2024 Land Capacity Analysis Results Preview:

Latah, Washington

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Spokane County Land Capacity Analysis Methodology

Each jurisdiction is responsible for developing its own LCA report to provide quantitative information for existing and future urban areas to support residential and non-residential growth. This methodology, as adopted by the Steering Committee of Elected Officials on March 5, 2024, was developed using guidance from Commerce in the Urban Growth Area Guidebook: Reviewing, Updating and Implementing Your Urban Growth Area in "Chapter 5: Land Capacity Analysis and Buildable Lands Program for Urban Growth Areas" which was then augmented to account for specific local circumstances in Spokane County. *This report only includes the part of the methodology that pertains to residential capacity. Analysis of commercial and industrial capacity will begin in early 2025*.

Step 1: Identify lands that are potential candidates to accommodate future growth, including vacant, partially used, and underutilized land.

The Commerce guidelines define three general types of land that form the supply for eventual growth: vacant land, partially used land, and underutilized land. The definition of these terms has been modified below to fit local conditions.

All lands will be counted and sorted according to number of lots or acreage (as appropriate) and existing generalized zone classification.

1. Vacant Land – Initial identification of these lands includes any lot or parcel that does not contain improvement value exceeding \$5000 in value, as determined from the Assessor's records. DRAFT Regardless of improvement value, land containing a distinctive land use or clearly supporting other nearby uses should not be considered vacant. Parking lots, storage yards, and golf courses are some examples of such land which would not be considered vacant. This is initially determined using Property Class codes ending in *91 (e.g., 891 "land with adjoining use"), though identification by other means may be required.

Additionally, some parcels may contain a significant part of a structure but have no improvement value because the assessor typically only assigns improvement value to one of multiple related parcels. Again, Assessor Property Codes can be used to identify these parcels and remove them from the "vacant land" inventory.

Where a planned unit development (PUD) or preliminary plat has been adopted for a given area, jurisdictions may use the approval of those instruments to inform the capacity of those vacant areas. For example, if a PUD has been approved for 1,000 units, and only 750 units have been platted and constructed, the jurisdiction can consider the area to contain 250 units of additional capacity. Steps two through five below should not be applied to areas within PUDs and preliminary plats.

Likewise, if a jurisdiction has adopted a sub area plan, specific plan, or study for a given area which provides for an estimated buildout scenario, that study or plan can be relied upon to determine the capacity of an area rather than steps two through four below.

2. Partially Used Land – Land in this category is occupied by a use which is consistent with zoning but contains enough land to be further subdivided without need of rezoning. Accordingly, any parcel in rural areas containing at least two times the minimum lot size required by the applicable zone district could be considered partially used.

Partially used residential land in urban areas includes those properties that can be subdivided into eight (8) or more lots, parcels, or tracts consistent with existing zoning standards.

As an additional consideration, jurisdictions can subtract lands from this category that contain a very valuable home, as very valuable homes on large lots are not expected to subdivide or redevelop within the 20-year timeline. Accordingly, any partially used land with at least eight times more improvement value than land value can be removed from the available capacity.

Commercial and industrial lands will not be calculated in this category.

3. Underutilized Land – These parcels include those zoned for more intensive use than that which currently occupies the property. For example, a single-family home in a multi-family zoning district would fit within this category. If a parcel is classified as underutilized, it is not included in the partially used category as the capacity does not assume the existing use would remain if redeveloped.

An existing residential use(s) on a commercial or industrial zoned parcel will be considered underutilized and counted as such. A parcel in a commercial or industrial zone with an improvement value of four times the land value or less should also be reviewed further for the likelihood that it would redevelop as either residential or commercial/industrial use. Each jurisdiction should then determine the likelihood that redevelopment of these parcels would include residential units or commercial/industrial uses and include them in their underutilized land accordingly.

An improvement to land value ratio of 4 to 1 is considered "average" for normal uses by the Assessor. Accordingly, these parcels may not redevelop in the 20-year timeframe if the improvement value is high enough, even if the use is generally non-conforming. Likewise, an Assessor Property Class of 391 can be used to select for these properties and to review whether they should be included in the Underutilized category.

Step 2: Subtract all parcels that the community defines as not developable because of physical limitations.

