

DATE: December 18, 2020
TO: Clark County Buildable Lands Project Advisory Committee
FROM: Becky Hewitt, ECONorthwest; Jose Alvarez and Bob Pool, Clark County
SUBJECT: Options for Updates to the Clark County VBLM and Impact on Model Results

Introduction

The Buildable Lands Project Advisory Committee (BLPAC) has met seven times to review and consider potential updates to the Clark County Vacant Buildable Lands Model (VBLM). The meeting on January 6, 2021 is the last meeting for the group. Since the last meeting on September 25, 2020, County staff has run the VBLM with several options for updates that have emerged through this process to allow the BLPAC to compare the model outputs against those using the current assumptions. During the meeting on January 6th, the Project team will summarize the results of these options in terms of their impact on estimated capacity.

Based on the outcomes of the last meeting, the Project Team evaluated three packages of potential model updates:

- **Option 1:** a set of updates that have strong support from most of the PAC. For topics where there is not sufficient support for a proposed refinement, Option 1 defaults to retaining the assumptions used in previous BLRs.
- **Option 2A:** all updates from Option 1, plus additional updates or refinements recommended by the Project Team that expand on the recommendations in Option 1 but are more controversial.
- **Option 2B:** all updates from Option 1, plus additional updates or refinements recommended by members of the BLPAC that the Project Team may not support and are more controversial.

These options are described further in Exhibit 1.

The Project Team has prepared a "[Story Map](#)" (click link to access) that illustrates the results of the potential model refinements, and highlights particular changes that make the greatest impact on the estimated capacity. This section provides a brief summary of highlights, with selected graphics taken from that Story Map.

Decision-Making

The BLPAC does not have to choose one of the options in its entirety. During the meeting, the Project Team will seek direction from the BLPAC on which refinements have the support of enough of the BLPAC members to be presented as a group recommendation. (Based on the BLPAC's decision protocols, this requires two-thirds of the committee members present; 9 of the

13 members¹ if all members are present.) For areas of disagreement, multiple perspectives and options will be forwarded to Council for consideration.

Magnitude and Direction of Overall Impacts

All of the options for refinements increase both housing and employment capacity overall. However, that increase is not evenly distributed. The greatest increase is within the City of Vancouver, with modest increases in some other areas and modest decreases in other areas.

- Battle Ground (including UGA): neutral to slight increase
- Camas (including UGA): slight increase to slight decrease
- La Center (including UGA): increase
- Ridgefield (including UGA): slight increase
- City of Vancouver: substantial increase
- Vancouver UGA: neutral to slight increase
- Washougal (including UGA): slight increase
- Woodland (including UGA): decrease
- Yacolt (including UGA): decrease

Options Tested and Specific Impacts

The details of what was included in each option and notes about the magnitude and direction of the impact are summarized in Exhibit 1.² A series of charts taken from the Story Map follows Exhibit 1 to illustrate the impacts summarized in the table.

¹ One of the original members has formally withdrawn from the committee, leaving a total of 13 if all participate.

² Note that some proposed refinements are addressed outside the VBLM during the Comprehensive Plan update process and are listed as “N/A” (Not Applicable) in Exhibit 1 because their impact cannot be tested using the VBLM. Other topics were considered and discussed, but there are no proposed refinements at present; these are also listed as “N/A”.

Exhibit 1. Summary of Issues and Options for Updates to the Clark County BLP

Topic	Proposed Refinement	Include in Option 1?	Include in Option 2A?	Include in Option 2B?	Impact	Proposed Decision Process
Land Classifications: Residential	Index building value threshold for vacant land based on trends in property values in the County (Y)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unable to isolate the impact of this change for residential, but does not appear to make a substantial difference for residential.	“Consent agenda”: voted as a group
	Create new classification for small underutilized lots in Urban High Density (0.5-1ac, no more than one housing unit, assuming 10% redevelopment)	Yes (as written)	Include Low Density Residential as well (assuming 5% of acres redevelop) (Y)	Yes (as written)	Adds 17 net acres as written and about 250-270 units. Adding low density adds another 104 net acres and roughly an additional 500 units. (See Exhibit 2.)	Individual vote, no further discussion
	Create new classification for vacant platted lots (part of a plat approved within last 20 years)	Yes (Y)	Yes: Lower bound at 1,000 sf and upper bound at 0.5 ac	Yes: Lower bound at 1,500 sf and upper bound at 1 ac	Adds about 3,300 units overall. Differences between options are negligible (difference of less than 5 lots). (See Exhibit 3.)	“Consent agenda”: voted as a group
	“Excluded” category: do not exclude Housing Authority and other nonprofit housing ownership	No	Yes (Y)	No	Adds 36 gross acres of Housing Authority property (28 acres of which are redevelopable, so only a small percentage is added to the net acres)	Individual vote, no further discussion
Land classifications: employment	Add some of “excess” and “rearrange” acres on built land to the employment land supply (N)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Adds about 410 net acres of industrial land and about 95 net acres of commercial land.	“Consent agenda”: voted as a group
	Continue to use land value and land value per acre, but index based on trends in property values in the County (Y)	Yes (Y)	Yes	Yes	Adds about 500 gross acres of industrial land and several hundred acres of commercial land.	“Consent agenda”: voted as a group
	Classify undeveloped commercial and industrial properties with active businesses as underutilized rather than vacant (Y)	Yes	Yes	Yes	538.3 acres go from vacant to underutilized	“Consent agenda”: voted as a group
	Min lot size – drop from 5,000 to 4,000 (Y)	No	Yes	No	Adds very few properties, all of which are (by definition) very small. Total impact is roughly 20 acres.	Individual vote, no further discussion

