

Discussion Guide: Kittitas UGA

What is the purpose of the Kittitas UGA analysis?

- The purpose of the Kittitas Urban Growth Area (UGA) analysis is to evaluate the City of Kittitas (City) Land Capacity Analysis on behalf of Kittitas County (County) in response to the Eastern Washington Growth Management Hearings Board (Board) orders.
- The Board invalidated a proposed Kittitas UGA expansion. In its Final Decision and Order on August 20, 2007 (case 07-1-004c), the Board indicated concern with the City's land capacity analysis being accepted by the County without independent review and the need for additional information on economic development as well as other issues.

What are the residential findings?

- The City's capacity for residential development appears greater than the capacity needed to support the population allocated by the Kittitas County Conference of Governments (KCCOG). The KCCOG allocation would result in the need for land capable of supporting about 180 homes.
- Our analysis of residential land capacity shows a range of 298-448 homes similar to the City's expected subdivision homes projection of 357-379. Thus, our land capacity results and the City's own projections exceed the amount of land needed to support the KCCOG allocation.

What are the options to address the residential findings?

To provide for a balance between land capacity and population allocations, several options are possible:

- a. Reduce UGA boundaries to reduce residential capacity
- b. Alter the land use mix to reduce residential uses and increase non-residential land uses
- c. Revise the population allocation
- d. Mix of UGA, land use, and population allocation changes

Two options are recommended for further consideration based on Options "c" and "d":

- Continue with current UGA boundaries and reallocate population to the Kittitas UGA through an amendment to the KCCOG population allocations; or
- Reduce UGA boundaries, change the land use mix and reallocate less population than above.

What are the employment findings?

Through our research, we have identified and documented the following issues that indicate a need for additional jobs in Kittitas:

- Various local government, business, and education stakeholders have emphasized the need to retain and grow local businesses and recruit new ones to Kittitas County;

- Kittitas County experiences significant retail leakage. Retail leakage occurs when citizens of Kittitas County spend money at retailers located outside of the county such as by traveling to Yakima or Seattle to make purchases;
- The City's unemployment rate is higher than the County as a whole;
- The City's jobs-housing balance is much lower than the County as a whole;
- The City's assessed value per capita is lower than other cities in the County; and
- The City lacks large parcel sizes for large format retail or manufacturing businesses.

What are the options to address the employment findings?

Kittitas County and ICF Jones & Stokes presented the information and options regarding residential and employment lands to the Kittitas City Council at their meeting of September 8, 2009. The City Council discussed the following points:

- **Jobs-Housing Balance:** The City Council indicated an intent for the City to be "job rich" as opposed to a bedroom community or a balanced community.
- **Tax Base:** The City may have some sales tax history and anecdotal business loss information to add to the discussion.
- **Priority Areas:** The rectangular parcel – i.e. the area close to the freeway – is most important.
- **Rationale for Employment:** City Council members generally indicated the employment rationale outlined by the County was appropriate. Out-commuting and housing tenure are issues that the City thinks would be appropriate to add to the discussion.

Based on the questions and City input, we have identified two options to take forward to the County Planning Commission and County Board of Commissioners regarding employment areas in the UGA:

- Full UGA expansion proposal with industrial and mixed commercial/industrial uses
- Partial UGA expansion proposal focusing on including the area to the east of the wastewater treatment facilities closest to I-90.

Next Steps

County staff and ICF Jones & Stokes staff attended the City Council meeting on September 8, 2009 to review information and options. The City Council generally indicated the range of options offered by the County were appropriate, but intended to have further discussion before determining whether to provide additional direction on a preferred option. On September 22, 2009, the City adopted a resolution affirming the independent analysis presented in this memorandum, and indicating that the reduction of the proposed UGA boundaries to exclude the residential area east of Road 81, and re-designating the area adjacent to the John Wayne Trail from residential to commercial, appears to be most consistent with the City Comprehensive Plan.

Confirmation of the City's input by October 5, 2009 would allow the County to consider it prior to the formal Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioner's consideration and public hearings scheduled for October 13, 2009.

