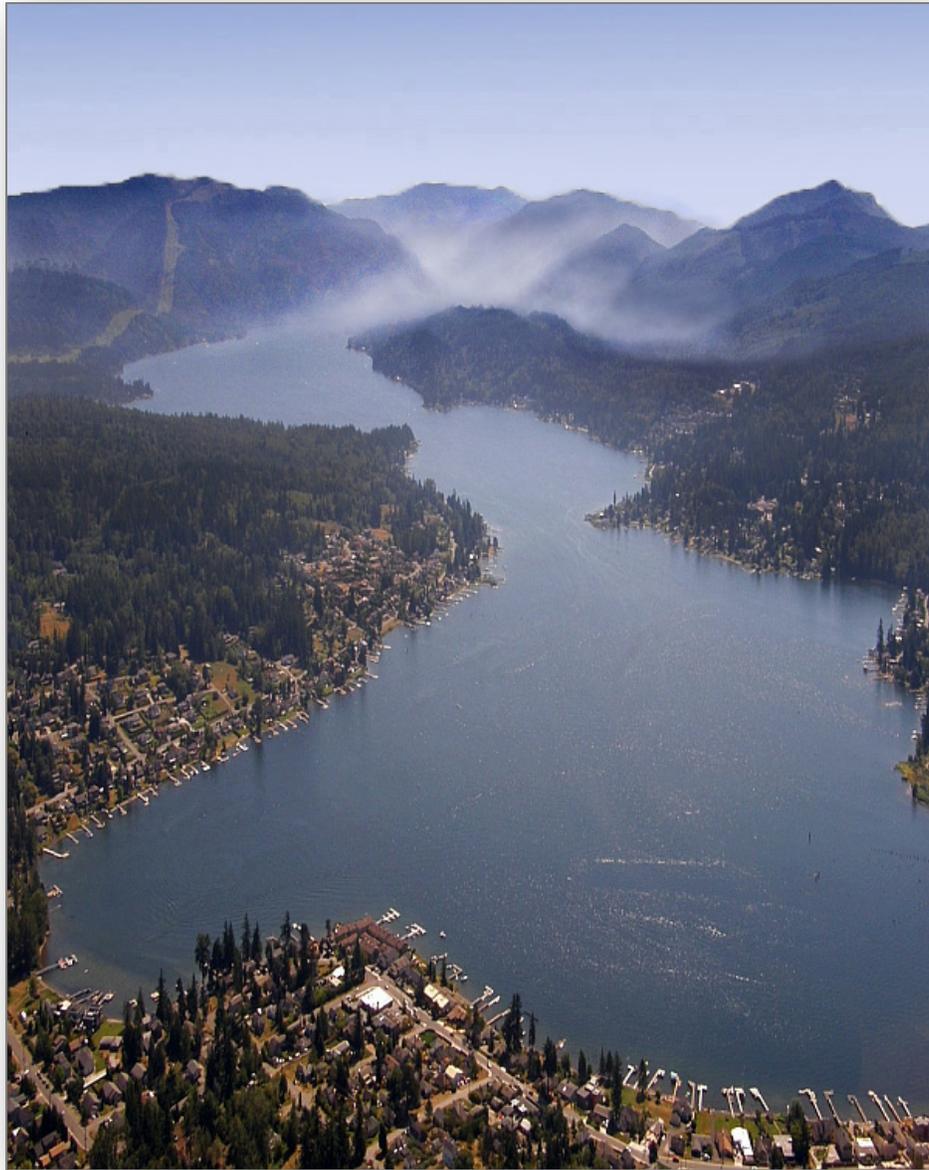


Lake Whatcom Watershed Annual Build-out Analysis Report 2014



City of Bellingham
Planning & Community Development Department
January 2014



INTRODUCTION

Annually, beginning in 2005, the City of Bellingham Planning Department has performed a Lake Whatcom Watershed Build-out Analysis (Build-out Analysis) of existing residential housing units and potential developable lands in the watershed.

The purpose of the annual analysis is to provide a summary of development in the Lake Whatcom Watershed. The analysis is a “gross” analysis, so as to make the process simple and repeatable on a yearly basis.

