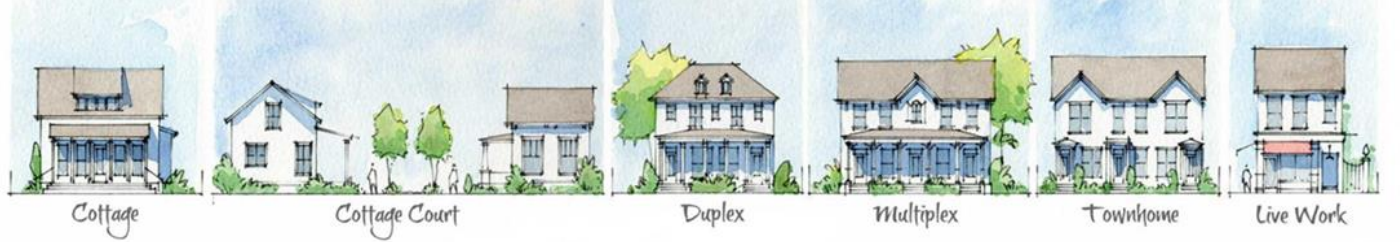




# Skamania County and City of Stevenson

## Housing Needs Analysis



## Acknowledgements

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## Section I. SUMMARY

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As part of the greater Portland-Vancouver bi-state region, Skamania County is experiencing unprecedented growth in population and households. **This trend is driving up housing needs** and is expected to continue over the foreseeable future as the Pacific Northwest continues to outpace national growth trends.

In addition to regional growth pressure caused in-part by commuters to distant job markets, **Skamania County's attractive location on the Columbia River and recreational amenities continue to attract part-time seasonal residents, who currently own about 1 in 5 dwellings.**

According to Windermere Realty, between 2018 and 2019, **average home prices in Skamania County increased 26%, which was by far the largest increase of any county** within the Region (second place was Columbia County with a 4% annual increase).

Income in Skamania County is insufficient for many people to comfortably afford housing. As of 2017, **there were nearly 1,100 of cost-burdened households** (paying over 30% of their income on housing). This 2017 data reflects a point in time before the double-digit housing prices began to occur, so the housing affordability problem is only getting worse.

Looking ahead, **Skamania County is projected to add another 3,619 new residents over the next 20 years, which will require another 1,949 additional housing units** to be constructed.

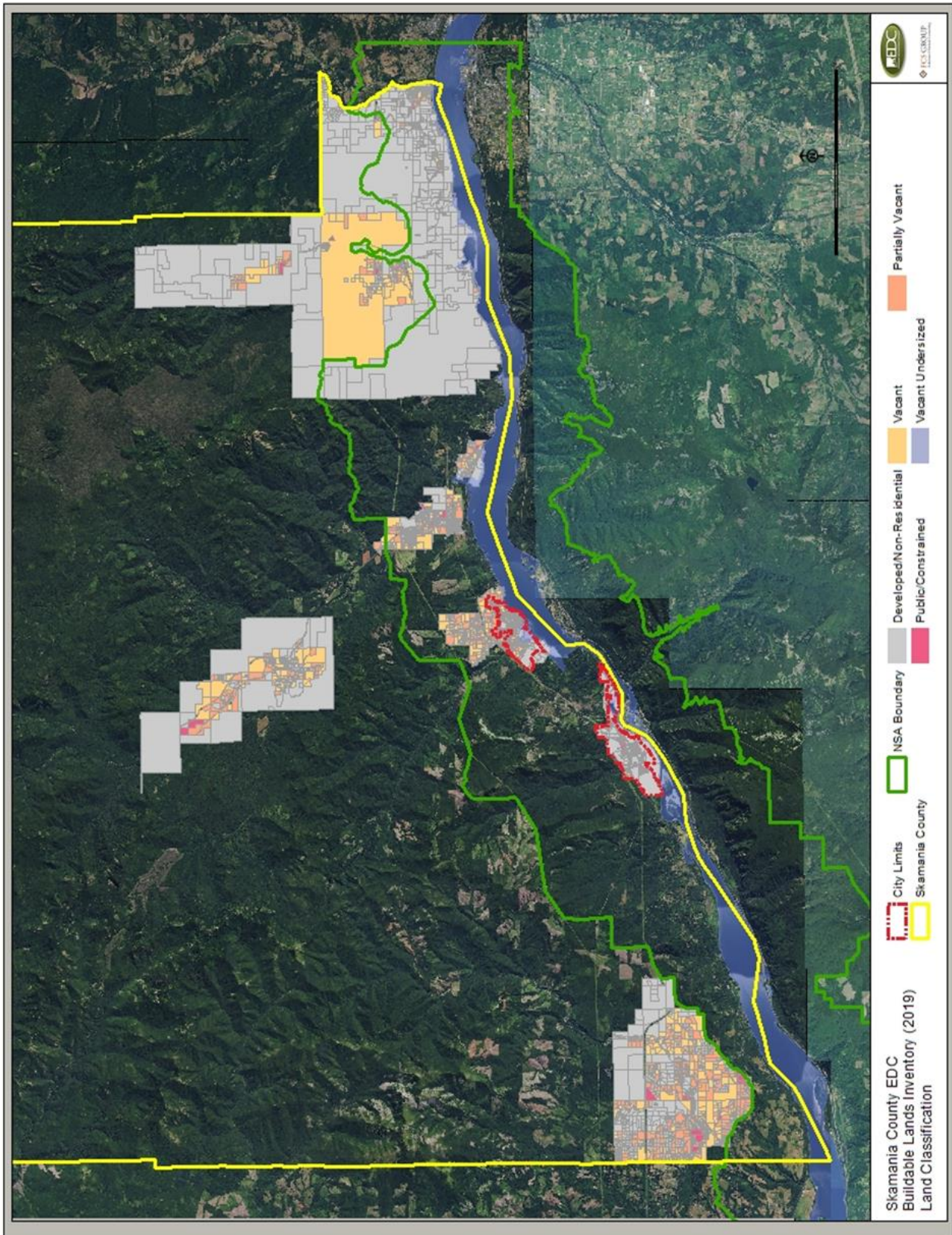
**With current vacancy rates near zero, the growing 20-year demand will support a variety of new housing types**, including 1,142 owner-occupied dwellings, 475 long-term renter dwellings, 331 short-term renter dwellings, and 20 units of group quarters (transitional housing units).

**It is estimated that 45% of this future housing demand (800 to 900 units) will need to be affordable to middle-income households** (with incomes less than \$88,000). Middle housing includes cottages, townhomes, duplexes, garden apartments as well as accessory dwelling units, which can be built at a lower cost than traditional rural detached housing.

**This study has identified and mapped 8,746 acres of potentially buildable land area** within Skamania County (**Exhibit 1.1**) which is zoned for new housing. **However, over 80% of this land is not appropriately zoned and/or served by utilities to address middle housing needs.** Based on existing policies and plans, the housing that will be constructed will meet the upper-income and seasonal investor demand segments but will not fully address middle-housing demand.

Currently, middle housing development is only being planned in the City of Stevenson, which accounts for just 8% of the County's buildable residential land inventory. **This study recommends that Skamania County and the City of Stevenson work in concert to amend local development codes and refresh infrastructure investment strategies** so that additional cottages, plexes, townhomes, and garden apartments can be built to address these trends.

Exhibit 1.2: Residential Land Base with all constraints



## Section II. INTRODUCTION

---

The Skamania Economic Development Council (EDC) in partnership with the Skamania County, the City of Stevenson and Port of Skamania, selected FCS GROUP and WSP USA (planning consultants) to conduct a countywide assessment of buildable lands, housing needs and strategies to address future housing demand.

### II.A. WORK COMPLETED

This work was completed during 2019 and included input from the Technical Advisory Committee and community officials, developers, real estate brokers, business owners, school district representatives and housing advocacy groups. Key work elements entailed the following.

#### **Buildable Lands Inventory Tasks**

- ✓ Complete a countywide Buildable Lands Inventories (BLI). The inventory includes detailed information about tax lots in Skamania County and their suitability for residential development.
- ✓ Determine parcels and parcel areas using the Skamania County tax assessor parcel layer.
- ✓ Identify tax lots that do not have potential residential or employment growth capacity, including those in state and federal recreation areas.
- ✓ Identify constrained lands, such as federally owned lands, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA) restrictions, as well as those in floodplains, containing steep slopes (25% or more) which are least suitable for future housing development.
- ✓ Consider existing and needed infrastructure, including water availability.
- ✓ Identify other lands to exclude (streets, rights-of-way, etc.).
- ✓ Determine public / semi-public parcels (publicly owned land, church owner land, etc.).
- ✓ Identify vacant tax lots by zoning class
- ✓ Determine developed areas and identify parcels that are fully developed.
- ✓ Determine potential infill area.

#### **Housing Needs Assessment Tasks**

- ✓ Complete a countywide housing needs assessment (HNA). The includes an analysis of the socioeconomic characteristics and trends affecting housing demand, recent housing development trends, existing housing inventory, market conditions, and projected economic trends.
- ✓ Create an inventory of existing housing stock to include the age, condition, and location of existing housing as well as the amount of housing that is owner occupied, and an inventory of rental housing.

- ✓ Review regional trends that affect housing needs in Skamania County including the amount of housing used for short-term rentals and vacation homes.
- ✓ Develop a market analysis that considers the cost of housing by type, the amount of time housing is on the market, and listing to sales ratio. This analysis takes into account trends in: new home construction; issued building permits; new household formations, and homeownership analysis.
- ✓ Create a projection of housing need by type, density, and price point.

### Housing Strategy & Zoning Tasks

- ✓ Develop a countywide housing strategy that will serve as an overarching framework that combines the BLI and HNA. The final strategy will include recommendations for changes to housing policy and zoning codes to encourage residential development as identified by local stakeholders.

## II.B. KEY FOCUS AREAS

To conduct this assessment, eight focus areas were selected by the Technical Advisory Committee that demonstrate the greatest potential for a range of housing, including workforce housing needs.

Focus areas include:

- City of Stevenson (urban growth area)
- Carson area
- Home Valley area
- Mill A area
- Cook area
- Stabler area
- Underwood area
- West End area

## II.C. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

To obtain input on the proposed plan, WSP conducted 20 stakeholder interviews in early October 2019. Interviews were conducted as informal conversations intended to understand individual and organizational perspectives, including up to four stakeholders per interview. Discussion topics generally covered the following:

- The adequacy of housing options in their community
- What specific types of housing are needed to meet current demand
- Specific barriers to housing development in Skamania County and the City of Stevenson
- Specific knowledge about utility and infrastructure needs to support housing for a site or community
- Top priorities should be to enhance housing options



These interviews helped to inform the housing strategy recommendations. Notable themes include the following:

- Housing options in Skamania County are inadequate for single-income earners, service workers, low-income residents, and those with housing assistance needs.
- A variety of housing options are needed across all market segments, especially multifamily (apartments and townhomes), mixed use in appropriate locations, and specialized housing for seniors, cottage housing options, and live-work spaces.
- Housing barriers include financial risk for less profitable housing types, high development costs and long permitting time lines, and a shortage of construction labor. Local regulations, including Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA) requirements, are a barrier to housing development, as is a lack of sewer infrastructure in outlying areas of Stevenson and all of unincorporated areas, particularly in Carson.
- Priorities to enhance housing options include updating local codes to remove barriers, for example by encouraging accessory dwelling units, plexes and townhomes, senior living and apartments, generating additional financial resources for encouraging development of income-restricted housing, obtaining grants for community development, and building relationships between regulators and developers.

A complete summary of community input received from interview participants is provided in **Appendix A**.

## Section III. HOUSING NEEDS ANALYSIS

This housing needs forecast represents a 20-year projection from the base year (2019) through year 2039. These technical findings are also intended to serve as a forecast for planning purposes.

### III.A. METHODOLOGY

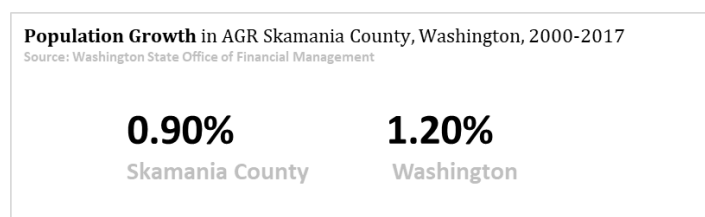
The methodology for projecting housing needs for Skamania County considers a mix of demographic and socio-economic trends, housing market characteristics and long-range population growth projections. Population is a primary determinate for household formations—which in-turn drives housing need.

County-wide population, households, income and market characteristics are described in this section using available data provided by reliable sources, such as the U.S. Census Bureau (Census and American Community Survey), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) and the City of Stevenson and Skamania County planning departments. Where trends or long-range projections are provided by an identified data source, FCS GROUP has included extrapolations or interpolations of the data to arrive at a base year (2019 estimate) and forecast year (2039 projection).

The housing need forecast translates population growth into households and households into housing need by dwelling type, tenancy (owner vs. renter) and affordability level.

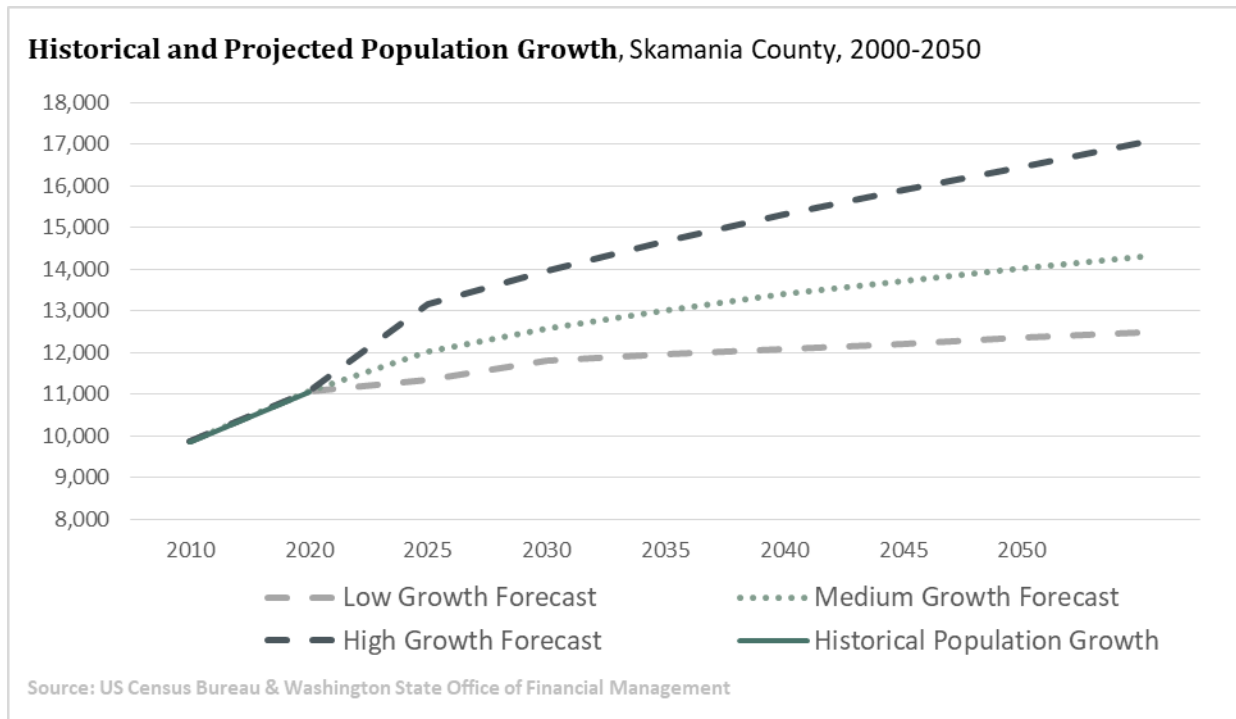
### III.B. DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMICS

Over the 17-year period from 2000 to 2017, population in Skamania County has increased by 16.5%, from 9,872 in 2000 to 11,498 “year-round” residents in 2017. Historically, between 2000 and 2017 Skamania County’s population increased at an annual growth rate (AGR) of 0.9%, which was below the Washington state average of 1.2% during this time frame.



According to the Washington State Office of Financial Management, Skamania County population is projected to add new residents over the coming decades with projected increases ranging from 695 to 4,174 people over the next 20 years (0.2% to 1.3% avg. annual growth rate) as shown in **Exhibit 2.1**. As population increases, the demand for all types of housing will increase.

**Exhibit 2.1**



Skamania County has a substantially older population than most of Washington. In Skamania County, 18.5% of the population are 65 or older, compared to 14.4% for Washington as a whole. The median age of county residents was 46 in 2017, compared with the State average of 37.6.



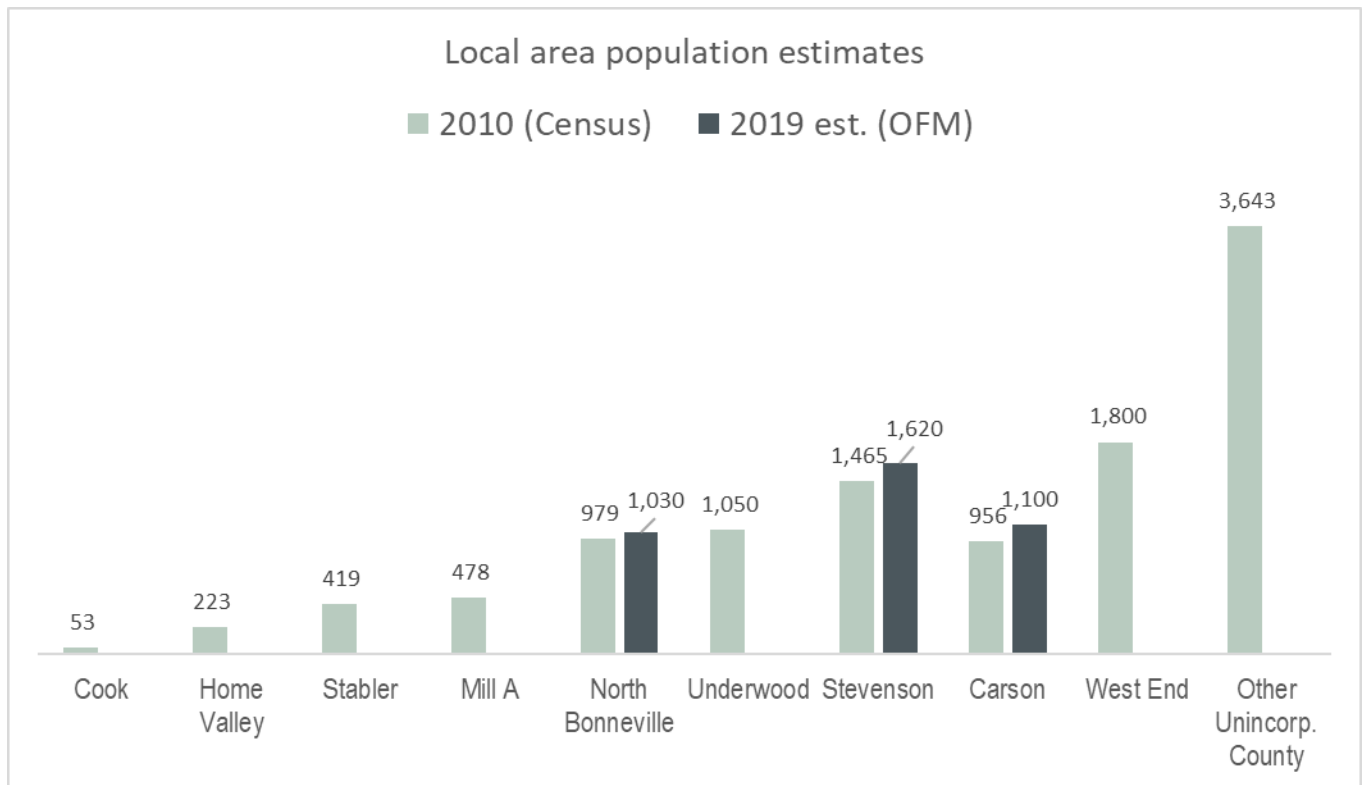
Skamania County’s average household size is 2.43 people per occupied household, which is slightly smaller than the statewide average of 2.55.



As shown in **Exhibit 2.2**, Stevenson is the largest city (est. 2017 pop. 1,620) in Skamania County, followed by North Bonneville (est. 2017 pop. 1,030). The unincorporated West End area of the county had an estimated population of 1,868 in 2004, according to County planning staff. Other major rural centers include Carson (est. 2019 pop. of 1,100 by OFM), followed by Underwood (est.

2010 pop. of 1,050). Other areas, including Mill A, Stabler, Home Valley and Cook each have fewer than 500 inhabitants.

**Exhibit 2.2 Local Area Population Estimates**

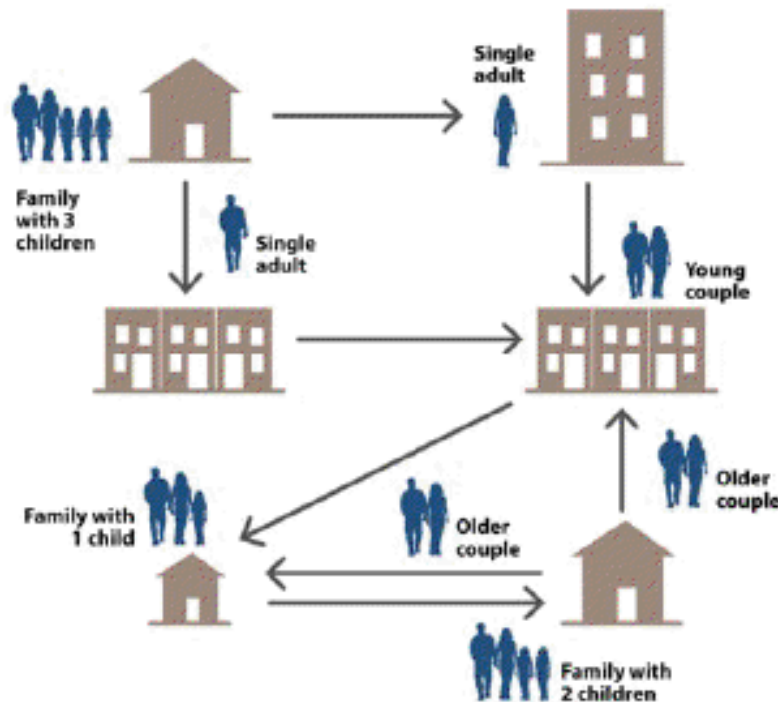


**III.C. FACTORS AFFECTING HOUSING DEMAND**

There is a clear linkage between demographic characteristics and housing choice. As shown in the figure below, housing needs change over a person’s lifetime. Other factors that influence housing include:

- Homeownership rates increase as income rises.
- Single family detached homes are the preferred housing choice as income rises.
- Renters are much more likely to choose attached housing and multifamily housing options (such as apartments or plexes).
- Very low-income households (those earning less than 50% of the median family income) are most at-risk for becoming homeless if their economic situation worsens.

### Housing Life Cycle



The relationship between demographic changes and housing needs can be used to forecast future housing needs. Three main demographic changes affecting housing in Skamania County include:

#### **Greatest/Silent Generation (those born before 1925 to 1945)**

This includes retirees better than age 74, who were raised during the Great Depression, World War I or World War II. This cohort accounted for 7% of the county's population in 2017. As people reach their 80s some move into assisted living facilities with convenient health care services.

#### **Baby Boom Generation (those born 1946 to 1964)**

Baby boomers (currently age 55 to 74) account for nearly one-third (31%) of Skamania County residents. The boomer segment has been growing more rapidly than the other cohorts over the past 10 years and many are now entering their retirement years. Boomers usually prefer to "age in place" but that preference can change if they become widowed, disabled and/or require assistance at later stages in life.

#### **Generation X (born early 1965 to 1980)**

Gen X (currently includes people between age 39 to 54) accounted for 20% of Skamania County residents in 2017. Gen X households often include families with children, and many prefer to live in single family detached dwellings at various price points.

#### **Millennials (born early 1980s to early 2000s)**

Millennials (currently in their twenties or thirties) accounted for 20% of Skamania County residents in 2017. Younger millennials tend to rent as they establish careers and/or pay back student loans.

Working millennials often become first-time homebuyers, opting to purchase smaller single-family detached homes or townhomes.

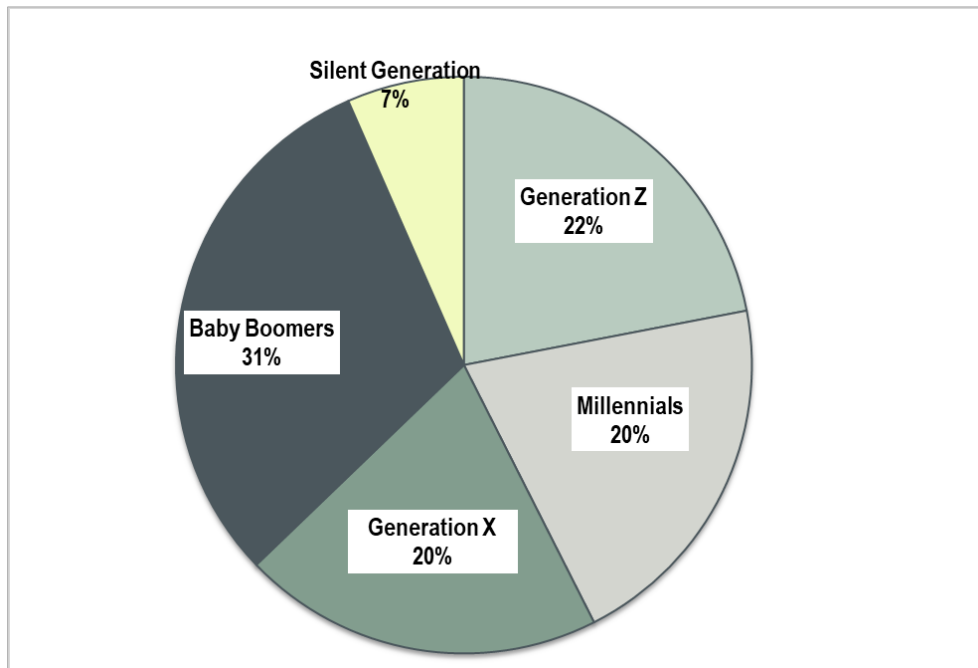
**Generation Z (born mid-2000s or later)**

Gen Z includes residents age 19 or less, which accounted for 22% of Skamania County residents in 2017. This segment mostly includes children living with Gen Xers or younger Baby Boomers.

**Families with Children**

This category includes a subset of Gen Xers and millennials, or younger Boomers. Taken as a whole, this category constitutes a significant share of Skamania County’s population and is expected to increase moderately over the next two decades. Families prefer to live in a variety of single-family housing options (detached homes or townhomes/plexes) at price points commensurate with their family income.

**Exhibit 2.3 Skamania County Population Cohorts**



**III.C.1. Income Characteristics**

Housing is typically the largest single expense or investment people make during their lifetime. Local income levels help determine the type of housing that is attainable. U.S. Housing and Urban Development guidelines indicate that housing is “attainable” when no more than 30% of median household income is allocated to housing (e.g., mortgage principal, interest and property tax payments or rent payments).

Median family income is a separate measure of income and is used by HUD when determining fair market rents for affordable housing.

