

# LAND QUANTITY ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY FOR SPOKANE COUNTY

## INTRODUCTION

The adopted County-wide Planning Policies (CWPPs) for Spokane County indicate that the land quantity analysis method developed by the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) should form the basis of local efforts. The guidebook - *Issues in Designating Urban Growth Areas Part I - Providing Adequate Urban Area Land Supply* - delineates a step-by-step process for determining the supply of land that may be considered to be available for growth.

This document - *Land Quantity Analysis Methodology for Spokane County* - is intended to augment that CTED process by addressing specific local circumstances. The CTED guidebook is attached for ease of reference.

The following steps will apply to the land quantity analysis process to be conducted by each jurisdiction in Spokane County.

## INFORMATION SOURCES FOR THE LAND QUANTITY ANALYSIS

The records of the Spokane County Assessor's Office will be utilized as the official base information for each jurisdiction's land quantity analysis. That information may be augmented by other sources or 'field' methods as appropriate. In addition, the official zoning and land use files for each town, city and Spokane County will be utilized.

## THE LAND QUANTITY ANALYSIS REPORTS AND FORMAT

Each jurisdiction will be responsible for developing its own land quantity analysis report. The land quantity analysis reports from each jurisdiction are intended to provide quantitative information regarding the theoretical ability of existing urban areas to accommodate additional residential and non-residential growth. This information will be useful to the Steering Committee of Elected Officials, the Spokane County Board of County Commissioners, each jurisdiction, and the public in the course of designating Urban Growth Areas (UGAs). It is recognized that the information in the report must be integrated with, and augmented by, other information from various Technical Committees as well as from each jurisdiction in order for Urban Growth Area (UGA) boundaries to be proposed and designated. Land capacity is but one of several factors which must be analyzed in order to adequately develop UGA proposals.

The primary purpose of the land quantity analysis reports will be to analyze residential, commercial, and industrial growth capacity within existing city limits and urbanizing unincorporated areas. The report will also provide an estimate of growth capacity within rural areas of unincorporated Spokane County.

At a minimum, the following information will be included in the reports:

- total number of existing platted lots in cities, towns, and urbanized county areas
- total number of lots in approved preliminary plats in cities, towns, and urbanized county areas broken down by year of approval and sunset date for the preliminary plat approval.
- total number of approved, but un-built, multi-family units in cities, towns, and urbanized county areas.
- total areas of vacant commercial and industrial land, sorted according to parcel size ranges (i.e.: less than .25 acre; .25 acre to 1 acre; 1 acre to 5 acres; 5 acres to 10 acres; etc.)
- total acres of unplatted land available for development, sorted according to generalized existing zoning categories.
- future capacity projections, based upon high, medium, and low-density scenarios.

The reports will also contain a complete listing of all assumptions made, list of participants (both governmental and non-governmental), and provisions or recommendations for wider public comment.

## **SEPA INTEGRATION**

The reports themselves will serve as a portion of the overall State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process for the establishment of UGAs. As such, it should project a range of alternatives for build-out based upon different future growth scenarios. The process should also provide opportunity for public comment. Concerns should be properly noted and incorporated into the final product.

## **TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REVIEW AND COMPILING OF REPORTS**

Once the individual land quantity and analysis reports for each jurisdiction are complete, the Land Quantity Technical Committee will review the analysis for consistency with the methodology as well as the existence of unique local conditions that may influence the analysis. Adjustments in the methodology or to the analysis may be appropriate if those reviews indicate that a deviation from the methodology's assumptions are warranted. A final land quantity report, essentially a compilation or summary of each individual report, will be forwarded to the Steering Committee of Elected Officials for its use.

The Land Quantity Technical Committee may find it useful to coordinate their review and information with other technical committees who are working toward a regional carrying capacity analysis.

## **WHERE LAND QUANTITY INVENTORIES WILL OCCUR**

1. Each incorporated town and city shall conduct a land quantity analysis within its own corporate limits.
2. Each city and town shall conduct a land quantity analysis within any adjacent unincorporated areas which are under study for potential inclusions within its UGA. An agreement with Spokane County should be made regarding the process for conducting such analysis.
3. Spokane County shall conduct a land quantity analysis within the urbanizing unincorporated areas. The primary focus of that study will generally be the Urban Impact Area (UIA) as delineated in the existing Land Use Element of the Generalized Comprehensive Plan for Spokane County. Additional areas, as appropriate, may be included in the land quantity analysis.
4. Spokane County shall conduct an analysis of its rural growth capacity by counting the number of vacant lots or acreage, partially-used parcels, and under-utilized land, exclusive of designated natural resource lands.
5. The Jurisdictions, as appropriate, shall cooperate in any land quantity analysis which involves geographic areas under study by two or more jurisdictions as potential UGAs. Formal written agreements should be enacted between the affected jurisdictions. Those agreements will automatically become an addendum to this methodology.

## BASIC CTED METHODOLOGY STEPS (Modified to Reflect Local Conditions)

**Step #1: Identify lands which are potential candidates to accommodate future growth-vacant, partially-used, and under-utilized land** (in order words, subtract all parcels committed to other uses).

The CTED guidelines define three general types of land that form the supply for eventual growth: **vacant land, partially-used land, and under-utilized land**. The definition of these terms has been modified below to fit location 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- Includes any lot or parcel that does not contain a structure or building improvement exceeding \$500 in value, as determined from the Assessor's records. All vacant lots within preliminary plats, where the preliminary approval is still valid, will be included in this category.

Land which is structure-free but contains a distinctive land use or clearly supports 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 calculated as vacant.

2. Partially-used land- The CTED guidelines define land in this category as being

*"...occupied by a use which is consistent with zoning but contains enough land to be further subdivided without need of rezoning."* In order words, any parcel containing at least two times the minimum lot size required by the applicable zone district could be considered partially-used.

However, as a minimum for local purposes, partially-used residential land in urban areas would typically include those properties that can be subdivided into five (5) or more lots, parcels or tracts consistent with existing zoning standards.

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

3. Under-utilized land-The CTED guidelines define these as parcels which *"...are zoned for more intensive use than that which currently occupies the property."* For example, a single family in a multi-family zoning district would fit within this category.

However, since there has been relatively little activity locally in the redevelopment of residential properties to higher densities, this category should not be applied to those situations.

An existing residential use(s) on a commercial or industrial zoned parcel will be considered under-utilized and counted as such.

**Step #2: Subtract all parcels that our community defines as not developable because of physical limitations.** For instance, once you have identified critical areas, such as wetlands, and have established plan policies and regulations prohibiting development in these areas, subtract these areas from the initial land supply pool.

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.

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 it 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
- Shorelines
- Water bodies

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 quantity analysis.

**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.150).

This category will 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. The types of ownerships, for example, may include utility companies, school districts, parks departments, or railroads to name a few. In any case though, 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.

1. Roads or right-of-ways - this category includes lands which will be needed for circulation facilities as relatively undeveloped areas begin to develop. 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.
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."

The CTED guidelines suggest a build-out factor which 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.

On a county-wide basis, a build-out factor of 70% is an acceptable average. Therefore, it would be assumed that approximately 30% of the total available land would not be available for development during the next 20 years.

**Step# 5:**        **Determine total capacity.** After determining desirable densities and land uses for various areas without your jurisdiction, 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, under- utilized, 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 at this point in time. The land quantity analysis and report will estimate that future land capacity in a high, medium, and low scenario given existing zoning.

**Step# 6**        **Draw the urban growth boundaries for your jurisdiction which meet criteria you have set.** Include enough developable, suitable, and available vacant, under-utilized or partially-used land area to meet ... projected growth.