Lands consisting of designated critical areas or other physical constraints may, in some cases, be subtracted from the inventory due to the presence of certain features which makes them difficult or impossible to develop. Critical areas, such as wetlands or streams, are commonly constrained by policies and regulations prohibiting development in these areas. Accordingly, any lands containing these features should be subtracted from the lands identified in Step 1. Affected areas should include not just the boundary of a known critical area but also the associated buffer that may be required by local code or policy.

If policies or regulations are such that development is completely prohibited, then the area would be subtracted from the available land supply. If development would be allowed with mitigating measures, then the land area or a portion of it should be counted as available. However, any exclusion should not imply that such land cannot be developed, but instead recognizes that the difficulties associated with doing so are enough to limit development potential.

Areas that may be excluded to one degree or another from the available land supply include, but are not limited to:

- Critical areas (as defined in RCW 36.70A)
- Natural resource lands (as defined in RCW 36.70A)
- Steep slopes and other geohazards (according to locally adopted critical areas ordinances or other local delineation)
- Shoreline Jurisdictional Areas
- Water bodies, including designated wetlands and their buffers.

In any case, it is up to the individual jurisdiction to analyze and to justify in their report how the various policies or regulations impact the land capacity analysis, according to local regulations and data sources.

Step 3: Subtract lands which will be needed for other public purposes. This includes utility corridors, landfills, sewage treatment plants, recreation, schools, and other public uses (GMA, Section 15, RCW 36.70A. l50).

Areas in this category include both public and private properties which are either currently owned and operated or those which will be needed to meet future needs in developing areas. Common owners of these lands, for example, may include utility companies, school districts, parks departments, or railroads to name a few. Likewise, the type of property tax exemption applied to these properties can be used to make an initial selection of these lands. In any case though, any lands removed from the capacity for step 3 should consider that the predominate existing or planned use of the land is such that it would not reasonably be considered as available for any type of residential, commercial, or industrial development. Sample areas to be removed from available capacity include, but are not limited to:

1. Roads or rights-of-way (ROWs) – this category includes lands which will be needed for circulation facilities as relatively undeveloped areas begin to develop. Existing ROWs should be removed, but also a percentage of acres of land capacity should be subtracted from the overall capacity to account for internal circulation and other circulation needs. The actual percentage subtracted should be determined based upon development trends unique to the individual jurisdiction. Those assumptions then need to be documented in the individual jurisdictions' report.

2. School sites – this includes both existing sites and those additional needs which will be generated by growth in development areas.

3. Park sites – this includes both existing sites and those additional needs which will be generated by growth in developing areas. When available, the local jurisdiction's level of service for parks provision should be used to estimate the amount to be removed.

4. Utility substations, corridors, and other facilities – this category includes both existing and anticipated sites and corridors which would preclude residential, commercial, or industrial development.

5. Other public lands – any other public need which is known to the local jurisdiction.

Step 4: Subtract ..."that percentage of land"... which you assume will not be available for development within your plan's 20-year timeframe. Assume that a certain percent of vacant, under-utilized, and partially-used lands will always be held out from development."

This factor takes into consideration the fact that not all available lands will actually become available for development in the next 20 years. This could be due to a variety of personal and economic reasons. Applied universally to all capacity areas, it is safe to assume a percentage of all vacant, partially used, or underutilized land will simply not develop within the 20-year timeframe. This percentage that is taken out of capacity for various unknown economic and social reasons is known as the market factor.

There is insufficient data available locally, regionally, or on a state level to determine an exact market factor to apply—there are simply too many variables at play to determine the market factor with any certainty. Therefore, jurisdictions in the County assume that approximately 30 percent of the total available land will not be available for development during the next 20 years.

Given the difficulty that occurs when rural lands (those outside the UGA) are developed or redeveloped, it is generally acceptable to assume a higher market factor in those areas. For this reason, it is assumed that half (50 percent) of capacity in rural areas will not be available for development within 20 years.

Step 5: Determine total capacity. After determining desirable densities and land uses for various areas within your jurisdiction (i.e., vacant, partially used, and underutilized), multiply the number of acres in remaining parcels by the number of units per acre allowed in the area where the parcel is located. Add together to determine total capacity of vacant, underutilized, and partially-used lands."

The sorting of the available land supply according to the generalized existing zoning categories of residential, commercial, and industrial is key to determining total land capacity. The land quantity analysis and report will estimate that future land capacity given existing zoning. To do this, historic development data along with other information sources available to each jurisdiction should be used to determine an assumed development capacity by zone for all capacity lands. Assumptions should be provided for the number of dwelling units per acre expected in various zones as well as the resulting number of people per unit expected in those areas. Secondary information sources,

such as the US Census and Office of Financial Management data can be used to inform the population assumptions in this step. Separate calculations can be applied to vacant, underutilized, and partially used portions of each jurisdictions' capacity, provided the assumptions behind those are clearly documented.