Topic	Proposed Refinement	Include in Option 1?	Include in Option 2A?	Include in Option 2B?	Impact	Proposed Decision Process
	“Excluded” category: do not exclude Housing Authority and other nonprofit housing ownership; do not exclude Port-owned properties in commercial	No	Yes 	No	Adds 83 gross acres of Port property (mostly vacant and underutilized) within commercial and mixed use designations.	Individual vote, no further discussion
Accounting for Redevelopment	5% residential redevelopment rate on built Vancouver City Center commercial; 1% residential redevelopment rate on Vancouver built commercial outside City Center	Yes 	Use redevelopment rates slightly above historical trend rates: 9% for City Center, 2% elsewhere	Yes	Adds 5 net acres in the City Center and 15 net acres in other commercial zones, totaling just under 1,000 units in Options 1 and 2B. Adds 8.6 net acres in the City Center and 27 acres in other commercial zones, totaling roughly 1,600 units in Option 2A. (See Exhibit 4.)	Individual vote, no further discussion
Modeling Mixed-Use Areas / Residential in commercial areas	For vacant and underutilized Commercial land in City of Vancouver that converts: Outside City Center assume 15% will develop as residential Inside City Center assume 30% will develop as residential	Yes, as written 	Use splits at or above historical trend (40% for all Vancouver commercial land)	Remove exceptions not allowed by zoning	Adds 5 net acres in the City Center and 47 net acres in other commercial zones, totaling roughly 1,900 units in Options 1 and 2B (the differences in 2B are negligible as only a few projects were excluded). Adds roughly 9.2 net acres in the City Center and 127 acres in other commercial zones, totaling roughly 6,400 units in Option 2A. (See Exhibit 5.)	Individual vote, no further discussion

Topic	Proposed Refinement	Include in Option 1?	Include in Option 2A?	Include in Option 2B?	Impact	Proposed Decision Process
Market Factor & Critical Lands	Keep existing never-to-convert factors for residential: 10% for vacant land, 30% for underutilized	Yes 	Yes	Yes	None	Individual vote, no further discussion
	For critical lands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep 50% deduction for market factor (land that won't become part of a development) Don't apply additional vacant and underutilized deductions Apply open space deductions to the land assumed to become part of a development: 35% open space deduction in Residential Urban Low, 17.5% for Residential Urban High in Vancouver UGA 	No (keep existing system of deductions)	Yes	No (keep existing system of deductions)	Across all residential land (excluding redevelopment), removing the vacant and underutilized market factor deductions for critical lands means about 800 <i>less</i> acres deducted in Option 2A for market factor. Open Space deduction means about 1,200 <i>more</i> acres deducted in Option 2A. Net change is that roughly 400 <i>more</i> acres are deducted in Option 2A. (See Exhibit 6.)	Discussion then vote
Infrastructure Set-Asides	Use AHBL calculations to set on-site set-asides in VBLM: 27.05% for Residential Urban Low 13.52% for Residential Urban High in Vancouver UGA	No (keep existing set-asides)	Yes	No: use set-asides from examples compiled by DEAB (32-35%)	On all residential land (excluding redevelopment), roughly 2,400 acres are deducted for infrastructure in Option 1, roughly 2,200 acres are deducted for infrastructure in Option 2A, and roughly 2,700 acres are deducted for infrastructure in Option 2B. (See Exhibit 7.) When combined with the changes to critical lands above, the net difference between Options 2A and 2B is only about 100 net acres county-wide (see Exhibit 8). Based on additional analysis since the last meeting, a refinement to Option 2A is proposed, as described in Attachment A.	Discussion then vote

Topic	Proposed Refinement	Include in Option 1?	Include in Option 2A?	Include in Option 2B?	Impact	Proposed Decision Process
Population Capacity	Use observed density by GMA land use	Yes N	Yes	Yes	Average density achieved in Vancouver UGA overall was 10.4; 30% higher than planned (8). All other UGAs were close to density targets. (See Attachment B for details.) Impact is moderate in aggregate (see Exhibit 9), but more pronounced in Vancouver (see Exhibit 10).	“Consent agenda”: voted as a group
Employment Density	Retain existing assumptions	Yes Y	Yes	Yes	None	“Consent agenda”: voted as a group

Exhibit 2: Residential Redevelopment / Small Underutilized Lots: Housing Unit Impact

