



MEETING SUMMARY

Clark County Buildable Lands Project Advisory Committee Introductory Meeting

12/6/2019, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Members Present: Bryan Snodgrass, David McDonald, Eric Golemo, Jamie Howsley, Jeff Swanson, Jennifer Baker, Jim Malinowski, Marjorie Ledell, Matt Swindell, Rian Davis, Ron Barca, Ryan Makinster, Stephen Abramson

Staff and Presenters: Jose Alvarez, Clark County Community Planning; Bob Pool, Clark County GIS; Oliver Orijako, Clark County Community Planning; Bob Parker, ECONorthwest; Becky Hewitt, ECONorthwest

Welcome and Introductions

Staff and Committee members introduced themselves and the organizations they represent.

Buildable Lands 101

Jose Alvarez presented a slide show giving background and context on the Buildable Lands Program, and Bob Pool presented a slide show with an overview of the Vacant Buildable Lands Model (VBLM) used to estimate capacity for development within urban growth areas (UGAs). (The slideshows are available separately.) Committee discussion and questions included:

- Question about Yacolt – why not included?
 - Does not have a density target because it doesn't have a sewer system
- Question about the community framework plan relative to the periodic comprehensive plan update.
 - The community framework plan was a 50-year vision. It continues to inform comprehensive plans.
- Question about development outside UGAs – does the analysis include rural areas?
 - The VBLM primarily looks at land inside UGAs, but capacity in rural areas is included separately by looking at existing zoning and permits issued in rural areas.
- Comment about Contracts, Covenants and Restrictions (CC&Rs) and how they get addressed in the model.
 - Tracts in plats are assumed to have no development potential. (Note: Developed subdivisions are treated as built, further development is not assumed whether or not CC&Rs are present.)
- Question about the market factor and whether that is a fixed assumption or something the committee will review.
 - Current model assumes 10-30% of land will not develop over the planning period (varies by land classification – higher for underutilized land and lower for vacant land). In addition, there is a market factor applied to the number of acres needed through the demand calculation. These assumptions will be reviewed through this process.

Role of the Advisory Group

Jose indicated that the role of the Advisory Committee is to provide recommendations to the County Council regarding updates to the Buildable Lands methodology and the Vacant Buildable Lands Model. The Project Team (County staff and consultants) will provide research, data, and analysis to inform the Committee's discussions. Generally, the Project Team will outline options for consideration and identify trade-offs associated with those options.



Goals and Aspirations for the Project

Each member of the Committee offered their hopes for the project. Notes from this discussion are captured below:

- Identification and ground truthing of viability of employment lands – what's not developing and why?
- Provide a basis for sustainable growth as the county continues to grow quickly
- That growth come not at the expense of neighbors – that growth be balanced with quality of life
- Ground truthing of residential lands – is it truly viable residential land
- Take what we're doing and fine tune it to make it more accurate – challenge the thinking behind the model we're using
- How this project dovetails with policy in the context of quality of life, how to balance growth and the impacts on public budgets, housing affordability and the characteristics of raw land, some constraints (redevelopment on commercial land, or the changing nature of jobs—the model is using antiquated definitions)
- Ensure rural communities are treated fairly – do not want unnecessary barriers put up to economic development and growth
- Main goal is to improve affordability and quality of life for residents. Looking at assumptions – that they reflect reality (e.g. a market factor that reflects market cycles). Developing where there's infrastructure rather than creating more sprawl.
- Clark County has done this better than other counties. Fine tuning is important. The regulatory environment has evolved dramatically— stormwater, tree regulations, biodiversity—needs to be accounted in this process. Other part of the accuracy is having a true and honest discussion about redevelopment with cities. Doesn't make sense to make assumptions that redevelopment is going to occur if cities don't establish the policy guidelines.
- Concerned with affordability and quality of life. Everyone is bringing their own political agenda to the process. The focus should be on “are these lands going to develop in the future.” Consideration of lands outside to ensure they can continue to be productive in uses that they were historically productive. Consider redevelopment in urban areas, particularly as it affects affordability. Concern about underbuild on residential lands under County jurisdiction.
- VBLM is a great tool, but also an abstraction and a model – hope to keep reality and nuance in perspective.
- From city standpoint – development outside cities affects cities—impact on transportation infrastructure.
- Desire for accuracy. Many inputs into the model, but need to keep sight of how the outputs are corresponding with reality. The model is capturing about two-thirds of the population that has occurred based on City of Vancouver estimates – this is getting worse and is closer to half over the past few years.
- Accuracy of model important; also need accuracy for the growth projections that go into the demand estimates.
- Work should reflect a balance of the various interests that are represented on the Committee and avoid a collision between growth, density and quality of life.