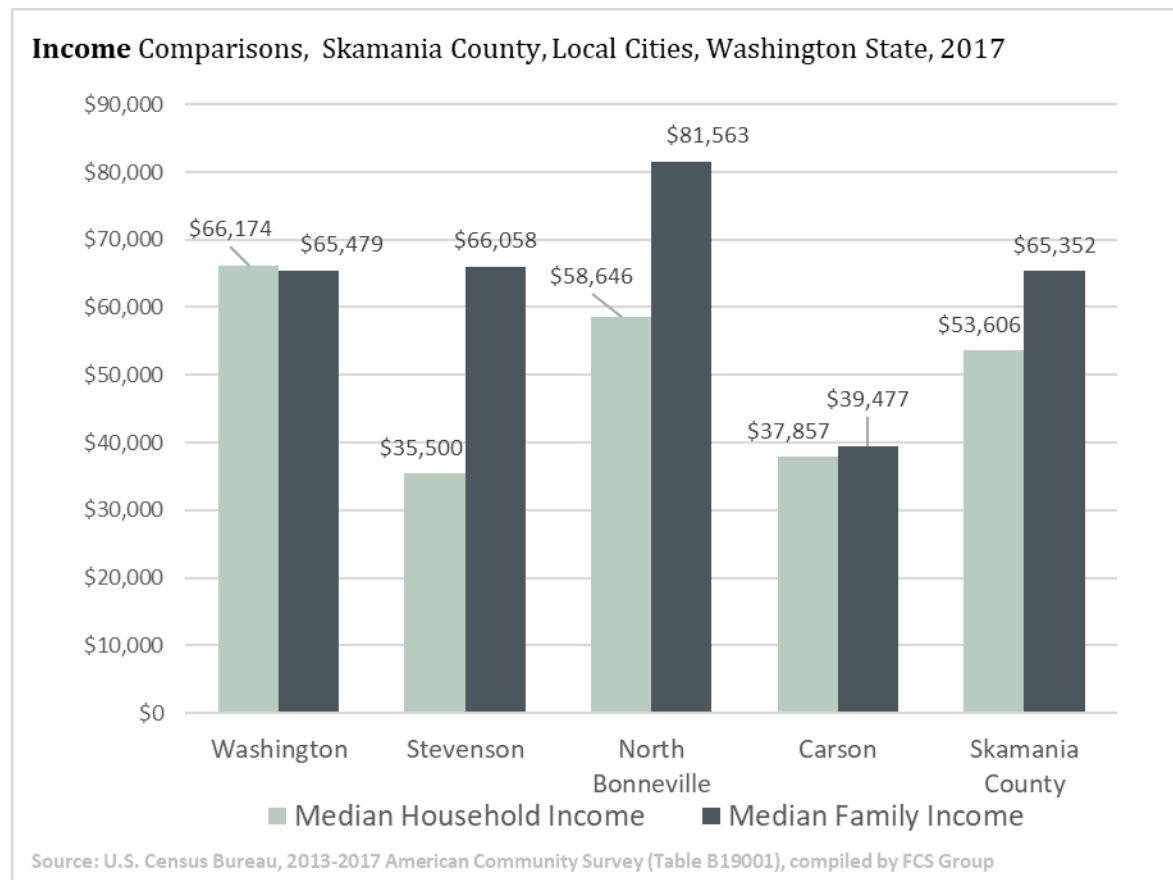
As shown in **Exhibit 2.4**, the median family income level in Skamania County (\$65,352) is nearly on par with the Washington state average (\$65,479). However, the median household income in Skamania County (\$53,606) is well below the state of Washington (\$66,174). Within Skamania County, income levels are higher in North Bonneville (west end of county) than in Stevenson and Carson.

**Definitions of Income**

**Median Household Income:** This includes the income of the householder and all other individuals 15 years old and over in the household, whether they are related to the householder or not. Because many households consist of only one person, average household income is usually less than average family income.

**Median Family Income:** A family consists of two or more people (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption residing in the same housing unit. Median family income is typically higher than median household income because of the composition of households. Family households tend to have more people, as contrasted with households who have lesser incomes because they are very young or elderly.

**Exhibit 2.4**



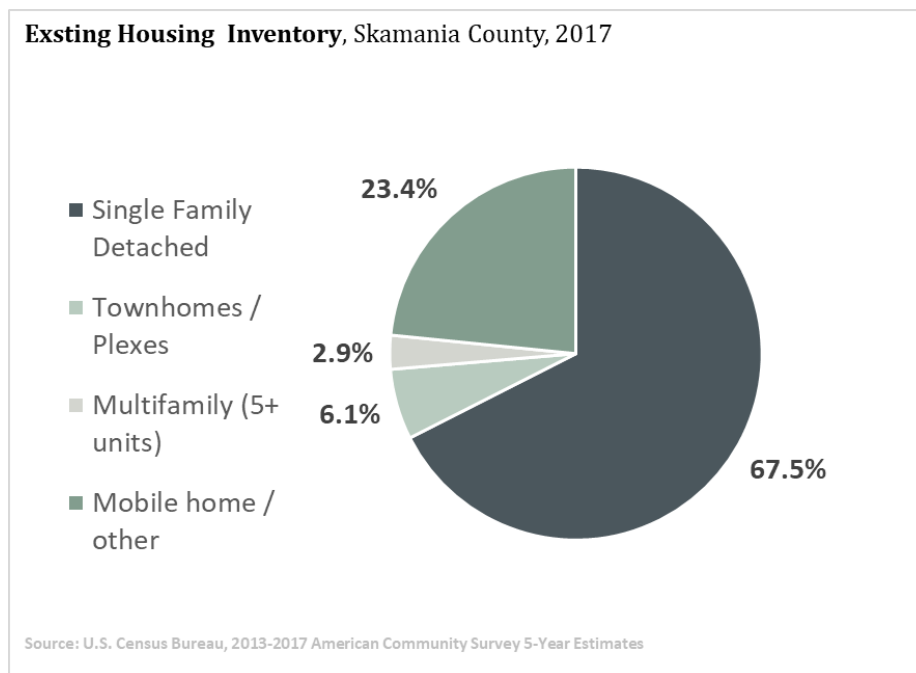
### III.D. EXISTING HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

An analysis of historical development trends and local housing market dynamics provides insight regarding how the housing market functions. HNA findings indicate that changes in demographic and socio-economic patterns over the next two decades will result in a shift in housing demand from what is now predominantly single-family detached housing to wider mix of housing types.

According to the most recent American Community Survey, there were 5,766 housing units in Skamania County as of 2017. The existing housing stock is dominated by single family detached (low density development) which accounts for 67.5% of the inventory. The next leading housing type in Skamania County includes mobile homes with 23.4% of the overall inventory. Multifamily, townhomes and plexes account for only 9% of the existing inventory (see **Exhibit 2.5**).

In comparison to the Washington average, the local share of mobile homes is much larger (23.4% local vs. 6.5% state) and the current inventory of townhomes/plexes/multifamily is way smaller (9% local vs. 29.8% state).

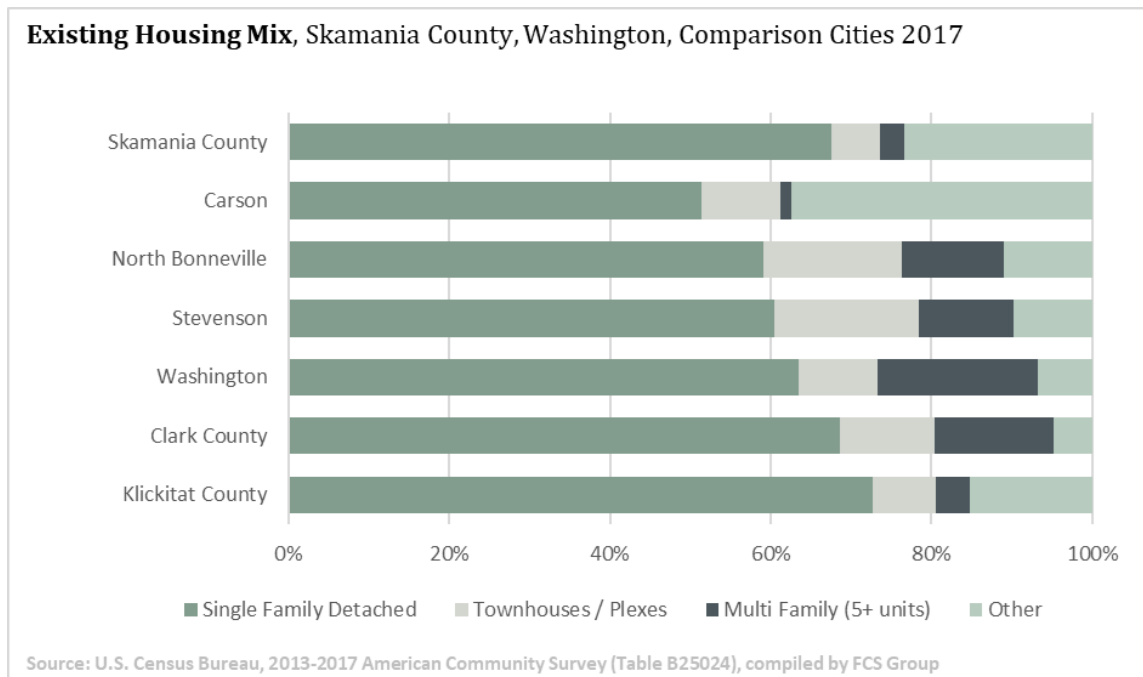
**Exhibit 2.5**



As indicated in **Exhibit 2.6**, in comparison with other locations, Skamania County presently has a relatively high share of single family detached and mobile homes/other housing types, but a relatively low share of townhomes/plexes and multifamily (middle housing) units.



Exhibit 2.6

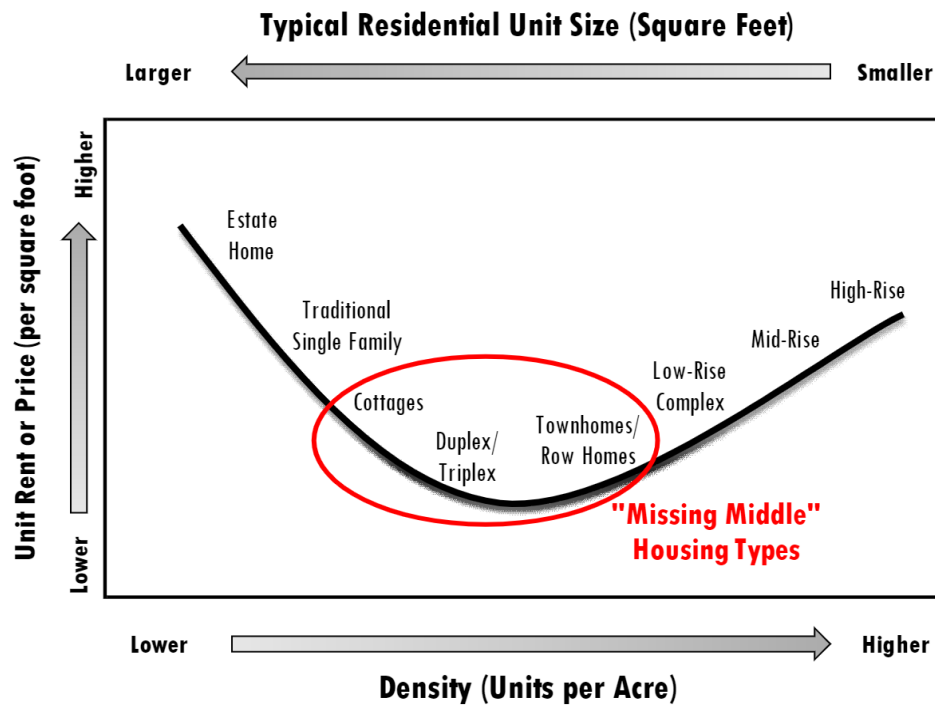


### The Concept of “Middle Housing”

“Middle Housing” is a term that refers to housing types that are attainable to households earning 80% of less of the area’s median family income. In the case of Skamania County, households that earn less than 80% of the area’s median family income account for nearly half of the local housing demand. Since the current “middle-income” housing inventory accounts for an estimated 35% of the total housing inventory, the “missing middle” housing demand is currently estimated at 15% of the total housing inventory or approximately 860 dwellings.

The demand for missing middle housing is expected to increase measurably in the future as income levels do not keep pace with rising land/development costs. In order to address this important market segment, additional development of lower cost housing types, such as cottage homes, duplexes, tri-plexes, townhomes, and apartments is needed as well as manufactured homes and accessory dwelling units (ADUs). As shown in **Exhibit 2.7**, these missing middle housing types can usually be built at a lower cost and rent level per square foot than other housing types.

Exhibit 2.7



Skamania County also has a relatively high share of seasonal housing units which are owned by part-time residents as “second homes” or used as “short-term rentals.” While it is not possible to pinpoint actual numbers, interview responses and U.S. Census data both indicate that about 18% of the housing inventory in the County is owned by non-local residents, which is double the statewide average (see **Figure 2.8**).

Exhibit 2.8 Skamania County Housing Tenancy and Seasonal Housing

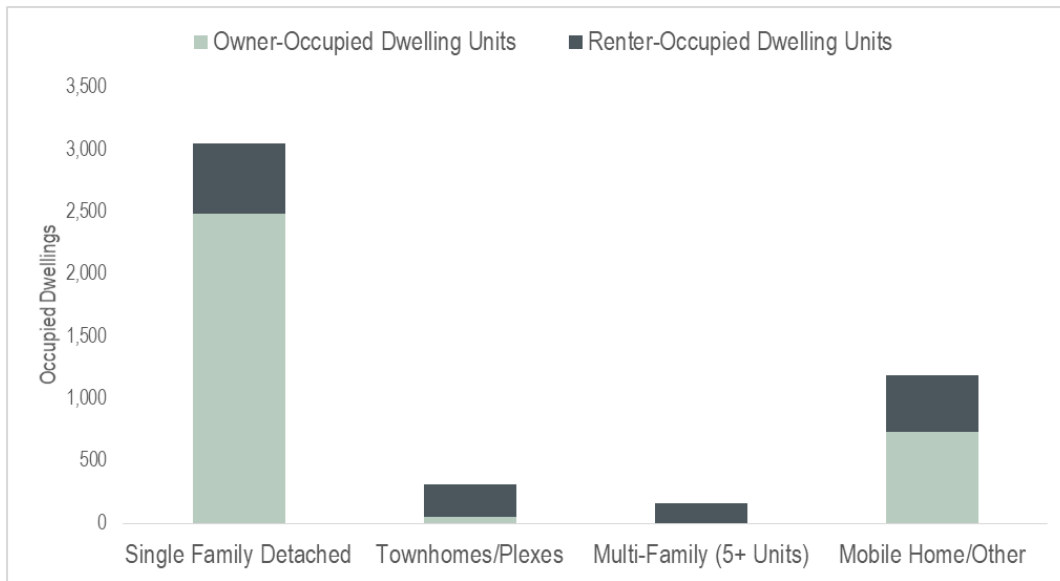
	Owner-Occupied Dwelling Units	Renter-Occupied Dwelling Units	Seasonal Housing and Vacant Units*	All Dwelling Units
Single Family Detached	2,481	571	842	3,894
Townhomes/Plexes	52	261	40	353
Multi-Family (5+ Units)	0	159	10	169
Mobile Home/Other	732	457	161	1,350
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>3,265</b>	<b>1,448</b>	<b>1,053</b>	<b>5,766</b>
<b>Distribution</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* includes second homes and vacation rentals.

Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey (Table B25032)

Housing tenancy for occupied homes in Skamania County consists of 69% owners and 31% renters. As indicated in **Exhibit 2.9**, homeowners primarily reside in detached homes or mobile homes (aka. manufactured housing). Renters primarily live in townhomes/plexes and multifamily apartments and mobile home parks.

**Exhibit 2.9 Skamania County Tenancy of Year Round Residents**

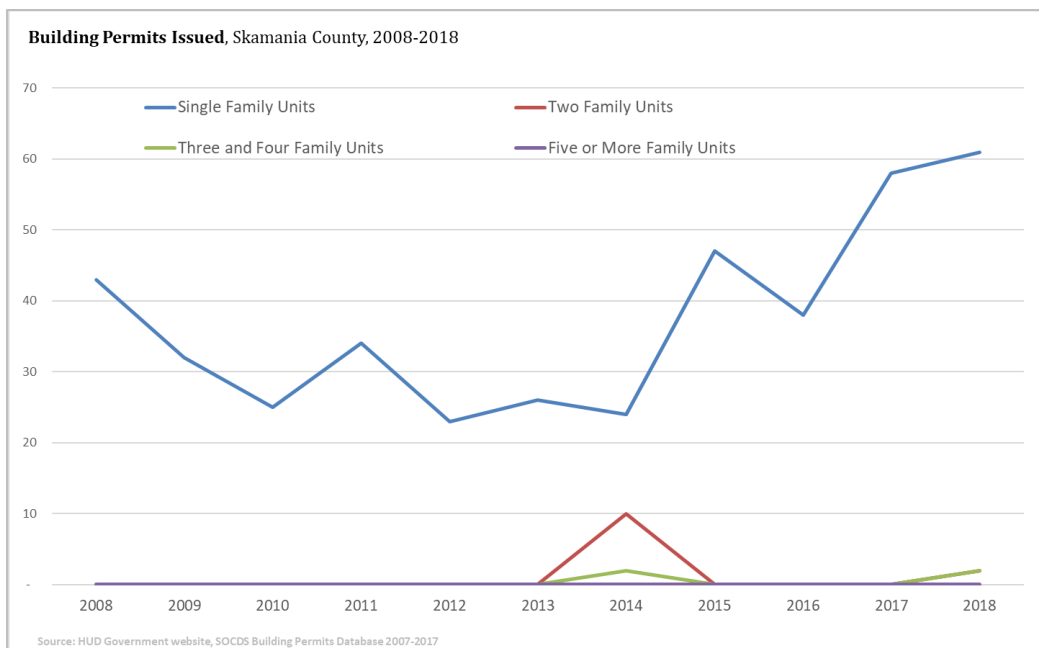


Vacancy rates for housing have trended down in recent years as demand has outpaced additions to the supply. Overall, the vacancy rates for rental housing in Skamania County is reported to be less than 3% currently.

### Construction Permitting Activity

During the past several years new building construction in Skamania County has been dominated by single family housing. Despite a drop in construction following the 2009 national recession, new housing construction been averaging 40 to 65 units per year since 2014 (see **Exhibit 2.10**).

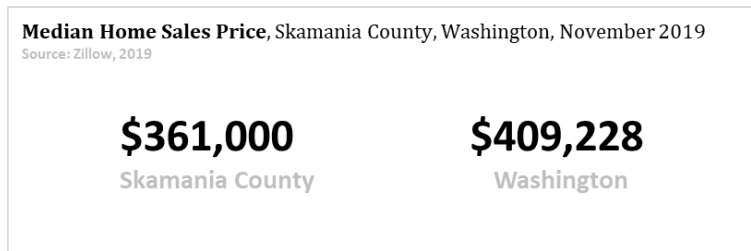
**Exhibit 2.10**



### III.E. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

No matter how you look at it, home prices in Skamania County are rapidly rising. The median home price in Skamania County was \$361,000 (as of November 2019), which is below the median home price of Washington as a whole.

The median price reflects the level where 50% of the homes sold are higher and 50% are lower. Average prices take into account total sales prices divided by total homes sold.



Within Skamania County, median home sales prices reported by Zillow.com reflect median prices ranging from \$282,000 in Carson to \$524,000 in Underwood. Stevenson home prices appear to be increasing the fastest over the past year from \$314,000 in 2018 to \$337,000 in 2019 (as of November).

Current housing inventory of listings and sales trends reflect a very tight local housing market, with a standing inventory of less than 4 months in Skamania County (a healthy housing market typically has a 6-month inventory). Sales have been highest for homes with prices ranging from \$200,000 to \$400,000 (see **Exhibit 2.11**).

**Exhibit 2.11**

**Median Home Price Sales Trends in Select Markets**

	Nov-18	Nov-19	Change %
Skamania County	\$338,000	\$361,000	6.8%
Carson	\$266,000	\$282,000	6.0%
North Bonneville	\$283,000	\$300,000	6.0%
Stevenson	\$314,000	\$337,000	7.3%
Underwood	\$496,000	\$524,000	5.6%

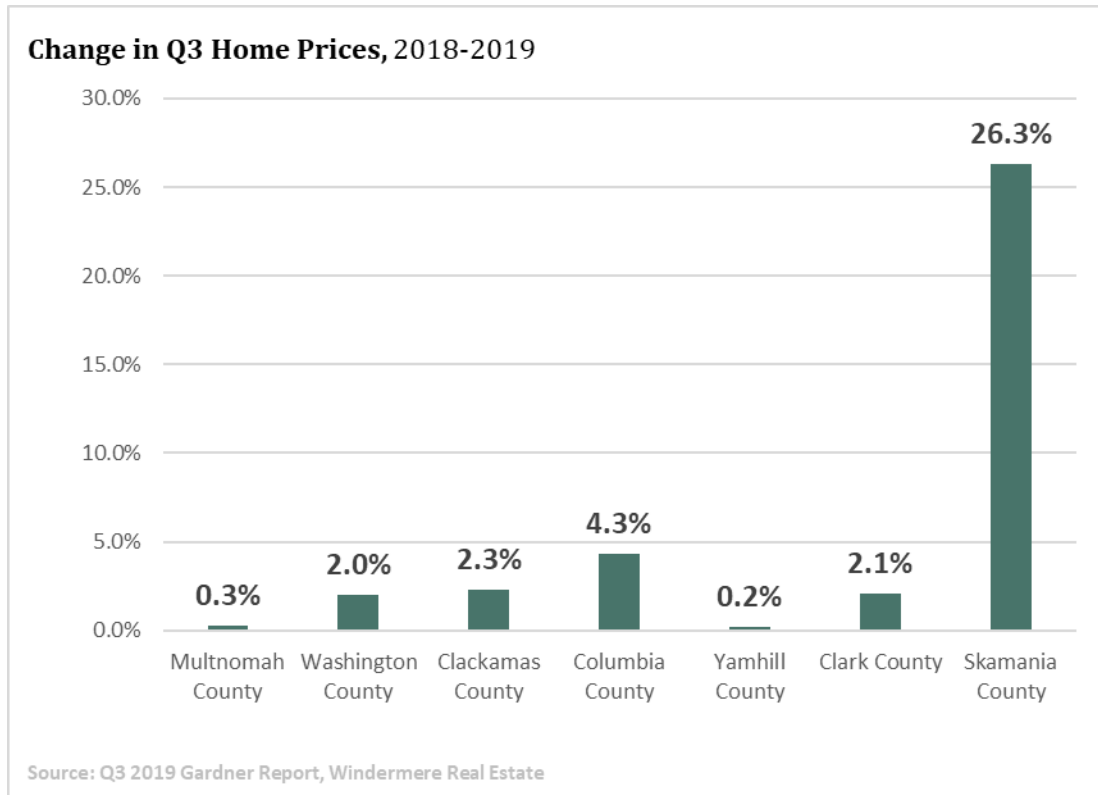
**Homes Sales and Inventory, Skamania County**

Sales Price Level	Recent Sales (past 2 years)	Avg. Sales Per Month (past 2 years)	Current Listings	Remaining Inventory (months)
Sales Price Level				
Less than \$100,000	33	1.4	4	2.9
\$100,000 to \$199,999	44	1.8	2	1.1
\$200,000 to \$299,999	104	4.3	15	3.5
\$300,000 to \$399,999	98	4.1	8	2.0
\$400,000 to \$499,999	70	2.9	12	4.1
\$500,000 or more	65	2.7	22	8.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>3.7</b>

Source: Zillow.com; analysis by FCS 12/20/19.

Year over year, average home prices in Skamania County have been increasing at a torrid pace, especially when compared with other counties within the greater Portland-Vancouver metropolitan region (see **Exhibit 2.12**).

**Exhibit 2.12: Change in Average Home Prices**



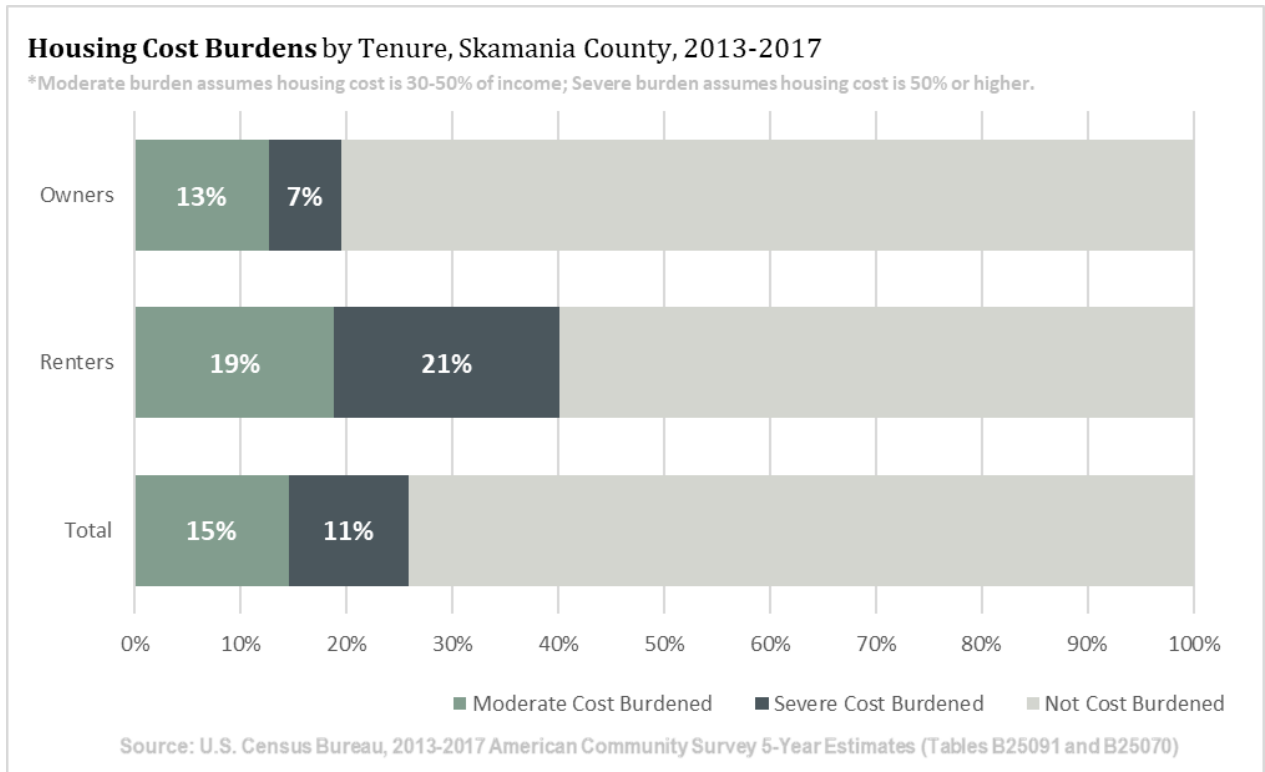
### III.E.1. Rents and Housing Cost Burdens

Median rents in Skamania County are also below the Washington statewide average. However, given the fact that median household incomes are 16% below the state average, housing affordability is a growing concern. Newer market rate rentals in Stevenson and Carson are reported to fetch monthly rents of \$1.25 to \$1.40 per square foot of floor area.

According to the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) standards, households are considered “cost burdened” if they pay over 30% of their income on housing. Households are “severely cost burdened” if they pay over 50% of their income on housing.

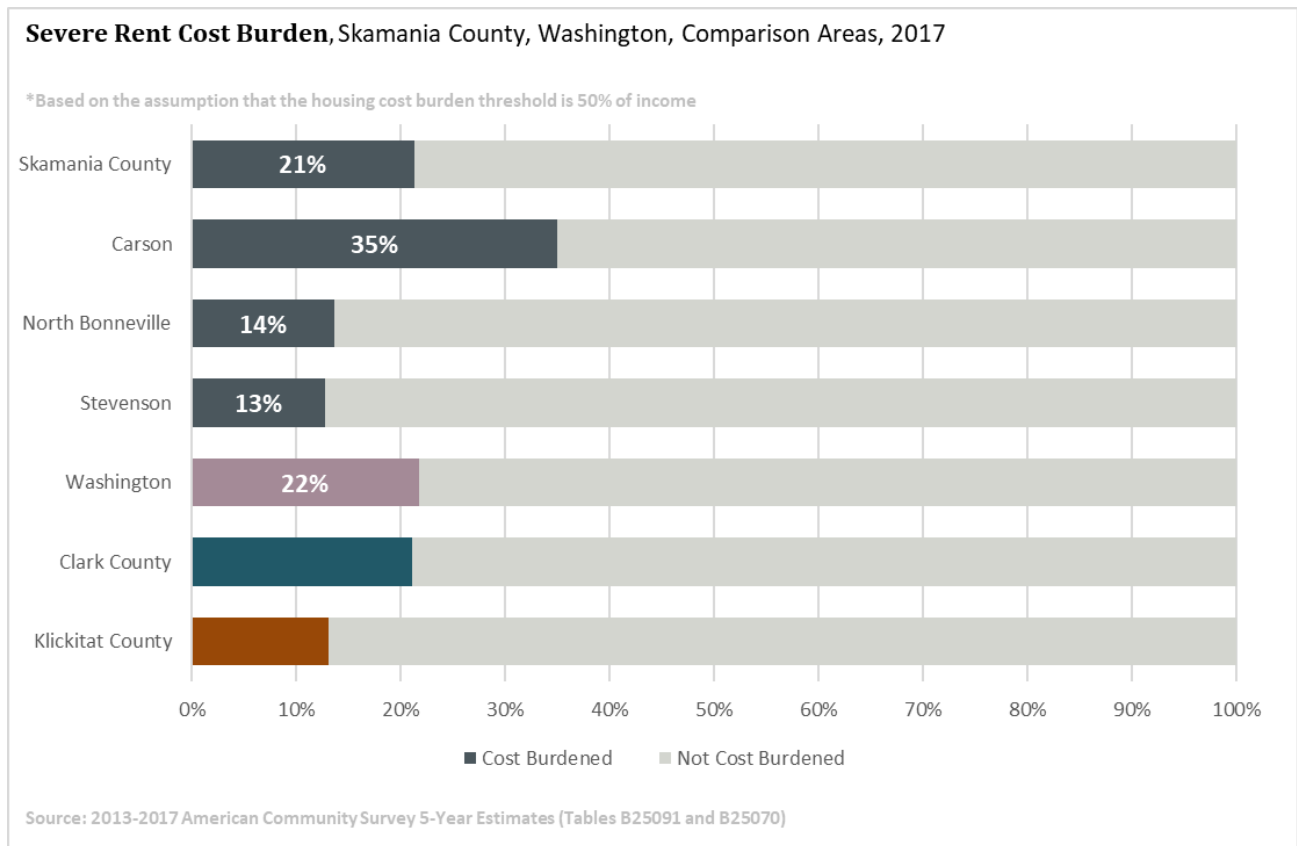
As indicated in **Exhibit 2.13**, 26% of the households in Skamania County were considered moderately to severely cost burdened in 2017. Approximately 40% of renters in Skamania County are cost burdened, which is slightly below the statewide average of 47%. Additionally, 20% of homeowners are cost burdened, which is below the statewide average of 21%.

Exhibit 2.13



**Exhibit 2.14** illustrates where housing rental cost burdens are occurring. The Carson area has the highest share of severe cost burdened rental households, and Stevenson and North Bonneville have the lowest share.

**Exhibit 2.14**



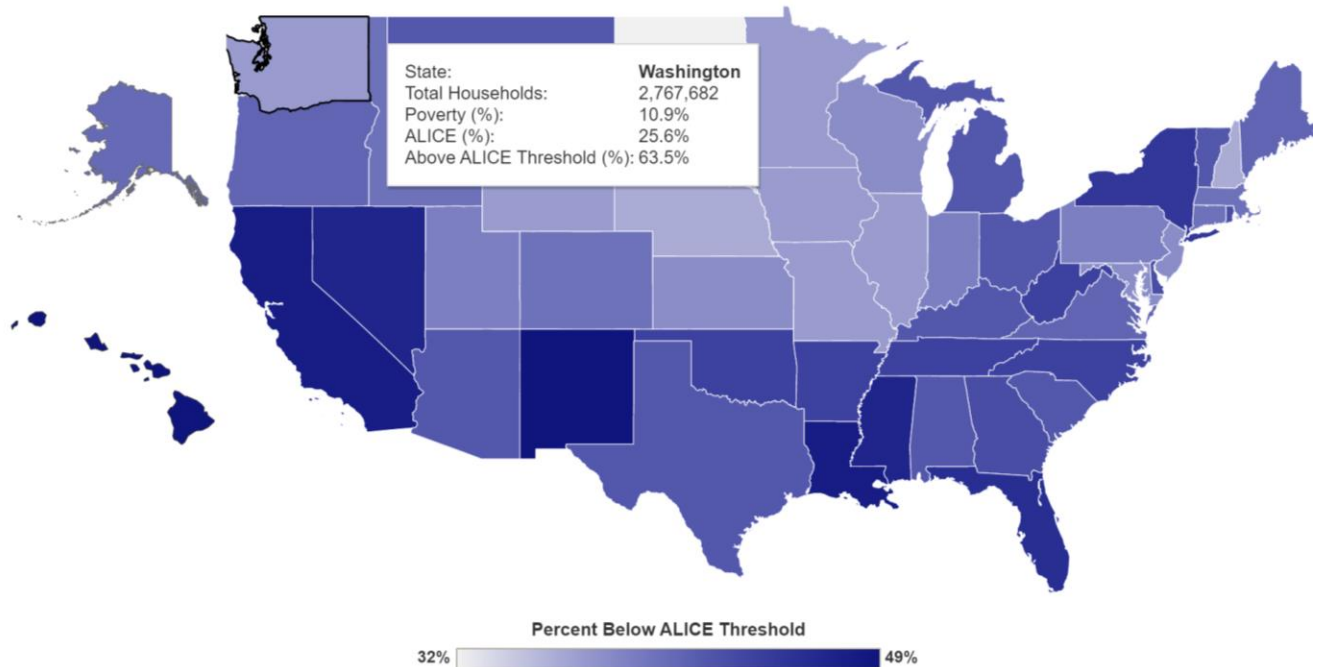
### III.E.2. Economic Hardship

Like many growing communities across the western U.S., nearly 1 in 3 Skamania County households are experiencing economic hardship as the cost of living rises faster than income levels.

Since the War on Poverty began in 1965, the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) has provided a standard for determining the proportion of people living in poverty in the U.S. Despite the FPL’s benefit of providing a nationally recognized income threshold for determining who is poor, its shortcomings include the fact that the FPL is not based on the current cost of basic household necessities, and except for Alaska and Hawaii, it is not adjusted to reflect cost of living differences across the U.S.

In recognition of these shortcomings, the United Way now provides a new measure of economically distressed households struggling in each county in a state. This effort provides a framework, to measure the struggles of households that do not earn enough to afford basic necessities, with a population called **ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed)**. As shown below, in 2016, the overall FPL in Washington state was 10.9% while the share of households living below the ALICE threshold was nearly 26%.

### State Level Details





### ALICE Methodology Overview

The ALICE research team developed new measures to identify and assess financial hardship at a local level and to enhance existing local, state, and national poverty measures.

**Household Survival Budget** is an estimate of the total cost of household essentials – housing, child care, food, transportation, technology, and health care, plus taxes and a 10 percent contingency. It is calculated separately for each county, and for six different household types.

**The ALICE Threshold** represents the minimum income level necessary based on the Household Survival Budget. Households below the Threshold include both ALICE households and those living in poverty.

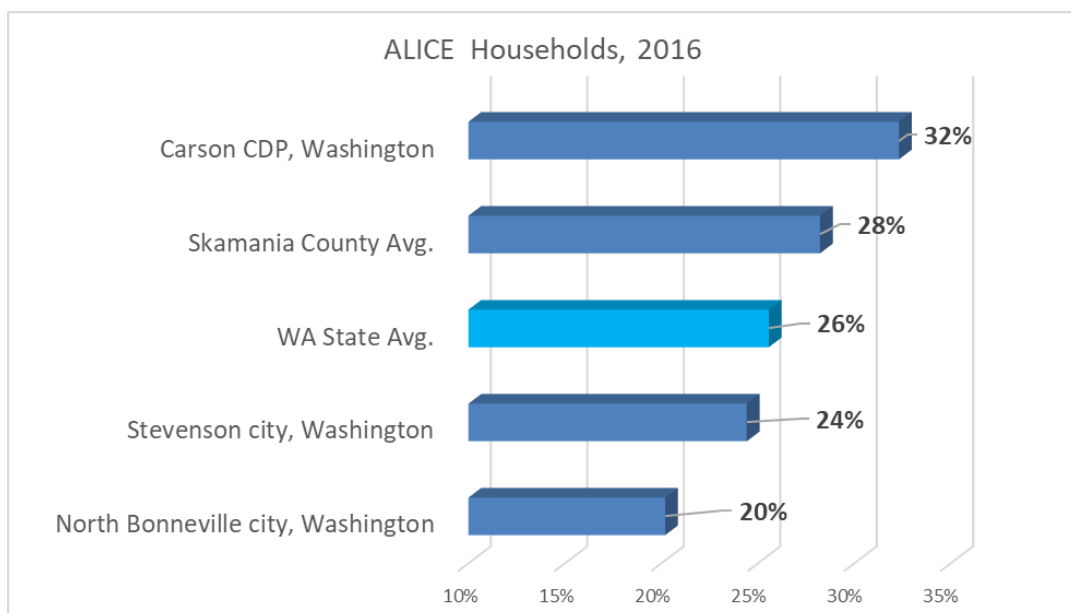
**The ALICE Income Assessment measures:**

1. The income households need to reach the ALICE Threshold
2. The income they actually earn
3. How much public and nonprofit assistance is provided
4. The Unfilled Gap – how much more money is needed to reach the ALICE Threshold despite both income and assistance

For more information please check out: <https://www.unitedforalice.org/methodology>

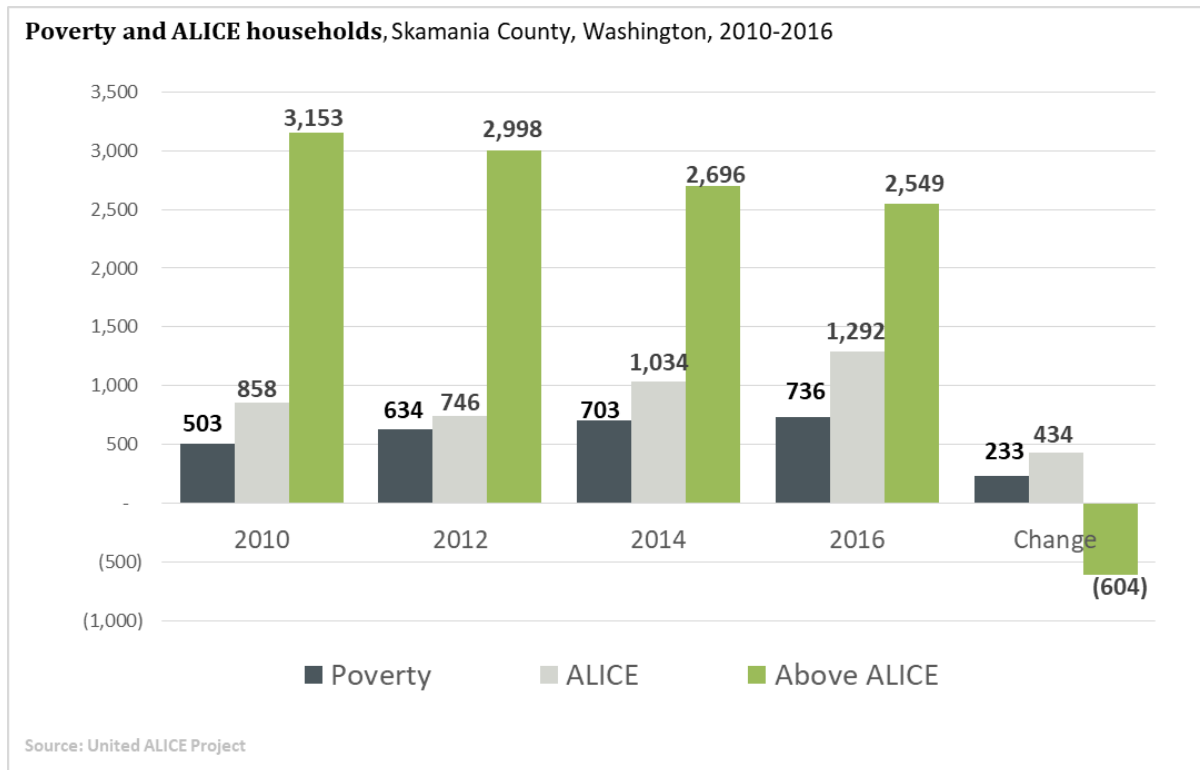
In Skamania County, the overall share of households living below the ALICE threshold was 28% in 2016, which was slightly worse than the statewide average (25.6%). Carson has the highest share with 32% or nearly one in three households living in hardship. North Bonneville and Stevenson have relatively lower shares with 20% and 24%, respectively (**Exhibit 2.15**).

**Exhibit 2.15**



Despite 10 years of economic expansion, there has been an increase in poverty and economic hardship in Skamania County. As shown in **Exhibit 2.16**, between 2010 and 2016, the number households in poverty increased by 233 and those meeting ALICE thresholds increased by 434. During this same time, the number of households above ALICE thresholds declined by 604. While housing is only part of the picture, it is the largest living expense for most households.

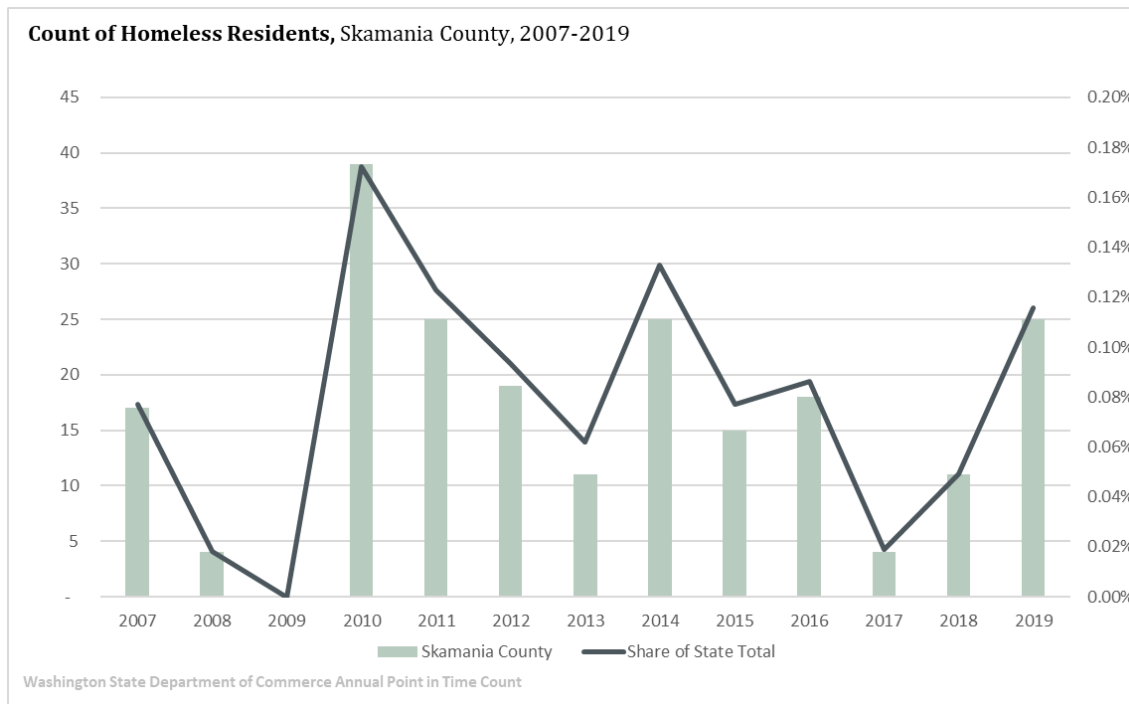
**Exhibit 2.16**



### III.E.3. Homeless Residents

Homelessness is an increasing issue throughout the Nation and is no longer isolated to urban centers. Washington counties are required to conduct an annual “point in time” assessment of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons. The count is conducted in accordance with the requirements of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The homeless population in Skamania County has fluctuated between zero and 40 people over the past decade. In 2019, Skamania County’s homeless population is estimated at 25 people, which marks the third straight year of increased homelessness in the county (**Exhibit 2.17**).

Exhibit 2.17

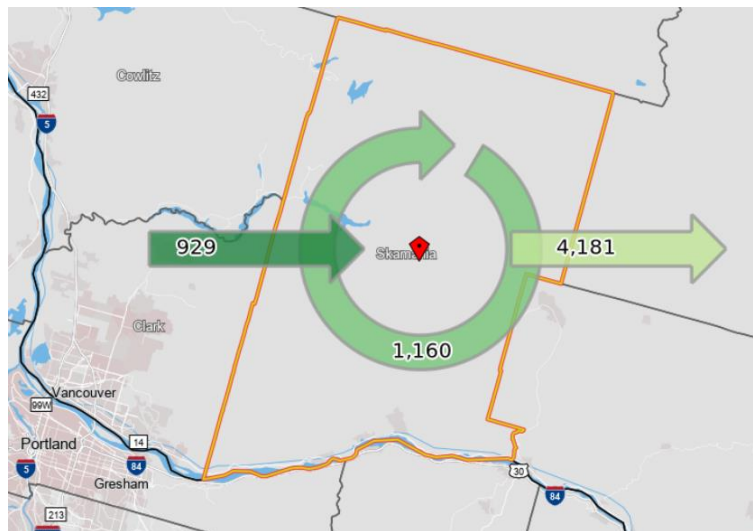


### III.F. POTENTIAL PENT-UP MARKET DEMAND

Representatives from local businesses, school districts, and local government voiced some concern over the lack of attainable housing for local employees. According to U.S. Census On-the-Map data, in 2017 there were 4,181 residents who commuted to work outside Skamania County and 929 workers who in-commuted to work inside Skamania County (**Exhibit 2.18**). Anecdotal input indicates that there has been an influx of new residents into Skamania County recently given relatively lower housing costs than what is found closer to the Portland/Vancouver Region.

Skamania County employers provided 2,089 jobs in 2017. **Almost one in five workers in Skamania County in-commute over 100 miles per day; which is 55% higher than the statewide average.**

**Exhibit 2.18: Commute Patterns, Skamania County, 2017**



As indicated in **Exhibit 2.19**, FCS GROUP has documented market gaps in Skamania County’s available housing inventory. Conversion of homes to seasonal and vacation rentals, low vacancy rates, and inadequate housing construction levels result in market gaps that can only be corrected by supply additions. Using conservatively low market capture rates, there is likely some pent-up housing demand for approximately 47 to 62 rental units and 70 to 93 owner units needed for moderate income households at 80% to 120% of the area median family income (MFI) level.

**Exhibit 2.19**

**Current Housing Market Gap for Housing at 80% to 120% MFI, Skamania County**

	Skamania County	Total Dwelling Units	Rental Units	Owner Units
Existing Workers in County	2,089			
Long Distance in-commuters (over 100 miles per day)	389			
Market Demand Sensitivity Analysis				
Low Capture Rate	30%	117	47	70
Midpoint Capture Rate	35%	136	54	82
High Capture Rate	40%	155	62	93

Based on U.S. Census Bureau, On-The-Map, 2017.

**III.F.1. Affordable Housing Need**

There are currently five affordable housing community developments in Skamania County, including three in Stevenson (Cascade Village, Rock Creek Terrace and White Cap) and one in North Bonneville (Hamilton Park) and one in Carson (Carson Springs). These developments provide 144 units of government assisted housing.

A local non-profit Mid-Columbia Housing Authority is currently developing affordable housing in Skamania County, with a new senior housing developments in Stevenson and planned mixed-income development in Carson.

In addition to the current pent-up demand for market rate rental housing, there is also a significant market gap for government assisted housing available to households earning less than 50% of the MFI level. According to the U.S. Housing and Urban Development, Skamania County is part of the greater Portland-Vancouver Region, which has a median family income level of \$87,900 in 2019. In comparison to the region, the median family income for Skamania County was much lower than the region at \$65,352 in 2017 (latest year for local Census data).

HUD fair market rents for Skamania County currently range from \$1,131 for efficiencies to \$2,531 for 4-bedroom units (**Exhibit 2.20**). Please refer to **Appendix C** for additional analysis of HUD housing affordability rents and income levels.

**Exhibit 2.20**

<b>HUD Fair Market Rent (FMR) by Unit Type, Skamania County, 2019</b>				
<small>Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development</small>				
<b>\$1,131</b>	<b>\$1,234</b>	<b>\$1,441</b>	<b>\$2,084</b>	<b>\$2,531</b>
Efficiency	1-Bedroom	2-Bedroom	3-Bedroom	4-Bedroom

Recent housing inventory data indicates that there are approximately 600 Skamania County households that would qualify for government housing at 50% of the MFI level, yet only 424 units were available at this price point in 2017, indicating pent up demand for 176 subsidized housing units. In light of inadequate levels of state and federal housing grants, we have assumed a 33% market capture rate or approximately 60 units of low-income (government subsidized) housing demand is likely to be constructed in Skamania County over the next 10 to 20 years.

## Section IV. FUTURE HOUSING NEED

The methodology includes two housing forecast scenarios which were reviewed and discussed by the Technical Advisory Committee. They include:

Scenario A Baseline Forecast

Scenario B Baseline + Pent-up Housing Demand Forecast

### Scenario A: Baseline Housing Demand Forecast

The future (20 year) housing forecast for Skamania County takes into account the population and socioeconomic and housing characteristics described earlier. After review of the three OFM population forecast scenarios, the Technical Advisory Committee agreed that the high growth forecast is the optimal forecast to use for long-range planning purposes and as such is included in the baseline housing forecast scenario.

The baseline forecast holds current household size, group quarters demand, vacancy rates and seasonal housing rates remain constant.

With the baseline forecast, Skamania County is projected to add approximately 3,619 people which will require 1,813 new dwellings over the next 20 years (see **Exhibit 4.1**). This forecast also would require approximately 20 units for net new group quarters population as transitional housing needs.

**Exhibit 4.1 Scenario A Baseline Forecast**

**Skamania Population & Housing: Baseline 20-Year Forecast (high growth forecast)**

	Estimate 2019	Forecast 2039	Proj. Change 20 Years	Growth rate AGR (2019-2039)
Skamania County Population	<b>11,853</b>	<b>15,472</b>	<b>3,619</b>	1.34%
Skamania County Housing Needs				
Group Quarters Population	61	79	19	
Population in Households		15,393	3,601	
Avg. Household Size	2.43	2.43		
Resident Housing Units	-	<b>6,334</b>	<b>1,482</b>	
Seasonal & Vacant Housing Units		<b>1,415</b>	<b>331</b>	
percent of housing stock	18.3%	18.3%		
Total Housing Units (baseline)	<b>5,937</b>	<b>7,750</b>	<b>1,813</b>	

Source: Findings based on Washington State Office of Financial Management data forecasts; other data derived from U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2013-2017. AGR = annual average growth rate.

## Scenario B: Baseline + Workforce Housing Forecast

This scenario includes the baseline along with capture of a portion of the current market gap for market rate workforce housing (136 units) with as much as 60 units of income restricted affordable housing for a total planned addition of approximately 1,946 units over the next 20 years (see **Exhibit 4.2**).

### Exhibit 4.2

#### Skamania County Housing Needs Forecast: Scenario B (dwelling units)

Total Housing Demand	Owner-Occupied	Long-term Rental	Short-term Rental	Total
	Units	Units	Units*	
Baseline Demand	1,088	394	331	1,813
Pent-up Market Capture	54	82	-	136
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,142</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>1,949</b>
Distribution	59%	24%	17%	100%

Source: analysis by FCS based on prior tables. \* Short term assumes rentals less than 30 days.

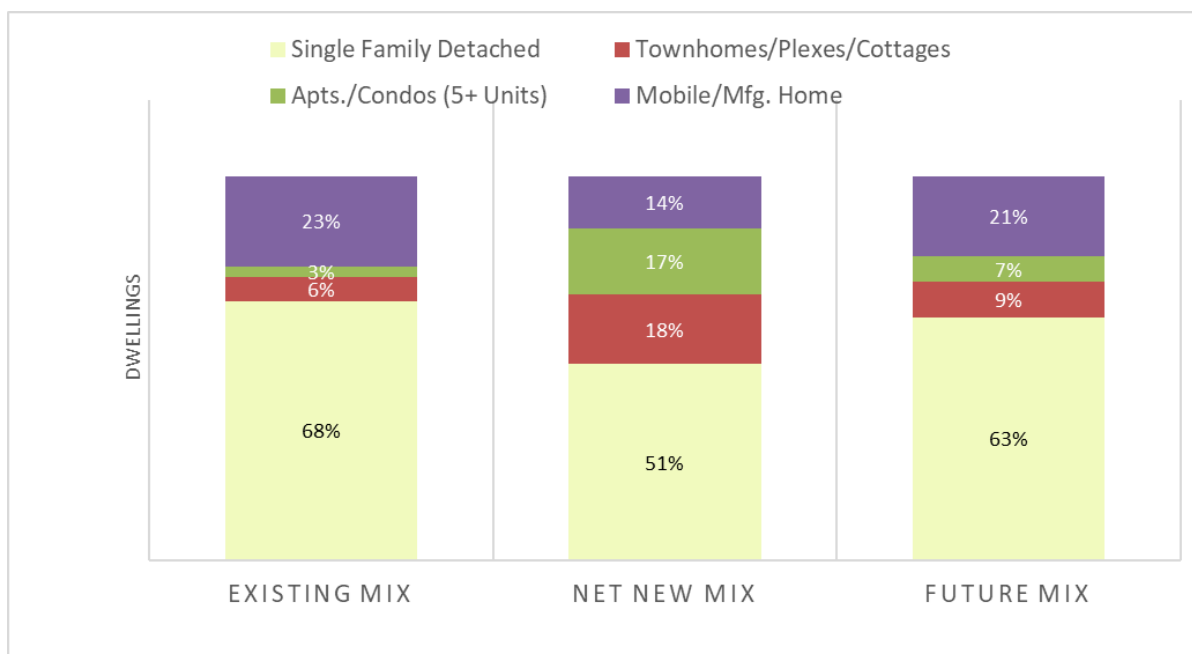
As reflected in **Exhibit 4.3**, the forecasted housing mix that would address future demand will likely consist of approximately: 994 single-family detached homes 356 townhomes/duplexes/ADUs (including cottage homes), 335 multifamily housing units and 264 manufactured housing units (as part of manufactured home parks). Additionally, there will also be increasing “group quarters” housing demand for about 20 additional residents that will require shared living arrangements (such as congregate care or interim housing).

### Exhibit 4.3

	Existing Dwelling Units	Net New Dwelling Units	Future Dwelling Units
Single Family Detached	3,894	994	4,888
Townhomes/Plexes	353	356	709
Multi-Family (5+ Units)	169	335	504
Mobile/Mfg. Home	1,350	264	1,614
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>5,766</b>	<b>1,949</b>	<b>7,715</b>

**Exhibit 4.4** compares the housing mix in Skamania County today compared with the forecasted market driven mix to be added over the next twenty years. Scenario B would increase the overall share of townhomes, plexes and multifamily in comparison to the current mix. The share of manufactured housing would remain relatively constant.

**Exhibit 4.4 Existing and Future Housing Mix, Scenario B**



*Source: analysis by FCS based on prior tables.*

The types of housing that is most suited to meet qualifying income levels for home ownership vary by family income level. The owner housing forecast that’s suited to meet qualifying income levels is provided in **Exhibit 4.5**.

**Exhibit 4.5**

**Owner-occupied Housing Needs, Scenario B\***

Family Income Level	Range of Home Sales Price	Attainable Housing Products	Distribution of Owner-Occupied Units	Projected Owner-Occupied Units Needed
Upper (120% or more of MFI)	\$500,000+	Large lot and Standard Homes	80%	914
Upper Middle (80% to 120% of MFI)	\$350,000 to \$499,000	Small Homes, Townhomes	10%	114
Lower Middle (50% to 80% of MFI)	\$230,000 to \$349,000	Mfgd. Homes, Plexes, Condos	10%	114
Low less than 50% of MFI)	n/a	Govt. Assisted	0%	0
<b>Total Dwelling Units</b>			<b>100%</b>	<b>1,142</b>

*\*Assumes 30% of income is used for mortgage payment, with 5% interest, 30-year term with 20% downpayment for upper middle and high income levels, and 5% downpayment for lower income levels.*

The rental housing forecast that’s suited to meet qualifying income levels is provided in **Exhibit 4.6**.



**Exhibit 4.6****Renter-Occupied Housing Needs, Scenario B\*\***

Family Income Level	Range of Monthly Rent (2 bedrm)	Attainable Housing Products	Estimated Distribution of Units	Projected Renter-Occupied Units Needed
Upper (120% or more of MFI)	\$2,400+	Large lot and Standard Homes	10%	81
Upper Middle (80% to 120% of MFI)	\$1,750 to \$2,400	Small Homes, Townhomes, Apartments	30%	242
Lower Middle (50% to 80% of MFI)	\$1,000 to \$1,750	ADUs, Townhomes, Mfgd. Homes, Plexes, Apts.	40%	323
Low (less than 50% of MFI)	Less than \$1,000	ADUs, plexes, gov't assisted apts.	20%	161
<b>Total Dwelling Units</b>			<b>100%</b>	<b>807</b>

\*\*Assumes 30% of income is used for rental payments; standard two bedroom unit.

#### IV.A. BUILDABLE LAND INVENTORY

As summarized in **Exhibit 4.7**, the current buildable residential land base for the eight focus areas includes 5,746 acres of vacant land and 2,550 acres of part-vacant land area. While only a portion of this land inventory is likely to be developed over the next 20 years, BLI properties could be subdivided for development at the property owners' discretion.

In addition to vacant lands, there are 450 acres of potentially redevelopable land area, where land is valued more than existing building improvements per Skamania County Assessor records.<sup>1</sup>

The aggregate of the eight focus areas have a total of 11,651 acres within the residential land base (net of constraints). If we assume that 25% of the net land area (within very low, low and medium density land classifications) is devoted to future roads, public facilities, parks and unknown site

<sup>1</sup> Buildable land findings are detailed in the attached Skamania County Buildable Land Inventory report, which is based on July 1, 2019 per Skamania County Assessor tax records. North Bonneville is not included in these findings as the city opted to not participate in this housing study.

development issues, the potential dwelling unit capacity under current zoning at “buildout” is 4,850 dwelling units on 8,746 net acres (see **Exhibit 4.7**).

**Exhibit 4.7: Potential Residential Development Capacity**

Location	Vacant Acres	Part-Vacant Acres	Redevelopable Acres	Total Developable Acres	Total Dwelling Unit Capacity	Share of Total
Carson	304	241	61	606	889	18%
Cook	-	1	-	1	-	0%
Home Valley	51	65	3	120	116	2%
Mill A	2,830	309	31	3,170	762	16%
Stabler	886	403	88	1,377	780	16%
Stevenson	342	329	43	714	1,652	34%
Underwood	101	77	17	195	41	1%
West End	1,230	1,125	208	2,563	610	13%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5,746</b>	<b>2,550</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>8,746</b>	<b>4,850</b>	<b>100%</b>

Individual focus area-specific buildable land maps are available in **Appendix B**.

## IV.B. HOUSING NEED VS LAND SUPPLY

The actual amount and type of housing that is built in Skamania County will depend heavily upon the availability of wastewater treatment (sanitary sewer) capacity that is available, particularly within the cities of Stevenson and North Bonneville.

Under current zoning, the buildable land inventory within the key focus areas can accommodate 4,850 additional (72% low-density detached) dwellings. As indicated in **Exhibit 4.8**, the vacant land inventory within the key focus areas is zoned to accommodate 2,977 dwellings or 61% of the buildout capacity of remaining demand. An additional 1,445 units could be built on part-vacant land at the property owner’s discretion. Redevelopment land could in theory only address 458 units of demand.

**Based on the Scenario B high-growth demand forecast, if all owners of buildable vacant land opt to develop their property to its full potential, the vacant residential land base in Skamania County’s focus areas would be fully depleted in 30 years.**

**Development of part-vacant and redevelopable lands could extend this buildout time line by another 10 to 20 years. However, most property owners will not wish to subdivide their properties, which will limit the available land supply and drive up land prices and development costs over the foreseeable time frame.**

Stevenson is the only focus area with the likely potential to accommodate significant additions to the missing middle housing supply. As shown in **Exhibit 4.8**, under current zoning and infrastructure plans, **Stevenson has the potential capacity to add about 886 units of missing middle housing on vacant lands, 262 units on part-vacant lands and 194 units on redevelopment lands. This equates to approximately 28% of the overall long-range housing capacity.**

Carson also has significant development potential but that is limited by current zoning and lack of a public wastewater treatment systems. Under current zoning, the Carson area has the capacity to add nearly 890 low-density detached dwellings before its developable land becomes fully depleted. While

there are plans in the pipeline to add some affordable multifamily housing in Carson, allowed densities are only 2 units per acre on medium density zones.

Other focus areas, including Mill A, Stabler, West End, Home Valley and Underwood have potential for addressing demand for large estate homes or standard detached homes on septic. However, given the nature of rolling topography, limited roadway access and lack of public water/sewer infrastructure, any chance for addressing missing middle housing in these locations is unlikely.

**Exhibit 4.8**

Focus Area	Expected Housing Types under current zoning	Dwelling Unit Capacity on Vacant Land	Dwelling Unit Capacity on Part-Vacant Land	Dwelling Unit Capacity on Redevelopable Land	Total Dwelling Unit Capacity
<b>Carson</b>	Standard detached*	243	66	75	384
	Large lot detached	230	241	31	502
	Estate homes	1	2	-	3
	<b>Carson Total</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>889</b>
<b>Cook</b>	Estate homes	-	-	-	-
	<b>Cook Total</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Home Valley</b>	Estate homes	50	64	2	116
	<b>Home Valley Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>Mill A</b>	Estate homes	655	93	14	762
	<b>Mill A Total</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>762</b>
<b>Stabler</b>	Large lot detached	121	60	9	190
	Estate homes	382	170	38	590
	<b>Stabler Total</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>780</b>
<b>Stevenson</b>	Townhomes & Multifamily	512	175	156	843
	Cottages & Plexes	374	87	38	499
	Large lot detached	39	146	11	196
	Estate homes	64	45	5	114
	<b>Stevenson Total</b>	<b>989</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>1,652</b>
<b>Underwood</b>	Large lot detached	5	-	-	5
	Estate homes	17	16	3	36
	<b>Underwood Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>West End</b>	Large lot detached	1	4	3	8
	Estate homes	283	276	43	602
	<b>West End Total</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>610</b>
<b>Total Dwelling Capacity</b>		<b>2,977</b>	<b>1,445</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>4,850</b>
<b>Potential Missing Middle Housing**</b>		<b>886</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>1,342</b>
Missing Middle % of Capacity		<b>30%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>28%</b>

\* Low density zoning in Carson allows 2 dwelling units per acre; which could include townhomes/plexes.

\*\* Includes small lot cottage homes, attached townhomes, plexes and apartments; limited to Stevenson focus area.

Compiled by FCS GROUP.

## Section V. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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### V.A. KEY FINDINGS

Skamania County's housing market is steady and getting stronger every year. Vacancy rates for long-term rentals are near zero today, and investment owned properties (e.g., second homes) account for nearly 20% of the housing demand. While there is steady demand for single family detached housing construction, there is a vast middle-income housing segment that is not being addressed.

Based on the long-run forecast of 3,619 new residents, **Skamania County will need approximately 1,949 additional housing units** to be constructed over the next 20 years.

Market demand will support a variety of housing types, including approximately 1,142 owner-occupied dwellings, 475 long-term renter dwellings, 331 short-term renter dwellings, and 20 units of group quarters (transitional housing units).

With rental vacancy rates near zero and land development costs rising, most new homes being constructed today are only able to address higher income demand. This situation is expected to become even more challenging in the future as remaining buildable lands develop with low density detached housing.

While the current buildable land supply can full address the demand for rural estate homes and standard detached housing development, it is not likely to fully address the needs for middle-income housing types attainable to most local families. Middle income housing types include small lot detached "cottages", townhomes, duplexes and garden apartments. Under current zoning and infrastructure plans, these more attainably priced housing types will most likely only occur in Stevenson.

In order to meet the demand of nearly half of current and future households that earn less than \$90,000 in annual income, the county and its cities need to find a way to encourage additional private investment of middle housing. Using regional HUD guidelines, middle housing includes homes priced below \$368,000 (or two bedrooms that rent for less than \$1,700 per month).

To enable developers/builders to deliver middle housing at attainable price points, Skamania County and the City of Stevenson should consider amendments to its development code and infrastructure investment strategy so that new cottages, plexes, townhomes, and garden apartments can be built.

To attract private development of middle-income housing, a mix of local actions are recommended.

### V.B. CITY OF STEVENSON RECOMMENDATIONS

As the Skamania County's seat of government, largest city and primary community services provider, the City of Stevenson had taken proactive steps to accommodate new development. Those efforts have included updates to the City's Comprehensive Plan and water and sewer master plans, as well as a recently completed Downtown Plan.

Stevenson's buildable residential land base has the potential to accommodate the most diverse mix of densities and land use types among the focus areas, including the only high-density zoned land

identified in this study. However, while Stevenson has development potential, its infrastructure is constrained, and remaining vacant sites are limited to a total of 19 acres in the high-density category and 54 acres in the medium-density category (remaining vacant parcels are less than 2 acres in size).

The issues facing Stevenson today include:

- How to cost-effectively extend water and sanitary sewer system capacity to serve areas that are within ½ mile of the existing city limits?
- How to create more development opportunities for construction of “missing middle” housing products, such as plexes, townhomes and cottage homes; particularly in walkable settings and areas served by public sewer and water?
- Ways to work with the County and local property owners/residents to create future neighborhoods in urban exempt areas that include a variety of planned housing types.

The City of Stevenson should consider implementing the following recommendations in their zoning code to reduce or eliminate barriers to housing development.

- ✓ Consider adding flexibility to the development of ADUs by:
  - Increasing the number of allowable ADUs from one to one attached and one detached per SFDD
  - Increasing size from 800 to 900 square feet
  - Eliminating the additional parking space requirement
  - Make the owner-occupancy requirement optional for an additional fee to cover enforcement costs.
- ✓ Permit two-family dwellings (TFDs or duplexes) in the R1 zone instead of requiring a conditional use permit.
- ✓ Complete sewer and water master plan updates before allowing major zone changes. Identify timing of future sewer pump station(s) and water service elevation levels so both systems can be extended to handle future growth beyond 2030.
- ✓ Consider feasibility of consolidating R2 and R3 zones, especially near schools.
- ✓ Reduce the minimum lot size requirement for TFDs and MFDs in R2, R3, and CR zones. Attached single-family housing products can be located on lots as small as 2,000 square feet.
- ✓ Permit senior housing options in R3 zone instead of requiring a conditional use permit
- ✓ Allow senior housing options in the R1 and R2 zones through conditional use instead of prohibiting them
- ✓ Define Light Industrial Activities and permit retail and artisan manufacturers/cottage industry business owners to operate in live/work spaces in C1 zone

## V.C. JOINT COUNTY/STEVENSON RECOMMENDATIONS

Skamania County and the City of Stevenson can work together to more effectively address countywide middle-income housing needs. As noted above, within the current city limits, there are opportunities to rezone land for addition development. In adjacent areas outside the NSA boundary, there are opportunities to work with Skamania County to permit a wider mix of development along with planned sewer and water infrastructure expansion and multimodal (road/bicycle) transportation linkages. Recommendations include:

- ✓ Consider a city/county intergovernmental agreement (IGA) to support city of Stevenson expansion and potential rezoning that result in additional housing development opportunities.
- ✓ Identify local and state public-owned properties (excluding park/open space areas) that could be developed for a mix of housing types.

## V.D. SKAMANIA COUNTY RECOMMENDATIONS

**Relatively high land and development costs hamper development of attainable housing for residents and workers. As a result, Skamania County has an existing deficit for “missing middle” housing.** To help encourage or incentivize construction of missing middle housing, the County should continue to pursue state and federal housing investment grants and work with the city of Stevenson and North Bonneville to consider the following policies:

- ✓ Eliminate Process Barriers in the Code. Consider making multifamily uses and cluster developments permitted uses rather than requiring conditional use permits or prohibiting these uses outright. County staff will be most knowledgeable about the areas of the County and the corresponding zones where this would be most beneficial; more developed areas, such as Carson and the West End should be considered first.
  - The RR zone in Carson and the WERL-2 zones could permit multifamily units outright or some of these areas could be rezoned to allow for more housing. Code amendments should also be considered in commercial zones, such as CC, CR, and C where new housing would have the least impact on surrounding uses and where residents have come to expect greater intensity of use.
  - Cluster developments should be more widely considered as permitted uses in some of the higher intensity zones in the County, including R-1, R-2, NWLR-2 and GMA residential zones.
  - Mobile and manufactured homes are an important source of affordable housing and should be a permitted use in zones with standards developed for lease lot sizes.
  - The County should consider ADUs within GMA residential zones.
- ✓ Lot Size Requirements: There are multiple zones throughout the County that require lot sizes larger than necessary to accommodate certain unit types on septic systems. The County should use Attachment B of this report as a starting place to audit their code with the intent of reducing lot size requirements where allowed under septic requirements and where smaller sizes would fit within the existing development patterns. The County is undergoing an update to the septic code in 2020 with larger land area requirements than now exist. The lot size analysis should be updated when new septic land area requirements are known.

- ✓ Consider “lot size averaging” so that the site of individual lots in a short-plat development can vary from the zoned minimum or maximum density, in a manner that the overall development still meets average lot size requirements.
- ✓ Encourage use of “shadow plats” that show where future accessory dwelling units could be provided on lots approved for single family housing.
- ✓ Consider making multi-family residential a conditional use in the Rural Conservancy shoreline designation in the draft SMP.

### V.D.1. Carson Area Opportunity

There is currently an abundant supply of vacant buildable land (800+ acres) within the Carson area. This area is likely to be developed with very low-density detached housing (889 units permitted under current zoning). The best opportunity to consider alternative planning scenarios for Carson is before large vacant parcels are committed to detached housing development. To influence development potential, the feasibility of a small wastewater treatment facility could be evaluated along with:

- ✓ The potential mix of housing that can be provided
- ✓ The ability to create a commercial and business center
- ✓ Locations for small and medium size light industrial operations
- ✓ Facility capital and operation costs, funding, and governance options
- ✓ Community support (at least one property owner has voiced interest in dedicating land for the treatment facility)

**It is recommended that the County initiate a wastewater treatment facility feasibility study for the Carson Area.** The study would consider a variety of collection, conveyance, and treatment options to address both long- and intermediate-term sewer needs. The study would examine parameters, including capital and land cost, maintenance, permitting, effluent flows, and potential affects (benefits and costs) to customers (rate payers). There are a variety of systems (vacuum systems, septic-tank effluent systems, local and regional tanks, and a variety of packaged residential to regional treatment technologies) that could be considered.

Interim wastewater treatment solutions could enable the County or Public Utility District to begin collecting sewer system development charges in anticipation of a treatment plant. The initial feasibility study may cost on the order of \$75,000 to \$125,000. Grant funds through the Washington Department of Ecology, Department of Commerce and the U.S. Department of Agriculture may be explored to fund the study.

### V.D.2. New Local Funding Options

**Skamania County has no major dedicated source of revenue for leveraging outside investment (public or private) for middle- or low-income housing. The demand for short-term rentals is increasing and could eventually “crowd out” long-term rental housing availability for locals.**

Policy recommendations include:

- ✓ Consider creating an annual license fee for short-term rental units in unincorporated areas of the county. Utilize proceeds to help fund a part-time housing coordinator that is responsible

for pursuing federal and state grants and arranging potential public/private development partnerships that include workforce housing construction.

- ✓ In conjunction with local governments, Skamania County should leverage federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG funds), state public works grants and bonds to help communities expand water and sewer infrastructure within areas planned for middle housing through establishment of local improvement districts or reimbursement district programs.

**Washington and federal (National Scenic Area) planning requirements hamstringing the county's ability to protect residents from rapidly rising property values. About 1 in 5 existing dwellings in Skamania County are owned by non-residents.**

- ✓ Engage Washington Legislature to consider new property tax guidelines for rural counties (e.g., population under 50,000) such as a "homestead property tax exemption" that would provide a relatively lower property tax rate for year-round residents in comparison with non-resident property owners. Non-resident dwellings tend to be occupied during peak season months which places additional cost on local services, such as transportation, parks and emergency services. The intent of this legislation would be to generate a more equitable source of general fund revenues and to manage rapid increases in housing costs.<sup>2</sup>



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<sup>2</sup> While Washington state does provide property tax exemptions and deferrals for eligible homeowners (e.g., low income senior citizens, disabled persons, etc.), it does not currently allow homestead property tax exemptions; which have proven to be effective in states such as Florida, which has a relatively high share of non-resident property owners.



# APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY OUTREACH

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# APPENDIX B: BUILDABLE LAND REPORT

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# APPENDIX C: LOCAL CODE EVALUATION

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## SKAMANIA COUNTY BUILDABLE LANDS INVENTORY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW SUMMARY

The Skamania Economic Development Council (EDC) in partnership with consultants FCS GROUP and WSP USA is assessing buildable lands and housing needs within Skamania County. Over the next few months, the EDC will inventory vacant lands to target where future housing growth should occur. To conduct this assessment, eight focus areas have been selected that demonstrate the greatest potential for a range of housing, including workforce housing needs. To solicit input on the proposed plan, WSP conducted a series of stakeholder interviews in early October 2019. Interviews were conducted as informal conversations intended to understand individual and organizational perspectives, including up to four stakeholders per interview. At the beginning of each interview, stakeholders were provided with a brief introduction, including general background information about the study area. Following the introduction, discussion topics generally covered the following.

- The adequacy of housing options in their community.
- What specific types of housing are needed to meet current demand.
- Specific barriers to housing development in Skamania County.
- Specific knowledge about utility and infrastructure needs to support housing for a site or community.
- What the EDC's top priorities should be to enhance housing options.
- Specific opportunity or catalyst sites.

The following is a summary of the input received, organized around the topics identified above. Candid responses were encouraged, and comments are not attributed to specific individuals to provide a level of anonymity. A list of stakeholders interviewed is included at the end of the summary.

### **Adequacy of housing options in your community.**

Overall, stakeholders agreed that available housing options are not adequate in Skamania County. While most stakeholders acknowledged that for some consumers (such as wealthier retirees), there is sufficient housing stock, there was broad consensus that the housing stock for the workforce (including service workers) is essentially nonexistent. Stakeholders indicated that most new construction was selling between \$300,000 to \$600,000, and that most first-time homebuyers or young families were being priced out of the market. Stakeholders also consistently indicated that rents are high, especially for single-income earners or service workers in the food and beverage or hospitality industries. Finally, stakeholders advised that low-income residents and those with housing assistance needs were severely underserved.

### **Specific types of housing needed to meet current demand.**

Many stakeholders felt that increasing housing stock across all market segments is needed. Almost all stakeholders indicated that a variety of multifamily housing represents the highest need. Apartments (studios to three-bedroom apartments) and entry-level townhomes were identified as the most desirable housing types. Several stakeholders indicated that mixed-use apartment buildings with ground floor retail and apartments above would be appropriate in certain locations. A variety of innovative housing products were also identified by stakeholders; these included master-planned 55+ communities, clustered cottage-style developments, shipping container villages, and light industrial/artisan live-work spaces.

### **Specific barriers to housing development in Skamania County.**

Several common themes emerged from the stakeholders regarding barriers to housing development. Among these, financial risk was identified as a top issue. Many stakeholders indicated that developing housing products that are more affordable for renters or first-time home buyers (including apartments and entry-level townhomes), just aren't as profitable due to high construction costs and the financial risk of lower income tenants or buyers. Other challenges include elevated land costs, the high costs of builder and development fees, extended development review time lines, and a shortage of construction labor.

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA) was identified as being another significant barrier to housing development. Stakeholders indicated that the NSA rules restrict the available land inventory and greatly increases development time lines. Local geographic constraints, as well as local zoning code and development standards, further restrict development.

A majority of stakeholders agreed that the most likely places with available residential land to accommodate future development are Stevenson and Carson. However, a lack of infrastructure in some of the most desirable areas is another barrier identified by the stakeholders. Most notably, the lack of wastewater treatment (sewer) in Carson restricts lot sizes and limits denser development in what is otherwise a desirable area for residential growth. Right-of-way issues also prove to be challenging, with complex layers of easements, encroachments, and other elements increasing costs and development time lines.

While there was acknowledgement that attracting and retaining local jobs requires adequate housing, there was not common agreement regarding what economic development initiatives should be considered to positively impact the housing market. Perspectives varied greatly about potential strategies, from letting the market influence available housing products, to local government action in providing subsidized housing. Likewise, there were varying views on quality of life issues (including the perceived lower quality of rural schools – a negative; and the positive impacts of recreation and tourism) and their effects on recruitment of new employees and families. These groups are likely to face inadequate housing options.

**Specific knowledge about utility or infrastructure needs to enhance housing.**

The stakeholders cited the cost of hooking up to local water and sewer systems as one of the primary drivers of elevated housing costs in Skamania County. Additionally, stakeholders indicated that residential development in the desirable area of Carson would continue to be limited by a lack of wastewater treatment (sewer) in the community. Many stakeholders advised certain infrastructure in much of the county is well established and sufficient, including the transportation network, electricity provision, and fiber communications. Still, key infrastructure development and/or extensions for water and sewer delivery in upper Stevenson and Carson, were repeatedly noted as high-priority needs.

**Top priorities the EDC should focus on to enhance housing.**

Stakeholders indicated the EDC’s top priorities should focus on promoting efforts to update local codes to be more development-friendly, working with interested parties to coordinate housing-friendly initiatives, and directing technical and financial resources into the community to support housing choices. Specific suggestions developed by the stakeholders include encouraging smart-growth principles, innovative housing solutions (such as Accessory Dwelling Units), coordinating discussions between developers and regulators, and acquiring grants to help with community development. Several stakeholders emphasized the importance of creating flexibility in the development standards to bring creative housing products to market.

Some stakeholders suggested the EDC could take on a leadership role in building relationships between local agencies involved with review of proposed housing products, and local landowners or developers. Stakeholders indicated the need to build trust between local landowners and regulatory agencies, and that the EDC may be a good partner to take on that role.

**Specific opportunity or catalyst sites.**

The stakeholders indicated several opportunity or catalyst sites that should be considered for housing development. Additionally, they provided several locations or communities that were not ideal for housing. A summary of these sites/communities is provided below.

Potential Catalyst Communities or Sites	Communities or Sites Lacking Housing Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carson area generally</li> <li>• Wind River Valley/Wind River Business Park</li> <li>• Mixed-use infill in downtown Stevenson</li> <li>• Trailer park at west end of First Street in downtown Stevenson for live/work housing or tiny home village</li> <li>• Property owned by Bob Talent on the west side of Skamania Lodge</li> <li>• Healthy Planet LLC property in Stevenson</li> <li>• Barnes Bros. property in Home Valley</li> <li>• Old Wind Mountain Ranch in Home Valley</li> <li>• Gary Collins’ property in east Home Valley</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stabler (water and sewer)</li> <li>• Mill A (water and sewer)</li> <li>• Cook (water and sewer)</li> <li>• Carson (sewer)</li> </ul>

Potential Catalyst Communities or Sites	Communities or Sites Lacking Housing Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30-acre M-d-Columbia Housing Authority site near Middle School in Carson</li> <li>• Brian Adams' property in "West Gateway" area of Stevenson</li> <li>• Fairgrounds and County shops along Rock Creek Drive</li> <li>• Underutilized "Main Street" commercial spaces in Carson</li> <li>• Upper Kanaka Creek area</li> <li>• Underwood (based on in situ expansion)</li> <li>• Old Co-Ply site in Stevenson</li> <li>• SDS Broughton Mill on the river close to Underwood</li> <li>• 27-acre field behind Backwoods Brewery in Carson</li> <li>• Carson Depot (for wastewater treatment facility)</li> <li>• North Bonneville Port Site (for live-work spaces)</li> <li>• Apartments in North Bonneville</li> <li>• Field next to gas station off State Route 14 (SR 14) in North Bonneville and old fuel area off SR 14 in west Stevenson</li> </ul>	

**Stakeholders interviewed.**

Individuals who participated in the stakeholder interviews are identified below. Stakeholder affiliation is also noted; however, the opinions given were those of the individual stakeholder and do not necessarily represent the organizations identified.

- Brian Adams (Terrapin Investments LLC)
- Pat Albaugh (Port of Skamania)
- Scott Anderson (Mayor of Stevenson)
- David Bennett (Windermere Realty)
- Karen Douglas (Stevenson-Carson School District)
- Tim Elsea (Skamania County Public Works-County Engineer)
- Xavier Gates (Walking Man Brewery)
- John Goodman (Skamania PUD)
- Bob Hamlin (Skamania County Commissioner)
- Jane Keeler (John L. Scott)
- Rick Leavitt (Leavitt Brothers Consulting)
- Jeff Logosz (Slingshot)
- Matt Maher (Wave Broadband)
- Don McCaskell (Invision II LLC)

MEMO: Skamania County BLI/HNA Stakeholder Interview Summary  
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Ronda Miller (Wave Broadband)  
Carrie Nissen (LDB)  
Matt Piper (People for People)  
Zachary Pyle (FDM Management)  
Reyna Saldate (John L. Scott)  
Kevin Waters (Skamania Economic Development Council)

NF:nb  
October 21, 2019

DRAFT





# Skamania County

## Buildable Lands Inventory Technical Methodology



November 2019

**Project Consultants**

**FCS GROUP**

Todd Chase, AICP, LEED <sup>AP</sup>, Principal/Project Manager

Owen Reynolds, AICP, Project Consultant

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## OVERVIEW

FCS GROUP was tasked with completing a Buildable Lands Inventory (BLI) for the Skamania County Economic Development Council (SCEDC) with a focus on key areas of the County which included:

- City of Stevenson (urban growth area)
- Carson area
- Home Valley area
- Mill A area
- Cook area
- Stabler area
- Underwood area
- West End area

A draft BLI analysis was conducted for the City of North Bonneville. However, the maps and results are included in this report, as the City has opted not to participate as a focus area.

This inventory included an assessment of land suitable for residential development within the County and provides SCEDC with a catalog of developable lands (including potential catalyst sites) required to address the housing related land use needs.

Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools, FCS GROUP analyzed existing property types, Zoning and Comprehensive Plan designations, valuation, and environmental constraints. Skamania County property assessment data was used as a basis for the initial vacancy typing, followed by an analysis of applicable environmental constraints (floodways, protected areas, parks/open spaces, steep slopes) to remove lands unsuitable for development based on natural feature limitations.

The resulting BLI includes detailed information about tax lots in Skamania County and their suitability for residential development. This inventory provides a tabular and graphic representation of the key focus areas. The datasets used for this project, with source and a brief description, are listed below in **Exhibit 1**.

**Exhibit 1: Skamania County BLI Data Sources**

Dataset	Type	Description	Source
County Boundary	GIS Layer	Boundary of Skamania County	Skamania County
NSA Boundary	GIS Layer	Boundary of National Scenic Area	NSA Data Library <sup>1</sup>
City Limits	GIS Layer	City of Stevenson & City of North Bonneville city limits	Skamania County
Urban Areas	GIS Layer	Boundaries of Urban Areas	NSA Data Library <sup>1</sup>
Place Name	GIS Layer	Points representing cities, towns, or places. Identifies focus areas for analysis	Skamania County
Places Of Interest	GIS Layer	Polygons representing places with dedicated land use (fire stations, schools, government facilities)	Skamania County
Site Structure Address Points	GIS Layer	Address file of structures located in analysis area	Skamania County
Rail Roads	GIS Layer	Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad centerline	Skamania County
Road Centerlines	GIS Layer	County and City roads, State highway, registered private roads, some major USFS and DNR forest roads	Skamania County
Streams - DNR	GIS Layer	Water courses, streams, and rivers	WADNR via Skamania County
Waterbodies - DNR	GIS Layer	Water bodies and features	WADNR via Skamania County
Aerial Imagery	Raster	National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP) aerial imagery - July 2017	USDA <sup>2</sup>
Zoning_CompPlan	GIS Layer	Zoning designations in Skamania County, includes County, cities, Nat.Scenic Area.	Skamania County
Zoning_CompPlan	GIS Layer	Comprehensive Plan designations in Skamania County, includes County, cities, Nat.Scenic Area.	Skamania County
Land Use Designation (LUD)	GIS Layer	Generalized land use designation for National Scenic Area	NSA Data Library <sup>1</sup>
FEMA FIRM Flood Maps	GIS Layer	FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps data from FEMA	FEMA via Skamania County
NWI Wetlands - USFWS	GIS Layer	Local or National Wetlands Inventory - March 2013	USFWS via Skamania County
Parks & Open Space	GIS Layer	Parks within City & UGA Limits	City/County
Steep Slopes	Raster	Slopes 15% or greater derived from LIDAR Digital Terrain Model (DTM)	WADNR <sup>3</sup>
CAO	Digital Map	Critical Areas Ordinance supporting data layers (City of Stevenson only)	City of Stevenson
Parcels	GIS Layer	Parcels/Tax lots with owner attribution	Skamania County
General/Special Mgmt Areas	GIS Layer	General Management Areas and Special Management Areas (GMA/SMA)	NSA Data Library <sup>1</sup>
WADNR Lands	GIS Layer	Lands managed by Washington Department of Natural Resources	WADNR <sup>4</sup>
Owl Management Lands	GIS Layer	Lands managed for owl habitat by Washington Department of Natural Resources	WADNR <sup>4</sup>
Parcels	GIS Layer	Parcels/Tax lots with valuation (Assessed/RMV/PMV) attribution	Skamania County
ROW	GIS Layer	Parcels identified as Right of Way (ROW)	Skamania County
Structure Footprints	GIS Layer	Building footprints indicating presence of a structure on parcel	Skamania County
Parcel Building Details	Tabular	Building type, style, size, age, condition and quality	Skamania County

1 - Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA) Data Library  
 2 - USDA - National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP)  
 3 - WADNR - Washington Department of Natural Resources LIDAR Portal  
 3 - WADNR - Washington Department of Natural Resources Open Data Portal

## Buildable Land Inventory Methodology

The objective of the residential BLI is to determine the amount of developable land available for future residential housing development within the area of analysis. The steps taken to perform this analysis are as follows:

1. **Calculate gross acres** by land use plan/zoning designation, including classifications for fully vacant and partially vacant parcels. This step entails “clipping” all the parcels that are contained in the project area and excludes parcels outside this area for consideration of development at this time.
2. **Identify development constraints and calculate gross buildable acres** by plan designation by subtracting land that is constrained from future development, such as such as existing public right-of-way, parks and open space, steep slopes, and floodplains.
3. **Net out public facilities and calculate net buildable acres** by plan designation, by subtracting future public facilities such as roads, schools and parks from gross buildable acres.
4. **Determine total net buildable acres by plan designation** by disaggregating net buildable acres from step three into general land use plan designations (e.g., low density, medium density, high density, etc.) and taking into account potential redevelopment locations and mixed-use development opportunity areas.

