

# SMART GROWTH DEVELOPMENT? A PARCEL LEVEL ANALYSIS OF SUMNER

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## 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 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 county 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.

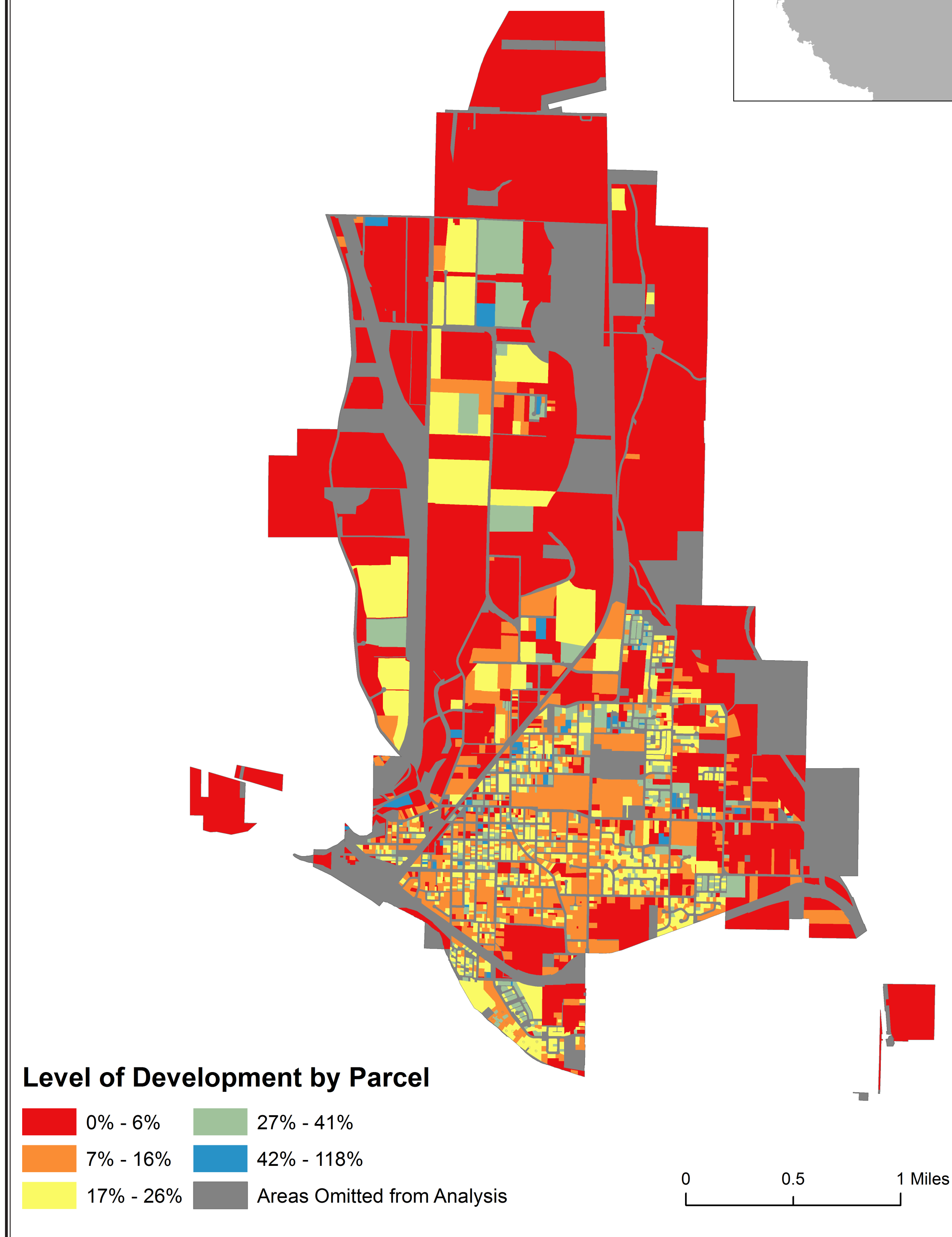
In October 2011, the planning department's decision was overturned by the Pierce County Council and a revised proposal was approved. This push to develop outlying areas is

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 Sumner boundaries? The inset map above is a digitized map of the proposed zoning for Orton Junction. Using similar methodology to determine parcel level development capacity, I was able to determine the total built square footage the new Orton Junction would be able to carry.

Special thank you to Professor Kelley for all his guidance and patience, Natasha Boyd for her insight, Melora Shelton for helping to keep me grounded, and to the rest of the 2011-2012 GIS Certificate group for their inspiration and positive thoughts!

