

DATE: October 4, 2019
TO: Snohomish County Tomorrow Planning Advisory Committee Subcommittee
CC: Steve Toy, Snohomish County Buildable Lands Team
FROM: Morgan Shook and Margaret Raimann, ECONorthwest
SUBJECT: SCT PAC SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING 1 SUMMARY

To address changes to the Review and Evaluation Program for Buildable Lands as described in E2SSB-5254, ECONorthwest is working with Snohomish County to assist in identifying and addressing recommended updates to the County’s Buildable Lands Methodology. The County contracted with ECONorthwest to develop and recommend updates to the methodology in collaboration with the Snohomish County Buildable Lands Team, a subcommittee of the Snohomish County Tomorrow (SCT) Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), and other key stakeholders. Following this process, the Snohomish County Buildable Lands Team will implement these updates to the methodology in the 2021 Buildable Lands Report (BLR).

The SCT PAC subcommittee held its first meeting on September 17, 2019 at 1:30 p.m. ECONorthwest and Snohomish County Buildable Lands Program staff led the meeting, which provided an overview of the project and updated guidelines, outlined key outcomes for subcommittee members to discuss, and listed the next steps. The second meeting of the subcommittee is tentatively scheduled on November 12, 2019.

This memorandum provides a summary of the September 17th meeting, focusing on key meeting outcomes and next steps.

Key Issues and Desired Outcomes

Overview of the project. Steve Toy gave an overview of the Buildable Lands Program and the reasons for convening a subcommittee for the methodology updates leading up to the 2021 Buildable Lands Report. ECONorthwest presented the work program for the methodology update, in coordination with outreach with the subcommittee, stakeholder groups, and elected officials. ECONorthwest also provided an overview of the new requirements of E2SSB-5254 and the updated Department of Commerce guidelines for updating buildable lands reports.

Proposed approach. ECONorthwest outlined the proposed approach for determining the potential recommended updates to the County’s buildable lands methodology. The key issues to address are summarized below, with attention on specific questions or concerns raised during the meeting:

- *Validation of previous BLR results.* The Buildable Lands Team has been working to validate results of the 2012 BLR. ECONorthwest will assist with reviewing specific areas of interest as County staff continue this work.
 - A subcommittee member requested that, where possible, the analyses in this work program look back at the 20-year period—not only back to the 2012 BLR.

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- Subcommittee members expressed interest in finding out what the timeframes are for buildable land and whether the capacity is near term or long term.
 - *Review redevelopable lands methods.* ECONorthwest will analyze previous land classification schemes and development since 2012 to determine if the definition of redevelopable land is accurate based on the new guidelines.
 - *Review market factor assumptions.* ECONorthwest will conduct an empirical analysis of development in the County to determine if the previous market factors used are still accurate.
 - The City of Everett is hoping to understand how lead up to the arrival of light rail in 2036 affects their market and potential achievement of their 2035 growth targets.
 - The representative from the City of Lynnwood noted they are in the process of completing a market analysis for the city center area, in advance of the arrival of light rail in 2024. This may help to identify market factors for areas such as Lynnwood.
 - Some subcommittee members raised concerns about relying on previous property owner surveys and suggested they should not be used for the updated methodology. For example, some areas have developed that were said 20 years ago would never develop.
 - Subcommittee members agreed that geographic factors are important to differentiate for the market factor assumption.
 - *Review infrastructure gaps.* ECONorthwest will work with County staff to identify representative areas for detailed review. These areas will serve as “case studies” to help explain reasons for lack of infrastructure and understand necessary timelines and costs to build out the needed infrastructure.
 - The representative from the City of Arlington noted that they have gaps in water and sewer infrastructure needed for development in portions of their UGA. This gap is largely due to the cost to build out the needed infrastructure.
 - The representative from the City of Mukilteo noted that stormwater requirements on smaller lots have led to no development occurring in some locations.
 - Other subcommittee members noted that Granite Falls currently lacks adequate sewer treatment plant capacity.
 - *Review reasonable measures.* ECONorthwest will use the initial results of these analyses to assist in updating the matrix of reasonable measures, with special attention on the updated guidance to identify timelines for reasonable measures.

Next Steps

The next meeting of the SCT PAC subcommittee is tentatively scheduled for November 12, 2019. ECONorthwest will present preliminary results and findings of the issues defined above and in the scope of work.