The detailed steps used to create the land inventory are described below.

## RESIDENTIAL LAND BASE

The residential land base reflects current Skamania County Comprehensive Plan land use classifications and zoning designations (Comprehensive Plan and zoning maps for County areas are provided as **Exhibits 2 and 3**). Select areas have a defined Comprehensive Plan land use designation; areas which do not have a defined Comprehensive Plan land use designation utilize the zoning designation as the future land use for that area.

Properties that are within the residential land base include the following designations:

### Residential Zoning Designations

- High Density Residential (HDR)
- Manufactured Home Subdivision (MH)
- Multi-Family Residential (MF)
- Multi-Family Residential (R3)
- Multi-Family Residential Overlay (R3)
- Residential 1 (R1)
- Residential 2 (R2)
- Residential 5 (R5)
- Residential 10 (R10)
- Residential (GMA) R-1
- Residential (GMA) R-2
- Residential (GMA) R-5
- Residential (GMA) R-10
- Rural Estate (RE)
- Rural Estate 20 (RES20)
- Rural Residential (RR)
- Single-Family Residential (SFR)
- Single-Family Residential (R1)
- Suburban Residential (SR)
- Two-Family Residential (R2)

### Residential Comprehensive Plan Use Classifications

- Rural I
- Rural II

In addition, commercial land on which housing development is allowed was included the following Zoning designations:

### Commercial and Mixed-Use Zoning Designations

- Mixed Use (MU)
- Neighborhood Commercial (NC)

For analysis purposes, each of these Comprehensive Plan classifications/zoning designations have been grouped into four residential development categories that represent the expected level of development based on the housing types/densities that are permitted within the County. It should be noted that new housing development must be permitted outright or by

conditional development approval. This includes: low, medium and high density residential categories; as well as a commercial/mixed use category (which allows a mix of medium and high-density housing).

BLI findings and results were reviewed by County and City Staff and subjected to public review, then refined accordingly based on the input received.

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Exhibit 2. Comprehensive Plan Designations

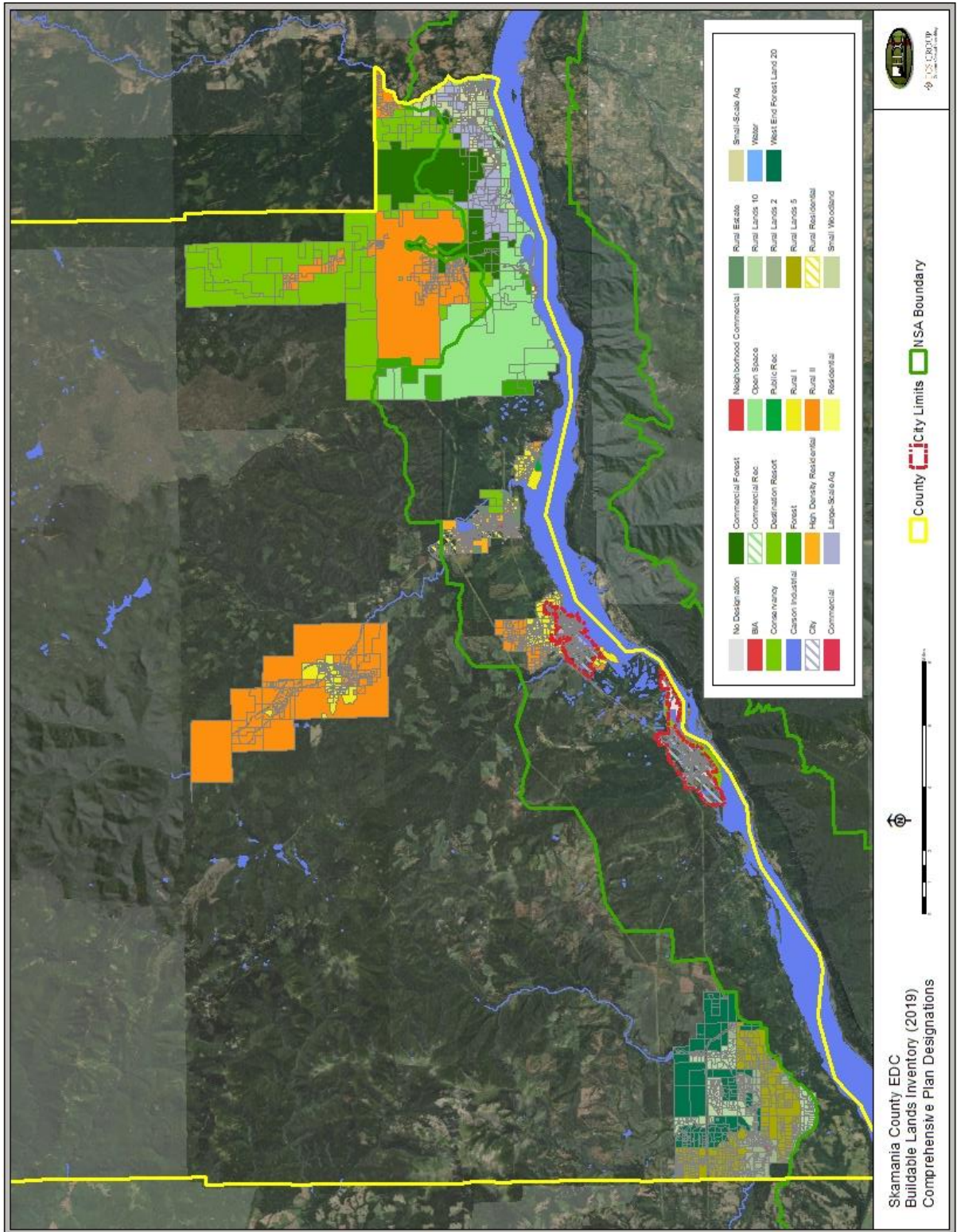
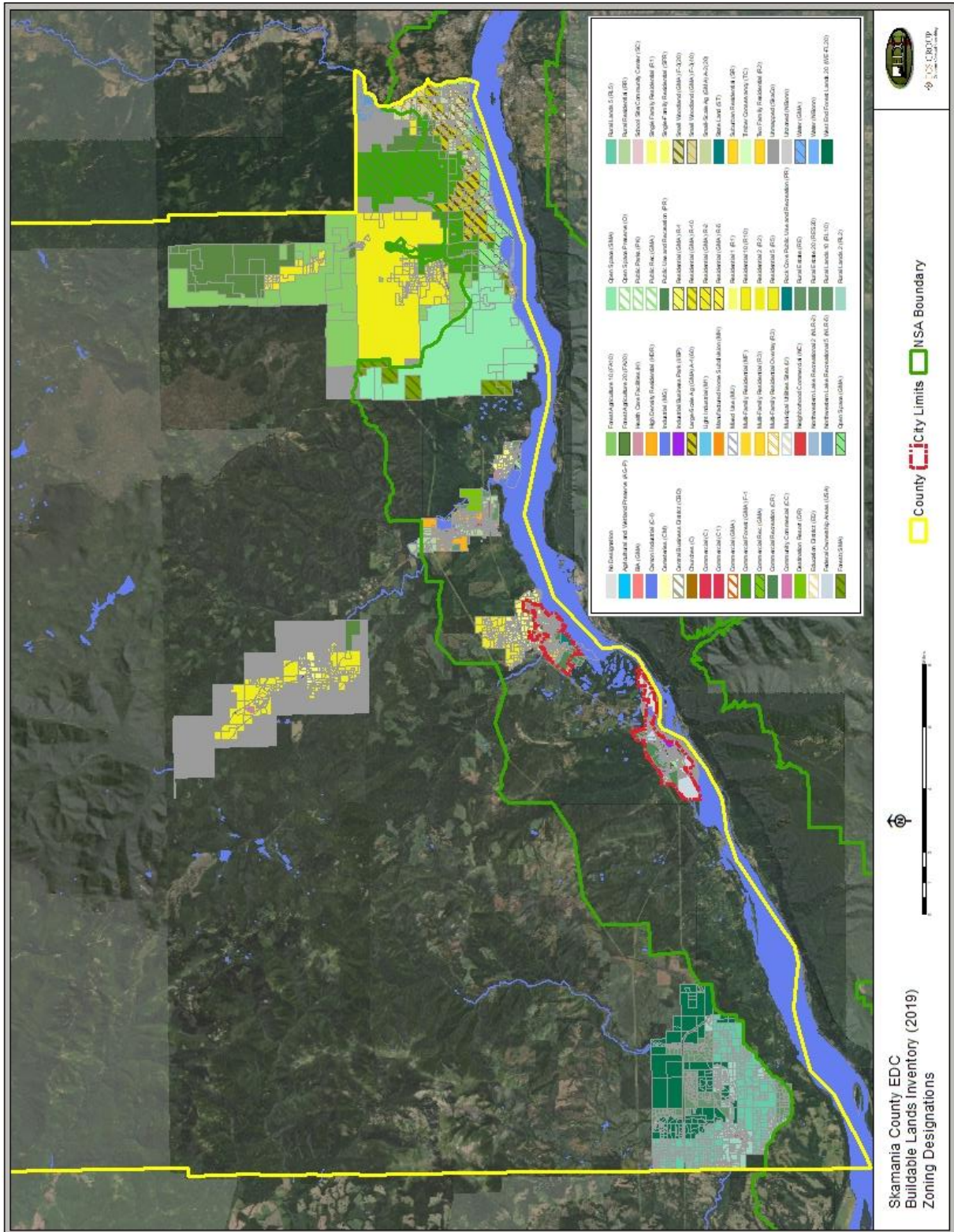


Exhibit 3. Zoning Designations



## LAND CLASSIFICATIONS

The next step includes classifying each tax lot (parcel) into one of the following categories.

- **Vacant land:** Properties with no structures or have buildings with very little value. For purpose of the BLI, residential lands with improvement value less than \$10,000 are considered vacant. These lands were also subjected to review using aerial photography; and if the land is in a committed use such as a parking lot, an assessment has been made to determine if it is to be classified as vacant, part vacant or developed.
- **Partially vacant land:** Properties that are occupied by a use (e.g., a home or building structure with value over \$10,000) but have enough land to be subdivided without the need for rezoning. This determination is made using tax assessor records and aerial photography. For lots with existing buildings, it is assumed that ¼ acre (10,890 sq. ft.) is retained by each existing home, and the remainder is included in the part vacant land inventory.
- **Vacant Undersized:** Properties that are vacant with less than 3,000 sq. ft. of land area. While this land area is not likely large enough to accommodate standard detached housing units, it may be suitable for accessory dwelling units (ADUs).
- **Developed & Non-Residential Land Base:** Properties unlikely to yield additional residential development for one of two reasons: they possess existing building structures at densities and are unlikely to subdivide or redevelop over the planning period; or they include parcels with Comprehensive Land Use Plan designations not included in the aforementioned residential land use classifications (such as commercial and industrial).
- **Public and Constrained (unbuildable) land:** These properties are unlikely to be developed because they are under a certain size (3,000 square feet), or restricted by existing uses such as: public ownership, roads and public right-of-way (ROW); common areas held by Home Owners Associations, parks/open space/recreation areas; cemeteries; and power substations.
- **Redevelopable Land:** In order to reflect existing market forces, a portion of developed properties were identified as “redevelopable.” These properties are a subset of developed, residentially zoned land that have existing “low value” structures which could be converted to more intensive residential uses during the planning period. The redevelopment land inventory includes tax lots have “land values” that are greater than “improvement values” based on current Skamania County assessor records.

These tax lot classifications were validated using aerial photos, building permit data, and assessor records. Preliminary BLI maps and results were refined based on input from Skamania County, City of Stevenson planning staff, and EDC staff along with public stakeholders during the planning process.

## DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

The BLI methodology for identifying and removing development constraints is consistent with best practices on buildable land inventories. By definition, the BLI is intended to include land that is “suitable, available, and necessary for residential uses.”

“Buildable Land” includes residential designated land within the project area, including vacant, part vacant and land that is likely to be redeveloped; and suitable, available and necessary for residential uses. Public-owned land is generally not considered to be available for residential use unless it is the intent of the public agency to see it developed for residential (i.e., as part of a public/private development or redevelopment project).

Land is considered to be “suitable and available” unless it is:

- Has slopes over 25 percent;
- Is within the 100-year flood plain (FEMA FIRM Zone A); or
- Parcels outside exempt areas within the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA)

Based on best practices and data provided by the Skamania County, the following constraints have been deducted from the residential lands inventory.

- Land within waterbodies and floodways. Lands identified within waterbodies and floodways per the FEMA FIRM maps.
- Land within floodplains. This includes lands in flood-hazard areas (the 100-year floodplain ZONE A) from the buildable land inventory.
- Land within wetlands.
- Land with slopes greater than 25%.
- Land within natural resource protection measures. This includes parks and open spaces that are identified in the data provided.

**Exhibits 4-6** illustrate these types of “environmental” constraints.

Exhibit 4. Floodplains and Waterways

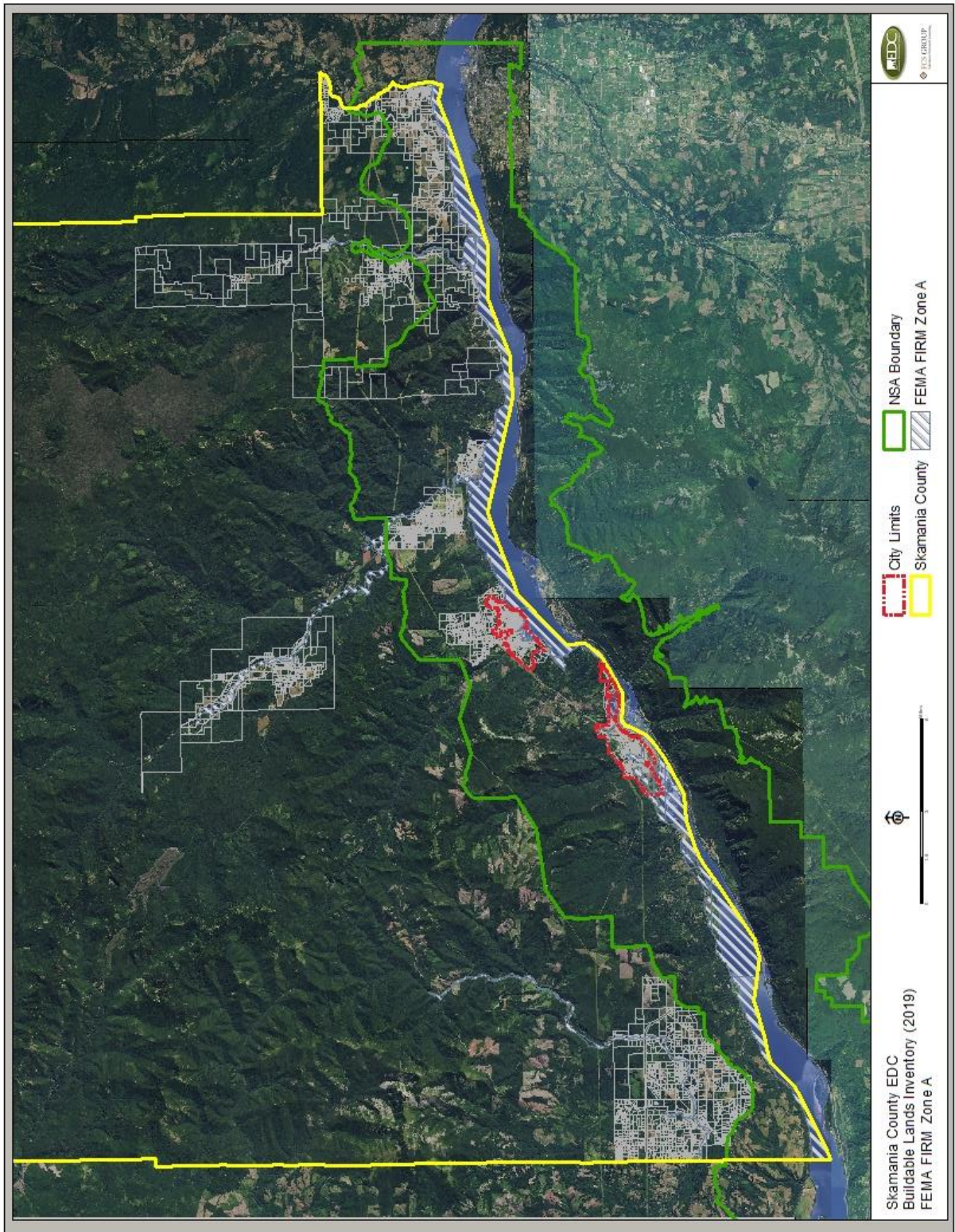


Exhibit 5. Wetlands

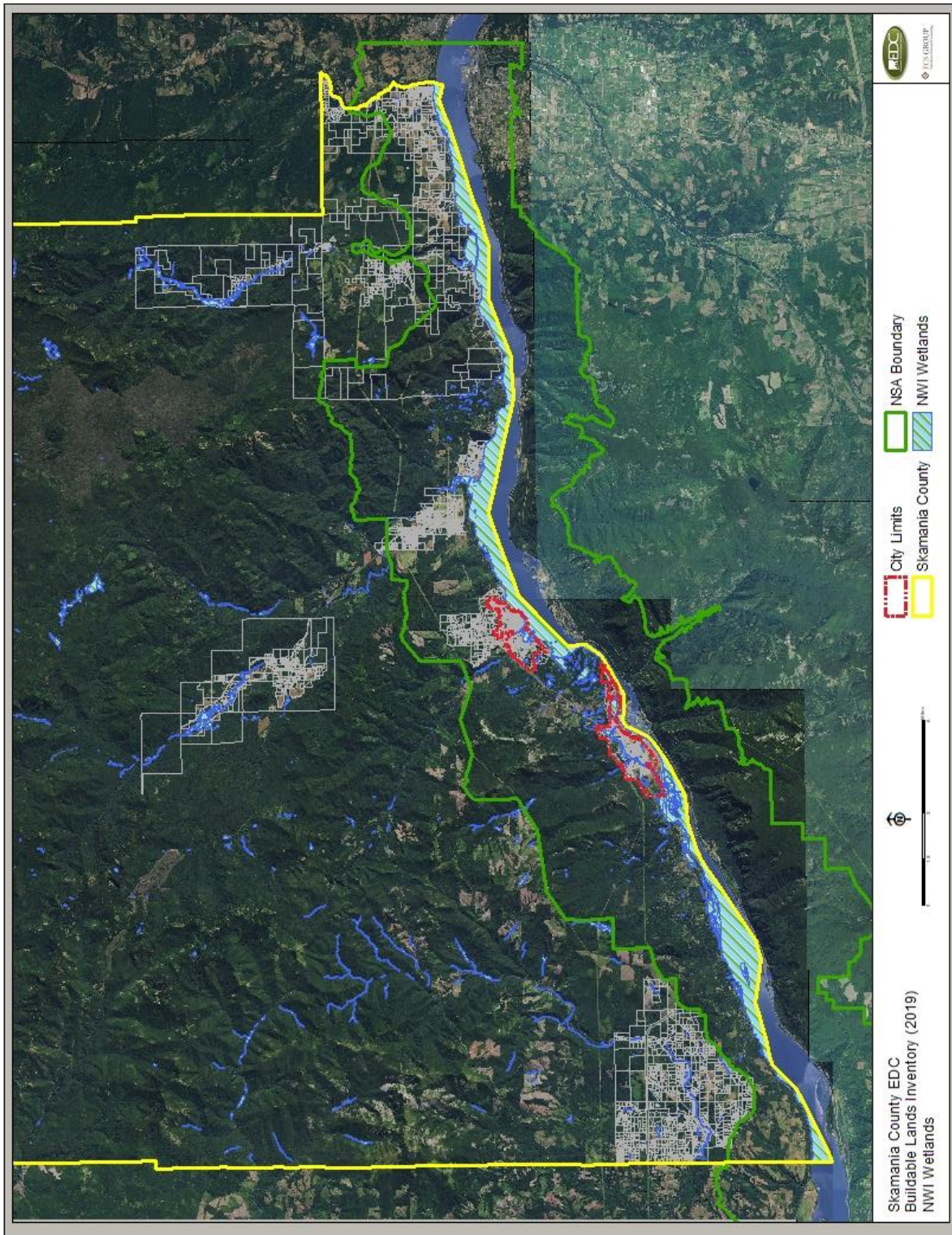
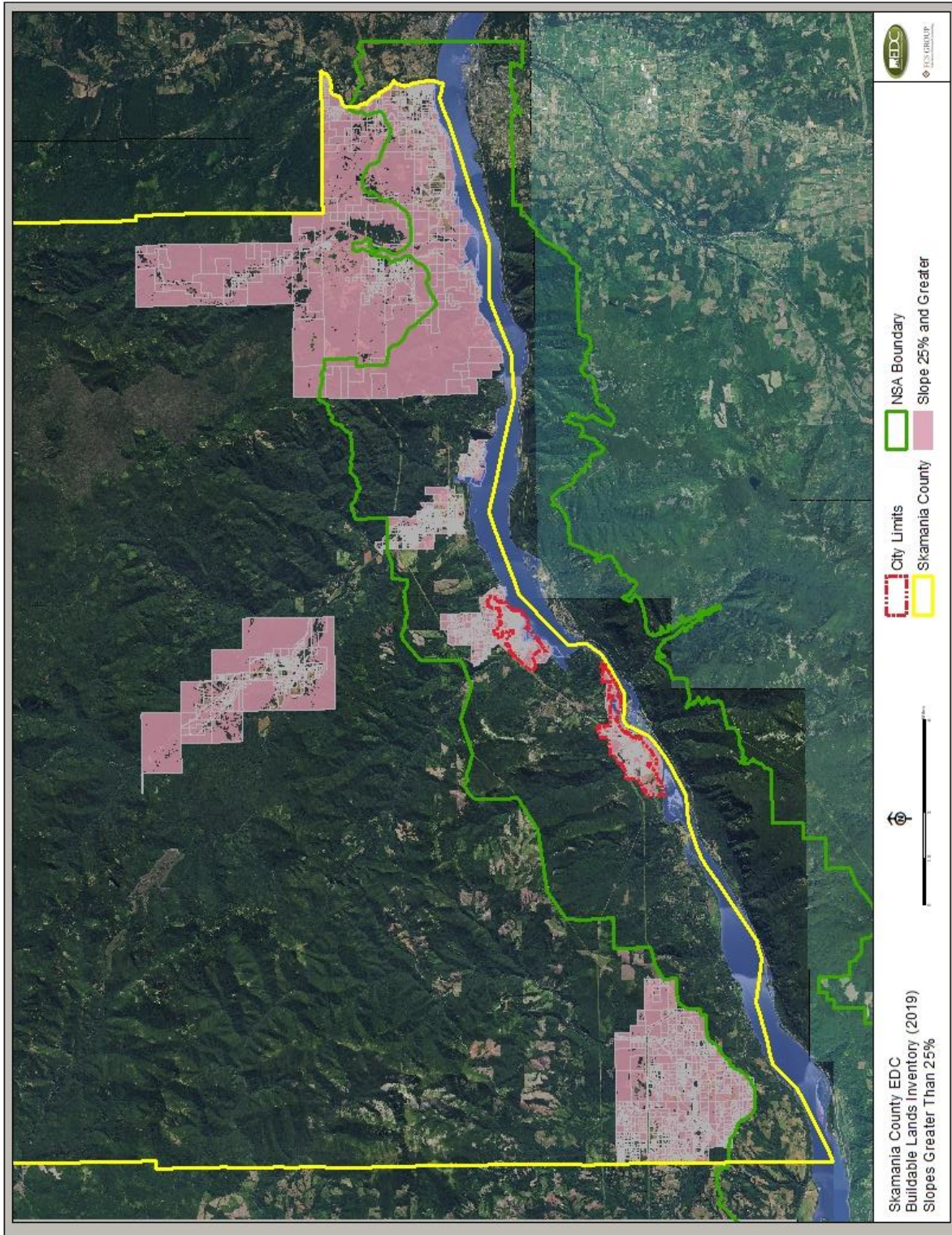


Exhibit 6. Slopes Over 25%



## RESIDENTIAL BUILDABLE LAND INVENTORY RESULTS

### Land Base

As noted above, the residential land base for the BLI includes all tax lots in the focus areas in residential, commercial and mixed-use designations. A summary of the land base by generalized plan designation is provided in **Exhibit 8**. The findings indicate that there are 5,361 tax lots in the land base with 36,032 gross acres.

#### Exhibit 8: Gross Acreage in Land Base

Land Classification	Count of Taxlot	Sum of Map Acres	Sum of Environmental	
			Constraints Acres	Sum of Lot Net Acres
Developed/Non-Residential	3,588	76,710	28,263	48,447
Partially Vacant	542	5,666	1,987	3,421
Unbuildable	133	655	248	407
Vacant	998	13,405	5,511	7,894
Vacant Undersized	100	29	23	6
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5,361</b>	<b>96,466</b>	<b>36,032</b>	<b>60,175</b>

### Buildable Land after constraints

The BLI methodology calculates the residential land base after accounting for the environmental constraints described previously in this report. The findings indicate that a total of 60,175 gross acres and 11,651 net acres are contained within the residential BLI in the focus areas. Approximately 7,655 acres (66%) are vacant, 3,397 acres (29%) are part-vacant, and 599 acres (5%) are considered to be re-developable (see **Exhibit 9**).

Buildable land has been organized into four general categories based on allowable density of the underlying zoning of each parcel. They are organized as follows:

- **Very Low:** generally allow development at less than one dwelling unit per acre. Specifically, these land uses allow between 0.05 and .5 dwelling units per acre.
- **Low:** Land classified as low density allows between one and 1.5 dwellings per acre.
- **Medium (Carson):** zoning allows up to 2 dwellings per acre.
- **Medium (Stevenson):** allows between 2 and 10 dwelling units per acre.
- **High (Stevenson):** allow between 16 and 34 dwelling units per acre.



**Exhibit 9: Residential Land Base with all constraints**

Row Labels	Vacant Acres	Part-Vacant Acres	Redevelopable Acres	Total
High	19	6	5	30
Medium	505	593	68	1,166
Low	291	87	66	444
Very Low	6,840	2,711	460	10,010
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7,655</b>	<b>3,397</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>11,651</b>

Given that this study is organized as an analysis of several focus areas, it should be noted that each area has unique availability as relates to developable residential land which is summarized below. Detailed tables for each focus area are available in **Appendix A**.

## Carson

The majority of developable land in Carson is in the low-density category which allows one unit per acre. There are also over 250 acres of medium-density land which allows 2 units per acre. Stakeholder interview feedback suggested that those densities could be increased significantly if a public sanitary sewer infrastructure system was constructed in Carson.

Row Labels	Vacant Acres	Part-Vacant Acres	Redevelopable Acres	Total
Medium	162.3	44.3	50.4	257
Low	211.8	223.0	30.6	465
Very Low	31.2	54.0	-	85
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>808</b>

## Cook

Cook has very little vacant residential land based on the confluence of limited vacant land supply and various development constraints. This results in only one developable parcel which is part-vacant.

Row Labels	Vacant Acres	Part-Vacant Acres	Redevelopable Acres	Total
Very Low	-	1.3	-	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>

## Home Valley

Developable land in Home Valley is limited to low-density properties with a mix of vacant and part-vacant parcels which total 159 acres, all of which allow one unit per acre.

Row Labels	Vacant Acres	Part-Vacant Acres	Redevelopable Acres	Total
Low	68	87	4	159
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>159</b>

## Mill A

Mill A has a significant amount of vacant residentially zoned property, much of which is in the R-5 classification which allows one dwelling for every 5 acres. A review of these parcels indicates that the vast majority of the residentially-zoned properties in Mill A are owned by timber companies.

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Row Labels	Vacant Acres	Part-Vacant Acres	Redevelopable Acres	Total
Very Low	3,774	412	41	4,227
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3,774</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>4,227</b>

### Stabler

Stabler has a mix of low and very low-density residential land, much of which is vacant. The low density properties allow one dwelling per acre, while the very low density properties allow one dwelling for every two acres.

Row Labels	Vacant Acres	Part-Vacant Acres	Redevelopable Acres	Total
Low	163	82	13	258
Very Low	1,019	455	104	1,578
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,182</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>1,835</b>

### Stevenson

Stevenson has the most diverse mix of densities and land use types among the focus areas, including the only high-density zoned land identified in this study. As with many of the focus areas, Stevenson has a significant amount of its developable land classified as vacant, including 19 acres in the high-density category and 54 acres in the medium-density category, which highlights the possibility that Stevenson could accommodate a significant amount of multifamily housing in the future. Much of this higher-density capacity can be served by Stevenson's existing sewer infrastructure which obviates the need to rely on septic tanks.

Row Labels	Vacant Acres	Part-Vacant Acres	Redevelopable Acres	Total
High	19	6	5	30
Low	127	229	27	383
Medium	54	9	4	68
Very Low	250	191	20	461
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>942</b>

### Underwood

The vast majority of developable residential land in Underwood is in the very low-density category, meaning that most residential development there would be limited to homes on much larger footprints.

Row Labels	Vacant Acres	Part-Vacant Acres	Redevelopable Acres	Total
Low	8	1	1	10
Very Low	128	101	22	250
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>260</b>

### West End

The West End focus area has significant amounts of very low-density properties. Like Underwood and Mill A, under existing conditions, the West End will yield mostly large lot dwelling

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development. Given it's proximity to Clark County, this focus area is likely to absorb commuter housing demand from the Portland-Vancouver region.

Row Labels	Vacant Acres	Part-Vacant Acres	Redevelopable Acres	Total
Low	2	4	4	9
Very Low	1,639	1,496	274	3,409
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,640</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>3,418</b>

## Development Capacity

The aggregate of the focus areas identified in this report have a total of 11,651 acres within the residential BLI land base (net of constraints). If we assume that 25% of the net land area within very low, low and medium density land classifications is devoted to future public roads, public facilities, parks and unknown site development issues, the potential dwelling unit capacity at buildout has been determined for 8,746 acres. Using density allowances identified in City and County zoning codes, the total residential dwelling unit development capacity in Skamania County is estimated to be 4,850 dwelling units (**Exhibit 12**).

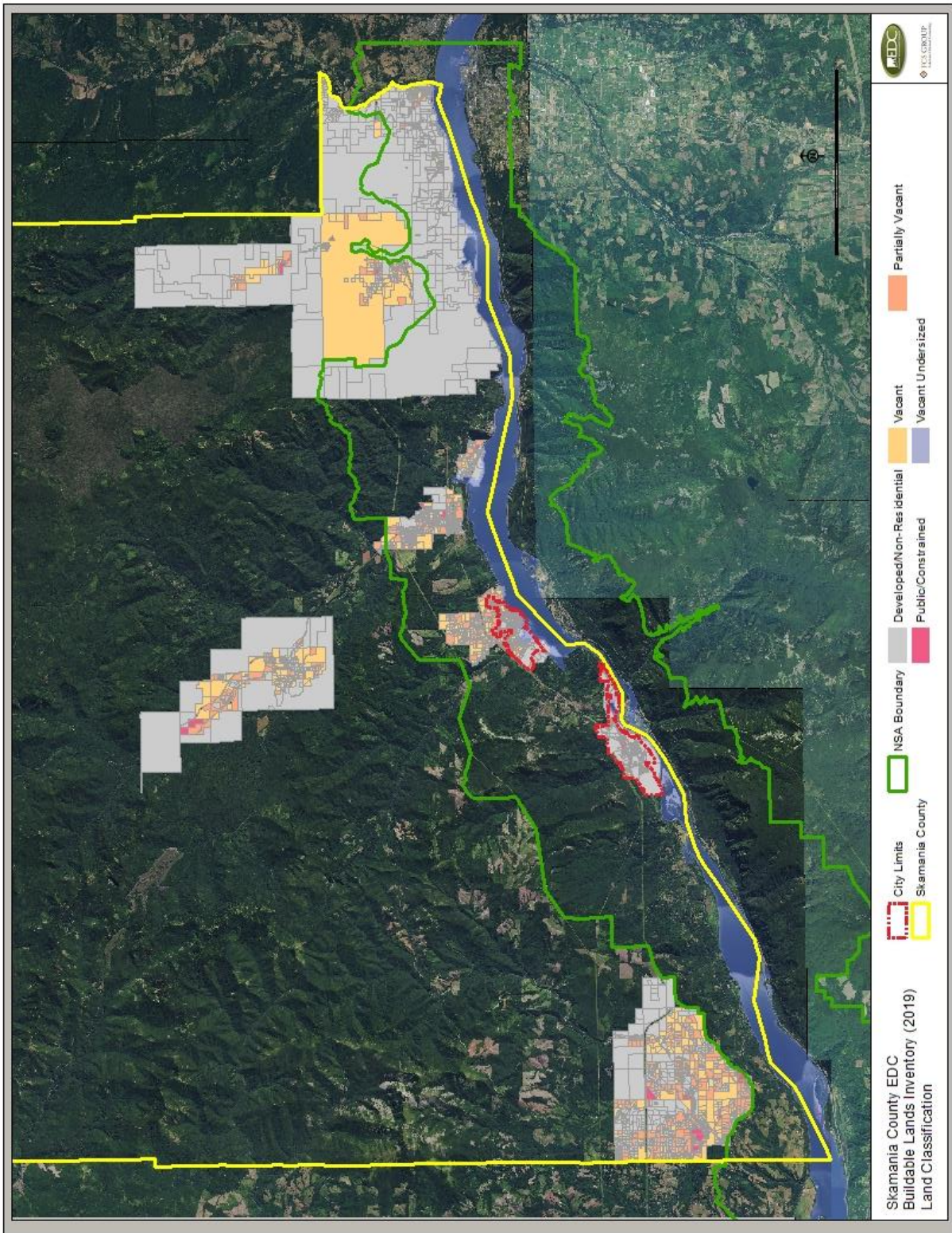
It should be noted that the City of Stevenson is the only focus area that would allow a mix of low and medium density townhomes and higher density midrise apartments and mixed use developments to occur. It is likely that lower density detached homes would occur throughout the remaining portions of the county.

**Exhibit 12: Potential Residential Development Capacity**

Location	Vacant Acres	Part-Vacant Acres	Redevelopable Acres	Total Developable Acres	Total Dwelling Unit Capacity	Share of Total
Carson	304	241	61	606	889	18%
Cook	-	1	-	1	-	0%
Home Valley	51	65	3	120	116	2%
Mill A	2,830	309	31	3,170	762	16%
Stabler	886	403	88	1,377	780	16%
Stevenson	342	329	43	714	1,652	34%
Underwood	101	77	17	195	41	1%
West End	1,230	1,125	208	2,563	610	13%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5,746</b>	<b>2,550</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>8,746</b>	<b>4,850</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Exhibit 13** illustrates the buildable vacant and partially vacant land areas for the residential land base within the focus areas. Individual focus area-specific buildable land maps are available in **Appendix B**.

Exhibit 13: Residential Land Base with all constraints



# APPENDIX A: DETAILED DEVELOPABLE LAND

## SUMMARY

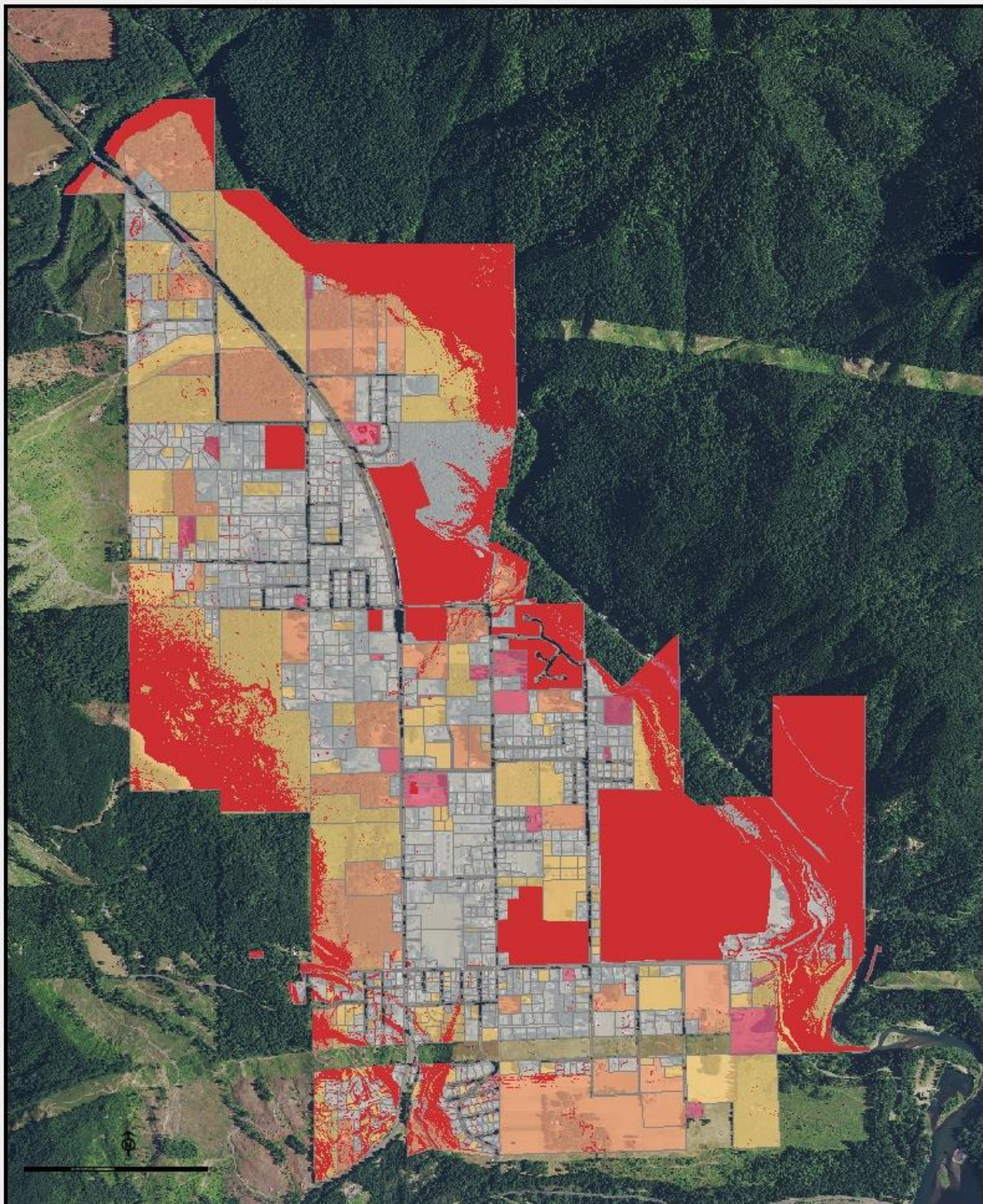
Location	Zone	Density (DU/Acre)	Grouping	Vacant Acres	Part-Vacant Acres	Redevelopable Acres
Stevenson	Residential (R-1)	1	Low	53	195.58	15.17
Stevenson	Residential (R-2)	0.5	Very Low	120.38	79.79	12.47
Stevenson	Residential (R-5)	0.2	Very Low	129.31	111.31	7.6
Stevenson	Single Family Residential (R-1)	7	Medium	44.27	4.31	3.83
Stevenson	Suburban Residential	2	Medium	73.98	33.49	12.12
Stevenson	Two-Family Residential (R-2)	10	Medium	1.91	0.69	0
Stevenson	Multi-Family Residential (R-3)	16	High	1.32	2.05	0.67
Stevenson	Multi-Family Residential Overlay (R-3)	16	High	6.13	0	0
Stevenson	Commercial (C-1)	34	High	11.56	4.23	4.3
Stevenson	Community Commercial (CC)	3	Medium	8.24	4.49	0
Carson	Rural Residential	1.5	Low	193.4	198.74	25.37
Carson	Rural Estate	0.05	Very Low	31.24	54.02	0
Carson	High-Density Residential (HDR)	2	Medium	162.25	44.33	50.35
Carson	Commercial	1	Low	18.4	24.28	5.26
Cook	Residential (GMA) (R-10)	0.1	Very Low	0	1.34	0
Mill A	Residential 10 (R-10)	0.1	Very Low	26.55	39.41	0
Mill A	Residential 2 (R-2)	0.5	Very Low	413.04	162.63	39.82
Mill A	Residential 5 (R-5)	0.2	Very Low	3333.96	210.23	0.9
Stabler	Residential 1 (R-1)	1	Low	158.39	77.15	10.67
Stabler	Residential 2 (R-2)	0.5	Very Low	1019.07	455.02	103.76
Stabler	Community Commercial (CC)	1	Low	4.45	4.55	2.33
West End	Rural Lands 10	0.1	Very Low	353.26	320.14	52.35
West End	Rural Lands 2	0.5	Very Low	292.78	343.74	32.63
West End	Rural Lands 5	0.2	Very Low	992.6	832.31	188.71
West End	Neighborhood Commercial (NC)	1.5	Low	1.56	4.22	3.54
Underwood	Residential (GMA) (R-1)	1	Low	7.69	1.31	1.23
Underwood	Residential (GMA) (R-10)	0.1	Very Low	0	3.5	0
Underwood	Residential (GMA) (R-2)	0.5	Very Low	16.38	15.73	3.45
Underwood	Residential (GMA) (R-5)	0.2	Very Low	30.74	79.15	18.14
Underwood	Residential 10 (R-10)	0.1	Very Low	72.84	0	0
Underwood	Residential 2 (R-2)	0.5	Very Low	7.59	2.55	0
Home Valley	Residential 1 (R-1)	1	Low	44.83	72.71	3.95
Home Valley	Community Commercial (CC)	1	Low	23.54	14.4	0

# APPENDIX B: FOCUS AREA BUILDABLE LAND MAPS

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DRAFT

Carson Buildable Land Map



Skamania County EDC  
Buildable Lands Inventory (2019)  
Land Classification with Constraints  
Carson Area

Developed/Non-Residential	Vacant	Partially Vacant	Constraints
Public/Constrained	Vacant Undersized		



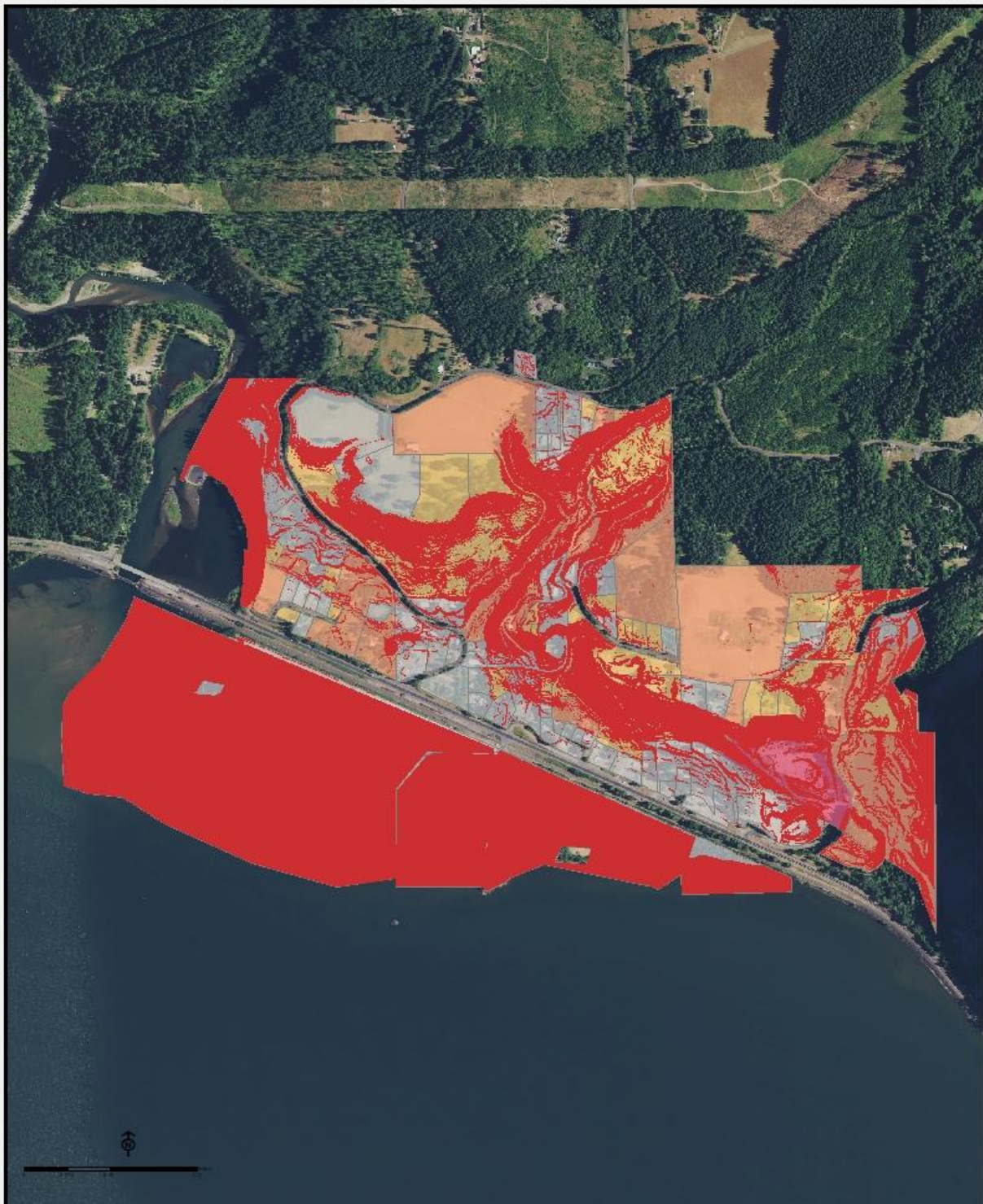


Skamania County EDC  
Buildable Lands Inventory (2019)  
Land Classification with Constraints  
Cook Area







- |                           |                   |                  |             |
|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Developed/Non-Residential | Vacant            | Partially Vacant | Constraints |
| Public/Constrained        | Vacant Undersized |                  |             |



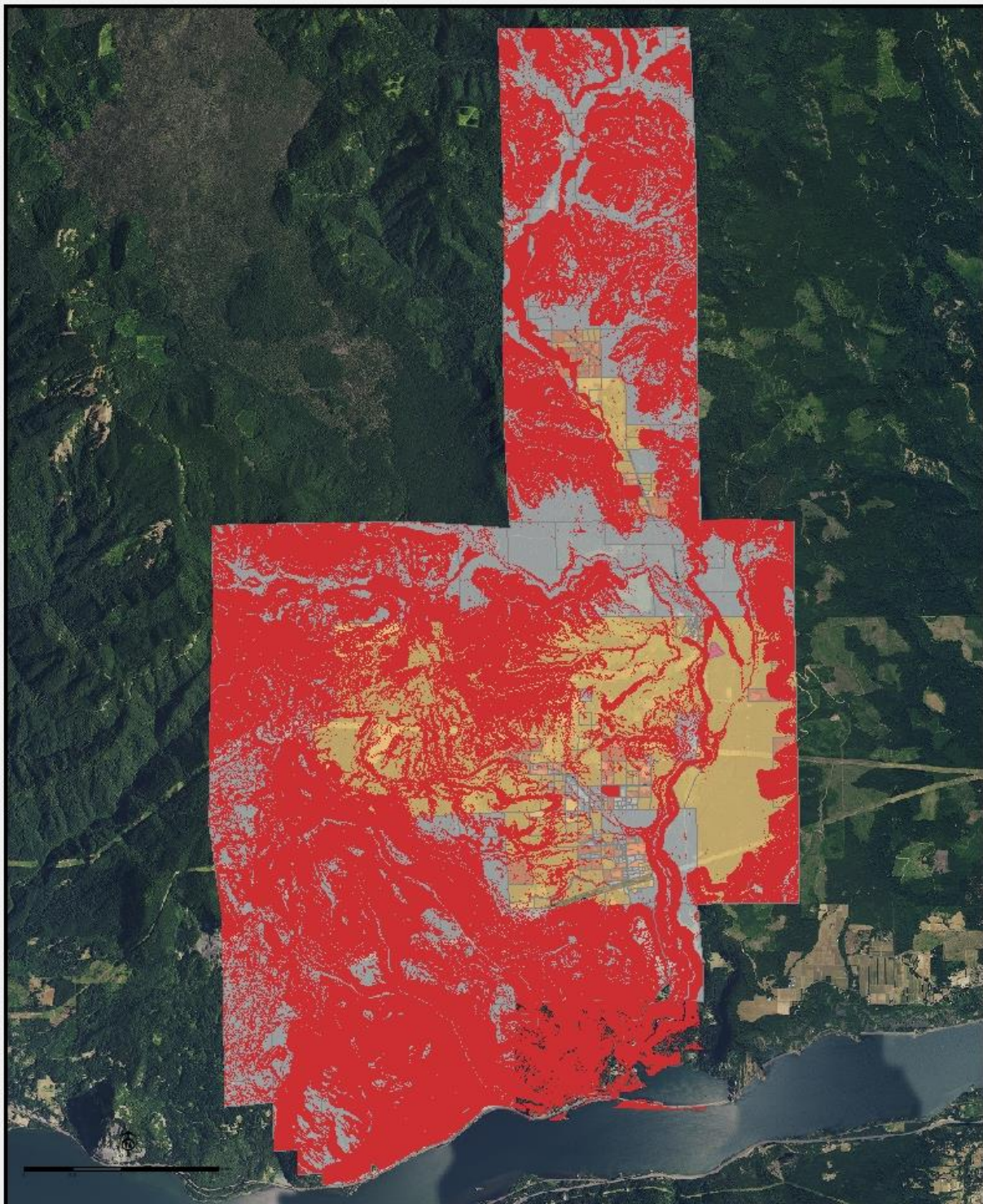










Skamania County EDC  
Buildable Lands Inventory (2019)  
Land Classification with Constraints  
Home Valley Area

- |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
|  Developed/Non-Residential |  Vacant            |  Partially Vacant |  Constraints |
|  Public/Constrained        |  Vacant Undersized |  |   |

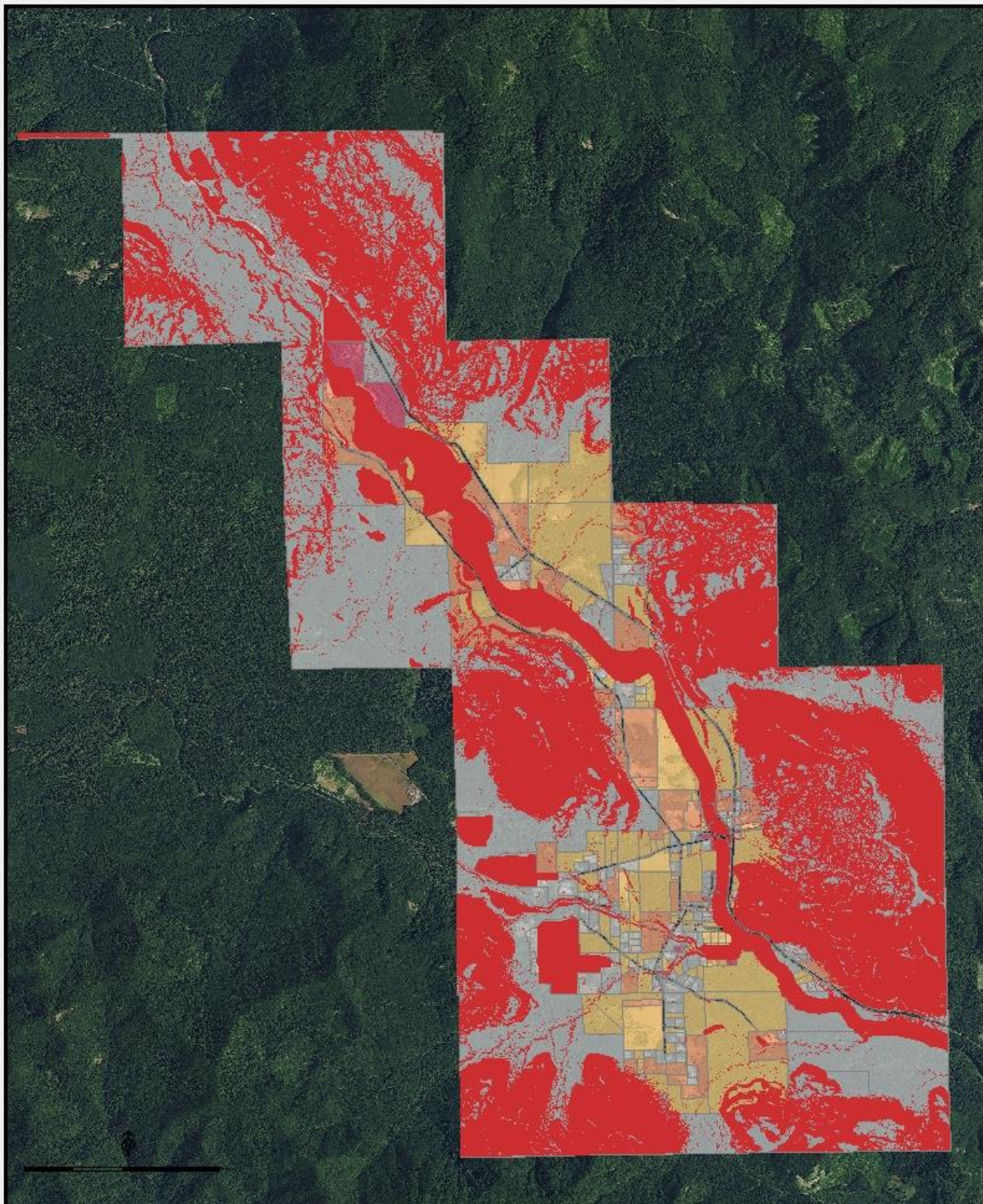




Skamania County EDC  
Buildable Lands Inventory (2019)  
Land Classification with Constraints  
Mill A Area

- |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
|  Developed/Non-Residential |  Vacant            |  Partially Vacant |  Constraints |
|  Public/Constrained        |  Vacant Undersized |  |   |

