



MEMBERS:

- City of Lacey
- City of Olympia
- City of Rainier
- City of Tenino
- City of Tumwater
- City of Yelm
- Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation
- Nisqually Indian Tribe
- Town of Bucoda
- Thurston County
- North Thurston Public Schools
- Olympia School District
- Intercity Transit
- LOTT Clean Water Alliance
- Port of Olympia
- PUD No. 1 of Thurston County

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:

- Lacey Fire District #3
- Puget Sound Regional Council
- TCOMM9-1-1
- The Evergreen State College
- Thurston Economic Development Council
- Timberland Regional Library

MEMORANDUM

TO: Thurston Regional Planning Council

FROM: Veena Tabbutt, Senior Planner

DATE: February 28, 2014

SUBJECT: Buildable Lands Report

Program Area	Mission Statement
MPO/RTPO	
X Core Services	B,C
Contract Services	
Grant Services	

PURPOSE

Acceptance of the Buildable Lands Report for Thurston County.

Summary:

- Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) staff have been tasked with updating the Buildable Lands Report for Thurston County.
- This report is a requirement of the Growth Management Act. The last report for Thurston County was published in 2007, with an update due no later than June 30, 2015.
- Due to the lack of state funding, the Thurston Regional Planning Council decided to fund an abbreviated report to ensure that jurisdictions will continue to be in compliance with the Growth Management Act
- The draft report findings are that Thurston County and the jurisdictions within:
 - 1) Are achieving urban densities within the urban growth areas
 - 2) Have adequate residential land supply to accommodate projected population growth to the year 2035; and
 - 3) Have adequate commercial and industrial land supply to accommodate projected employment growth to the year 2035.
- The draft report was reviewed by TRPC at their February 2014 meeting.

REQUESTED ACTION

Acceptance of the Buildable Lands Report.



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OVERVIEW

Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) staff have been tasked with updating the Buildable Lands Report for Thurston County. This report is a requirement of the Growth Management Act. The last report for Thurston County was published in 2007, with an update due no later than June 30, 2015. Due to the lack of state funding, the Thurston Regional Planning Council decided to fund an abbreviated report to ensure that jurisdictions will continue to be in compliance with the Growth Management Act.

The report draws heavily on the assumptions and data developed during the recent update of the Population and Employment forecast. The report represents “Baseline” conditions, or an analysis based on policies and regulations that are adopted by local jurisdictions. It does not take into account the strategies and targets developed during the Sustainable Thurston project, as they have not yet been implemented by local jurisdictions.

The Buildable Lands Program in Thurston County must answer three key growth-related questions. The first is whether residential development in the urban growth areas is occurring at the densities envisioned in local comprehensive plans. The second is whether there is an adequate land supply in the urban growth areas for anticipated future growth in population, and the third is whether there is an adequate land supply in the urban growth areas for anticipated future growth in employment.

The draft report was reviewed by TRPC at the February 2014 meeting.

Buildable Lands Report Findings

1. *Are urban densities being achieved in the urban growth areas?*

- Overall, Thurston County urban jurisdictions are achieving urban densities greater than the rule of thumb threshold of four dwelling units per acre.
- Individually, all Thurston County urban areas with sewer service are achieving urban densities. (For health code reasons, densities must be lower than four units per acre when sewer service is not available.)
- Achieved densities are higher within city limits (incorporated areas) than the unincorporated growth area.

2. *Is there enough residential land in the urban growth areas to accommodate population growth to the year 2035?*

Based on adopted policies in place in Thurston County as of mid-year 2012, the evaluation shows that:

- There is sufficient land supply to accommodate projected population growth (to year 2035) in Thurston County’s urban areas (cities plus unincorporated growth areas or UGAs), and
- Each urban jurisdiction in Thurston County has designated sufficient land supply to accommodate projected population growth (to year 2035).

3. *Is there enough commercial/industrial land in the urban areas to accommodate growth in employment to the year 2035?*

The evaluation shows that there is enough vacant, partially-used and redevelopable land to support the employment growth forecast to the year 2035 for urban areas in Thurston County.

The supply varies by jurisdiction. Each jurisdiction has a vision for how they plan to grow, which is laid out in their comprehensive plans. Olympia, for instance, has very little vacant industrial land compared to Tumwater and Lacey. Taking the three cities together, there is ample space for attracting manufacturing or warehousing jobs. All three cities have sufficient space for jobs in the commercial sector, however redevelopment is likely to occur more often in Olympia as there is less vacant land. Reuse of empty buildings and redevelopment of underutilized parcels is considered in the land supply analysis, especially in the core urban areas and along major transit corridors where redevelopment is more likely to occur.

Yelm has seen steady job growth over the last few decades, and has designated adequate land supply to accommodate future growth.

Rainier’s long range plans include annexing parts of their unincorporated growth area and rezoning it to commercial or industrial uses.

Questions remain as to how much of the commercial and industrial land supply will be available for development due to the pending federal endangered species listings.

Forecasting future need for industrial and commercial land is much more complex than residential forecasts. A robust land supply requires a full range of options for potential businesses – from unimproved land, to land with infrastructure already available, to existing and vacant buildings.

Other Considerations

Is there Too Much Land in the Urban Growth Areas?

This question is not part of the “buildable lands” review requirement, and will be fully addressed during the Urban Growth Area review undertaken by counties every ten years under the State’s Growth Management Act. However, the data in the supply versus demand table shows not only the excess capacity within the urban growth areas is **sufficient to accommodate projected growth**, but also that the growth areas are not too large based on the criteria established by Thurston County. It falls within the range of the established reasonable market factor for Thurston County of 10 to 25 percent.

Residential Supply versus Demand

Jurisdiction	2010 Dwelling Units	DEMAND		SUPPLY	
		Units required to Accommodate 2035 Population		Capacity for Additional Dwellings 2010 Plus	Percent Excess 2035
		Total	2010-2035		
Bucoda & UGA	240	460	220	350	37%
Lacey & UGA	31,740	45,560	13,820	17,560	21%
Olympia & UGA	26,950	40,410	13,460	16,880	20%
Rainier & UGA	770	1,300	530	750	29%
Tenino & UGA	750	1,550	800	1,200	33%
Tumwater & UGA	10,570	19,170	8,600	11,010	22%
Yelm & UGA	3,050	10,250	7,200	10,310	30%
Grand Mound UGA	380	690	310	430	28%
Total Urban Areas	74,450	119,390	44,940	58,490	23%

Endangered Species Listing Considerations

Habitat needs for pending endangered species listings will likely have a tremendous impact on available residential, commercial and industrial land supply. As information becomes available on how the listings will affect land supply, the buildable lands analysis will be updated.

Sustainable Thurston Considerations

Over the next several years jurisdictions will re-examine zoning and development regulations as part of their comprehensive plan updates. If they recommend significant adjustments to the urban growth area boundary or zoning densities, the effect on the urban buildable lands supply will be evaluated.