



**City of Woodland**

**Buildable Residential Lands Analysis**

**May 13, 2021 draft**

**Community Development Department**

P.O. Box 9, 230 Davidson Avenue

Woodland, WA 98674

[www.ci.woodland.wa.us](http://www.ci.woodland.wa.us)

(360) 225-1048 / FAX # (360) 225-7336

## **HOUSING CAPACITY AND VACANT RESIDENTIAL LAND**

### **Commercial Districts**

Residential is a permitted use in C-1 zone and under certain circumstances, it could be incorporated as a mixed use. There are a number of existing units in the commercial zones and a review of the City's GIS data shows:

Central Business (C-1) Zoning District – There are 31 single-family residential units and 12 multi-family units with permits to be built for a total of 43 existing units in the C-1 zone.

Highway Commercial (C-2) Zoning District – There are 14 single-family residential units and there were 7 multi-family units in the C-2 district. However, in 2020, 1 single-family unit was converted to a commercial use, and 5 of the 7 multi-family units were destroyed in a fire. This means that of the 21 units that existed in 2020, only 15 of those units exist as of 2021 when this report was written.

Neighborhood Commercial (C-3) Zoning District – Zero units exist, and residential units cannot be built in the C-3 zoning district.

For all practical purposes, there is expected to be zero additional new residential units in the commercial zones.

### **Industrial Districts**

The City of Woodland zoning code does allow for existing residential units to be replaced within its industrial districts, and caretaker units are permitted for some uses but use of these codes are limited. The number of residences in the industrial zones are:

Light Industrial (I-1) Zoning District – There are currently 15 single-family residential units that exist within the I-1 zone.

Heavy Industrial (I-2) Zoning District – There are 7 single-family residential units that exist within the I-2 zone.

In staff's opinion, in spite of the ability to add and relace residential units in the industrial zones, the industrial zones should not be relied upon to provide dependable residential capacity.

### **Residential Districts**

#### **Medium Density Residential (MDR) Zoning – Vacant land**

There are five vacant parcels with a total of 23.02 acres of that are zoned MDR. At the maximum density of 25 units per acre that much land could carry 576 additional units of residential development. Using a net density of 80% carrying capacity, that number would be 460 net units. However, development in the City of woodland has historically been much lower than the maximum density so staff took a look at the vacant buildable MDR land and found:

- One of those lots is adjacent to the cemetery, .38 acres in size, and unusable due to width and steep slopes. The practical buildable land on this parcel is zero.
- One parcel is .86 acres in size and has significant critical areas and access limitations. Specifically, it is accessed by a shared driveway that runs through a wetland and wetland buffer. Therefore, to develop beyond a single-family residence the driveway would need to be developed as a City street and there is not sufficient access for such improvement. And if there were, the improvements would require such mitigation as to make the road construction impractical from an economic and environmental impact point of view. This property is therefore not considered vacant buildable property beyond the construction of a single-family residential unit.
- The remaining three MDR parcels are 5.52 acres, 6.37 acres, and 9.89 acres in size.
  - The 9.89-acre parcel had a pre-application conference in 2020 for a 189-unit apartment project and staff is working with the applicant to prepare the necessary engineering documents to apply for the site plan. Staff expects the application for this project to be submitted in the summer of 2021 with construction on the public improvements to begin in 2021, and the residential structures to begin in 2022.
  - The 5.52-acre parcel also had a 2020 pre-application conference for the site. However, the site is within the shoreline of the Lewis River and also the aviation approach path for the Woodland airport. Therefore, the development potential for this site is significantly limited. The preapplication was for 41 townhomes at a net density of 7.4 units per acre. Staff continues to talk to the applicant's consultants regarding design considerations and submittal criteria. Staff expects this application to be submitted in Fall of 2021.
  - No permit activity has been received on the 6.37-acre parcel to date and it has no environmental constraints that would limit the development of the property.

Given this, the development capacity within the MDR zones appear to be:

- 1 single-family residential lot
- 41 townhomes
- 189 apartments
- 160 multi-family units

This yields a total of 391 multi-family units given the existing zoning and land inventory.