Step 6: Compare the population and unit capacity estimated by this process against the adopted population forecast and housing allocation forecast for each jurisdiction.

Once the capacity in both units and population is generated, it should be compared to the population growth forecast for each jurisdiction as well as the housing allocation required by House Bill 1220. By comparing population and unit capacity against the forecast allocation set by the Steering Committee of Elected Officials and ultimate the Board of County Commissioners, jurisdictions can determine what steps are required by the State to comply (i.e., annexation, UGA modifications, regulation amendments).

Additional Considerations for Latah, Washington

To complete step 5 of the LCA methodology, Spokane County planning staff created a "density assumption" unique to Latah. The density assumption is a measurement of how many housing units per acre could legally fit on a vacant or partially used parcel. Latah does not have a zoning code that stipulates a minimum lot size for residential development, so the minimum lot sizes of Fairfield, Rockford, Spangle and Waverly, Washington, were all averaged to create Latah's density assumption. This approach led Latah's "minimum lot size" to be 8,625 square feet, and the town's density assumption to be 5.05 dwelling units per acre. In addition, to ascertain the total population capacity for Latah, Spokane County planning staff assumed a population per household of 2.5. This is the same population used for single family homes in unincorporated Spokane County.

To account for any land area in a development that would be reserved for infrastructure (water, sewer, sidewalks, rights of way, etc.), planning staff assumed that 20 percent of all otherwise available land would not be developed. 20 percent is an industry standard deduction related to infrastructure for land capacity analyses. In short, planning staff applied the following formula to determine the dwelling unit and population capacity for each piece of available land in Latah, Washington:

(Total Acreage – Any Critical Areas) x Market Factor x Infrastructure Deduction x Dwelling Density Assumption = **Dwelling Unit Capacity**

Dwelling Unit Capacity x Population Assumption = Population Capacity

For example, if there was an available residential parcel that was 1 acre with 0.1 acres of critical areas, the formula would look like this:

(1-0.1) x 0.7 x 0.8 x 5.05 = **2.55 dwelling units**

2.55 x 2.5 = **6.4 people**

In addition to these assumptions, Spokane County planning staff also reviewed parcels individually to make sure that no land being marked as available was actually not available. For example, if according to aerial imagery, a parcel marked as vacant or partial use was clearly a yard of a neighboring property, or partially contained a neighboring structure, it was instead considered "not available."

Results - Latah, Washington

After following the above methodology, planning staff ascertained the following results for Latah:

Table 1: Latah Residential Land Capacity	
Available Vacant Land	39 acres
Available Partially Used Land	7 acres
Dwelling Unit Capacity	134 units
Population Capacity	335 people

Capacity for all jurisdictions is measured against the population allocations derived from the medium population growth forecast generated by the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM). These jurisdictional allocations were prepared by the Planning Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC) and approved by the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC).

Jurisdiction	Total Population	Total	New
	Estimate (2023)	Population	Population
		Estimate	Gained 2023-
		(2046)	2046
Spokane County (whole)	554,600	654,665	100,065
Unincorporated County	163,390	198,870	35,236
Incorporated Spokane County	391,210	455,795	64,829
Airway Heights	11,280	17,945	6,665
Cheney	13,160	16,535	3,375
Deer Park	4,925	6,290	1,365
Fairfield	600	600	0
Latah	185	185	0
Liberty Lake	13,150	21,934	8,784
Medical Lake	4,915	5,159	244
Millwood	1,925	1,974	49
Rockford	570	636	66
Spangle	280	280	0
Spokane	232,700	256,057	23,357
Spokane Valley	107,400	128,313	20,913
Waverly	120	131	11
Source	OFM	CALC	CALC

Table 2: 2023-2046 Population Forecasts for all Spokane County Jurisdictions

Because of historic population decline in Latah, PTAC allocated the town zero population growth. When Latah's population growth capacity (335 people), is compared to its allocated population (0), it becomes apparent that Latah will likely not need to annex any land to accommodate any population growth that occurs there over the next 20 years. For a visual of where Latah has capacity to grow, see the map below:

