



MEMORANDUM

Date: July 10, 2014
To: Olympia City Council
From: Todd Stamm, Principal Planner
Subject: Comprehensive Plan Update and the Buildable Lands Report – Staff Recommendation

The Growth Management Act requires that six counties, including Thurston County in cooperation with its cities, periodically prepare a “Buildable Lands Report” that examines whether those counties have sufficient lands available for anticipated growth and development. The counties and their cities are to review the most recent Buildable Lands Report to ensure their comprehensive plan remains consistent with the Growth Management Act.

During the Planning Commission’s consideration of Olympia’s Comprehensive Plan update, the most recent report prepared for the County by the Thurston Regional Planning Council staff was dated 2008. An update was anticipated, but for budget reasons the specific release date was then in doubt.

In March of 2014 that new version of the Buildable Lands Report was adopted by the Thurston Regional Planning Council -- at the same time that the Olympia City Council was finalizing its public hearing draft of the Comprehensive Plan. City staff evaluated this new Buildable Lands Report and concluded that the draft Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the information included in the new Report. However, the result of this timing was that the draft Comprehensive Plan now being considered by the Council still references the now-out-of-date 2008 document.

Staff recommends that the draft Comprehensive Plan’s references to the Buildable Lands Report be revised to refer to the 2014 Report. Staff’s proposed edits to the Comprehensive Plan are attached to this memorandum. They are included at this time for information purposes only. Action on these proposed edits is not needed until after the Council’s public comment period is completed August 5, 2014. Note that these changes only update background information; they do not change the substance or policies of the Plan.

Staff-proposed edits to the Council Public Hearing Draft of the Olympia Comprehensive Plan

Housing section of Land Use and Urban Design chapter (page 103 of Council Public Hearing Draft):

Olympia is part of a larger housing market extending throughout Thurston County and beyond. Thus planning for housing is done based on anticipated shares of this larger area. The 2010 Census indicated that Olympia and its urban growth area included almost 26,000 housing units. As estimated in the Thurston Regional Planning Council "Profile," 57% were single-family homes, 39% were multi-family (shared-wall) units, and 4% were manufactured housing. The ~~2008~~ 2014 Buildable Lands Report for Thurston County estimated that ~~more than 11,000~~ about 13,000 new housing units will be needed by ~~2030~~ 2035 to accommodate population growth in Olympia's urban growth area. Of these, about ~~60%~~ 45% are expected to be single-family homes.

Based on existing zoning and development patterns, ~~the~~ that Buildable Lands Report indicated ~~s~~ the area ~~can~~ could accommodate ~~almost 15,000~~ about 16,000 new housing units. In addition to large areas zoned for single-family development, almost 400 acres of vacant multi-family-and duplex zoned land ~~is~~ were available. And, an additional 500 acres of vacant and partially-used commercial land ~~can~~ could be redeveloped for new housing.

TS:nl