### **High Density Residential (HDR) Zoning – Vacant land**

There are 14 vacant parcels zoned HDR with a total area of 29.17 acres. With a maximum density of 35 units per acre that means there is a potential capacity for 1,021 units. However, there are hurdles and constraints affecting the ability of the HDR properties to fully develop at capacity, so staff reviewed those properties and found:

- Eight of the parcels are small in size and isolated in nature thus giving them limited capacity for development. These parcels equal 3.78 acres of the total area and staff estimated them to have a buildable capacity of 20 units.
- The remaining 6 parcels are under one ownership and represent the balance of the 25.39 acres of HDR property. At the maximum density of 35 units per acre, the carrying capacity of the property is 889 units. However, an estimated 60% of the property in question is located within the floodway of the Lewis River. While that does not prevent the developer from utilizing density transfer, the HDR zoning district has a 35-foot height limit and therefore the ability of the property to actually capture density by building taller buildings is very limited. By staff's estimate, with only an estimated 10 acres of buildable property and the City's current parking standards a density of 20 units per acre appears to be a more practical target for the site. This means that the parcel has a practical buildable capacity of 200 units versus the 889 units estimated above.

Given this, staff's estimate is that the City has a capacity of 220 multi-family units on the remaining vacant residential land zoned for high density residential.

#### **Low-Density Residential (LDR) Zoning – Vacant land**

There are 38 parcels of vacant land in the LDR zones. Those parcels constitute 69.07 acres of vacant land available for residential construction. At the projected density of 4 units per acre, the gross building capacity would be 277 units.

However, 10 parcels equaling 41.16 acres of that total have preliminary approval as the Woodland Creek subdivision. And there are 2 parcels equaling 9 acres with preliminary approval as the Quail Meadows Subdivision for 31 lots. Both projects are in the final engineering stage of development. Both sites expect to begin installation of their public utility infrastructure in 2021 and hope to begin residential home construction by the fall of 2021.

There are another 20 empty single-family residential lots in the City for an additional 5.09 acres of vacant but buildable land.

This means there are only 7 vacant parcels with development potential left in the City. Those parcels have a total acreage of 13.82 acres. The actual sizes of these known vacant parcels (in acres) are: 0.85, 1.12, 1.27, 2.45, 3.33, and 4.8 acres.

If those lots were to develop at the target density of 6 units per acre, that means there is a building capacity of 83 units left within the Low-Density Residential zoning districts. Using a net loss of 20% of the property for public improvements, that number would be 66 net unit building capacity left within the Low-Density Residential zoning districts.

Staff therefore projects the City's vacant buildable low-density single-family residential capacity to be 247 units (150 units + 31 units + 66 Units = 247 units).

## HOW WAS RESIDENTIAL CAPACITY CALCULATED?

### GIS DATA

The City of Woodland maintains a Geographic Information System (GIS) for the City. The City's GIS is based upon information supplied by the Cowlitz County GIS system.

Using this data, staff downloaded the raw GIS data and sorted the information for all parcels within the City. Using tax assessor data, staff identified the parcels the vacant land use codes and those with no assessed values for structures. (Meaning those with no structures assessed for taxable value.)

With that subset of properties, staff used the Vision permitting system to identify properties that have approved development permits, or pending development applications. (For example, the attached data set identifies the Woodland Creek, and Heron Meadows subdivisions.) Staff then assigned the approved number of residential units that will occur because of those permits.

Staff then systematically reviewed the remaining properties identified as vacant and determined whether each parcel had:

- A structure (Either recently completed or not identified by the Cowlitz County Assessor's Office, plus the data was corrected for unit losses like demolition, fire, and relocation.)
- Would the zoning of the lot allow for residential development or redevelopment?
- Whether the lot was a Single-Family Residential (SFR) lot within an approved subdivision. Such lots were then identified as a vacant "SFR lot". (See attached data)
- Whether the lot had sufficient area for development and further division.
- Whether the lot has constraints that would prevent further development. (steep slopes, floodway, wetlands etc.)

Staff then used their best professional judgement to estimate the building capacity for those vacant properties using the zoning and development assumptions outlined in the building capacity summary above.