Following this discussion, Becky, Jose, and Oliver clarified the boundaries and scope of this project and the Committee's work: this phase is about estimating capacity on buildable lands, with a focus on the VBLM. It will not make determinations about whether UGAs need to be amended, though it will feed into those determinations.

- Question about whether this process requires external reviews (e.g. SEPA, Ecology, etc.)
 - This process is about evaluating the tool. It's a legislative decision that has to go through Council. If it's a policy decision that affects a local policy (e.g., Vancouver should have a target of 10 instead of 8) that would require a local decision.
- Oliver emphasized that assumptions must be justified—the County must show its work.
- Question about consideration of buildable lands in rural areas—does the process include an estimate of capacity in the rural areas?
 - Yes, the Growth Management Act (GMA) requires monitoring development in rural areas. The County assumes a limited amount of development on rural land based on minimum lot size in rural zoning.

- Clarification that we're not talking about a VBLM for rural areas, rural capacity is addressed outside the model.

Proposed Committee Structure and Decision Protocols

Becky Hewitt reviewed the draft decision protocols.

- A member asked whether decisions would require a quorum.
 - Protocols will be updated to clarify what constitutes a quorum and when one is needed.
- Based on Committee member preferences, meetings will generally be held from 2-4pm on Friday afternoons. Meeting dates will be provided in advance.

Draft Consultant Work Plan

Becky Hewitt and Bob Parker provided an overview of the proposed topics for the Project Team and Committee to review. (The summary slides are available separately.) Committee discussion and questions included:

- Comment on infrastructure – should different assumptions be used by jurisdiction? Ridgefield has all subdivisions go through Planned Development and ends up with more set asides. Camas is passionate about trees. Ridgefield will be a Phase II NPDES by the time the process is complete—will require more stormwater set asides.
- Comment about soil types and the amount of infrastructure required—Engineering has a model for soil type.
- Comment that redevelopment is occurring in residential areas, not just commercial areas—something to look at. Look at waterfront redevelopment and how much showed up in model. Also will miss a lot if we stick to current zoning—in Vancouver residential development in the central area is often preceded by a zone change.
 - In the past the County has adjusted for redevelopment by asking Cities to provide evidence of redevelopment and including it as an override to the model.
- What definition of “affordable” will the County use in looking at housing affordability?
 - This project won't get into definitions of affordability; just recommending collecting data on cost/value of new residential development as an indicator to track over time.
- How will we know that once we've come to agreement on the individual assumptions that the model will work better overall.
 - The Project Team will run the model with the updated assumptions and compare results to what was observed to see if the results are better, and share this with the Committee.

Public Comment

- Susan Rasmussen: Reviewing the rural is essential. Section 2A of the bill states that the review and evaluation shall include inside and outside of UGAs. Concerned that rural areas are not included in the analysis and concerned that the rural areas get their fair share of housing and jobs.
- Mike Odren: Have been talking about the infrastructure deduction for a decade, including providing analysis to the board/policy makers. Don't feel that the message has been heard.

Next Steps

- Committee can provide written comments on the Issue Summary memo by Wednesday December 11th so that the Project Team can consider them prior to finalizing the list of issues for consideration.
- Next milestone is a Jan 29 work session with Council. Will go over an updated Issue Summary memo with Council as the basis for the program going forward.
- 2nd BLPAC meeting will be mid- to late-February.