

Vacant Buildable Lands

Clark County produces an assessment of vacant buildable lands (VBL) county-wide and for each city and urban growth area. Table 4 represents the available vacant and buildable land within the 2016 La Center Urban Growth Boundary. The La Center VBL is based upon 4 units per net acre overall.

Table 4 – 2015 Vacant Buildable Lands Model – La Center

Residential	Gross Acres	Will not convert Acres	Infrastructure Acres	Net Developable Acres	Housing units	Persons
	888	373.1	142.2	373.2	1492	3971.3
Commercial	Gross Acres	Will not convert Acres	Infrastructure Acres	Net Developable Acres	Jobs	
	63.6	4.6	14.7	44.3	884.4	
Industrial	Gross Acres	Will not convert Acres	Infrastructure Acres	Net Developable Acres	Jobs	
	84.4	19.3	16.3	48.8	439.6	

The city projects a population growth of 4,433 new persons and the County VBL model projects only enough capacity to accommodate 3,971 new persons. The city anticipates that these additional 462 people can be accommodated by a combination of up-zoning land from low density to medium density and by allocating some of the population to the Mixed Use and (R/P) zoning districts both of which allow up to 16 units per net acre.³ These steps will help ensure that the city has an adequate supply of residential land and ample housing importunities. See page 38 for discussion of VBL allocation of population to low density, medium density, mixed use and residential professional areas.

The County projects that La Center will see a net increase of 2,051 new jobs and the VBL projects that the city has capacity to accommodate only 1,324 new jobs. The city anticipates that the additional 727 new jobs can be accommodated by a combination of adding 56.55 gross acres of land to the Urban Growth Area at the La Center Junction and by allocating additional jobs to the Mixed Use and R/P zoning districts.

The vacant buildable land in the (R/P)zone has the potential to accommodate 38 new low density units, 98 medium density units and 190 new commercial jobs. The addition of 56.55 gross acres of employment land at the La Center Junction has the potential to accommodate 350 industrial jobs or 850 commercial jobs.

³ [Maximum net densities may exceed maximum densities specified for the City's Medium Density Residential \(MDR-16\), Residential Professional \(R/P\), and Mixed-Use \(MX\) zoning districts if a development uses the critical areas density transfer process in the La Center Municipal Code.](#)

on population and employment projections, land capacity analysis, and comprehensive plan map designations.

- 1.1.9. Partner with Clark County and the city of Ridgefield to define the scope of an open space corridor between the two cities.
- 1.1.10. Coordinate with local agencies to anticipate the long-term opportunities for urban growth in the area between La Center and Woodland.
- 1.1.11. Work with the U.S. Post Office to ensure that all land within the city limits has a La Center U. S. mail address.
- 1.1.12. Zone changes within a Comprehensive Plan district, for example changing from low density to a higher density zone within an Urban Residential Plan District, shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council.

Residential Development

- 1.2.1 Provide an adequate supply of land zoned for residential purposes in order to meet the residential needs of the city. Developments shall emphasize low density residential uses, but also allow for, and encourage, medium density development in certain areas.
- 1.2.2 Encourage residential development to use opportunities provided through infill development and redevelopment of existing housing stock, in addition to new construction on larger undeveloped lands.
- 1.2.3 Provide at least three (3) land use designations in which residential uses are allowed. They include:
 - a) "Urban Residential District" designation, in which low density residential uses with minimum 7,500 square foot lot sizes and medium density residential uses with a minimum density of 8 units per acre and a maximum density of 16 units per acre are permitted.
 - b) "Residential/Professional District" designation in which low density residential uses (minimum of 4 units per net acre), medium density residential uses (range of 8 to 16 units per net acre), and commercial (maximum 22 units per net acre) are permitted.⁴
 - c) "Mixed Use" designation in which residential uses, primarily in upper stories, may be permitted in conjunction with commercial or office uses.
- 1.2.4 Allow "Urban Residential" lot size for newly created lots to reach 11,000 square feet where the lot abuts the Urban Growth Boundary, particularly if there are no roads at the boundary.

