

# Rural Residential Buildable Lands Inventory

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## Introduction and Summary

ORS 197.296 Priorities for urban growth boundary expansion, generally requires cities to include exception areas before including agricultural land. To meet ORS 197.298 priorities, The Dalles proposed in 2007 to include all residential exception areas with development capacity nearby or adjacent to the 1983 UGB within the 2026 UGB –an area evaluated at approximately 520 gross acres. The Dalles Community Development Director analyzed residential housing capacity in these exception areas

(*Findings for Exception Areas and Adjacent Properties*, The Dalles, June 2007), and determined they had the capacity to provide an additional 323 residential dwelling units – the equivalent of about 58 acres of buildable residential land at urban densities.

### Concerns related to the 2007 Analysis

The City's exception area capacity evaluation (2007), while probably realistic, contained several methodological concerns related to 2013 periodic review work, and was necessarily uninformed by studies performed after 2007. These concerns are summarized below:

- Created prior to evaluation of natural and scenic areas (2011) in the study area;
- Was not performed with GIS;
- May have missed some land in farm use that is under rural residential zoning;
- Included some small adjacent parcels that were zoned for agriculture (so not actually exception areas);
- Some of the exception area acreage was considered to be future commercial in 2007, rather than residential; and
- Did not have a clear or replicable methodology.

This document resolves these concerns, by providing a GIS analysis of each rural residential area, considering natural constraints, existing development, and scenic impacts. This document also provides a replicable methodology in the Methodology section.

However, this document does not evaluate potential reductions in buildable land supply due to the likely presence of significant cultural resource sites. The Dalles Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP) calls for the protection of significant cultural resources that (a) have been identified in the Cultural Resources Reconnaissance Survey for the UGB Expansion Area (Willamette CRA, 2013) or (b) may be identified as a result of future systematic cultural resource surveys and reports required by the CRMP.

### Rural Residential Capacity Summary

As shown on Table 1 below, the total area of rural residential analysis is larger than the 2007 evaluation, by about 100 acres – this reflects increased evaluation of Seven Mile Road (initially removed in the 2007 analysis due to predominance of steep slope and the 7 Mile Creek riparian area), and more accuracy in the boundaries of exception areas through GIS.

Very few exception area parcels are vacant – only three of the eight areas had any vacant parcels, and these totaled 27 acres (primarily in the Cherry Heights area). However, an aggressive infill approach – assuming all undeveloped and unconstrained areas on developed lots will be available for development in the next 20 years – produces a *potential* infill supply within these exception areas of 128 acres. Total capacity including full infill build-out within the 621 acres of exception areas adds up to the equivalent of 155 gross buildable acres.

**TABLE 1: EXCEPTION AREA SUMMARY**

Exception Areas	Gross Acres	Parcels	Vacant Buildable Acres	Infill Potential Acres	Total Buildable Acres
Murray's Addition	189.7	250	7.2	35.5	42.7
Seven Mile Road	82.9	9	0	24.9	24.9
Foley Lakes (west)	36.9	6	0	21.7	21.7
Foley Lakes (central)	27.9	1	0	1.3	1.3
Foley Lakes (east)	89	1	0	32.2	32.2
Cherry Heights	133.7	85	18.6	4.7	23.3
Mill Creek / Scenic	40.3	30	1.2	0	1.2
Dufur Triangle	20.6	11	0	7.2	7.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>155</b>

## Methodology

The methodology used for this analysis used the following steps:

- 1) Define exception areas. Exception areas were defined as areas zoned rural residential by Wasco County and the Gorge Commission (based on Gorge GIS data obtained in 2007) within approximately 1 mile of the existing UGB. In several areas, zoning boundaries do not line up exactly with tax lots or the City's UGB, but approximate the boundaries.<sup>1</sup> The exception area boundaries for this analysis were adjusted to conform with existing tax lot boundaries where there's an obvious distinction (e.g. adjacent strips of "rural residential" zoning within large, irrigated cherry orchard parcels were not considered as rural residential for this analysis).
- 2) Determine parcels and parcel area. Using the Wasco County tax assessor parcel layer. Areas within the exception area boundary, but outside of parcels, are rights-of-way (ROW).
- 3) Determine steep slope constraints. 25% and greater slope was defined through GIS analysis of 10M DEMs produced by the USGS. These slopes were considered to be constrained (i.e., unbuildable).
- 4) Determine natural resource constraints. *The Dalles Natural Resource Inventory* (Winterbrook, 2011) defined areas with high value natural resources such as wetlands, riparian areas, and oak grove habitat. Many of these resources are found within exception areas. Where natural resources extend beyond the boundaries of constrained steep slope areas (already determined in the step above), these areas were considered to be constrained.
- 5) Determine publicly / semi-public parcels. Examples include Chenoweth PUD facilities, churches, ODOT land, etc. These parcels were considered unavailable for housing.
- 6) Determine developed areas. Developed areas were mapped through aerial photography – areas with existing development (e.g., houses, barns, roads) were considered developed. Parcels

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<sup>1</sup> Original Gorge mapping was done at a much larger scale, so it's logical that boundary lines don't match exactly at a higher detail of analysis.

under 15,000 square feet<sup>2</sup> with a house were considered fully developed. Developed areas were considered to be constrained.

