Smart Growth Development? A Parcel Level Analysis of Sumner

Gina M. Owens

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/gis_projects
Part of the Urban, Community and Regional Planning Commons, and the Urban Studies and Planning Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/gis_projects/70

This GIS Certificate Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Urban Studies at UW Tacoma Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in GIS Certificate Projects by an authorized administrator of UW Tacoma Digital Commons.
PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) was enacted in 1990 to coordinate unplanned growth and development across the state at regional and local levels. The GMA requires state and local governments to identify and protect critical areas and natural resource lands, define urban growth areas, and prepare comprehensive plans that align with state development goals. A goal of the GMA is to protect Agricultural Resource Lands (ARL as defined by WAC 365-190-050); land that is not already characterized by urban growth; land that is used or capable of being used for agricultural productions; based on soil quality, and physical and geographic characteristics; and land has long-term commercial significance for agriculture. The WAC further states “…the process should result in designating an amount of agricultural resource lands sufficient to maintain and enhance the economic viability of the agricultural industry in the country over the long term; and to retain supporting agricultural businesses…”

In July 2011, the Pierce County Planning department denied the City of Sumner’s proposal to annex 182 acres ARL land to use for their urban growth area; stating that the proposal contradicts state growth policies as defined by the GMA; which expressly advises against routing urban growth into rural and agricultural lands.

In October 2011, the planning department’s decision was overturned by the Pierce County Council and a revised proposal was approved. This push to develop outlying areas is called sprawl. Sprawl is an epidemic that is plaguing many agricultural and rural areas across the country. Sprawl has continued to be allowed because it brings the promise of economic boon.

My analyses will explore Sumner’s current development levels. I hope to answer three questions in performing this study. First, to what level is Sumner currently developed and how much of their developable space is underutilized? Based on proposed zoning for Orton Junction, what is the development capacity? And can the development goals for Orton Junction be fulfilled in current City of Summer boundaries? The inset map above is a digized map of the proposed zoning for Orton Junction. Using similar methodology to determine parcel level development capacity, I was able to determine that the total built square footage of the new Orton Junction would be able to carry.