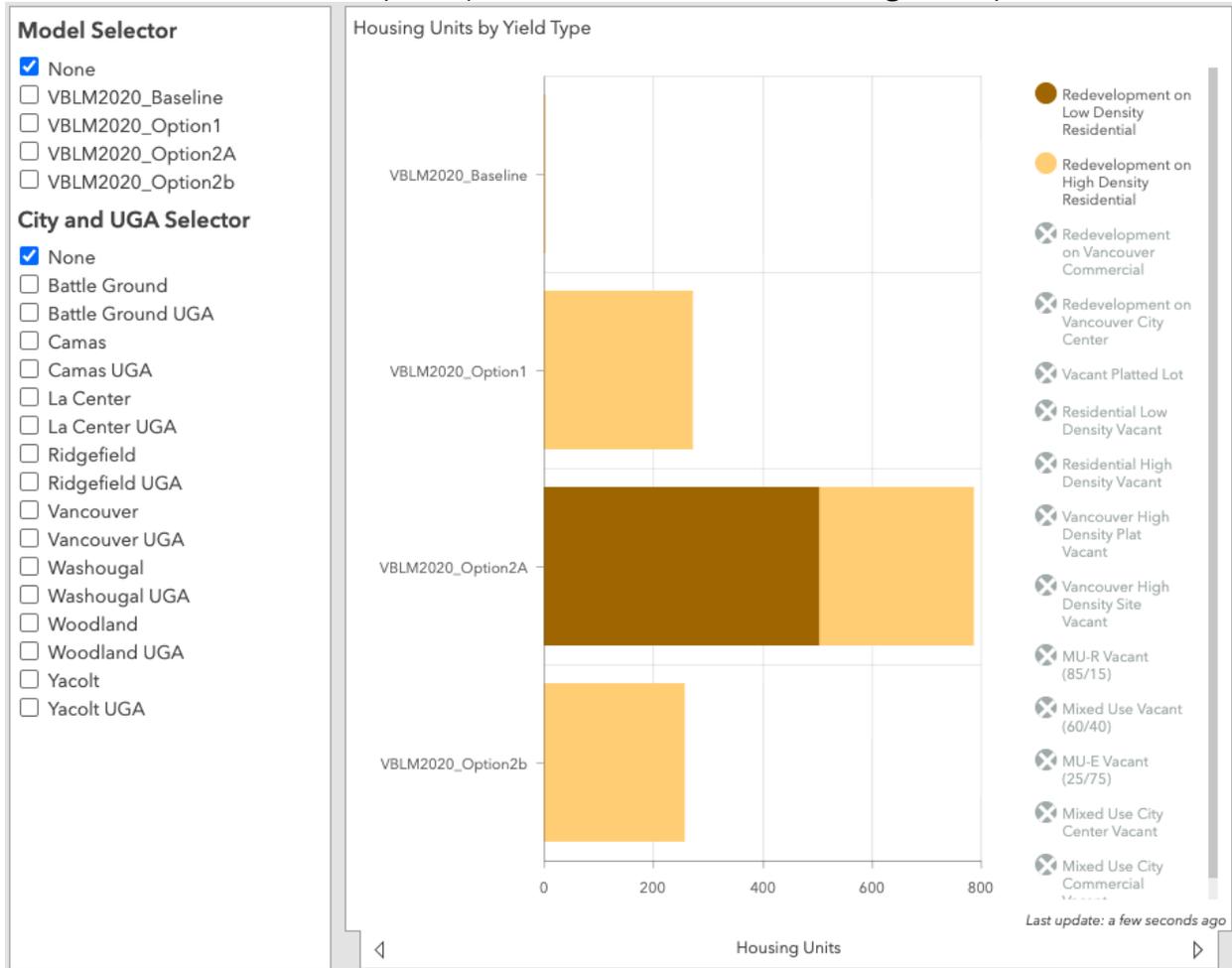


Exhibit 3: Vacant Platted Lots: Housing Unit Impact

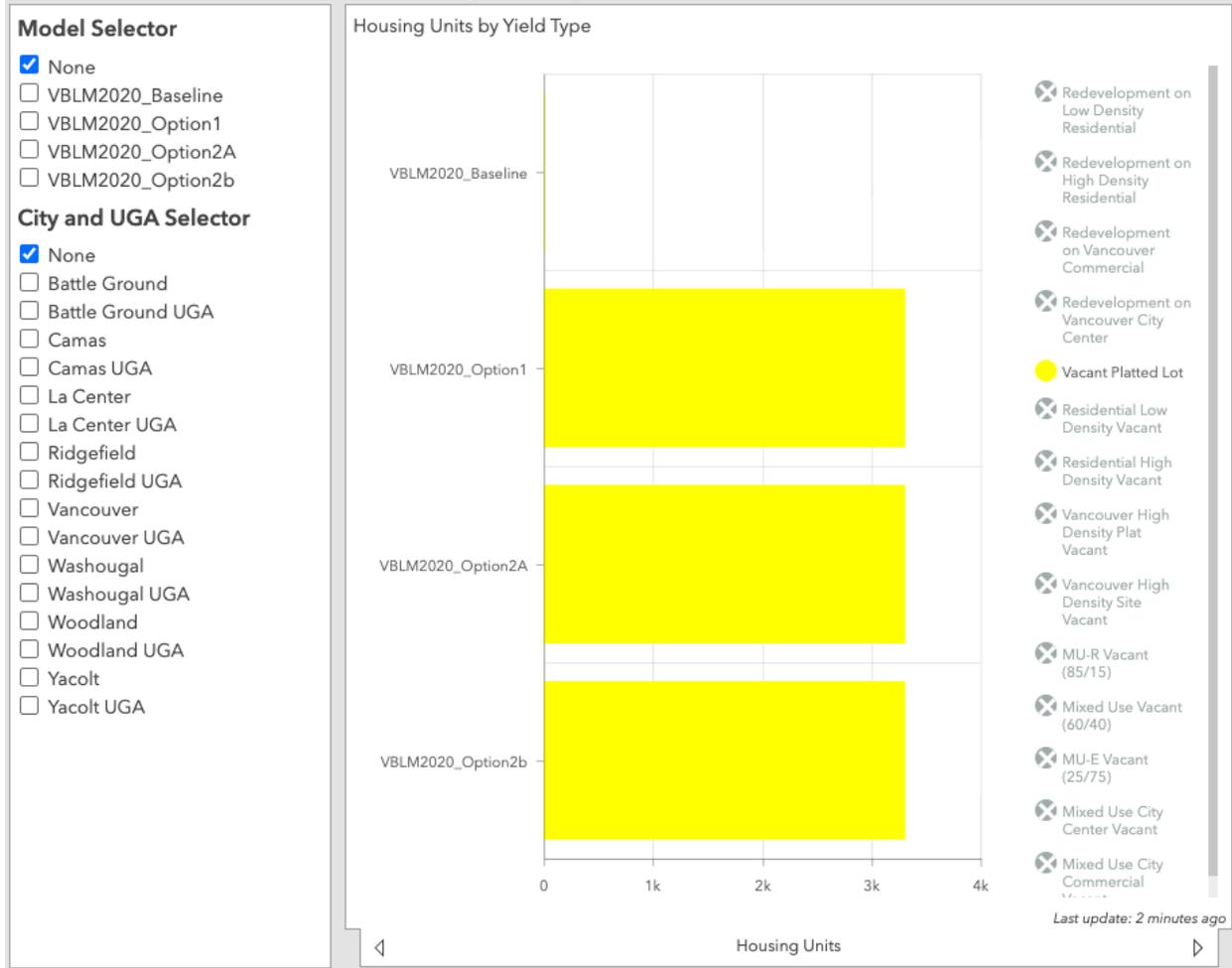


Exhibit 4: Residential Redevelopment on City of Vancouver