- 7) Determine vacant parcels. Parcels with no existing development were considered vacant.
- 8) Determine potential infill area. Parcels with existing development and at least 15,000 square feet of unconstrained land were considered potential infill.

For scenic impact analysis, areas identified as “moderate” or “high” visibility in the *Scenic Resources Evaluation for the City of The Dalles* (Ecotrust, 2011) were mapped within the identified exception areas.

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### Murray’s Addition

This exception area includes both Murray’s Addition and larger (5-10 acre) parcels zoned for farm use to the northwest. This area begins approximately 0.5 miles to the northwest of the existing UGB, and runs along Chenoweth Road. The 250 parcels contain 166 acres, and 58 acres are developed (predominantly rural residential dwellings and outbuildings). The northern portion of this area is constrained by steep slopes, and the area south of Chenoweth Road contains both steep slope and the Chenoweth Creek riparian area. Constrained land totals 53 acres. Total buildable land includes 7.2 acres on vacant parcels, and 35.5 acres of potential infill.

### Seven Mile Road

This exception area begins approximately 0.4 miles from the existing UGB (just before reaching Murray’s Addition along Chenoweth Road), and runs northwest along the west side of 7 Mile Hill Road. This area consists of 9 large parcels, totaling 83 acres. The 53 acres of mapped constraints include steep slopes and riparian areas associated with 7 Mile Creek. This area was the only nearby exception area originally left out of the 2007 UGB proposal – due to limited access to buildable areas due to slopes and presumed high resource value of the creek. However, the methodology used by this analysis resulted in identification of pockets of unconstrained potential infill land within this area totaling 25 acres.

### Foley Lakes (West)

This area includes the western portion of the Foley Lakes Mobile Homes Park, 5 small rural residential parcels, and a large undeveloped area north of the Park (within the same parcel as the Park). It begins approximately 0.4 miles from the existing UGB along Chenoweth Creek Road, and runs north along the east side of 7 Mile Creek Road. This area was originally included in the 2007 UGB proposal as a commercial node. The 33 acres within this area contain only about 12 acres of development and slope constraints, providing 22 buildable acres of potential infill land north of the Park.

### Foley Lakes (Central)

This area begins approximately 0.3 miles from the existing UGB along Chenoweth Creek Road. It is defined by natural boundaries of slope, natural resources, and visibility. This area is directly adjacent to

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<sup>2</sup> This number roughly reflects a cutoff of 5.6 dwelling units/acre, given an existing unit ( $43560/5.6*2 = 15,557$ ).

the east of Foley Lakes (West). This area includes 27 acres consisting of one parcel – a portion of the Foley Lakes Mobile Homes Park. This area is nearly entirely constrained by steep slopes, natural features, and developed portions of the Park. Portions of the park without apparent development or constraints provide a total of 1.3 buildable acres of potential infill land.

### **Foley Lakes (East)**

This area is approximately 0.1 miles from the existing UGB along Chenoweth Creek Road, and contains the major portion of the Foley Lakes Mobile Homes Park, as well as Foley Lakes (the water features). This area is directly to the east of Foley Lakes (Central) along Chenoweth Creek Road. Foley Lakes (East) contains 87 acres within its one parcel. The northern portion of this area is considered to be within Hidden Valley. Constraints include developed areas of the Park, steep slopes and water-related natural features. However, the methodology used in this analysis determined there were pockets of undeveloped and unconstrained land within this area totaling 32 buildable acres of potential infill land.

### **Cherry Heights**

The Cherry Heights exception area runs immediately adjacent to the southwest portion of the existing UGB, roughly along portions of W 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Cherry Heights Road. This area contains 85 parcels that total 116 acres. The majority of its area along the edge of the UGB is constrained by steep slopes and/or natural features. However, it has a pocket of about 19 acres of vacant, buildable land along Cherry Heights Road, and about 5 buildable acres of potential infill land totaling about 23 buildable acres.

### **Mill Creek / Scenic**

This area is adjacent to the southwest portion of the existing UGB along Mill Creek and Skyline Roads. It contains 30 parcels with 36 acres. Only 2 parcels contain buildable land – both are vacant parcels along Mill Creek Road, and they total 1.2 acres. The majority of this area (25 acres) is constrained by natural features, mainly associated with Mill Creek.