METHODS AND ANALYSIS

This simple analysis utilizes the GIS parcel square footage and the underlying zoning density to determine the gross potential residential capacity per parcel. The Build-out Analysis does NOT take into consideration specific lot restrictions such as 25 year restrictions, other temporary or permanent restrictions, current building permits, or critical area reductions. Lands in public ownership (including all land owned by the Sudden Valley Community Association), land devoted to utilities/streets, and lands where residential construction is not permitted are excluded from the available land supply. Existing residential units are identified through the County Assessor's Land Use Codes and Improvement Valuation. Parcels with improvement values less than \$10,000 are considered vacant and re-developable in this analysis.

Existing Dwelling Units: Parcels with an Assessor's Residential Land Use Code and an Improvement Value greater than \$10,000 (including uses coded with forestry or ranch descriptions and an improvement value greater than \$10,000).

Vacant Land: Parcels in an area with a residential zoning use (or where residential units are permitted) and also have an Assessor Improvement Value less than or equal to \$10,000.

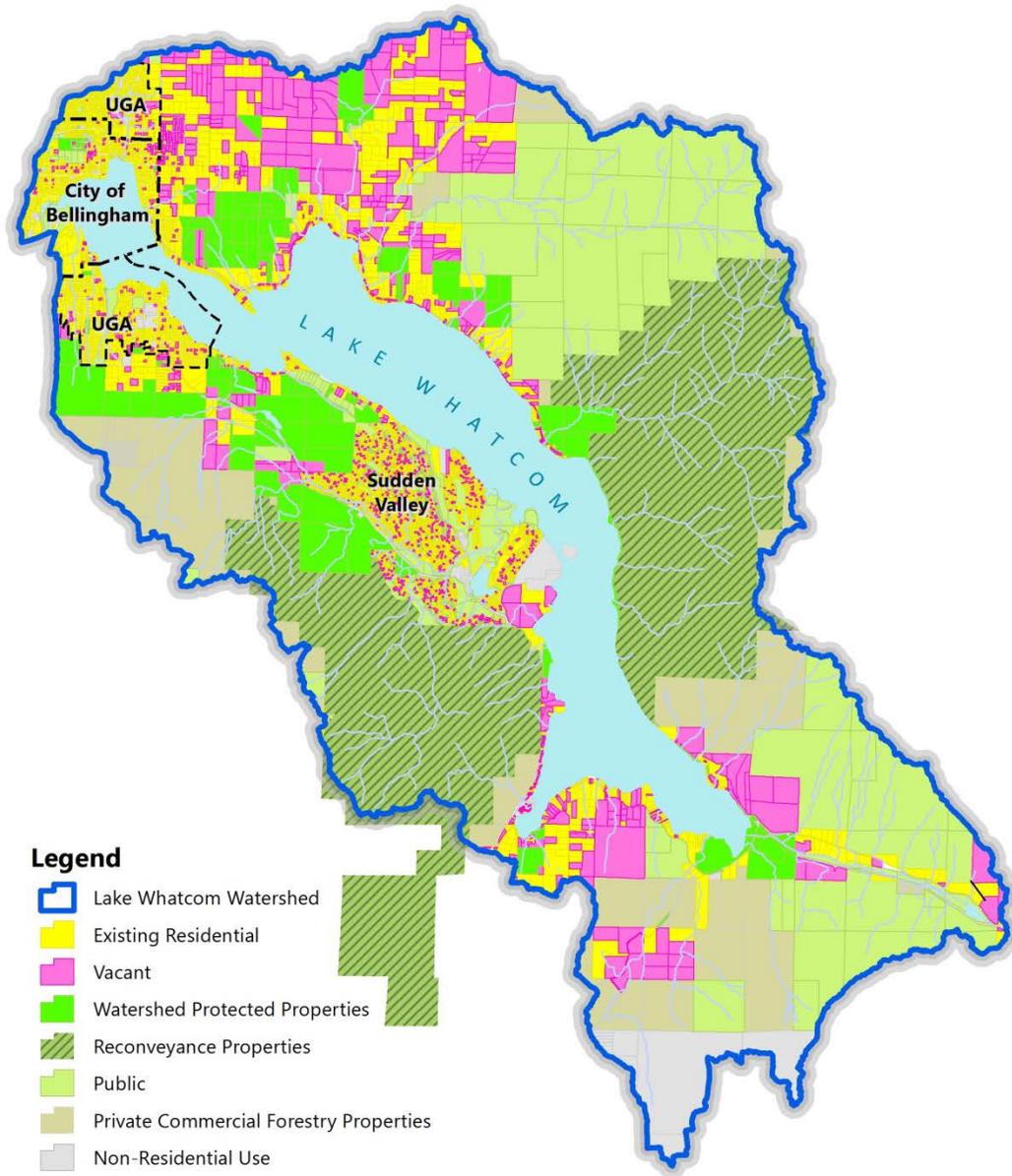
Developable Capacity (Potential Units): determined using current total parcel acreage of a vacant parcel (derived from GIS and excluding areas over water) and the underlying current zoning density.