Commercial Built Land: Housing Unit Impact

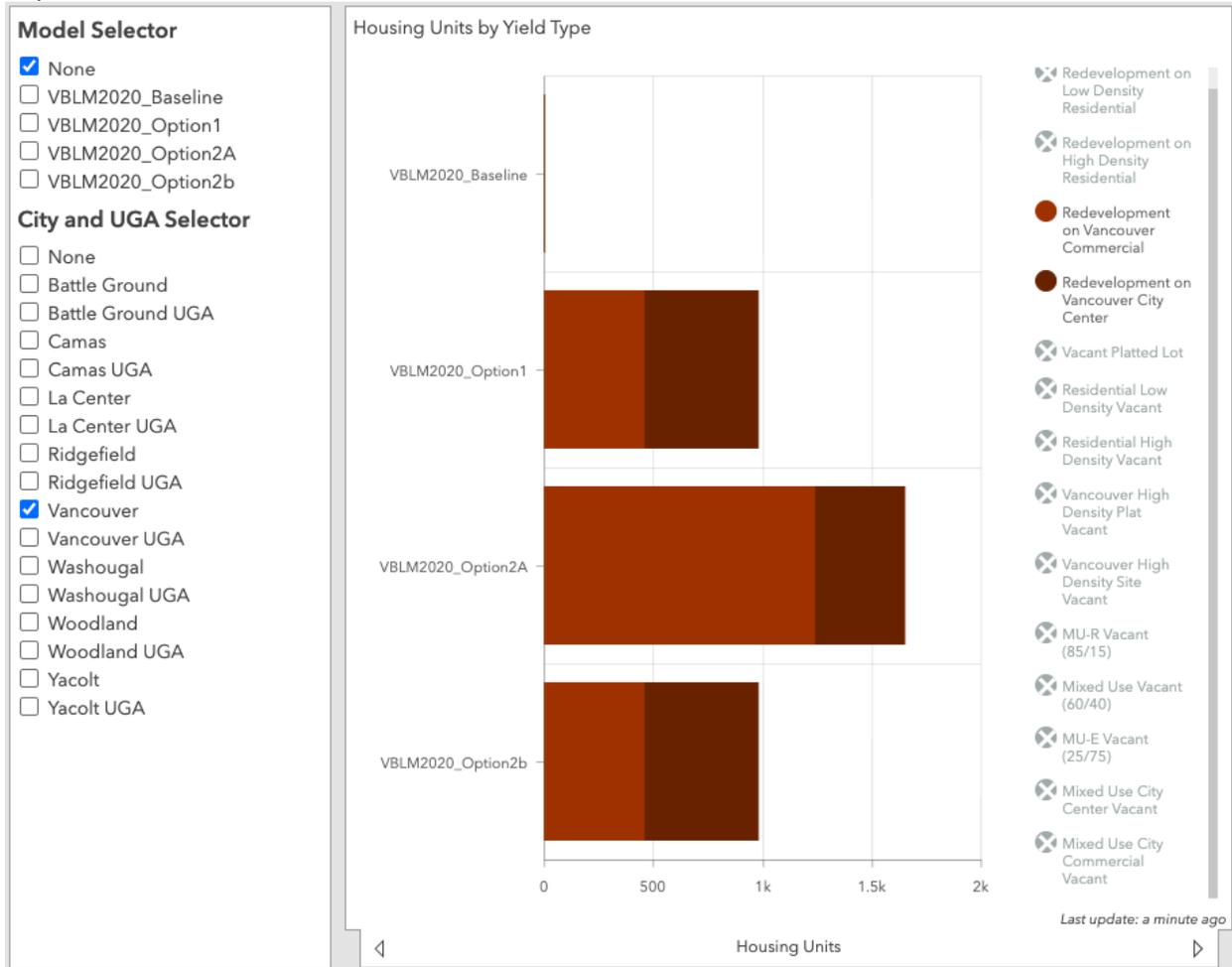


Exhibit 5: Mixed Use Split on Vacant and Underutilized Commercial Land in City of Vancouver: Housing Unit Impact