### **Dufur Triangle**

This area is along Dufur Road adjacent to the southeast portion of the UGB. It contains 11 parcels with 18 acres. This area has no mapped constraints. Though every parcel is developed, there are several small farmed areas that provide infill opportunities totaling 7.2 buildable acres.

### **Buildable Land Summary**

As shown in Table 2 below, the 8 exception areas in this analysis total 621 acres, with 393 parcels and 565 parcel acres. Of the 565 acres, 15 are public or semi-public, 261 are constrained by steep slopes or natural features, and 134 acres are fully developed. These areas include 27 acres of vacant buildable land, and 128 buildable acres of potential infill land. The total buildable land area, assuming development of 100% of potential infill parcels, is 155 acres.

**TABLE 2: EXCEPTION AREAS BUILDABLE LAND**

Exception Areas	Gross Acres	ROW Acres	Parcels	Parcel Acres	Public Acres	Constrained Acres	Developed Acres	Vacant Buildable Acres	Infill Potential Acres	Total Buildable Acres
Murray's Addition	189.7	24	250	165.7	11.8	53.4	57.8	7.2	35.5	42.7
Seven Mile Road	82.9	0	9	82.9	0	52.8	5.2	0	24.9	24.9
Foley Lakes (west)	36.9	3.6	6	33.3	0	6	5.6	0	21.7	21.7
Foley Lakes (central)	27.9	1	1	26.9	0	21.1	4.5	0	1.3	1.3
Foley Lakes (east)	89	2.3	1	86.7	0	30.8	23.7	0	32.2	32.2
Cherry Heights	133.7	18.2	85	115.5	1.3	72.3	18.7	18.6	4.7	23.3
Mill Creek / Scenic	40.3	4.7	30	35.6	0	24.9	9.5	1.2	0	1.2
Dufer Triangle	20.6	2.4	11	18.2	2.3	0	8.7	0	7.2	7.2
Total	621	56.2	393	564.8	15.4	261.3	133.7	27	127.5	154.5

## Buildable Land and Scenic Impact Summary

Since The Dalles is within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA), several additional concerns apply to the concept of UGB expansion – most notably scenic and cultural values. Since these values do not fit within a standard Oregon buildable lands approach (and cultural resources aren't mapped at the time of this analysis), this analysis provides additional information on scenic values for each exception area, and provides some ratios to assist in decision-making when addressing NSA standards.

Table 3 shows high and moderate visibility (“visible”) acreages for each exception area. As shown on Table 3, Cherry Heights contains the most total visible area (99 acres), with by far the highest scenic value (49 acres of highly visible land). Dufur Triangle, on the other hand, contains zero moderate-high value scenic areas. The rest of the areas contain between 8 and 39 acres of visible land.

Each area has varying amounts of constrained acres as well – indicating slopes and natural resources – resulting in buildable acres as defined and described earlier in this document. Table 3 provides ratios for:

- 1) Buildable to visible land: This indicates how much buildable land is in each exception area relative to how much moderately and highly visible land. Higher numbers show relatively higher amounts of buildable land – for example, a value of “2.0” would indicate twice as much buildable land as visible land. This figure is capped at 5, for land with no visible area.
- 2) Buildable to constrained land: This ratio resulted from a methodology similar to the visible ratio, but with constrained land.
- 3) Average ratios: This averages the two ratios. Higher ratios again indicate a greater amount of buildable land relative to visible and constrained land. Values of 1.0 or above indicate a relatively high amount of buildable land. Values under 1.0 indicate relatively high visibility, constraints, or both.

As shown on Table 3, the areas with the worst ratios for visible land are Foley Lakes (Central) (0.1), Mill Creek / Scenic (0.1), and Cherry Heights (0.2). Three areas have close to the same amount of buildable land as visible land: Foley Lakes (West) (0.8), Seven Mile Road (0.9), and Murray's Addition (1.1). Two

areas have a high yield of buildable land relative to visible land: Foley Lakes (East) (3.2) and Dufur Triangle (5.0).

As shown on Table 3, the constrained ratio is slightly different. The worst ratios appear in Mill Creek / Scenic (0.0), Foley Lakes (Central) (0.1), Cherry Heights (0.3), and Seven Mile Road (0.5). Murray’s Addition (0.8) and Foley Lakes (East) (1.0) provide about the same amount of buildable land as constrained land, and Foley Lakes (West) (3.6) and Dufur Triangle (5.0) contain relatively high amounts of buildable land.

In average ratios, Dufur Triangle (with no constrained or visible land) clearly provides the greatest amount of buildable land relative to impact on scenic and natural values. Foley Lakes (West) (2.2) and Foley Lakes (East) (2.1) are second-tier – West providing high amounts of buildable land relative to constraints, and East providing high amounts of buildable land relative to visibility. Seven Mile Road (0.7) and Murray’s Addition (1.0) provide about as much impact on scenic and natural values as they do buildable land. Foley Lakes (Central) (0.1), Mill Creek / Scenic (0.1), and Cherry Heights (0.3) provide very low buildable land relative to visible and constrained lands.