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The 2015 year-end population was 3,163 and the projected 2036 population is 7,642. To accommodate the additional population of 4,433 persons the city will need an additional 1,667 dwelling units. By 2036 the total number of dwelling units in La Center may be 1,767.

The 2015 Clark County Vacant Buildable Land (VBL) analysis indicates that the La Center UGA contains approximately 258 net buildable acres of low density residential land. At 4 units per net acre, the VBL projects that these lands can accommodate 1,032 new single family homes. On the medium density side, the VBL indicates that the La Center UGA contains about 33.4 net buildable acres (75 gross acres). Medium density zoning districts should generate between 8 to 14 housing units per net acre. These lands could generate between 267 and 468 new medium density units. Finally, the Mixed Use (MX) land use zones contain about 16.7 net acres and are planned to build **between 8 and 16 units per net acre**⁶. MX zones have the capacity to generate 134 to 267 new medium density units.

Consequently, the Comprehensive Plan anticipates that the La Center UGA has sufficient residential land capacity to accommodate the projected 2036 population.

Demographic trends⁷ provide a snapshot of the current growth patterns and provide evidence of future activity:

- In 2010 the U.S. Census reported a total of 158 rental units in La Center.
- Over forty five percent (45.3%) of the housing stock was built after 2000 while 85.4% of the housing units were built after 1985.
- Estimated median household income in 2014 was \$71,948, significantly higher than the state-wide median (\$58,686) and the Clark County median income (\$59,341).
- The estimated median La Center house value in 2015 was \$339,800, higher than the Washington median house value (\$268,400).⁸
- About 5.2% of La Center residents live below the federal poverty line.

Statement of Policies that Encourage Affordable Housing

- The city residential and mixed use zoning districts establish minimum densities.
- The Comprehensive Plan provides for a wide variety of housing options, such as, townhomes, condominiums, manufactured homes, accessory dwelling units

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⁷ Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

⁸ www.zillow.com

Housing Policies

- 3.1.1. Work to ensure that medium density housing accounts for 25% of new residential construction overall during the life of this Plan.
- 3.1.2. Encourage flexible and cost efficient land use regulations that allow for the creation of creative housing types which will meet the needs of an economically diverse population.
- 3.1.3. Adopt implementation measures to assure that new residential development shall occur at an average density of four (4) units per net acre.
- 3.1.4. **Reevaluate the status of local medium density housing opportunities at the time of updates to the Comprehensive Plan or Urban Growth Boundary and adjust policies accordingly, if the goals of providing an average of four (4) units per net acre in the low density zones and 8 units an acre in the medium density zones are not met.⁹**
- 3.1.5. Encourage, where practical, the preservation and improvement of existing housing stock.
- 3.1.6. Allow special needs housing, as necessary. Special needs housing may include emergency shelters, transitional housing, nursing homes, congregate care facilities, or housing for the elderly or disabled, consistent with state and federal law.
- 3.1.7. Support programs that assist individual homeowners and property owners in upgrading and rehabilitating historical and other housing units in need of repair.
- 3.1.8. Integrate public safety into the design of neighborhoods.
- 3.1.9. Enhance neighborhood attractiveness by linking neighborhoods to public amenities such as greenbelts, open spaces, parks, downtown.
- 3.1.10. Work to buffer neighborhood edges adjacent to major streets and areas of commercial development,
- 3.1.11. Encourage the blending of new and existing neighborhoods,
- 3.1.12. Identify mature neighborhoods that may benefit from revitalization and/or redevelopment and, to the extent that resources are allocated, pursue reinvestment through public projects, private and individual initiatives, and other incentives.
- 3.1.13. Study the need for, and opportunity to create, senior housing facilities to meet

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