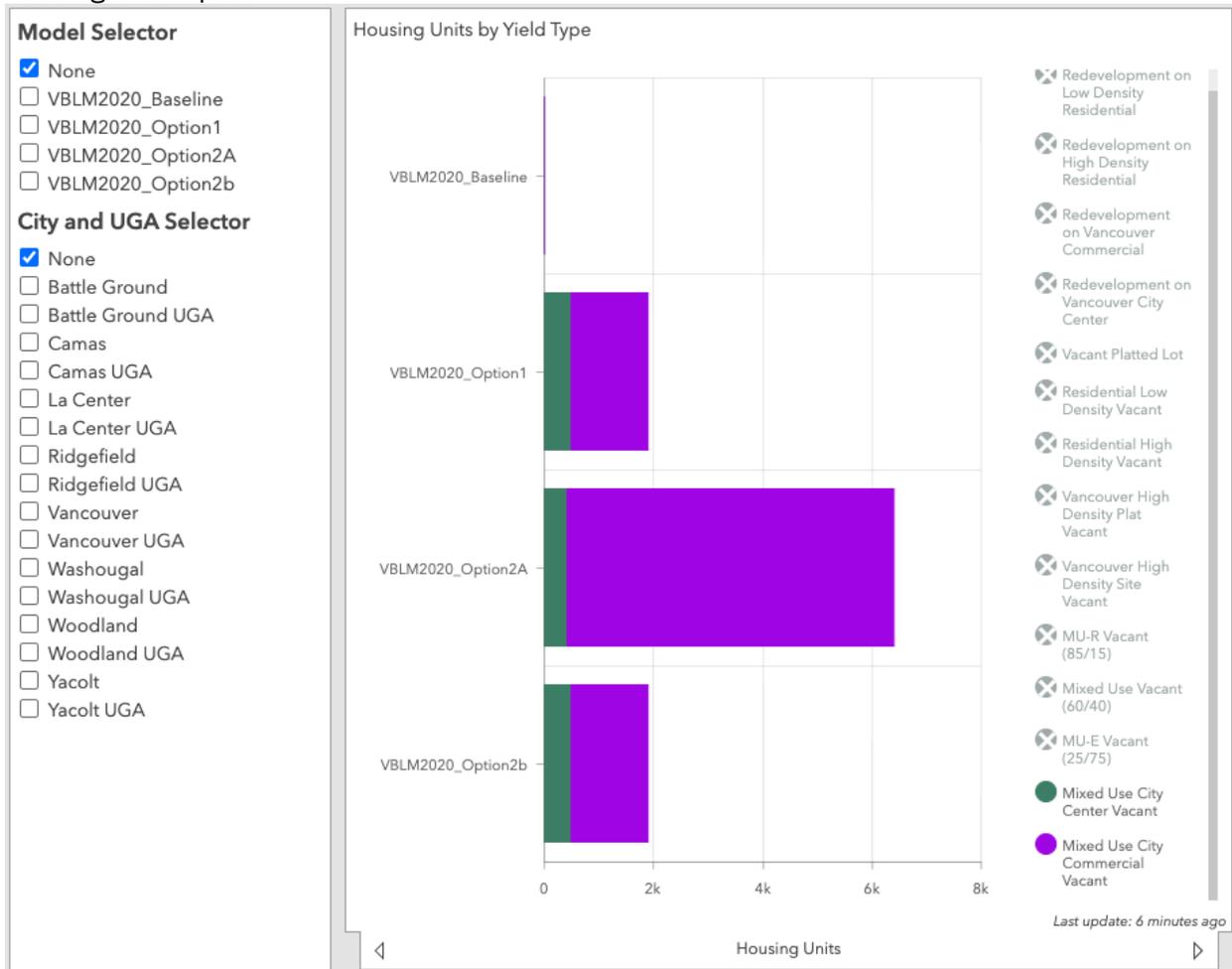


Exhibit 6: Market Factor and Open Space Deductions on Residential Lands with Different Critical Lands Assumptions