Parcel data since the beginning of this analysis in 2005 has varied greatly in accuracy. In 2005, county parcel GIS spatial data was not updated at the same time as the Assessor's database and resulted in “unmatched” GIS parcel records, or records that did not contain current information. Recent efforts by the City and County have resulted in better and more accurate parcel data, though this issue does still occasionally occur in current parcel data.

Since 2005, there have been year to year discrepancies in capacity estimates. Several factors cause these annual changes. **First** is the above mentioned “back-log” in parcel data updates. Assessor paper maps, assessor GIS datasets and the Assessor database are not always updated at the same time. This results in data that is “out-of-sync” with each other. **Secondly**, the GIS parcel data is spatially updated and made more accurate each year. This results in minor changes to the parcel acreage in which capacity is calculated, and in turn can adjust the capacity potential. **Thirdly** is the issue of predicting/modeling capacity based on current zoning and acreage versus what actually ends up happening in the “real world. For example Down Zoning and Up Zoning can impact capacity calculations, as we saw in February of 2008 when the Geneva UGA boundary was adjusted and portions of that area were “down zoned”. Annexation of UGA lands will also cause a shift in the number of units (existing and vacant) between the UGA and the City, as was the case in 2011 with the Geneva/Idaho Annexation.”. Lot consolidations and clustering are other influences on capacity calculations.

2014 Lake Whatcom Watershed Buildout Analysis

Watershed Breakout Areas	Existing Dwelling Units As of Jan 2014	Developable Capacity (Potential Units on Vacant Lands)	Gross Potential Buildout (Existing Units + Potential Units)	Developable (Vacant) Acres	Total Assessed Value of Developable (Vacant) Lands
City	1,595	132	1,727	29	\$9,981,388
UGA	1,551	114	1,665	53	\$7,969,679
Sudden Valley	2,566	664	3,230	192	\$23,958,375
Rural Watershed	1,165	901	2,066	3,855	\$63,080,627
Totals	6,877	1,811	8,688	4,129	\$104,990,069



EXISTING SINGLE FAMILY PARCELS BY SIZE

By examining the size of parcels with existing single family units we are able to understand the zoning density of existing residential areas. Between the four regions (City, UGA, Sudden Valley & Rural areas), the size of parcels varies greatly. For example, Sudden Valley single family lots are generally quite small (<7,200 sf per unit) whereas the average single family lot in the Rural areas is closer to one acre.

CITY	# of Parcels	Number of Existing Units	Percentage
<7,200 sf	245	245	23%
7,200 sf - 10,000 sf	300	300	28%
10,000 sf - 15,000 sf	358	358	33%
15,000 sf - 20,000 sf	93	93	9%
20,000 sf - 1 acre	77	77	7%
1 acre - 5 acres	13	13	1%
	1086	1086	100%

UGA	# of Parcels	Number of Existing Units	Percentage
<7,200 sf	28	28	2%
7,200 sf - 10,000 sf	331	331	22%
10,000 sf - 15,000 sf	709	709	47%
15,000 sf - 20,000 sf	191	191	13%
20,000 sf - 1 acre	196	196	13%
1 acre - 5 acres	43	43	3%
5 acres - 10 acres	2	2	0%
	1500	1500	100%

SUDDEN VALLEY	# of Parcels	Number of Existing Units	Percentage
<7,200 sf	1271	1271	55%
7,200 sf - 10,000 sf	515	515	22%
10,000 sf - 15,000 sf	374	374	16%
15,000 sf - 20,000 sf	112	112	5%
20,000 sf - 1 acre	53	53	2%
1 acre - 5 acres	4	4	0%
5 acres - 10 acres	1	1	0%
10 acres - 20 acres	1	1	0%
20 acres - 50 acres	1	1	0%
	2332	2332	100%

RURAL	# of Parcels	Number of Existing Units	Percentage
<7,200 sf	62	62	6%
7,200 sf - 10,000 sf	66	66	6%
10,000 sf - 15,000 sf	114	114	10%
15,000 sf - 20,000 sf	141	141	13%
20,000 sf - 1 acre	230	230	21%
1 acre - 5 acres	323	323	29%
5 acres - 10 acres	123	123	11%
10 acres - 20 acres	32	32	3%
20 acres - 50 acres	15	15	1%
	1106	1106	100%

DEVELOPABLE PARCELS BY ZONING DENSITY

In order to understand whether future development might be more or less dense we have examined the underlying allowable zoning density of the Developable or Vacant parcels.