## BUILDING CAPACITY CONCLUSIONS

The 2016 City of Woodland Comprehensive Plan identified 174 acres of undeveloped residential land with a projected building capacity of 673 low density units (at 4 units per acre) and 619 high-density units (at a density of 20 units per acre). (See Table 3-1 on Page LU-16)

We know from building permit data that the residential construction since 2016 activity has been:

	New Construction Activity	Housing unit losses
2016	53 units	-1 SFR conversion to commercial
2017	54 units	-2 SFR to demolition for redevelopment
2018	27 units	-6 SFR to demolition for redevelopment
2019	24 units	None
2020	7 units	-5 multi-family units to fire and -2 single-family units to demolition
2021	2 units (to date)	None (to date)
<b>Total</b>	<b>167 new units (all low density SFR)</b>	<b>-19 units (12 SFR/5MFR)</b>

Using adjusted numbers, the expected residential capacity expected between 2021 and 2036, per the comprehensive plan, should be:

- Low-Density – 518 units
- Multi-Family – 624 units

Based upon the analysis of the data available at the time of this 2024 review, staff has identified the following residential building capacity:

	# of Parcels	Acreage	Existing Units	Projected Maximum (gross)	Adjusted Net Projection
<b>Commercial</b>	-	-	46	12 new	12 new
<b>Industrial</b>	-	-	22	0 new	0 new
<b>Medium Density Residential</b>	5	23.02	-	576 (MF)	391 (MF)
<b>High Density Residential</b>	14	29.17	-	1,021 (MF)	220 (MF)
<b>Low Density Residential</b>	38	69.07	-	277 (SF)	247 (SF)
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>121.26</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>1,886</b>	<b>870</b>

### Are we meeting Comprehensive Plan projections?

Low-Density projections – With projected goals of 518 low-density (single-family) units, staff foresees that there is a building capacity for 247 additional single-family units with the remaining vacant buildable low-density residential property within the City. This leaves the community with a deficiency of 271 units. That deficiency represents 40% of 2016 projections and 47% of the 2021 needs.

This deficiency can be to several factors:

- Existing construction has occurred at a significantly lower density than projected.
- Existing zoning allows for density to occur at lower densities than projected.
- Development tools that incentivize density at the City’s desired density goals are not used.

- City codes incentivize development at density less than projected by the Comprehensive Plan.

Multi-Family projections - With a projected goal of 624 multi-family units, staff foresees a projected building capacity for 623 additional multi-family units with the remaining vacant buildable multi-family zoned residential property within the City. This means that the community is on target to meet 99.8% of its multi-family unit projections.

However, it should be noted that these numbers are skewed by amendments made to the Comprehensive Plan in 2019.

**Effects of the 2019 comp plan changes**

In 2019, the City approved two comprehensive plan amendments that affected the multi-family land supply. Specifically, the 6.37-acre B Young RV amendment and the 5.52-acre Woodland Commerce Center amendment which converted property to residential multi-family zoning. Those two sites represent 11.89 acres (51.6%) of the medium-density property in the table above; 298 units (or 51.8%) of the gross units in the table above; and 201 units (or 51.4%) of the projected net units in the table above.

This is important because it means that without the 2019 comprehensive plan amendments the numbers would be radically skewed. Adjusted to not include B Young & Woodland Commerce, the residential land supply would like:

	# of Parcels	Acreage	Existing Units	Projected Maximum (gross)	Adjusted Net Projection
<b>Commercial</b>	-	-	46	12 new	12 new
<b>Industrial</b>	-	-	22	0 new	0 new
<b>Medium Density Residential</b>	2	11.13	-	278 (MF)	189 (MF)
<b>High Density Residential</b>	14	29.17	-	1,021 (MF)	220 (MF)
<b>Low Density Residential</b>	38	69.07	-	277 (SF)	247 (SF)
Total	57	109.37	68	1,586	668

Without the 2019 amendments, the city would only be capable of meeting 67.4% of its multi-family projected goals.

**Meeting growth projections with changes to the development code**

Amendments to the existing codes can address a portion of the projected deficiency in low-density units. However, low-density development is known to have the highest levels of market entry costs, and they burden the community with high maintenance and operation costs. However, infill and higher density development tools will serve to reduce those development cost pressures.

This does not consider affordability issues because supply and demand economics only address a portion of housing costs. For example, the supply of multi-family units is not guaranteed to positively affect the affordable cost of single-family residential residents. Other tools beyond supply-side land development will be required to be explored.