

## Analysis

### 1

#### **Lands Within and Adjacent to Growth Areas**

Related Policies: *Grow where we're already growing*  
*Manage the use of large tracts of vacant land in Urban Growth Areas*  
*Build more compactly and efficiently*

#### **Why Focus on This Topic?**

During our fall 2019 planning area meetings, partners in two of the six planning areas in Lancaster County placed the most emphasis on the policies listed above. In our online planning area survey conducted from Nov. 2019 to Jan. 2020, participants in every planning area also agreed with that emphasis.

To keep most development inside growth areas, we need to make sure that these areas align with existing infrastructure (water and sewer) and have the capacity to accommodate appropriate industrial development, housing, etc.

The purpose of this analysis is to show us 1) how we've grown over the last five years, 2) areas where it might be difficult to build, and 3) areas that are more suitable for development. This information can help us avoid unnecessary expansions of growth areas that could conflict with agricultural and natural land preservation efforts.

#### **Purpose of Discussion**

- Evaluate residential development densities and the consumption of buildable lands in Urban Growth Areas from 2015 to 2019;
- Determine whether Urban Growth Areas have enough water capacity through 2040;
- Within growth areas, identify “unbuildable” lands (such as preserved farmland, quarries, cemeteries) that could be removed from these growth areas;
- Evaluate the overall development suitability of all buildable lands 1) within growth areas and 2) adjacent to these growth areas; and
- Recommend how *places2040* catalytic tools can be implemented to achieve the results we want to see.

**Desired Outcomes**

*Places2040* provides some ways to measure our progress in achieving this policy:

**Growth Inside Urban Growth Areas**

New dwelling units	▲	Increase % of new dwelling units in UGAs to accommodate projected population
New non-residential square footage	▲	Increase % of new non-residential square footage in UGAs
Countywide UGA net density	▲	Increase net density to target density for each UGA

**Employment Location**

Jobs in UGAs	▲	Increase % of jobs in UGAs
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**Water and Sewer Infrastructure Inside UGAs**

Parcels with water service	▲	Increase % of UGA parcels with water service
Parcels with sewer service	▲	Increase % of UGA parcels with sewer service

**Tables and Maps**

A more detailed discussion of the analysis undertaken for this topic appears in a separate “Methodology” handout. In general terms, Table 1 and Maps 1A, 1B, and 1C illustrate the following:

Table 1 – Buildable Lands, Residential Density, and Water Capacity

- Acres Consumed between 2015 and 2019 – Residential and non-residential acres consumed during this period, including average residential densities; and the acres of land remaining in 2019.
- Public Water Capacity through 2040 – Projected surplus or deficit in water supply within growth areas.
- Buildable Land Remaining in 2040 – How many acres will remain if we follow trend, and how many if we follow the recommendations in *places2040*.

Map 1A – Land Development Within Growth Areas

- Suitability for Development (Growth Area Buildable Land) – Lands scored using criteria outlined with input from the Economic Development Co. (EDC) of Lancaster County.
- Unbuildable Land Near Growth Area Edge – Lands with development constraints; could potentially be removed from growth areas.

Map 1B – Land Development Adjacent to Growth Areas

- Suitability for Development (Growth Area Edge) – All lands outside & adjacent to growth areas, but with quarries, preserved lands, and ag and natural preservation priorities removed. Remaining lands were scored using the same criteria as Map 1A.

Map 1C – Land Development Adjacent to Growth Areas

- Suitability for Development (Growth Area Edge – *Priority*) – Of the lands highlighted in Map 1B, these lands are the most suitable due to their access to water, sewer, and major roads.

**Analysis: Topic 1 – Lands Within and Adjacent to Growth Areas****Results of the Analysis**

Looking at the countywide data, these factors stand out to us:

- In 2015, we had about 28,000 buildable acres in growth areas. At the end of 2019, that number had decreased to about 24,000 acres.
- Public water suppliers in Lancaster County generally have the capacity to accommodate growth projected through 2040. Only three showed slight deficits.
- We didn't find a lot of unbuildable land adjacent to growth area boundaries – about 375 acres countywide.
- About 6,900 buildable acres are considered “more suitable” or greater, and 900 buildable acres ranked as “less suitable” and “least suitable” [for definitions of these terms, see “Methodology” handout].
- About 6,800 acres of land along growth area edges were identified as a “priority” since they appeared to have access to water, sewer, and major roads. About 4,800 acres were ranked as “more suitable” or greater.

**Applying the Catalytic Tools in *places2040***

Here's how our partners can use these tools to manage buildable lands and realign growth areas:

Municipalities / Regional Entities

- Place-Based Planning – Use the results of this analysis and work with neighboring municipalities to do further ground truthing of buildable lands and realign growth areas accordingly; look closely at “donut holes” and disconnected areas.
- Simplify Zoning – Rezone “most suitable” lands for industrial development and “more suitable” lands for a mixture of non-residential or residential. Amend zoning districts and ordinances to permit recommended residential densities. Zone any lands removed from growth areas to effective agriculture or conservation/open space districts.

Partners for Place

- Align Resources – Working with municipalities and property owners, EDC can use its resources to ground truth these analyses and identify and ready the lands most suitable for economic development

Authorities

- Infrastructure – Work to close any deficits in water supply for growth areas. Make sure that water and sewer are readily available for “more suitable” and “most suitable” lands.

### **Questions for Workshop Discussion**

1. What do you notice about the data in the table or the maps? What stands out to you?
2. How might you use this analysis to inform local and regional decision making?
3. Our analysis is simply a data-driven “baseline” review. More study is needed at the local level. What can you – as one of our partners – do to follow up with this analysis?
4. Has there been any discussion in your region about future development of buildable lands?
5. During the *places2040* planning process, the public asked us not to increase the overall amount of land within growth areas. Do you see any opportunities to make an even swap of acreage inside and outside these areas?