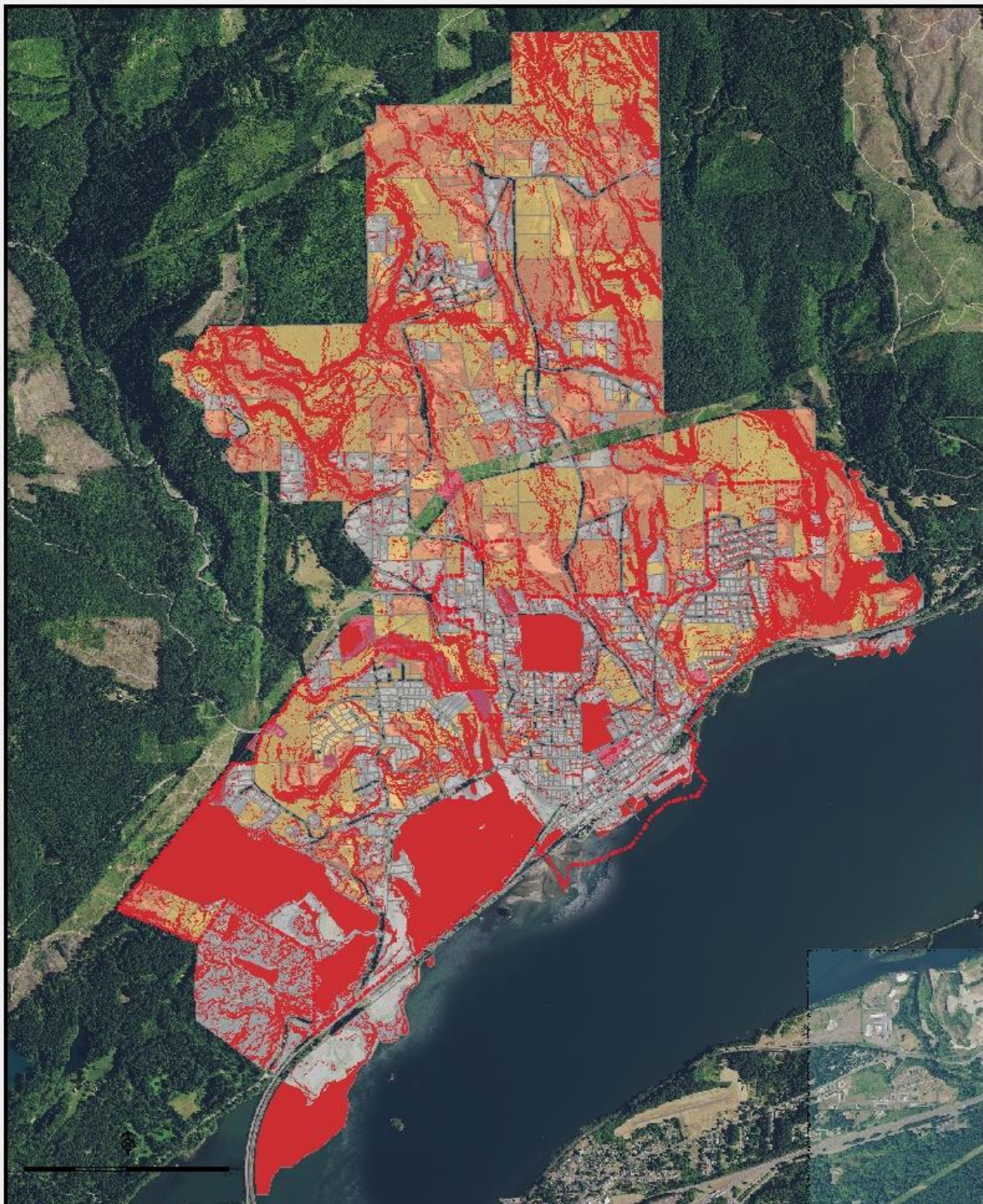




Skamania County EDC  
Buildable Lands Inventory (2019)  
Land Classification with Constraints  
Stabler Area

- |                           |                   |                  |             |
|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Developed/Non-Residential | Vacant            | Partially Vacant | Constraints |
| Public/Constrained        | Vacant Undersized |                  |             |

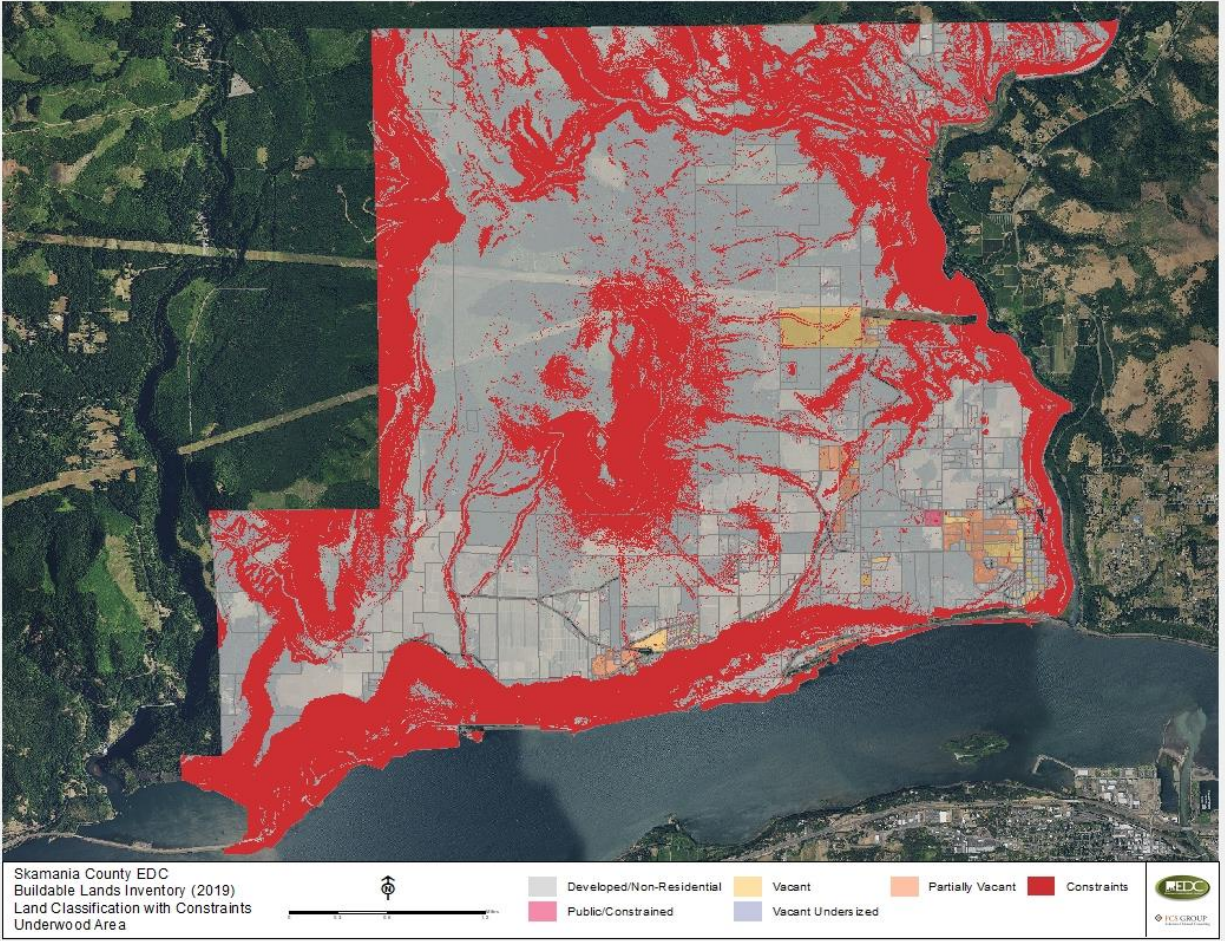


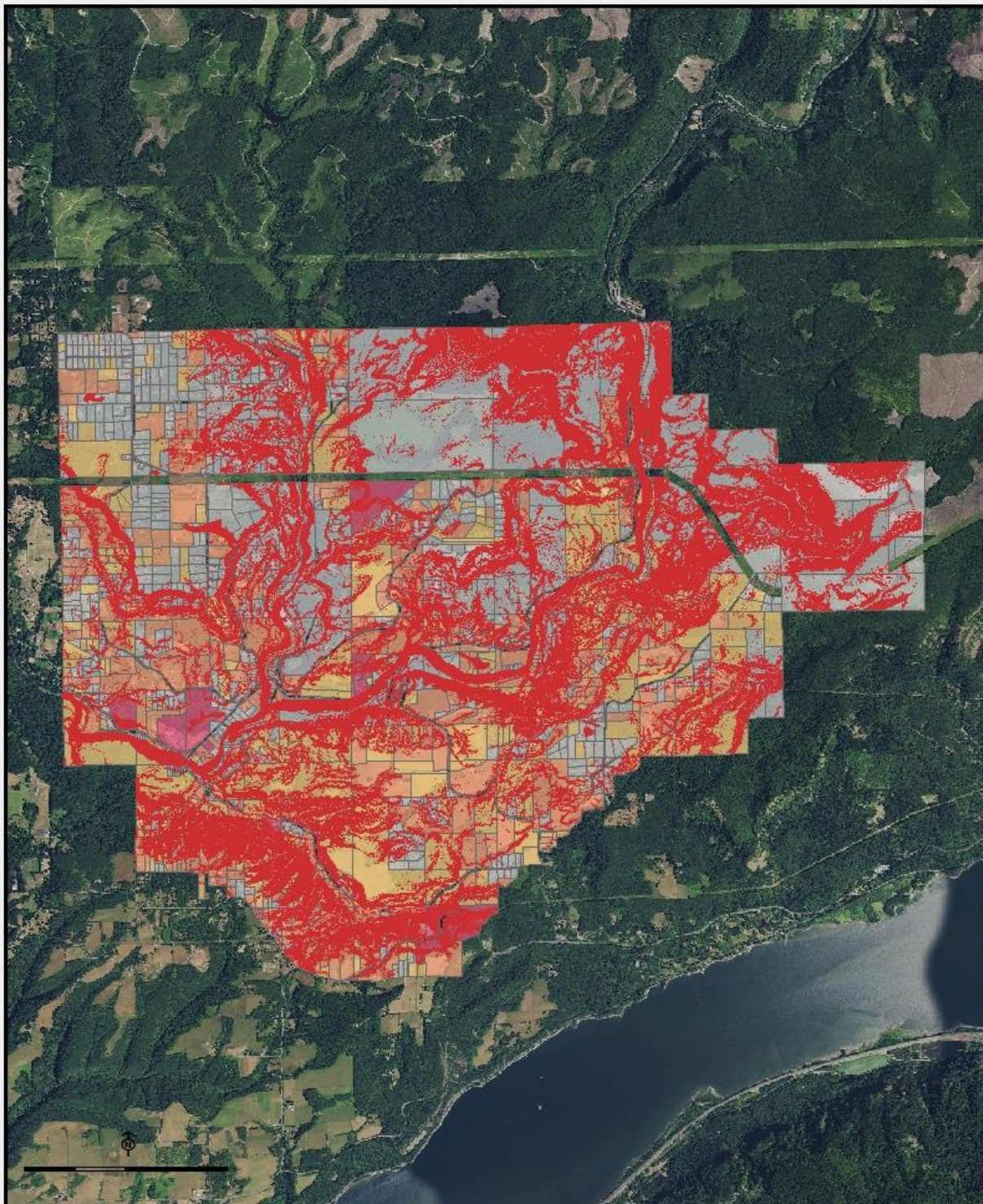


Skamania County EDC  
Buildable Lands Inventory (2019)  
Land Classification with Constraints  
Stevenson Area







Developed/Non-Residential	Vacant	Partially Vacant	Constraints
Public/Constrained	Vacant Undersized		







Skamania County EDC  
Buildable Lands Inventory (2019)  
Land Classification with Constraints  
West End Area

- |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
|  Developed/Non-Residential |  Vacant            |  Partially Vacant |  Constraints |
|  Public/Constrained        |  Vacant Undersized |  |   |





## Memorandum

Date: January 21, 2020

Subject: Skamania County Housing Needs Assessment – Code Evaluation Memorandum

From: Scott Keillor and Ethan Spoo

To: Todd Chase, FCS GROUP

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### INTRODUCTION

Skamania County has contracted with FCS GROUP to complete a buildable lands inventory and Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) focused on identifying adequate lands as well as policy and regulatory changes that will encourage adequate provision of housing in Skamania County and its communities including Stevenson and Carson. As part of the HNA project, WSP USA Inc (WSP) conducted a local zoning codes analysis to identify potential barriers to private and public sector housing development that might inhibit provision of an adequate and diverse supply of housing to meet the needs of the Skamania County residents and employees. This memorandum evaluates applicable land use regulations within the County to identify and explore solutions to possible code barriers to housing development. In early October 2019, WSP conducted stakeholder interviews of business, government, and development industry leaders to solicit their input on Skamania County's housing market, perceived barriers to delivering housing choices, and possible solutions. Several notable themes emerged from these interviews that inform WSP's code evaluation.

- Housing options in Skamania County are inadequate for single-income earners, service workers, low-income residents, and those with housing assistance needs.
- A variety of housing options are needed across all market segments, especially multifamily (apartments and townhomes), mixed use in appropriate locations, and specialized housing for seniors, cottage housing options, and live-work spaces.
- Housing barriers include financial risk for less profitable housing types, high development costs and long permitting time lines, and a shortage of construction labor. Local regulations, including Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA) requirements, are a barrier to housing development, as is a lack of sewer infrastructure in outlying areas of Stevenson and all of unincorporated Carson.
- According to local planners and interview participants, experienced outside developers are deterred from investing in Skamania County. This is, in part, the result of the public perception that the actual barriers to development within the NSA also affect the land outside the NSA, including the Urban Areas where development is encouraged. This contributes to a

lack of appropriate development in Urban Areas and prevents them from fulfilling their purpose.

- There are also few large tracts of vacant land within urban areas with both public water and sewer. Large developments provide an economy of scale sufficient to overcome environmental and other regulatory barriers on behalf of subsequent land owners. Without this, the further development of the existing small tracts and development of single-family homesites must individually overcome the barriers. The insufficient returns on investment increase both housing costs and public frustrations with the permitting process.
- Priorities to enhance housing options include updating local codes to remove barriers, for example by encouraging accessory dwelling units, coordinating housing-friendly initiatives, directing technical and financial resources into the community, obtaining grants for community development, and building relationships between regulators and developers.

## CODE EVALUATION TO ADDRESS HOUSING NEEDS

### **Regulatory Barriers to Workforce and Affordable Housing Development**

Barriers to workforce and affordable housing have been studied around the nation. A 2005 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Report, “Why Not in Our Community? Removing Barriers to Affordable Housing”<sup>1</sup> documents some of the more common regulatory barriers. Broadly speaking, these barriers include zoning and land use regulations and processes, such as slow and/or expensive land use reviews. More specifically, barriers include the following.

- Regulations that restrict any of the following: rental housing, higher density housing, multifamily housing, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and manufactured homes.
- Regulations/reviews that increase the cost of the development, as the developer will pass these costs onto the occupants. This includes health, safety, and environmental restrictions when they unnecessarily go above and beyond their purpose of protecting the occupants and/or the environment.
- Local regulations that duplicate federal and state environmental regulations.
- Costs associated with lengthy review periods for permits/reviews, including multiple rounds of submittals by the applicant.
- Administrative procedures that are vague (including those that lack a specific time line and/or are not integrated into the larger approval process).

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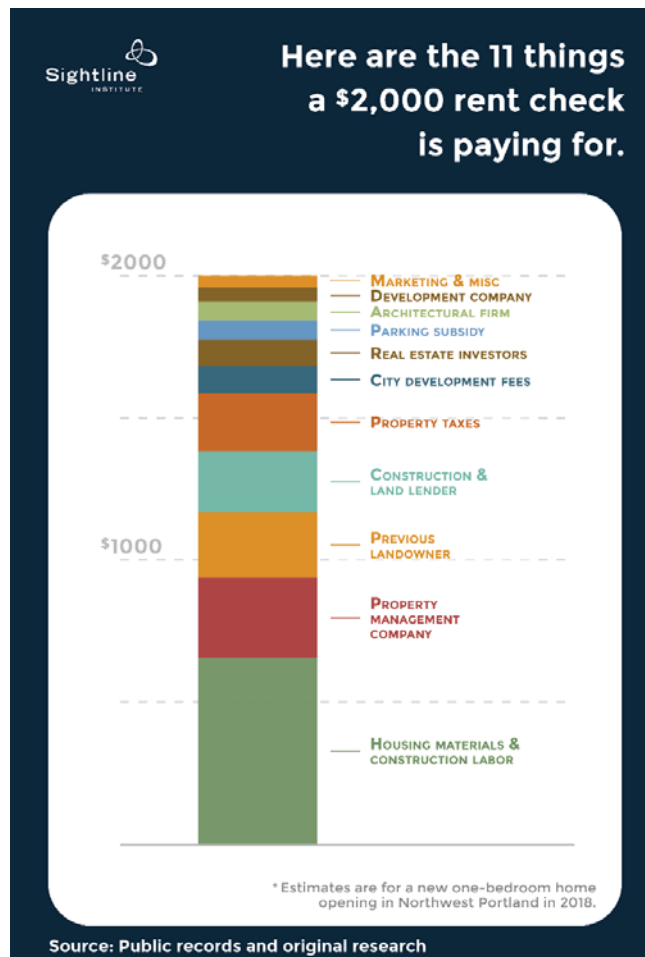
<sup>1</sup> See : “Why Not In Our Community?” *Removing Barriers to Affordable Housing. An Update to the Report of the Advisory Commission on Regulatory Barriers to Affordable Housing.* U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, February, 2005.



- Impact fees for workforce housing (such as cottages, plexes and apartments) that are disproportionate to the actual cost and/or provide a higher level of infrastructure than needed for the community.
- Obsolete building and rehabilitation codes (e.g., old-fashioned and expensive materials, outdated construction methods, etc.).
- Allowing neighbor concerns to have undue influence on the approval of an affordable housing development.

### The Cost of Rental Housing

A recent 2018 study by the Sightline Institute evaluated the various components of the cost of renting a typical 2-bedroom apartment in Portland. The findings indicated that several of the items listed above along with other factors determine rent levels (see following graphic). The study provides a hypothetical example of how these costs can be reduced. For additional information check out: <https://www.sightline.org/2018/08/30/what-makes-portlands-new-apartments-so-expensive/> and <https://www.sightline.org/2018/11/05/whys-the-rent-so-high-for-new-apartments-in-seattle/>



This memorandum focuses specifically on regulations that restrict rental housing, higher density housing, ADUs, and manufactured homes.

### **Land Use Regulatory Framework**

WSP reviewed Skamania County and the City of Stevenson zoning codes to identify barriers to housing development. The land use regulatory framework in the County and its communities is established by the Washington Growth Management Act (GMA), the NSA Act, the Washington Shoreline Management Act, and state and local septic system requirements — all adapted to meet local community development needs. These state and federal acts have fairly detailed requirements for new development in the County that significantly influence new development.

**Washington GMA:** Washington’s statewide land use planning program requires that high-population and high-growth counties and the cities within them adopt and periodically update comprehensive plans and implement development regulations. Although Skamania County is a non-planning county, it is still required to adopt critical areas regulations protecting wetlands, habitat areas, aquifers, flood hazards, and geologic hazards. These critical areas are prevalent throughout the county, which has many mountainous areas adjacent to streams. The County is currently in the process of updating its critical areas regulations, and Stevenson completed an update within the last year. Generally speaking, development is only allowed within critical areas and their buffers if mitigation is provided offsetting all impacts under critical area ordinances, contributing to the expense to develop land with these restrictions.

- **The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA) Act:** Development within the Columbia River Gorge NSA is regulated under the NSA Act and local Skamania County implementing regulations in Title 22 of the County’s code. The regulations are intended to protect the scenic, cultural, and natural resources within the Gorge and require that new development undergo NSA reviews. The regulations have the effect of restricting where development can occur by requiring that wetlands, streams, and cultural sites be protected and prescribe the architecture and design of buildings.
- **Shoreline Management Act:** Each jurisdiction across the state of Washington with streams flowing at a rate of 20 cubic feet per second or lakes 20 acres or larger is required to adopt a shoreline management program (SMP) that generally regulates land uses within 200 feet of these waterbodies, including protecting critical areas within shoreline jurisdiction, and prioritizing water-oriented uses (docks, trails, parks, boating facilities, water-dependent industries etc.) for shoreline location. Single-family residential uses are considered priority uses in SMPs across the state. Multi-family residential uses are not considered to be a prioritized use in shoreline protection areas by the State. Both City of Stevenson and Skamania County are in the process of updating their SMPs.
- **Septic System Land Area Requirements:** Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 246-272A and Skamania County Code Chapter 8.84 regulate the placement and design of small on-site septic systems (SOSSs), which are those treating effluence of less than 3,500 gallons per day (gpd). The County Department of Health is responsible for review and permitting of SOSSs. Review authority for large on-site septic systems (LOSSs) rests with the state under

WAC 246-272B. In 2020, the County is due to adopt a septic code with even more restrictive land area requirements than outlined below.

- Lot sizes for SOSSs under WAC 246-272A are given in Table 1. Standard septic system requirements limit residential lot sizes to no smaller than one dwelling unit per acre when water is supplied by a well or no less than 12,500 square feet when public water is available. Exact lot sizes are determined by soil type; Type 4 and 5 soils (the most common in Skamania County) require minimum lot sizes of 18,000 square feet and 20,000 square feet when served by public water or 1 and 2 acres when served by a well, respectively. For unit types other than single family, the minimum lot size requirements apply per unit volume of sewage (450 gpd). Sizing requirements dictate that 250 gallons be provided per bedroom, meaning that for duplexes, triplexes, and townhouses with one or two bedrooms, the required land area may be less than shown in the table.

**Table 1. Minimum Land Area Requirement  
Single-Family Residence or Unit Volume of Sewage**

Type of Water Supply	Soil Type (defined by WAC <a href="#">246-272A-0220</a> )					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Public	0.5 acre	12,500 sq. ft.	15,000 sq. ft.	18,000 sq. ft.	20,000 sq. ft.	22,000 sq. ft.
	2.5 acre <sup>1</sup>					
Individual, on each lot	1.0 acre	1 acre	1 acre	1 acre	2 acres	2 acres
	2.5 acres <sup>1</sup>					

<sup>1</sup>See WAC [246-272A-0234\(6\)](#).

WAC 246-272B-3500 sets land area requirements when using an LOSS. Class 4 and 5 soils common in Skamania County require 1 acre of land per 1,575 gpd of effluent. Because the unit volume of sewage is 450 gpd, an average of 3.5 units can be built per acre using an LOSS in Skamania County which is greater than the 2.0 to 2.5 units per acre allowable for small on-site septic systems.

The same restrictions apply within the City of Stevenson, but large minimum lot size restrictions come into play much less often because public water and sewer infrastructure is more commonly available.

### Skamania County Code Evaluation

To evaluate Skamania County and the City of Stevenson codes for potential barriers to housing development, WSP reviewed the zones in each jurisdiction, noting whether residential development is allowed and common development restrictions (density/lot size and setbacks) per zone.

#### Summary of Zoning Code

Skamania County’s zoning ordinance (Title 21) contains zoning regulations that apply to four specific subareas in more populated areas within the County (Carson, Northwestern Lake, West End, and Swift), NSA code that applies to the Columbia River Gorge in southern part of the

County, and general regulations for less populated, more rural areas of the County. Table 2 lists zones where residential development is allowed, development restrictions within each zone, and notes about restrictions that may limit the ability to provide residential development. The table does not include forest or agricultural zones where single-family housing may be permitted but is subject to strict state restrictions on the number of units for large parcels, because these zones cannot be amended to allow for more residential development. The table also does not reference camping cabins or recreational vehicles (RV) allowed in some zones, because these are forms of temporary housing, not permanent housing solutions.

Minimum lot sizes in Skamania County are heavily influenced by lot and land size requirements for septic systems. In order to understand whether lot sizes are a barrier to development of workforce and affordable housing, it is necessary to understand septic system lot and land size requirements. Table A-1 in the appendix compares the land size requirements for different housing products with minimum lot sizes in each zone to determine whether minimum lot sizes in each zone are larger than they need to be to accommodate each type of housing product.

**Table 2. Skamania County Zoning Evaluation for Barriers to Housing Development**

Zone/Name	Residential Permitted?	Notable Development Restrictions	Identified Barriers
<b>Rural County Area</b>			
Residential (R-1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: SFR up to fourplexes, ADUs</li> <li>• Conditional: mobile home parks</li> <li>• Prohibited: MFR (duplex and above) and cluster development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SFR minimum lot size 2 acres (well and septic), 12,500 square feet (water and septic), 8,000 square feet (water and sewer)</li> <li>• MFR (duplex or above) required minimum lots size is 150-250% of SF lot sizes.</li> <li>• ADU setback: 20 feet from adjacent property</li> <li>• ADU maximum size of 800 square feet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cluster development MFR (five and above) prohibited</li> <li>• Mobile homes require conditional use permits and lease lines must comply with lot size minimums.</li> <li>• ADU maximum sizes (800 sf for detached units).</li> </ul>
Residential (R-2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: SFR, ADUs</li> <li>• Conditional: Duplexes, mobile home parks, cluster development</li> <li>• Prohibited: MFR (triplex and above)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SFR minimum lot size: 2 acres</li> <li>• Duplex minimum lot size: 150% of SF</li> <li>• MFR (triplex and above) not permitted</li> <li>• ADU setback: 20 feet from adjacent property</li> <li>• ADU maximum size of 800 square feet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cluster development requires a conditional use permit</li> <li>• Multifamily (triplex and above) prohibited</li> <li>• ADU maximum sizes (800 sf for detached units).</li> </ul>
Residential 5 (R-5) Residential 10 (R-10) Rural Estate (RES-20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: SFR, ADUs</li> <li>• Conditional: small and large scale RV Parks, cluster developments</li> <li>• Prohibited: MFR (duplex and above)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SFR minimum lot size: 5 acres (R-5), 10 acres (R-10), 20 acres (RES-20)</li> <li>• MFR prohibited</li> <li>• ADU setback: 20 feet from adjacent property</li> <li>• ADU maximum size of 800 square feet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cluster development requires conditional use permit</li> <li>• Multifamily (duplex and above) prohibited</li> <li>• Lot sizes for single family are larger than necessary for septic land area requirements.</li> <li>• ADU maximum sizes (800 sf for detached units).</li> </ul>
Community Commercial (CC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: SFR through fourplex, cluster developments, ADUs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum lot size for all residential uses: 10,800 square feet</li> <li>• ADU setback: 20 feet from adjacent property</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MFR (five and above) prohibited</li> <li>• Overly restrictive minimum lot sizes for single-family through duplex when connected to public sewer</li> </ul>

MEMO: Skamania County Housing Needs Assessment – Code Evaluation

January 21, 2020

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Zone/Name	Residential Permitted?	Notable Development Restrictions	Identified Barriers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conditional: small and large scale RV parks</li> <li>• Prohibited: MFR (five and above) and cluster development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADU maximum size of 800 square feet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADU maximum sizes (800 sf for detached units).</li> </ul>
Commercial Recreation (CR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: Cluster developments, SFR for commercial caretaker and lots predating ordinance, ADUs</li> <li>• Conditional: small and large scale RV parks</li> <li>• Prohibited: MFR (duplex and above)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum lot size: 12,500 square feet</li> <li>• ADU setback: 20 feet from adjacent property</li> <li>• ADU maximum size of 800 square feet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MFR (duplex and above) prohibited</li> <li>• ADU maximum sizes (800 sf for detached units).</li> </ul>
<b>Carson Subarea</b>			
High Density Residential (HDR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: SFR, ADUs</li> <li>• Administrative Review: MFR and cluster developments</li> <li>• Conditional Use: Mobile Home Parks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum lot size SFR: 0.5 acre</li> <li>• Minimum lot size (Duplex): 0.75 acres</li> <li>• Minimum lot size (Triplex): 1.0 acres</li> <li>• Minimum lot size (Fourplex): 1.25 acres</li> <li>• Minimum lot size (MFR 5+): 2.0 acres</li> <li>• ADU setback: 20 feet from adjacent property</li> <li>• ADU maximum size of 800 square feet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobile home parks require conditional use permits.</li> <li>• Overly restrictive lot sizes for SFR connected to public water/septic or sewer and for MFR (duplexes and above) connected to sewer.</li> <li>• ADU maximum sizes (800 sf for detached units).</li> </ul>
Rural Residential (RR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: SFR, ADUs</li> <li>• Administrative Review: Cluster Development</li> <li>• Conditional: MFR and Mobile Home Parks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum lot size (SFR): 1 acre</li> <li>• Minimum lot size (Duplex): 1.5 acres</li> <li>• Minimum lot size (Triplex): 2.0 acres</li> <li>• Minimum lot size (Fourplex): 2.5 acres</li> <li>• Minimum lot size (MFR 5+): 3.0 acres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conditional use permit required for MFR (duplex and above)</li> <li>• Overly restrict lot sizes for SFR and MFR developments connected to water/septic or sewer.</li> <li>• ADU maximum sizes (800 sf for detached units).</li> </ul>