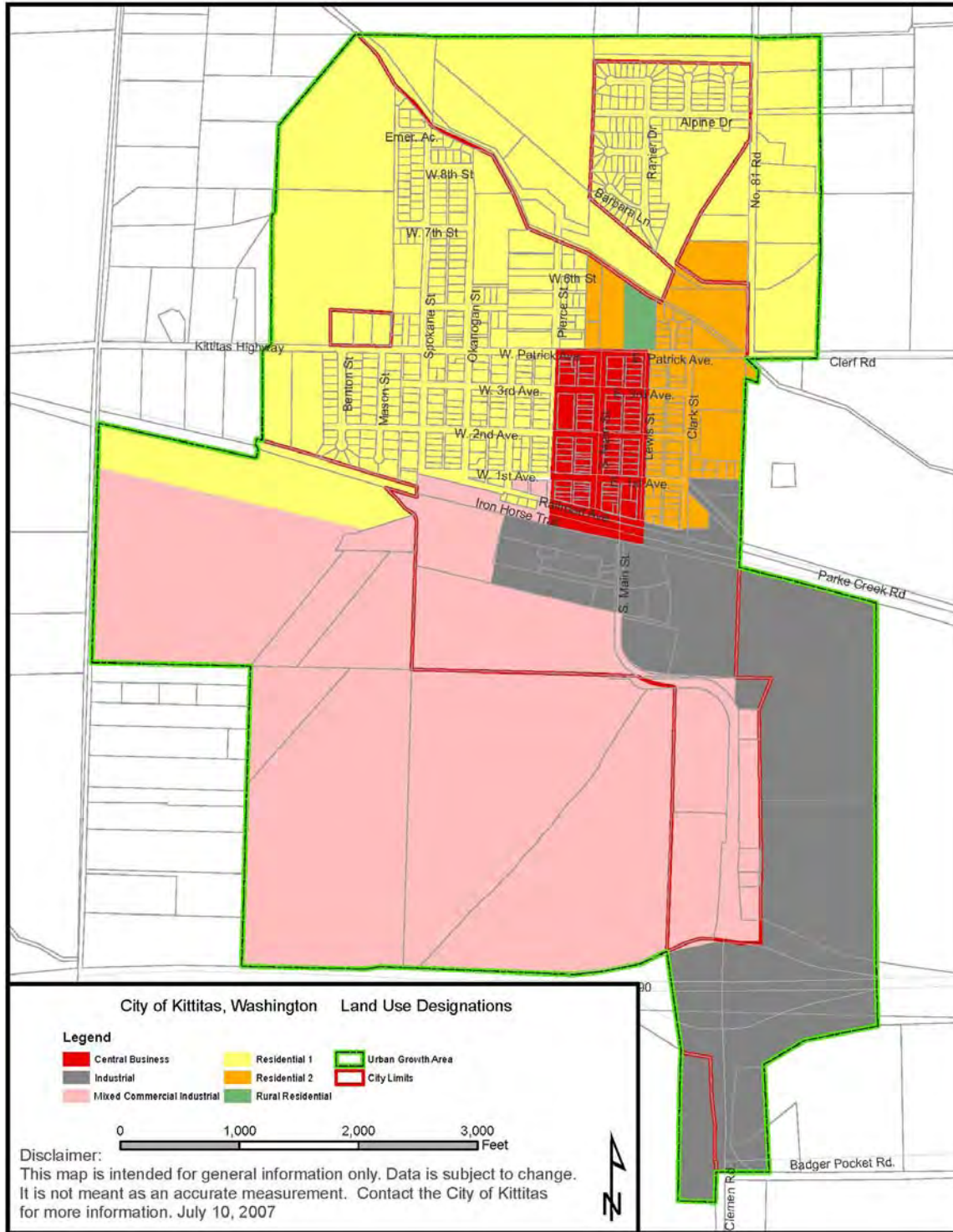


Figure 1. Combined Residential and Employment Option 1 (Current City of Kittitas Comprehensive Plan)