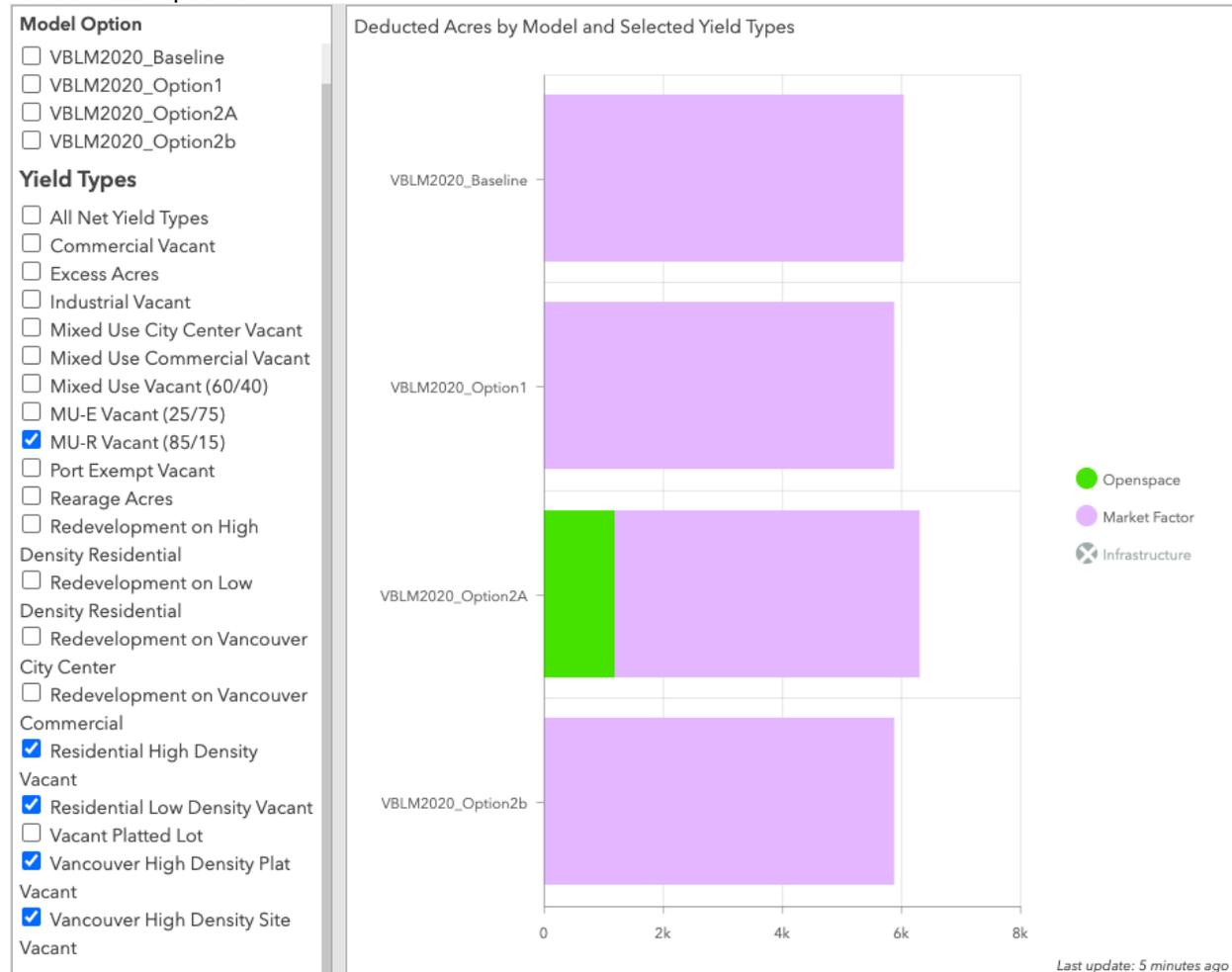


Exhibit 7: Infrastructure Deductions on Residential Land (Excluding Redevelopment)

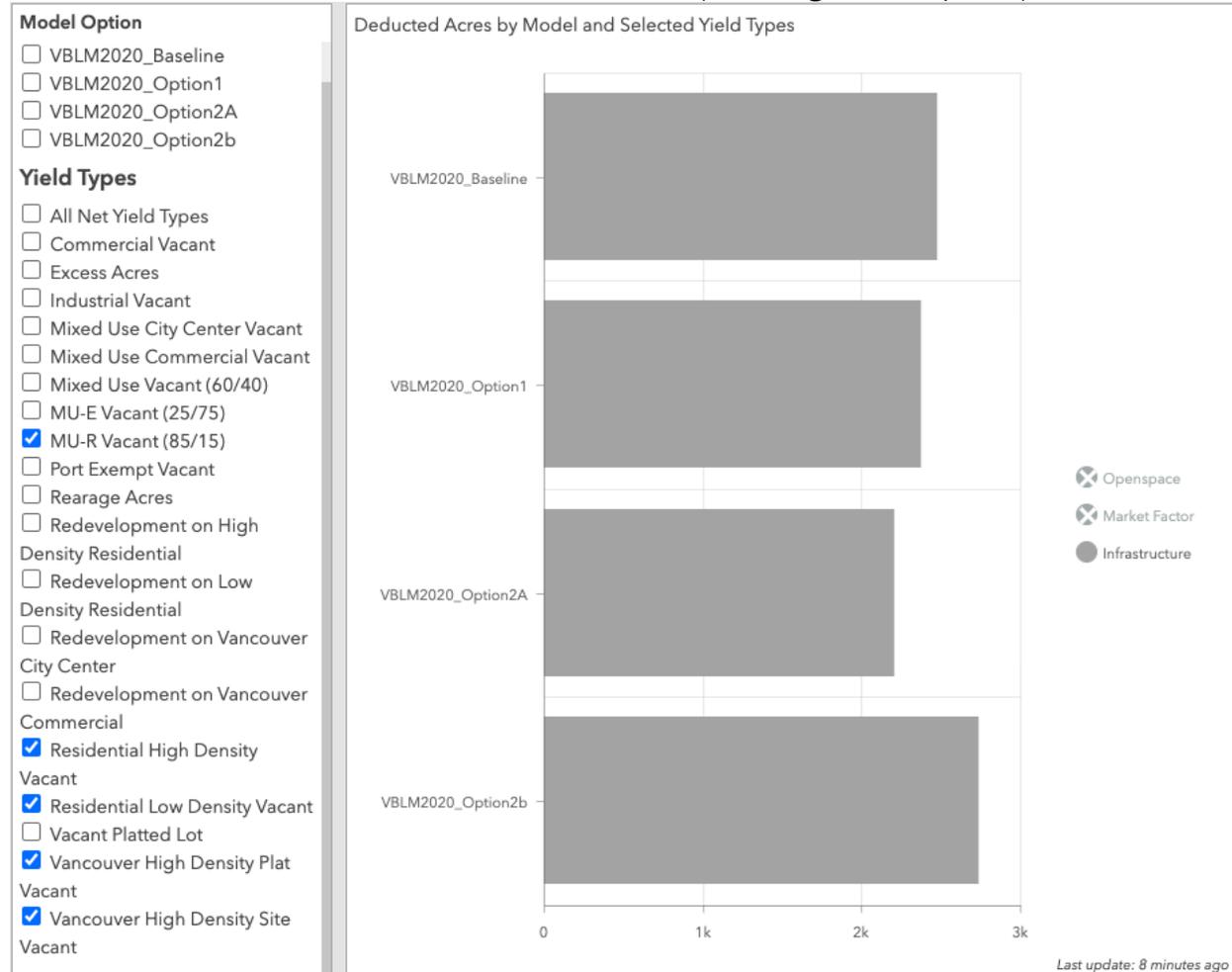


Exhibit 8: Market Factor, Open Space, and Infrastructure Deductions on Residential Land (Excluding Redevelopment)

