City of Portland Development Capacity Analysis
Development capacity analysis GIS model: 2 page overview

Overview

The City of Portland is developing Buildable Lands Inventory as part of the state requirements for Periodic Review of the Comprehensive Plan. This inventory begins with the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability's Development Capacity Analysis (DCA) model to determine potential buildable lands and then addresses possible constraints to full build out.

The DCA GIS model provides information about the amount of existing and allowed development that is useful for establishing our current and future residential and employment capacity.

Maximum land use intensities are controlled by establishing floor area ratio (FAR) limits, total number of multi-family residential units, or minimum lot sizes for new development. FAR is the ratio of a building's total square footage to the square footage of the underlying development parcel. These limits govern building bulk, and - among other objectives – create reasonable certainty for utility and transportation providers regarding the intensities of use for which they must provide services. FAR and building height limits are the primary limiting factor on development in employment, commercial, and high-density residential areas. In multi-family and single-family residential areas, capacities are determined by the allowed number of residential units, rather than maximum building square footages. The specific criteria for determining allowed capacity are described in detail in the bureau's Development Capacity Analysis GIS Model (2010) document.

All analysis is based on the City of Portland's "Comprehensive Plan Designations" rather than existing zoning. The Comprehensive Plan Designations reflect the current adopted land use plan for the City of Portland. This plan guides the future growth and development of the city.

There were several reasons for conducting this analysis:

- to quantify the existing development capacity within Portland under current zoning regulations;
- to identify likely redevelopment scenarios and prospective clusters of future development activity by identifying sites that are significantly underutilizing their allowed development capacity;
- to generate development capacity statistics for different areas of the City to highlight the differences in terms of existing and allowed development capacity;
- to serve as a basis for predicting residential and employment capacity under existing comprehensive plan designations.

Important note: This is a "supply-side" analysis. The model does not consider nor predict market demand for new construction. It only identifies lands within the City that are significantly underdeveloped and could potentially become available for development/redevelopment should market demand exist.

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