rights of way subject to the following requirements:
 - (1) Political signs are prohibited in the median of Valley Mall Boulevard/Pioneer Street, as well as on all City property other than rights of way.
 - (2) Political signs are prohibited within the vision clearance triangle of all streets and driveways, as defined in Chapter 11.12, Street Intersections, and Section 17.08.060, dealing with setbacks from commercial driveways;
 - (3) Political signs shall be located out of the traveled portion of the roadway, located out of established parking areas, and shall be no larger than four square feet;
 - (4) The Chief of Police, Public Works Director, and Building Official, or their respective designees, are authorized to remove any sign, which in their sole discretion creates a public safety concern. Any signs which are removed shall be stored during the relevant campaign, and may be retrieved by campaign representatives;
 - (5) An adjacent landowner or tenant who removes political signs from right of way fronting their property shall not be guilty of a civil or criminal infraction, or misdemeanor, under either state law or local ordinance;

- (6) The City of Union Gap shall not be liable for damage to political signs caused by City activities, such as street and right of way maintenance.


ORDAINED this 14th day of July, 2003.


Aubrey C. Reeves, Jr., Mayor

ATTEST:


Kathryn Thompson, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Philip A. Lamb, City Attorney

8.16.020 - Political signs.

- (a) "Political sign" is defined in Section 17.08.020, and is exempt from the application, permit and fee requirements of Title 17 when the standards of Chapter 17.08 are met. The temporary sign provisions of Section 17.08.110 do not apply to exempt political signs.
- (b) Notwithstanding any other provision of the Union Gap Municipal Code, political signs may be placed in public street rights-of-way subject to the following requirements:
 - (1) Political signs are prohibited in the median of Valley Mall Boulevard/Pioneer Street, as well as on all city property other than rights-of-way.
 - (2) Political signs are prohibited within the vision clearance triangle of all streets and driveways, as defined in Chapter 11.12 and Section 17.08.060.
 - (3) Political signs shall be located out of the traveled portion of the roadway, located out of established parking areas, and shall be no larger than four square feet.
 - (4) The chief of police, public works director, and building official, or their respective designees, are authorized to remove any sign which in their sole discretion creates a public safety concern. Any signs which are removed shall be stored during the relevant campaign, and may be retrieved by campaign representatives.
 - (5) An adjacent landowner or tenant who removes political signs from right-of-way fronting his or her property shall not be guilty of a civil or criminal infraction or misdemeanor under either state law or local ordinance.
 - (6) The city shall not be liable for damage to political signs caused by city activities, such as street and right-of-way maintenance.

(Ord. 2388, 2003)

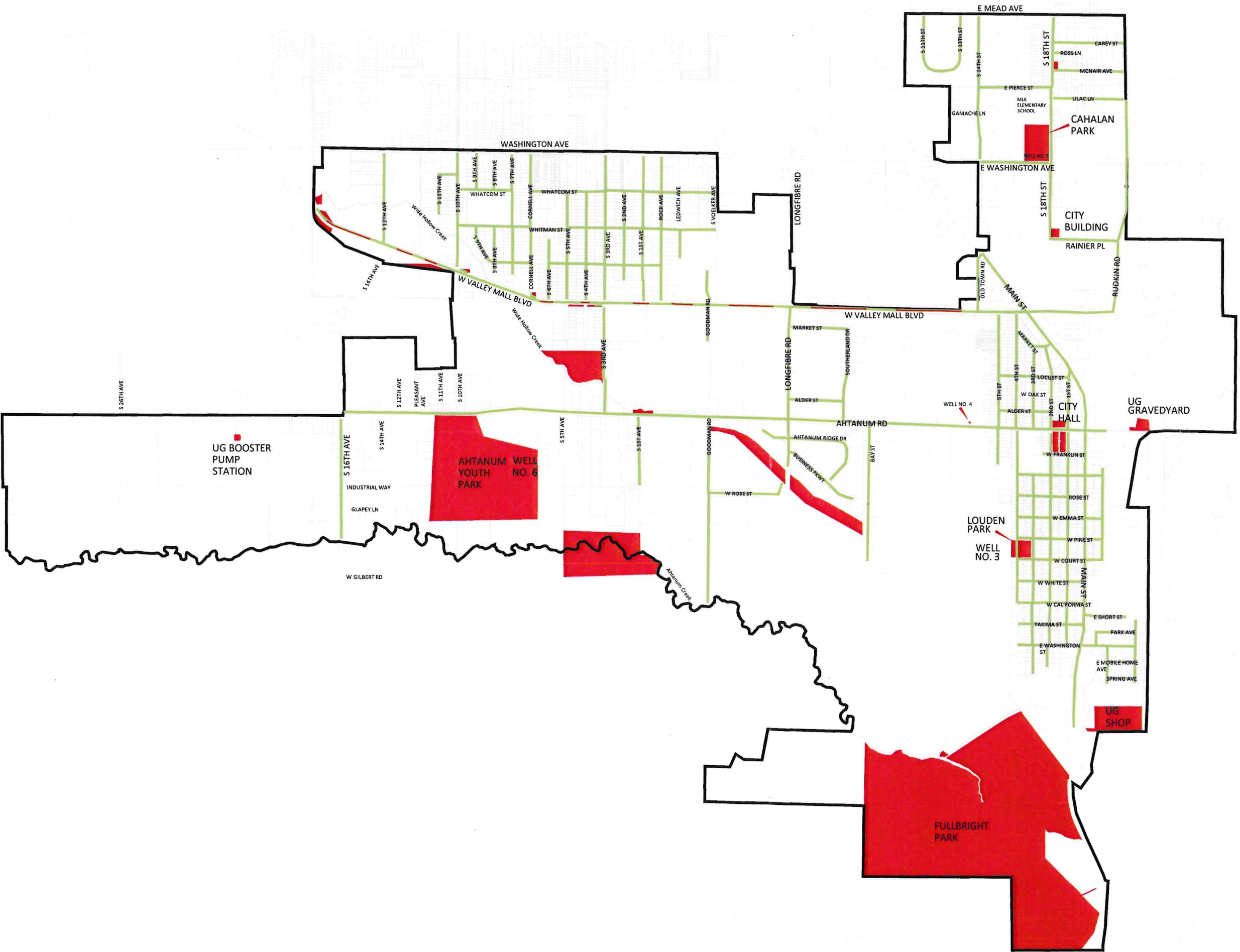
CITY OF UNION GAP

LEGEND

UGMC 8.16.020 - POLITICAL SIGNS

-  POLITICAL SIGNS NOT ALLOWED
-  VALLEY MALL BLVD CENTER STRIP
-  NO POSITING ON CITY FENCES/BUILDINGS
-  NO POSTING ON CITY PARKS/PROPERTIES
-  ALLOWED CITY RIGHT-OF-WAY
-  ALLOWED PRIVATE PROPERTY WITH PERMISSION

Note:
Please stay off of all park fences and all corner sight distance triangles at all street and driveway intersections.
Please remove all political signs after elections.



3106 First Street Union Gap WA 98903