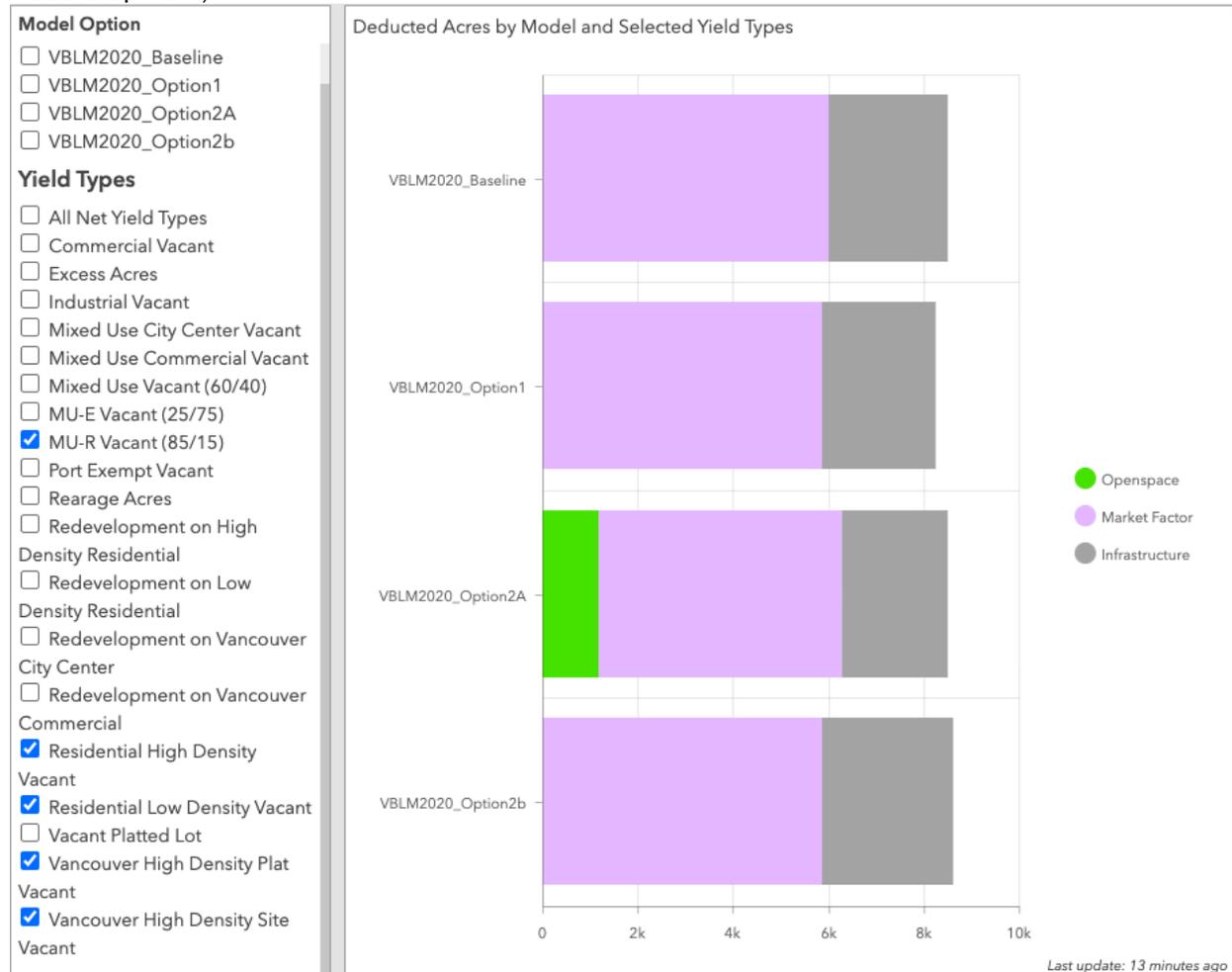


Exhibit 9: Impact of Residential Density Assumptions Across All UGAs: Housing Net Acres (top) vs. Housing Units (bottom)