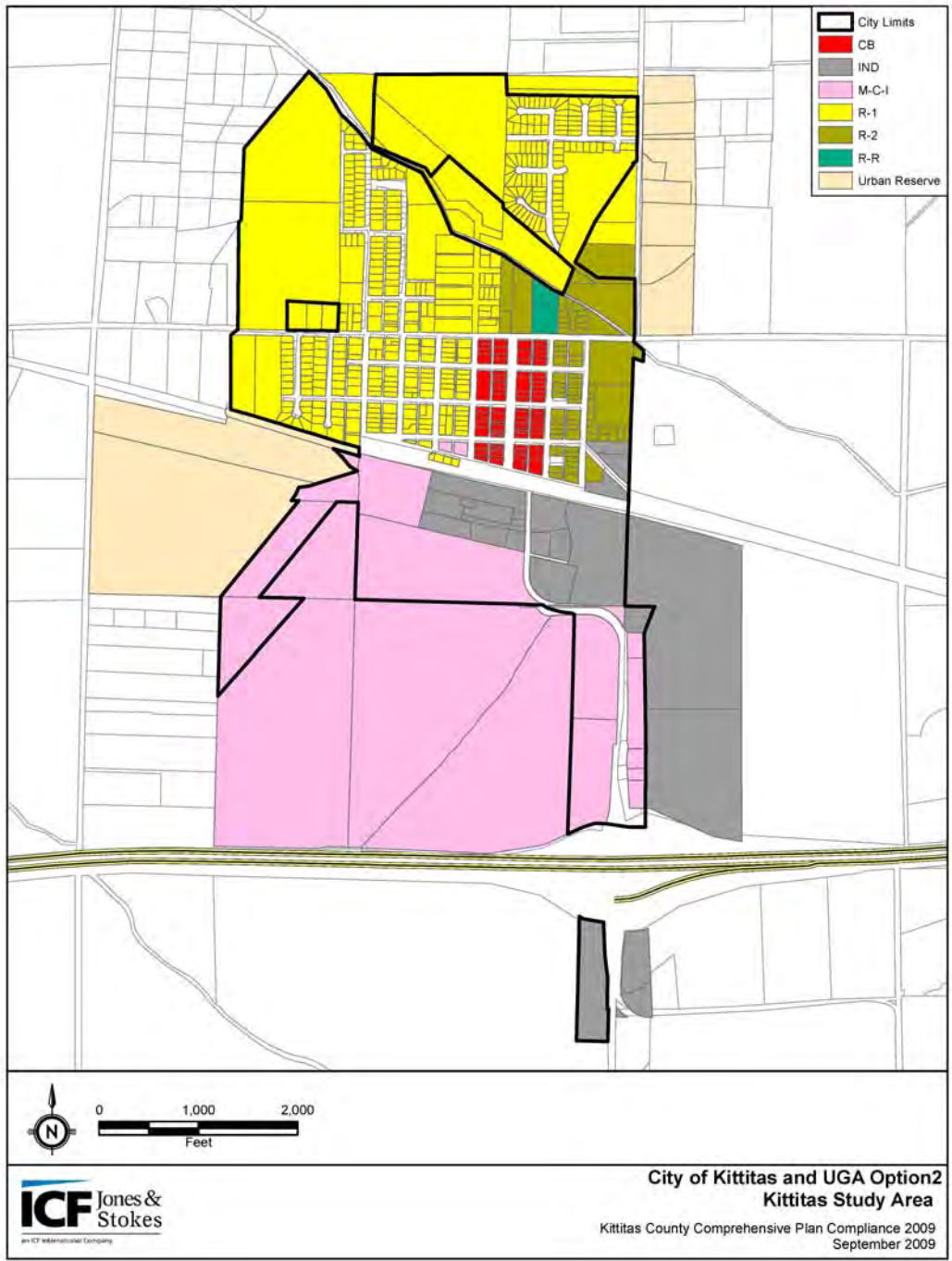


Figure 2. Combined Residential and Employment Option 2 (Reduced UGA and Urban Reserve)