**TABLE 3: EXCEPTION AREAS VISIBILITY AND BUILDABLE LAND COMPARISONS**

Exception Areas	Distance to UGB (Miles)	Gross Acres	High Visibility Acres	Mod Visibility Acres	Total Vis Acres	Constrained Acres	Buildable Acres	Buildable to Visible Ratio	Buildable to Constr Ratio	Average Ratios
Murray's Addition	0.5	189.7	0.5	38.1	38.6	53.4	42.7	1.1	0.8	1.0
Seven Mile Road	0.4	82.9	3.1	23.7	26.8	52.8	24.9	0.9	0.5	0.7
Foley Lakes (west)	0.4	36.9	4.5	22.9	27.4	6	21.7	0.8	3.6	2.2
Foley Lakes (central)	0.3	27.9	0.1	8.6	8.7	21.1	1.3	0.1	0.1	0.1
Foley Lakes (east)	0.1	89	0.4	9.8	10.2	30.8	32.2	3.2	1.0	2.1
Cherry Heights	0	133.7	48.8	50.1	98.9	72.3	23.3	0.2	0.3	0.3
Mill Creek / Scenic	0	40.3	0	8.3	8.3	24.9	1.2	0.1	0.0	0.1
Dufer Triangle	0	20.6	0	0	0	0	7.2	5.0	5.0	5.0
Total	NA	621	57.4	161.5	218.9	261.3	154.5	NA	NA	NA

## CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION CHOICES

This analysis provides data and analysis, but leaves several methodological options for applying this information to potential UGB expansion in The Dalles. Most notably:

- 1) Potential infill. The vast majority (83%) of buildable land identified in this analysis is on land that already contains development. These areas include large back yards, areas that are more difficult to provide access and services due to existing development and terrain, and areas under active farm use. In many rural residential areas, the residents enjoy their low density status, and have no desire to be annexed into a city. Assuming that all of these potential infill areas, if brought into the UGB, will be annexed and fully developed at urban densities by 2026 is *highly optimistic* – these areas are unlikely to be fully annexed in 13 years, much less developed at urban densities. A more realistic, but still very aggressive, assumption would be that half of potential infill land would be available for urban-level development during the planning timeframe. Table 4 below provides values for a 50% infill scenario.

**TABLE 4: EXCEPTION AREA BUILDABLE LAND, 50% INFILL SCENARIO**

Exception Areas	Gross Acres	Parcels	Vacant Buildable Acres	Infill Potential Acres (50%)	Total Buildable Acres
Murray's Addition	189.7	250	7.2	17.8	25.0
Seven Mile Road	82.9	9	0	12.5	12.5
Foley Lakes (west)	36.9	6	0	10.9	10.9
Foley Lakes (central)	27.9	1	0	0.6	0.6
Foley Lakes (east)	89	1	0	16.1	16.1
Cherry Heights	133.7	85	18.6	2.4	21.0
Mill Creek / Scenic	40.3	30	1.2	0.0	1.2
Dufur Triangle	20.6	11	0	3.6	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>91</b>

- 2) Columbia River Gorge NSA resource impacts. Protection of scenic resources is a primary purpose of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA). The NSA Management Plan also calls for protection of natural resources. Several exception areas contain very little buildable land relative to land with moderate to high scenic resource value, and some contain a large amount of natural resources as well. Avoidance of these areas may better achieve NSA objectives than bringing them into the UGB, despite ORS 197.298 priorities. If this is the case, areas excluded due to scenic or natural resources would not be able to meet identified urban growth needs due to federal protection.
- 3) Area inclusion progression. Several exception areas are found along Chenoweth Road. In order of proximity to the UGB they are: Foley Lakes (East), Foley Lakes (Central), Foley Lakes (West), Seven Mile Road, and finally Murray’s Addition. Foley Lakes (Central) provides extremely low buildable land yield relative to NSA resources, and provides a natural break point in terms of terrain and natural features. Foley Lakes (West) contains more visible land than buildable land. And Seven Mile Road has poor ratios for both visible and constrained land. Murray’s Addition, while providing a moderate ratio of buildable land to NSA resource land, is beyond all of these areas. Depending on the values applied to NSA resources (as discussed in #2 above), it may make sense to not include areas beyond Foley Lakes (Central).
- 4) Cultural Resources. This analysis does not include any adjustments for potential cultural resource constraints. All areas proposed for inclusion in the UGB expansion area will be subject to the Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP) and the Cultural Resources Overlay District at the time of any proposal for urban-level development. The requirement for archaeological study and analysis prior to any complete development application could have the effect of decreasing the buildable land supply.