



To: BLPAC

From: Jose Alvarez, Project Manager

Date: July 2, 2020

Subject: Rural Land Capacity Estimates

Background

The Department of Commerce issued updated Buildable Lands Guidelines in 2018 based on the passage of ESSB 5254. The Guidelines reference the “annual collection of data on urban and rural land uses” however the Guidelines do not specify what data the county must collect and use. Specific data is addressed in WAC 365-196-425 (3)(b) below. The Clark County Buildable Lands Report has included items ii, iv, and ix since the first report in 2002.

b) Counties should perform a periodic analysis of development occurring in rural areas, to determine if patterns of rural development are protecting rural character and encouraging development in urban areas. This analysis should occur along with the urban growth area review required in RCW 36.70A.130 (3)(a). The analysis may include the following:

(i) Patterns of development occurring in rural areas.

(ii) The percentage of new growth occurring in rural versus urban areas.

(iii) Patterns of rural comprehensive plan or zoning amendments.

(iv) Numbers of permits issued in rural areas.

(v) Numbers of new approved wells and septic systems.

(vi) Growth in traffic levels on rural roads.

(vii) Growth in public facilities and public services costs in rural areas.

(viii) Changes in rural land values and rural employment.

(ix) Potential build-out at the allowed rural densities.

(x) The degree to which the growth that is occurring in the rural areas is consistent with patterns of rural land use and development established in the rural element.

Methodology

The methodology for estimating capacity in the rural area is much simpler than the Vacant Buildable Lands Model method for the urban area. There are no density targets in the rural area. Capacity is estimated based on the rural densities allowed by the underlying zoning. The methodology for estimating the potential build out at rural densities is attached as EXHIBIT 1.



There is no infrastructure deduction in the rural area because private roads are being used to serve developments and are also included in lot area calculations. Lots abutting public roads can count up to 30' of the right-of-way as part of the lot area for the purposes of land division.

Critical areas are not considered a limiting factor in the potential development of land in the rural area. Development envelopes and cluster development standards allow flexibility in site planning to avoid critical areas. Both the habitat and wetland ordinances have a reasonable use provision that states: "This chapter shall not be used to deny or reduce the number of lots of a proposed rural land division allowed under the applicable zoning density."

Stormwater is typically treated on site through infiltration, low impact development Best Management Practices (BMP's) such as dispersion or bioretention ponds. Given the larger parcel sizes in the rural area these BMPs can be accommodated with no loss of potential lots.

Employment

The Growth Management Act (GMA) allows for the recognition of Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRD'S) that existed as commercial nodes in 1990 when the GMA became effective. In Clark County there are seven LAMIRDs, referred to as rural centers.

Commercial and Industrially zoned land in the rural area is concentrated in the rural centers. In addition to commercial businesses to serve the rural residents these rural centers have schools, fire stations and other public facilities. Two of the rural centers, Chelatchie Prairie and Brush Prairie, have land zoned for Heavy Industrial uses.

Forestry, surface mining, agriculture, wineries and equestrian businesses are sources of employment in the rural area that are land dependent.

Home businesses are also allowed on rural residential land on a scale commensurate with parcel size i.e. (a maximum of 6 non-resident employees and up to 5,000 sq. ft. accessory structures are allowed on parcels 20 acres or greater).

Employment data from the Employment Security Department (ESD) has been a challenge to use in the urban areas due to proprietary issues that changed how the ESD can share the data. These proprietary issues are further exacerbated in the rural area due to the limited number of employers, land-based employment and the data limitations, as only employees participating in the unemployment insurance program are counted.

From 1994 through 2016 the County's comprehensive plans have used employment projections and density assumptions for estimating the amount of land needed to accommodate 20 years of employment growth in the urban areas.

Estimating Potential Rural Housing Capacity

Clark County, Washington

Rural lands and rural development behave differently than urban development. This document describes how rural capacity is estimated by the Clark County Geographic Information Services (GIS).

The primary input into the process to estimate rural capacity is the land use layer¹. This layer is used to classify lands into three land use categories: Residential, Commercial or Industrial. The Assessor's database is used to classify the parcels into the following classifications based on the property type, ownership, and size: Vacant, Built, Underutilized, Excluded.

Rural Land Uses

Land use designations from the comprehensive plan or proposed zoning plan are categorized into three land use types.

- Residential – rural, rural center residential, agriculture, and forest land use designations
- Commercial – commercial land use designations
- Industrial – industrial land use designations

Residential Classifications

Property with a proposed land use of Residential are subdivided into the following categories based on information from the Assessor's database.

- Built
 - Parcel has existing housing units
 - Parcel is too small to be further divided based on minimum lot size requirements
- Vacant
 - No existing housing units
 - May contain outbuildings
- Underutilized
 - Parcel has existing housing units
 - Parcel is large enough to be further divided based on minimum lot size requirements
- Excluded
 - Forest zoned lands in the Current Use program (Timber or Designated Forest Land (DFL))
 - Remainder lots of cluster developments
 - Surface mining overlay area
 - Water Areas
 - Private street or Right of Way
 - Transportation or utilities
 - Private park or recreation area
 - Assessed as a zero value property

¹ Layers are the mechanism used to display geographic datasets. Each layer references a dataset and specifies how that dataset is portrayed using symbols and text labels.

EXHIBIT 1
7/2/2020

- Size is less than 1 acre
- Tax exempt
- Mobile Home Parks

- Not a Residential land use

Residential Planning Assumptions:

- Housing capacity calculation:
 - One housing unit per undersized vacant parcel
 - Conforming vacant and underutilized parcels
 - Housing unit capacity is calculated by dividing the parcel acres by the minimum lot size.
 - For dividable parcels lots are considered buildable if they are within 10% of the minimum lot size.

- Population Capacity calculation
 - 2.66 persons per housing unit