Below is a breakdown by region and by zoning density of the Developable/Vacant parcels.

CITY	# Vacant Parcels	Potential Units	% of Potential Units
RS (6000 sf density)	15	15	11%
RS (7200 sf density)	43	54	41%
RS (10000 sf density)	5	5	4%
RS (12000 sf density)	17	19	14%
RS (15000 sf density)	3	3	2%
RS (20000 sf density)	35	36	27%
	118	132	100%

UGA	# Vacant Parcels	Potential Units	% of Potential Units
UR (217800sf density)	114	114	100%
	114	114	100%

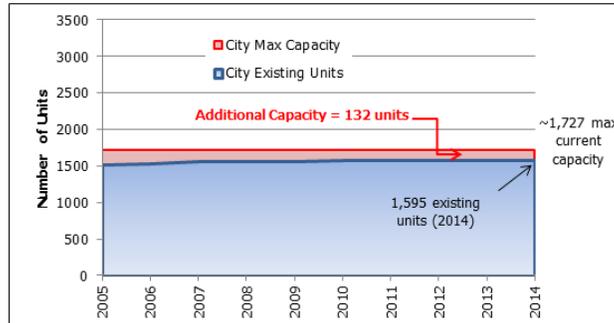
SUDDEN VALLEY	# Vacant Parcels	Potential Units	% of Potential Units
RR3 (14,520 sf density)	648	650	98%
R5A (217800 sf density)	5	14	2%
	653	664	100%

RURAL	# Vacant Parcels	Potential Units	% of Potential Units
RR2 (21780 sf density)	9	9	1%
R2A (87120 sf density)	11	11	1%
RR5A (217800 sf density)	17	19	2%
RR5A* (217,800 sf density)	10	10	1%
R5A (217,800 sf density)	637	745	83%
RF (871,200 sf density)	83	107	12%
	767	901	100%

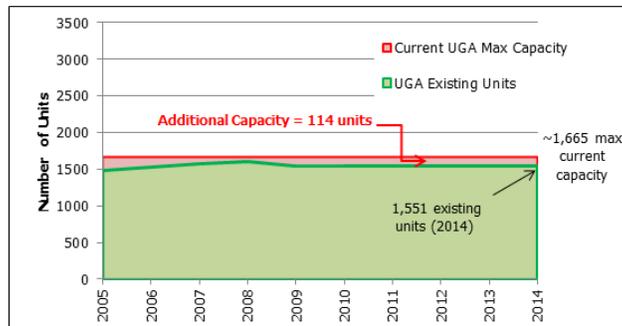
A LOOK BACK

Even though there are several reasons for year to year discrepancies in capacity, this body of work provides a general idea of development trends over time and available capacity:

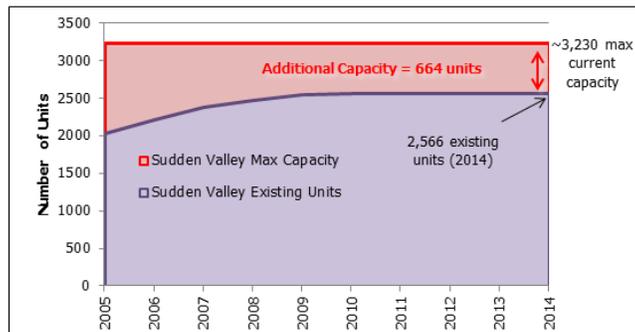
City



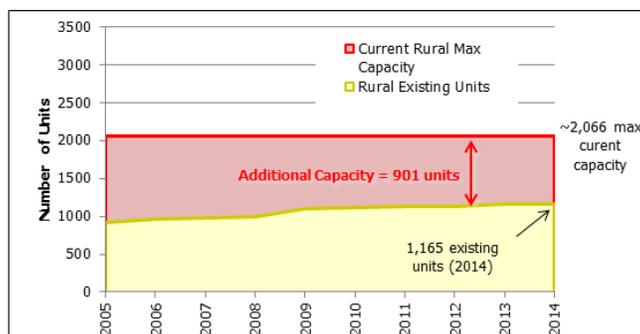
UGA

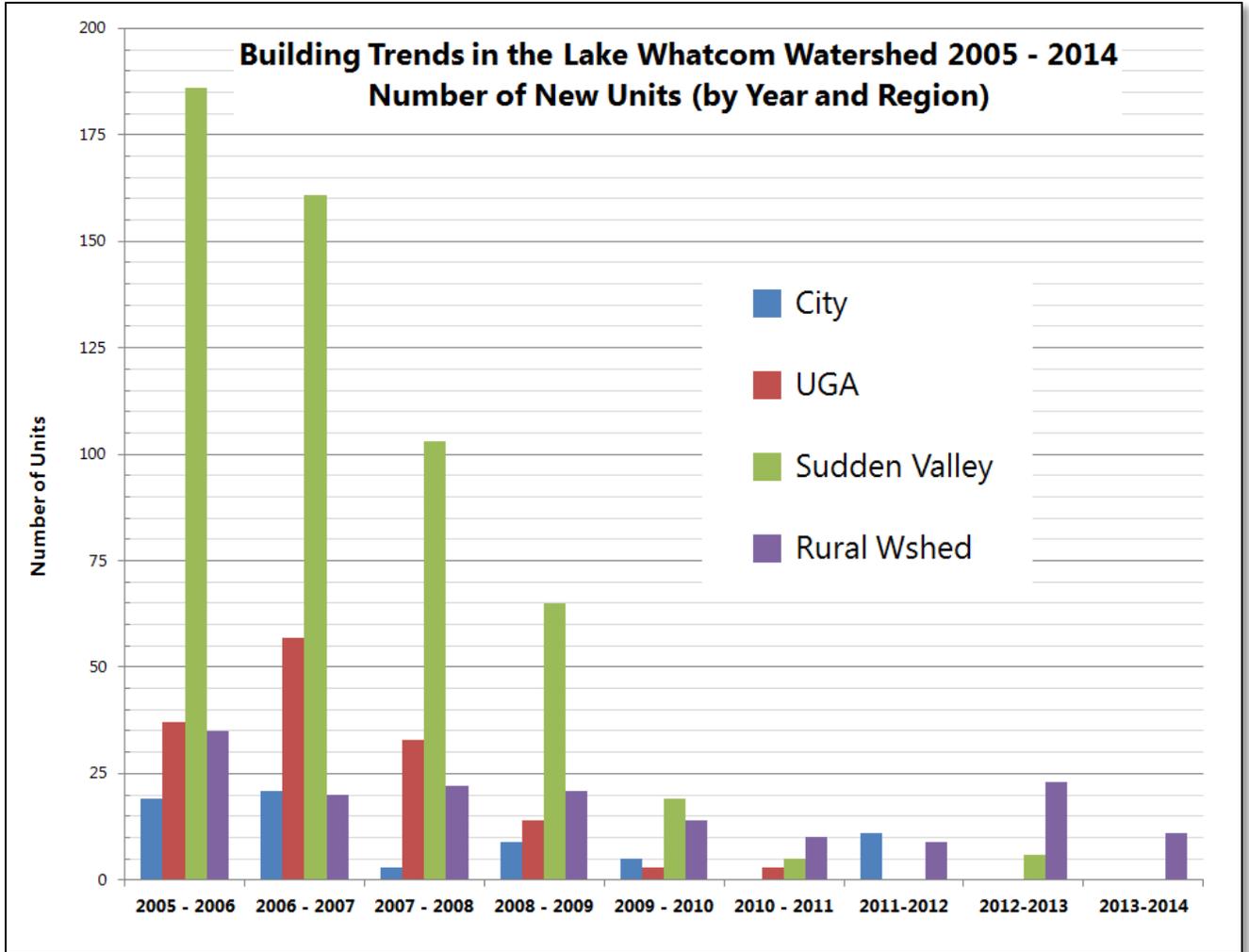


Sudden Valley



Rural Watershed





OWNERSHIP MAP

There are several timber companies and private owners that own large portions of property in and around the Lake Whatcom Watershed. Most of these large private holdings are within areas zoned Commercial Forestry and Rural Forestry. Due to development restrictions on CF lands, these lands are not included as lands with potential capacity for residential development. However, logging and other activities allowed on these lands do have potential to affect the water quality of the Lake Whatcom Watershed. Below is a map highlighting these major private and public ownership holdings, as well as the recent land reconveyance from DNR to Whatcom County.