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Zone/Name	Residential Permitted?	Notable Development Restrictions	Identified Barriers
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADU setback: 20 feet from adjacent property</li> <li>• ADU maximum size of 800 square feet</li> </ul>	
Rural Estate (RE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: SFR, ADUs</li> <li>• Administrative Review: Cluster development</li> <li>• Conditional: MFR, small and large RV parks</li> <li>• Prohibited: Mobile home parks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum lot size (SFR): 5 acres</li> <li>• Minimum lot size (MFR 2+): not specified</li> <li>• ADU setback: 20 feet from adjacent property</li> <li>• ADU maximum size of 800 square feet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conditional use permits required for MFR (duplex and above)</li> <li>• SFR lot size minimums are larger than state septic lot size requirements</li> <li>• ADU maximum sizes (800 sf for detached units).</li> </ul>
Commercial (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conditional: Residential above commercial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	None: no limitations on density or lot size.
<b>Northwestern Lake Subarea</b>			
NWL Residential 2 (NWLR-2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: SFR, ADUs</li> <li>• Conditional: Cluster developments, duplexes</li> <li>• Prohibited: MFR (triplex and above)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum lot size (SFR): 2 acres</li> <li>• Minimum lot size (duplex): 3 acres</li> <li>• ADU setback: 20 feet from adjacent property</li> <li>• ADU maximum size of 800 square feet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duplexes and cluster developments require conditional use permits.</li> <li>• Multifamily uses (triplex and above) are prohibited.</li> <li>• Overly restrictive lot size for duplexes.</li> <li>• ADU maximum sizes (800 sf for detached units).</li> </ul>
NWL Residential 5 (NWLR-5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: SFR, ADUs</li> <li>• Conditional: cluster developments, duplexes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum lot size (SFR): 5 acres</li> <li>• Minimum lot size (duplex): 7.5 acres</li> <li>• ADU setback: 20 feet from adjacent property</li> <li>• ADU maximum size of 800 square feet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duplexes require conditional use permit</li> <li>• MFR (triplex and above) prohibited</li> <li>• Overly restrictive lot size for SFR and duplexes connected to water/septic</li> <li>• ADU maximum sizes (800 sf for detached units).</li> </ul>

Zone/Name	Residential Permitted?	Notable Development Restrictions	Identified Barriers
<b>West End Subarea</b>			
West End Rural Lands 2 (WERL-2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: SFR, ADUs</li> <li>• Conditional: duplexes</li> <li>• Prohibited: MFR (triplex and above), cluster developments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum lot size (SFR): 2 acres</li> <li>• Minimum lot size (duplex): 3 acres</li> <li>• ADU setback: 20 feet from adjacent property</li> <li>• ADU maximum size of 800 square feet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duplexes require conditional use permits.</li> <li>• Multifamily (triplex and above) are prohibited</li> <li>• Overly restrictive lot size for SFR and duplexes connected to water/septic and sewer.</li> <li>• ADU maximum sizes (800 sf for detached units).</li> </ul>
West End Rural Lands 5 (WERL-5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: SFR, ADUs</li> <li>• Conditional: duplexes</li> <li>• Prohibited: MFR (triplex and above), cluster developments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum lot size (SFR): 5 acres</li> <li>• Minimum lot size (duplex): 7.5 acres</li> <li>• ADU setback: 20 feet from adjacent property</li> <li>• ADU maximum size of 800 square feet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duplexes require conditional use permits</li> <li>• Multifamily and cluster developments are prohibited.</li> <li>• Overly restrictive lot sizes for SFR connected to well/septic, water/septic, or sewer.</li> <li>• ADU maximum sizes (800 sf for detached units).</li> </ul>
West End Rural Lands 10 (WERL-10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: SFR, ADUs</li> <li>• Conditional: duplexes</li> <li>• Prohibited: MFR (triplex and above) and cluster developments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum lot size (SFR): 10 acres</li> <li>• Minimum lot size (duplex): 15 acres</li> <li>• ADU setback: 20 feet from adjacent property</li> <li>• ADU maximum size of 800 square feet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duplexes require conditional use permits.</li> <li>• MFR (triplex and above) and cluster developments prohibited</li> <li>• Overly restrictive lot size for duplexes.</li> <li>• ADU maximum sizes (800 sf for detached units).</li> </ul>
West End Forest Lands 20 (WEFL-20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: SFR, ADUs</li> <li>• Prohibited: MFR (duplex and above) and cluster developments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum lot size (SFR): 20 acres or 1 per legal lot of record</li> <li>• ADU setback: 20 feet from adjacent property</li> <li>• ADU maximum size of 800 square feet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overly restrictive SFR lot sizes.</li> <li>• Multifamily (duplex and above) and cluster developments prohibited.</li> <li>• ADU maximum sizes (800 sf for detached units).</li> </ul>



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Zone/Name	Residential Permitted?	Notable Development Restrictions	Identified Barriers
<b>Swift Subarea</b>			
Mountain Recreational Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: SFR, cluster developments, ADUs</li> <li>• Prohibited: MFR (Duplex and above)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum lot size (SFR): 5 acres per unit</li> <li>• ADU setback: 20 feet from adjacent property</li> <li>• ADU maximum size of 800 square feet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multifamily (duplex and above) prohibited</li> <li>• Overly restrictive SFR lot sizes connected to well/septic, water/septic, or sewer.</li> <li>• ADU maximum sizes (800 sf for detached units).</li> </ul>
Swift Forest Lands 20 (SW-FL20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: SFR, ADUs, cluster developments</li> <li>• Prohibited: MFR (duplex and above)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum lot size (SFR): 20 acres or 1 per legal lot of record</li> <li>• ADU setback: 20 feet from adjacent property</li> <li>• ADU maximum size of 800 square feet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MFR (duplex and above) prohibited.</li> <li>• Overly restrictive SFR lot sizes connected to well/septic, water/septic, or sewer.</li> <li>• ADU maximum sizes (800 sf for detached units).</li> </ul>
<b>NSA</b>			
GMA residential zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: SFR</li> <li>• Prohibited: MFR (duplex and above), cluster developments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum lot size (SFR): 1, 2, 5, and 10 acres for R-1, R-2, R-5, and R-10, respectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multifamily (duplex and above) and cluster developments prohibited</li> <li>• Overly restrictive SFR lot sizes in R-1, R-2, R-5 and R-10 connected to water/septic or sewer.</li> <li>• Overly restrictive SFR lot size connected to well/septic in R-5 and R-10.</li> </ul>
GMA – rural center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: SFR, duplexes</li> <li>• Prohibited: MFR (triplex and above) and cluster developments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum lot size (SFR, duplex): 1 acre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multifamily (duplex and above) prohibited</li> <li>• Overly restrictive SFR lot sizes connected to water/septic or sewer.</li> </ul>
GMA -commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted: SFR</li> <li>• Prohibited: MFR (duplex and above) and cluster developments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum lot size (SFR): 1 acre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multifamily: (duplex and above) prohibited</li> <li>• Overly restrictive SFR lot sizes connected to water/septic or sewer.</li> </ul>

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Zone/Name	Residential Permitted?	Notable Development Restrictions	Identified Barriers
GMA – public recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permitted: SFR on preexisting lot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum lot size (SFR): preexisting lots of any size</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None: zone is primarily intended for public recreation</li> </ul>
GMA – commercial recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permitted: SFR on preexisting lot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum lot size (SFR): preexisting lots of any size</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None: zone is primarily intended for commercial recreation</li> </ul>

Source: Skamania County Zoning Ordinance, Title 21

Notes: SFR = single-family residential, MF = multifamily, ADU = Accessory Dwelling Unit, SF=square feet

## Housing Development Barriers

As identified in Table 2 above, regulatory barriers to housing in Skamania County fall into several major categories.

- **Process Barriers:** Conditional use permits are required for certain housing types in residential zones. Commonly, these include mobile home parks (an important form of affordable housing in the County) and cluster developments and multifamily housing in some zones. Multifamily housing and cluster developments are also commonly prohibited in lower density zones. Requiring conditional use permits or prohibiting certain types of housing is a barrier to the development of these types of housing because applicants must undergo additional process (conditional use review or zone changes) to build restricted housing types. Specific barriers identified by zone include the following,
  - Conditional use permit required for multifamily residential: R-2 (duplexes), RR, RE, NWLR-2 (duplexes), NWLR-5 (duplexes), and WERL-2/5/10 (duplexes).
  - Conditional use permit required for mobile home parks: R-1, R-2, HDR, and RR.
  - Multifamily uses prohibited: R-1 (five and above), R-2/5/10/20, CC, CR.
  - ADUs prohibited: The County allows ADUs wherever single-family homes are permitted outside of the NSA. The prohibition on ADUs inside the NSA is a barrier to development of this type of housing.
  - Limitations on cluster developments: The County’s cluster development regulations allow new residential developments to occur below minimum lot sizes and even allow for density bonuses ranging from 25 to 50 percent in Carson’s residential zones (HDR, RR, and RE). Cluster developments require conditional use permits or are permitted in most zones restricting the effectiveness of this tool to create higher densities and reduce housing costs.
- **Lot Size Requirements:** Because much of Skamania County is rural, its zoning code requires large lot sizes. The R-1 zone allows an 8,000-square-foot lot size minimum for single-family residential connected to sewer, and the CC zone allows 10,800-square-foot minimum lots without regard to sewer connection. Outside of these zones, the smallest lot size minimums are 1 acre and as large as 40 acres in some zones that allow residential uses. Often, lot size requirements exceed what is necessary to meet septic requirements. Attachment A provides a comparison of minimum required lot sizes in Skamania County’s zoning code with those required under the State and County’s septic code. The analysis shows that a number of zones have larger required minimum lot sizes than are necessary under septic regulations, which is to be expected in a rural county. Of note are lot sizes for single-family and duplex uses on public water and septic in the Northwestern Lake and West End subareas, as well as single-family and multifamily uses on water and septic in the Carson subarea. See Attachment A for further detail.

- Carson infrastructure barrier: As an economic center and because of its road network, Carson is a logical location for development of housing at urban densities to address workforce and affordable-housing shortages. But, Carson does not have public sewer infrastructure that, in turn, limits housing density. Development in Carson is served by on-site septic systems.

**City of Stevenson Code Evaluation**

Summary of Zoning Code

**Table 3. City of Stevenson Zoning Evaluation for Barriers to Housing Development**

Zone/Name	Residential permitted?	Notable Development Restrictions	Identified Barriers
R1 Single Family Residential	Permitted: SFDD, ADUs, manufactured and modular homes, adult family homes  Conditional: TFD, MFD, boarding house, dormitory*  Prohibited: Mobile homes, assisted living, nursing homes	Minimum lot size (well/septic): 1 acre Minimum lot size (water/septic): 15,000 SF Minimum lot size (water/sewer): 6,000 SF	Additional parking requirements, ADU maximum sizes (800 sf for detached units) and owner-occupancy requirements. Only one ADU is allowed in conjunction with a SFDD.  Prohibition on assisted living and nursing homes limits options for seniors.
R2 Two Family Residential	Permitted: SFDD, TFD, manufactured and modular homes, adult family home.  Conditional: MFD, boarding house, dorms.  Prohibited: Mobile homes, assisted living, nursing homes.	Minimum lot size (well/septic): N/A Minimum lot size (water/septic): 15,000 SF Minimum lot size (water/sewer): 5,000 SF + 2,000 SF per additional unit.	MFD requires conditional use permits.  Lot sizes for attached housing (TFD, MFD, townhomes) on individual lots could be as small as 2,000 square feet per unit.  Prohibition on assisted living and nursing homes limits options for seniors.
R3 Multi-Family Residential	Permitted: SFDD, townhome, MFD, manufactured and modular homes,	Minimum lot size (well/septic): N/A Minimum lot size (water/septic): 15,000 SF + 5,000 SF per unit over 2.	Requiring conditional use for senior housing (assisted and nursing) may be burdensome in a high density residential zone.

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Zone/Name	Residential permitted?	Notable Development Restrictions	Identified Barriers
	<p>Conditional: boarding house, assisted living, nursing home, dormitory.</p> <p>Prohibited: Mobile homes</p>	<p>Minimum lot size (water/sewer):4,000 SF + 2,000 SF per additional unit.</p>	<p>Lot sizes for attached housing (duplex, triplex, townhomes) on individual lots could be as small as 2,000 SF per unit.</p>
<p>R3 Rock Cove Design Overlay</p>	<p>Permitted: SFDD, townhome, MFD, manufactured and modular homes</p> <p>Conditional: boarding house, assisted living, nursing home, dormitory.</p> <p>Prohibited: Mobile homes</p>	<p>Minimum lot size (well/septic): N/A                      Minimum lot size (water/septic): 15,000 SF + 5,000 SF per unit over 2.                      Minimum lot size (water/sewer):4,000 SF + 2,000 SF per additional unit.</p>	<p>Requiring conditional use for senior housing (assisted and nursing) may be burdensome in a high density residential zone.</p> <p>Lot sizes for attached housing (duplex, triplex, townhomes) on individual lots could be as small as 2,000 SF per unit.</p>
<p>MHR Mobile Home Residential</p>	<p>Permitted: SFDD, manufactured, modular, and mobile homes, Adult Family Home</p> <p>Conditional: MFD, TFD, boarding house, assisted living, nursing home, dormitory.</p>	<p>Minimum lot size (well/septic): 5ac + 2 acres per unit over 2                      Minimum lot size (well/sewer): 5ac + 2 acres per unit over 2                      Minimum lot size (water/septic): 5ac + 2 acres per unit over 2                      Minimum lot size (water/sewer): 5ac + 5,000 sf per unit over 40</p>	<p>Overly restrictive lot size for all septic combinations (state law allows a ratio of 2 acres per one unit)</p> <p>MHR zone does not appear present in zoning map.</p>
<p>SR Suburban Residential</p>	<p>Permitted: SFDD, ADUs, manufactured and modular homes, adult family home.</p> <p>Conditional: TFD, MFD, temporary residence,</p>	<p>Minimum lot size (well/septic): 1 acre                      Minimum lot size (water/septic): 20,000 sf                      Minimum lot size (water/sewer): 15,000 sf</p>	<p>Requiring conditional use for duplexes and MFR places a barrier on those development types.</p>

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Zone/Name	Residential permitted?	Notable Development Restrictions	Identified Barriers
	boarding house, assisted living, dorms.  Prohibited: Mobile homes, travel trailers		
CR Commercial Recreation	Conditional: MFD	Minimum lot size (all service levels): 10,000 sf	Overly restrictive lot size for TFD/MFD.
C1 Commercial Recreation	Permitted: SFDD, Manufactured Home, Modular Home, MFD, Boarding House, Adult Family Home, Assisted Living Facility  Conditional: Temporary Residence, Nursing Home	Minimum lot size (all service levels)  MFR: 1,200 sf per unit SFR: 6,000 sf  All other uses: 0 sf	Requiring conditional use for senior housing (nursing homes) may be burdensome in a high-density zone.  Requiring conditional use for Light Industrial Activities limits some live/work housing products for business owners in certain industries.

Source: Stevenson Municipal Code, Title 17

Notes: SFDD = single-family detached dwelling, TFD= two-family dwelling, MFD = multifamily dwelling, ADU = Accessory Dwelling Unit, sf=square feet

\*TFR and MFR were prohibited in the SR, R1 and R2 zones before the 2017 Stevenson Comprehensive Plan update. The allowance to increase density is tied to approval of a PUD, which requires public water and sewer. It is intended to create market conditions which encourage the extension of those systems.

## Housing Development Barriers

As identified in Table 3 above, regulatory barriers to housing in Stevenson fall into several major categories.

- **Process Barriers:** Conditional use permits are required for certain housing types in some residential or nonresidential but high-density zones. Most commonly, this applies to senior housing, which impacts a known low-income and vulnerable population. Mobile homes are prohibited in all residential zones except for the Mobile Home Residential zone. Requiring conditional use permits or prohibiting certain types of housing is a barrier to the development of these types of housing because applicants must undergo additional process (conditional use review or zone changes) to build restricted housing types. Specific barriers identified by zone include the following.
  - Conditional use permit required or for assisted living and nursing home facilities in zones: R3, MHR, and C1
  - Prohibitions on assisted living and nursing home facilities in zones: R1, R2
  - Prohibitions on mobile homes (but not manufactured or modular homes) in zones: R1, R2, R3, and SR.
  - Live/work housing products are not expressly permitted in zones: C1
- **Lot Size Requirements:** Most of Stevenson’s lot sizes provide reasonable flexibility for project proponents and are comparable to development standards in other urban areas.
  - Minimum lot sizes in the C1 zone provide for maximum flexibility, but the minimum lot sizes for MFR development in the R3 and CR zones are too restrictive. Lot sizes for attached housing (duplex, triplex, townhome, etc.) on individual lots can be as small as 2,000 square feet per unit.
- **Zoning Land Distribution:** The residential zoning designations for vacant and partially vacant land in the Stevenson area are primarily zoned for single family uses (98%). Multi-family zoning applies to less than 2% of these areas. This distribution is out of alignment with the housing mix anticipated in the HNA.

## Shoreline Master Program and Critical Area Ordinances

As previously mentioned, certain Skamania County streams, river, and lakes are subject to regulation under the state Shoreline Management Act and the County’s local SMP. These include all streams and rivers with an average annual flow of 20 cubic feet per second and lakes of greater than 20 acres. Land adjacent to shoreline streams, rivers, and lakes generally within 200 feet is also regulated as a “shore land.” Skamania County’s SMP is undergoing a comprehensive update and is in draft form under final review by the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology), which has final approval authority. The SMP, when adopted, will allow for single-family residential uses in the Rural Conservancy and Shoreline Residential environment designations (similar to zones) but prohibit them in all other designations. Multifamily



residential uses will require conditional use permits in the Shoreline Residential Designation and permitted in the High Intensity Shoreline residential designation. Given that Ecology has final approval authority for the SMP, there is little flexibility or opportunity to revise the draft SMP to allow for greater residential uses. One potential change may be to allow multifamily uses under conditional use permits in the Rural Conservancy designation. The SMP is a processing barrier and additional expense to developers of workforce and affordable housing within shoreline areas of the County.

The County is also updating its critical areas regulations under state mandate. The County's new critical areas regulations, once adopted, are expected to impose additional restrictions than the existing regulations. Generally speaking, there will be larger buffers required on streams and rivers. Submittal requirements for critical areas reports will be much more specific. Because the draft critical areas ordinance (CAO) does not outright prohibit development within critical areas, but requires applicants to demonstrate that impacts are unavoidable and to mitigate for all impacts, the critical areas ordinance imposes additional barriers on the development of housing in the county. The critical areas ordinance must meet best available science for the protection of critical areas, so there is little opportunity to reduce the barriers imposed by the regulations, but the County has reduced process barriers and expense to applicants by reducing critical area report requirements in certain situations.

The City of Stevenson recently completed an update to its CAO and is in the process of updating its SMP. The City's CAO and SMP are typical for Washington cities in that they restrict development located in critical areas and within 200 feet of shoreline water bodies. This should work to offset the barriers these documents create to the development of housing by potentially rezoning areas elsewhere for higher density, such as downtown. In other areas where market conditions prevent development and further division of relatively small lots, the City could consider establishing a program for the creation of local improvement districts to address environmental and infrastructure issues collectively, in advance of development, and in a way that can be paid for over a longer period of time.

## **Recommendations**

This section provides recommendations to modify Skamania County and City of Stevenson codes to eliminate housing barriers.

### **Skamania County**

Skamania County should consider implementing the following recommendations in their zoning code to reduce or eliminate barriers to housing development.

- Eliminate Process Barriers in the Code. Consider making multifamily uses and cluster developments permitted uses rather than requiring conditional use permits or prohibiting these uses outright. County staff will be most knowledgeable about the areas of the County and the corresponding zones where this would be most beneficial; more developed areas, such as Carson and the West End should be considered first.

- The RR zone in Carson and the WERL-2 zones could permit multifamily units outright or some of these areas could be rezoned to allow for more housing. Code amendments should also be considered in commercial zones, such as CC, CR, and C where new housing would have the least impact on surrounding uses and where residents have come to expect greater intensity of use.
- Cluster developments should be more widely considered as permitted uses in some of the higher intensity zones in the County, including R-1, R-2, NWLR-2 and GMA residential zones.
- Mobile and manufactured homes are an important source of affordable housing and should be a permitted use in zones with standards developed for lease lot sizes.
- The County should consider ADUs within GMA residential zones.
- Some counties in the region have maximum ADU sizes of up to 1,500 square feet. Increasing the maximum ADU size from 800 square feet to 900 square feet will provide homeowners more options to buy standard plans from local homebuilders and designers.
- **Lot Size Requirements:** As noted in Attachment A, there are multiple zones throughout the County that require lot sizes larger than necessary to accommodate certain unit types on septic systems. The County should use Attachment A as a starting place to audit their code with the intent of reducing lot size requirements where allowed under septic requirements and where smaller sizes would fit within the existing development patterns. The County is undergoing an update to the septic code in 2020 with larger land area requirements than now exist. The lot size analysis should be updated when new septic land area requirements are known.
- Consider making residential a conditional use in the Rural Conservancy shoreline designation in the draft SMP.
- The County should commission a sewer study that would look at a variety of collection, conveyance, and treatment options to address both long- and intermediate-term sewer needs. The feasibility should discuss parameters, including cost, maintenance, permitting, future effluent flows, and the ability to develop an interim system prior to full buildout of a public system with a sewer treatment plant. There are a variety of systems (vacuum systems, septic-tank effluent systems, local and regional tanks, and a variety of packaged residential to regional treatment technologies) that could pave the way for residential densities exceeding existing limits under septic regulations prior to development of a public system with a sewer treatment plant. Interim sewer treatment would allow the County to begin collecting sewer system development charges in anticipation of a treatment plant. A sewer study may cost on the order of \$75,000 to \$175,000. Grant funds through the Washington Department of Ecology, Department of Commerce and the U.S. Department of Agriculture should be explored to fund the study.

### City of Stevenson

The City of Stevenson should consider implementing the following recommendations in their zoning code to reduce or eliminate barriers to housing development.

- Consider adding flexibility to the development of ADUs by:
  - Increasing the number of allowable ADUs from one to one attached and one detached per SFDD
  - Some communities in the region have maximum ADU sizes of up to 1,500 square feet. Increasing the maximum ADU size from 800 square feet to 900 square feet will provide homeowners more options to buy standard plans from local homebuilders and designers.
  - Eliminating the additional parking space requirement
  - Make the owner-occupancy requirement optional for an additional fee to cover enforcement costs.
- Reduce the minimum lot size requirement for TFDs and MFDs in R2, R3, and CR zones. Attached single-family housing products can be located on lots as small as 2,000 square feet.
- Permit senior housing options in R3 zone instead of requiring a conditional use permit
- Allow senior housing options in the R1 and R2 zones through conditional use instead of prohibiting them
- Define Light Industrial Activities and permit retail and artisan manufacturers/cottage industry business owners to operate in live/work spaces in C1 zone
- Consider adopting additional tools and development standards that encourage density and the development of smaller and more affordable housing products. These additional tools and standards may include:
  - Lot-size averaging will allow more individual flexibility for lots in a short plat or subdivision.
  - Reduced front, rear, and side yard setbacks
  - Increased total lot-coverage maximums (in compliance with applicable stormwater standards)
  - Allow large remainder land-division parcels if a shadow plat demonstrates that the remainder parcel is divisible in the future.

### Joint County-City Recommendations

Skamania County and the City of Stevenson can work together to more effectively address countywide workforce and affordable housing shortages. Because of its role as the economic heart of Skamania County and availability of commercial services and land, development in

Stevenson and its adjacent urban area may present some of the best opportunities to address the lack of workforce and affordable housing in the County. Within the city, there are opportunities to rezone land for higher density development. Outside the city, in the urban area, there are opportunities to work with Skamania County to provide sewer and water infrastructure that will facilitate orderly development and eventual urbanization.

#### Perceptions of Development Timelines and Associated Costs:

Many local governments struggle with the public perception that development and permitting processes delay construction and add time to development timelines, therefore increasing associated, time-related costs. There were several ideas mentioned in discussions with the Project Technical Advisory Committee that intended to address this public perception:

- The County and City can take a pro-active stance on public outreach related to development. This could include continuing to participate in community-based outreach, reinvigorating engagement with small, independent property owners, and strengthening open communication methods with local developers, contractors, and real estate professionals.
- Incorporate annual reviews of development timelines into departmental operations and set internal targets to exceed development review timelines specified in code when possible. Use social media, online web pages, and community outreach events to communicate year-end findings and publicly celebrate achievements in departmental operations.
- Provide revised educational and informational material to community members at the permit center, online, and during outreach events. This educational material should use infographics and plain terminology to inform the public on the development process, basic code requirements, and departmental successes in reaching timeline goals.

#### Additional recommendations include:

- ✓ Consider a city/county intergovernmental agreement (IGA) to support city of Stevenson expansion and potential rezoning that result in additional housing development opportunities.
- ✓ Identify local and state public-owned properties (excluding park/open space areas) that could be developed for a mix of housing types.
- ✓ It is recommended that Skamania County and City of Stevenson enact a policy to obtain the right of first refusal for the purchase of properties (within their boundaries) facing foreclosure based on unpaid tax liens.

- ✓ Pursue use of a Community Land Trust by working with the Columbia Housing Corporation to develop a regional program for acquiring land for public use, environmental stewardship and development of deed-restricted housing.
- ✓ Evaluate the potential for Regional Mitigation Banking by working with state and federal agencies to allow regulated development to occur on environmentally constrained sites.
- ✓ Consider working with the WA state legislature to determine the legality of a homestead property tax program.

Stevenson rezoning opportunities:

Rezone Areas Zoned R2 and R3: The R2 zone allows for single-family and two-family residential uses. The R3 zone allows for a wide variety of residential uses including single-family, townhomes, and multifamily development. Areas north of Vancouver Avenue and west of School Street and immediately adjacent to Frank Johns Road south of Loop Road are zoned R2. If the City rezoned these areas as R3, it would provide an expanded opportunity for the development of multifamily houses in the City in an area already served by sewer and water infrastructure.

Stevenson urban exempt area annexation and development:

Skamania County maintains authority for land in Stevenson's urban area primarily located north of the city. Land north and east of Aalvik Road in the urban area is zoned R1 and R2 by Skamania County with minimum two-acre lot sizes. Land located immediately north of the city boundary along Kanaka Creek Road is also zoned R1. Both of these areas could be annexed into the City and developed if new sewer infrastructure is extended, including a sewer pump station in the Aalvik Road area and a gravity sewer along Kanaka Creek Road. According to City and County staff, annexation may be a political barrier for these areas with uncertain support. The fiscal impacts to the County's budgets related to annexation and development within the City are also not well-understood. Performing a fiscal analysis on this topic could help the jurisdictions work toward common goals.

- As an alternative to near-term annexation, the City and County could jointly adopt an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) for the development of the Aalvik Road and Kanaka Creek Road areas that would require that these areas develop under City standards. In order to effectively administer the IGA, the City and County will need to jointly plan for the extension of sewer and water infrastructure. Existing City policies prohibit the extension of sewer infrastructure outside City limits; this prohibition would need to be lifted coupled with a new policy to require property owners to annex prior to sewer connection and to connect when sewer is within a certain distance of their property. The City and County should jointly address infrastructure in these areas including pursuing funding from state sources that would make improvements feasible. Once there is a plan and funding mechanism for sewer, resistance to annexation may decrease as property owners realize the benefits of redeveloping their properties.

The IGA should address zoning standards (lot size, density, setbacks, permitted/conditional/prohibited uses, etc.), infrastructure standards (street widths and improvements), and the development review process. The IGA would ensure that development within the urban area meets City standards so that development is orderly and efficient rather than piecemeal prior to annexation. If advance planning through an IGA does not occur, these areas may develop under low density County standards making it difficult for these areas to redevelop in the near term at urban densities and the opportunity would be lost to add significant numbers of housing units to address countywide shortages.

## ATTACHMENTS

A: Comparison of Skamania County Code Lot Size Requirements to Septic Land Size Requirements in Class 5 Soils

SK:ES:llt