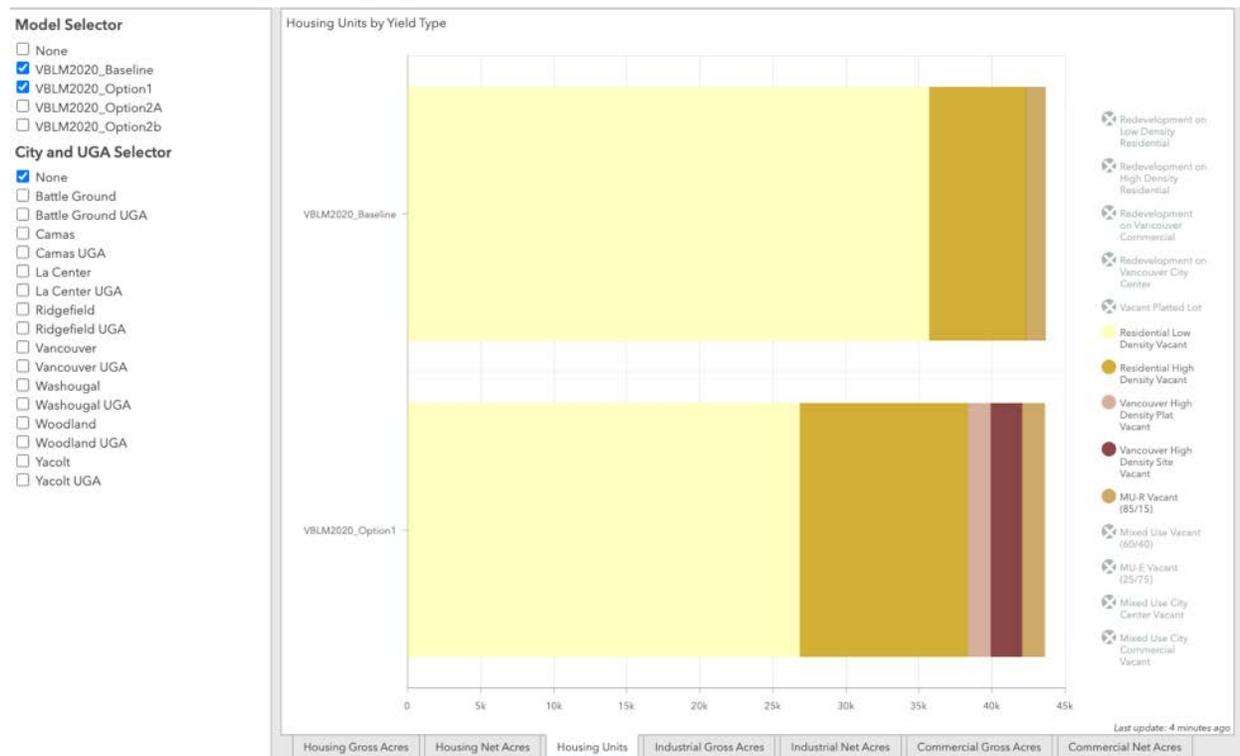
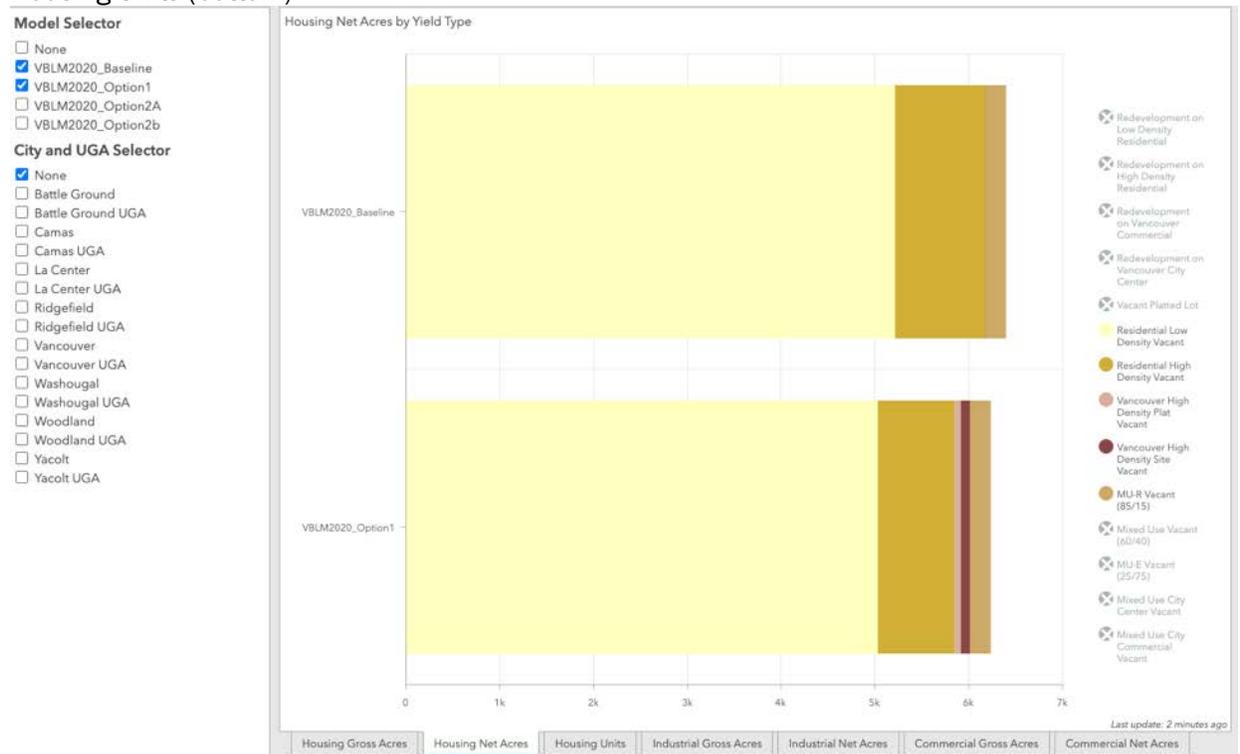


Exhibit 10: Impact of Residential Density Assumptions in City of Vancouver: Housing Net Acres (top) vs. Housing Units (bottom)

