

May 18, 2017

**Battle Ground Response to Issue 5 - Part I of 2**  
**Supplement to Buildable Lands Report for City of Battle Ground**

**Residential Land**

In Issue 5 of the Order, the Growth Management Hearings Board found that Battle Ground's expanded Urban Growth Area (UGA) was larger than necessary to accommodate its projected growth over the 2015-2035 horizon. Based on the County's most recent Buildable Lands Report (BLR), the Board found the County erred by expanding the Battle Ground UGA by 82 acres.

**Action Item 1.** To resolve this issue, Battle Ground will be working with the County to eliminate the 82 acres added to its UGA. As part of this process, the zoning will revert to R-5 and the UH-20 zoning overlay will be removed, as this designation applies to lands located inside an urban growth area. To ensure this area is protected for economic development, and is not further subdivided,<sup>1</sup> the City will be working with the County to apply the rural area's UR-20 zoning overlay to these properties. The UR-20 Overlay would replace the UH-20 Overlay.

**Action Item 2.** In 2013, the City observed that residential densities were not being built to the 6 unit per acre targets established in the Plan. Staff found that the minimum lot size standards as well as the density transfer provisions in the City's development code were not allowing for developers to realize the densities authorized in the low density residential districts. The low-density districts authorized a maximum density as established in the Plan, with the imposed minimum lot sizes and the amount of land needed for infrastructure deductions; density targets were not being met. The City fixed this by reducing the minimum lot size standards within the low-density residential districts. As a result, the development trends since ordinance passage have proven to create higher density plats as indicated in Table 1 below. Please see Exhibit A, Ordinance 13-07 for the specific code changes. Given the recent adoption of these measures, the BLR land capacity analysis was unable to account for the increased densities resulting from Ordinance 13-07, which are described below.

**Observation 1.** Development trends have changed dramatically since BLR publication, so the VBLM analysis lacked current data on development capacity and density occurring in Battle Ground. This concern is noted in the BLR, as the report states, "it is important to note that the observed densities occurred at a period of a deep recession having a significant impact to development occurring in the housing sector. However, Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Vancouver, Washougal and Clark County have adopted local development regulations that may reflect higher density development within the planning horizon" (p. 11). Given the data the BLR analysis was based on was derived from a period of no or low growth, this BLR analysis is now being supplemented to account for recent development trends. With current development figures factored in, the County will have a more accurate picture of Battle Ground's residential density.

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<sup>1</sup> As the Mayor addressed in prior testimony, this has been a challenge for lands just outside UGA borders.

Since the publication of the BLR, multi-family density took a sharp increase to 51.3 units per acre, due to new projects built during this time frame. For single-family residential platted lots, density is above 7 units per acre on average. In summary, Battle Ground's present densities are not 4.2 units per acre, and the City is being developed out at fairly high urban densities. As indicated in Table 1 below, Battle Ground's residential density is **13.37 units per acre**, far exceeding its residential density targets. This change is largely the result of the passage of Ordinance 13-07 along with the upturn in the market since the recession.

**Table 1. Battle Ground Residential Densities from January 2015 to March 2017.**

Single Family Subdivisions	Preliminary Approval	Net Acres	#Lots/ Units	Density
Cedars Landing	8/28/2014	24.72	172	6.96
Creekside Heights	5/21/2015	9.75	98	10.05
Cedars Village	7/7/2016	20.26	117	5.77
Eastbrook Subdivision	5/13/2016	9.23	80	8.67
Bloomquist Subdivision	2/24/2017	19.88	123	6.19
Parkway Heights	4/10/2017	8.45	39	4.62
<b>Multi-Family Density</b>		3.86	198	<b>51.3</b>
<b>Platted Single-Family Density</b>				<b>7.04</b>
<b>Combined Residential Density</b>				<b>13.37</b>

### **Employment Land**

**Action Item 1.** As noted earlier, the City will be removing the requested 82 acres from the City's Urban Growth Boundary that was brought in with this Plan update. Further detail is above.

**Action Item 2.** Second, the City has adopted the following policies in the Plan update to introduce more compact and efficient employment land use developments via mixed-use objectives, updating City long range plans, and promoting Old Town businesses through partnerships and other means. These new goals and objectives are listed below:

#### ***Economic Development Goal 2:***

*Provide a sufficient amount of land for commercial and business uses, through a supportive Land Use Plan and development regulations.*

#### **Objectives**

EDO2.1 Maintain and update the City's land use, transportation and utility plans on a regular basis to guide the future of the City's major commercial areas and help them respond to change.

EDO2.2 Provide a mix of uses that allows for the daily needs of resident to be met within Battle Ground.

***Economic Development Goal 3:***

*The City encourages regional and local economic development strategies.*

***Objectives***

*EDO3.3 Partner with the Battle Ground Chamber of Commerce and Old Town Battle Ground Association to promote and market the City's retail establishments. Assist the Chamber and Old Town Battle Ground in development of community marketing materials.*

**Observation 1.** Similar to Residential trends, Battle Ground's employment sector is densifying at a greater rate than outlined in the BLR. The trends represented in the BLR were largely derived from the recession and not representative of Battle Ground's employment density. Since that time, Battle Ground's top 10 employers on average have grown by 8.4%. This growth has occurred within their existing site acreage, except for Anderson Plastics, which expanded a portion of their growth outside of the City. Tapani Underground, Battle Ground's second largest employer, has experienced the largest amount of growth at 40%, adding 107 jobs. This has initiated on-site construction of approximately 27,000 square feet of warehousing and office space.

**Battle Ground's Top 10 Employers, Growth from 2015 – March 2017.**

Employer	Employee Count		Percent change
	January 2015	March 2017	
BG School District	714	716	0.3%
Tapani Underground	270	377	40%
Cascade Student Transportation	192	200	4%
Walmart	183	172	-6%
Vancouver Clinic	131	148	13%
Anderson Plastics/Dairy	155	137*	*This decrease is a result of the company splitting operations outside of the City, but the company is experiencing overall growth.
JRT Mechanical	119	122	3%
Victory Health Care	88	102	16%
Safeway	87	87	0%
City of Battle Ground	75	79	5%
<b>Average Growth</b>			<b>8.4%</b>

With this growth, the City is exceeding its employment goals. Neither the City nor the County have an employment density target (i.e., jobs per acre). The Countywide land capacity analysis

assumed 20 employees per acre, but this is an average and extremely difficult to measure given the varying degrees of employment densities throughout the County. For Battle Ground it is understood that 10 employees per acre is a more reasonable assumption for considering the adequacy of commercial land supplies. However, to be conservative, the City's update analysis for the compliance matter continues to assume 20 employees per acre. Updated information on commercial land supplies is separately provided. That analysis also addresses the City's overall UGA size, population allocation, and whether there is sufficient land within the UGA to accommodate the next twenty years of growth.

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