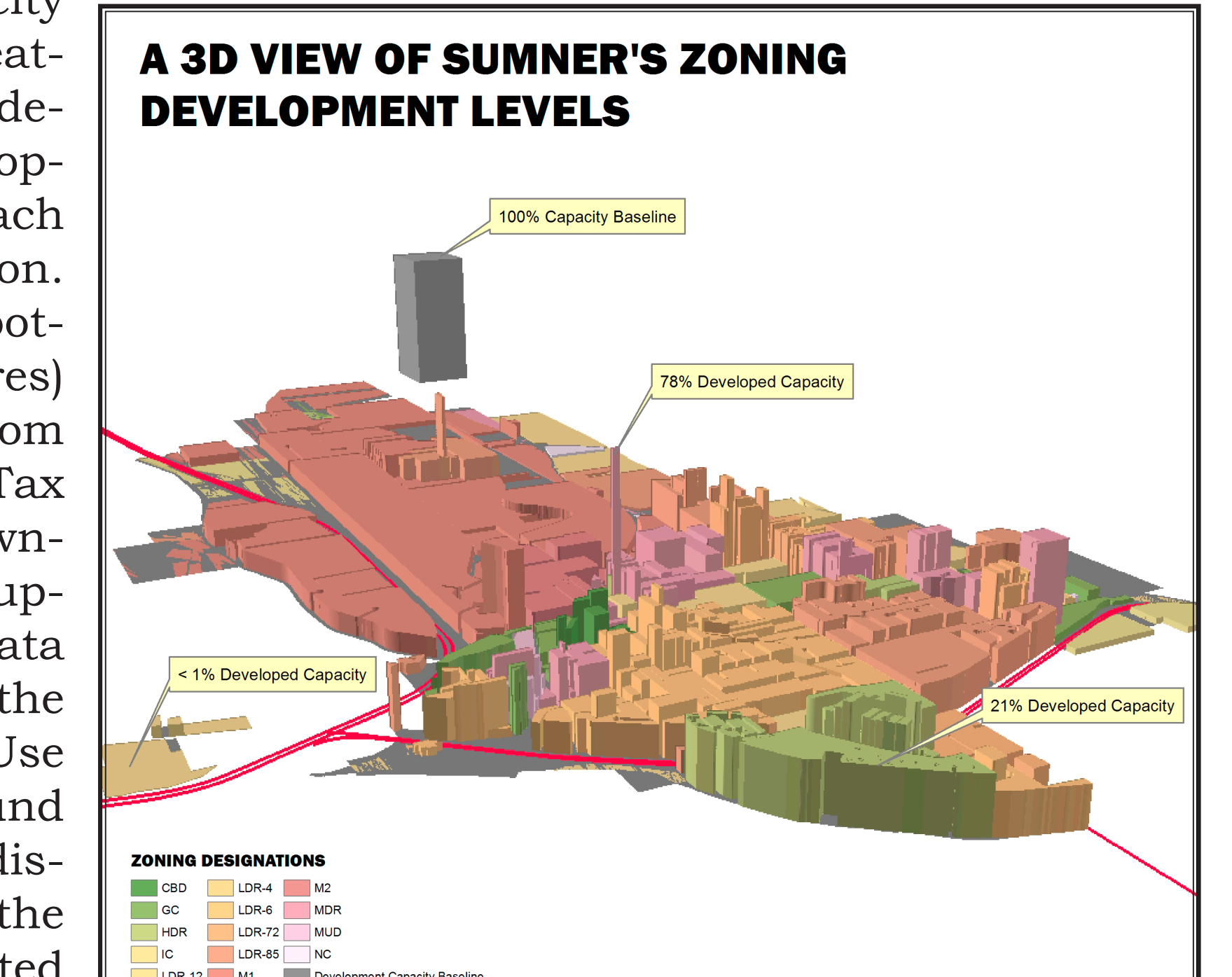
## CURRENT DEVELOPMENT LEVELS IN SUMNER



## METHODOLOGY

Data was gathered from the Washington State Geospatial Data Archive (WAGDA), the Pierce County Tax Assessor's Data Downloads site, the Pierce County Tax Assessor's parcel database, and from the City of Sumner GIS department to perform this analysis. Due to time restrictions and available data, this is a high level general parcel level analysis. To best determine the development capacity of each parcel, I had to first determine the developable capacity of each zone as determined by Title 18 of the Sumner Municipal Code. Each zone has specific development standards that specify maximum 'footprint' and building heights. This analysis does not take into account all of the variables (such as setbacks and exceptions) associated with each zone as they are beyond the scope of this project. Instead, general development standards for each zone and minimum building code requirements (2009 International Building Codes) as adopted by the Sumner Municipal Code were used as well as the gross lot square footage. For example, parcels within Light Manufacturing District (M1) zones have maximum lot coverage of 70% of the lot area and a maximum height limit of 35 feet. A 10,000 sqft. Parcel would then have a maximum development capacity of 21,000 sqft. I created a data table that detailed general development standards for each zoning designation. As-Built (square footage of built structures) data was collected from the Pierce County Tax Assessor's data download site, which is updated weekly. The data was then joined with the Pierce County Land Use feature. It was found there were several discrepancies between the sets of data collected from the Pierce County.

Due to these discrepancies, several parcels were omitted from my analysis. Once I had joined my zoning development standards data table with the Pierce



County tax assessor data and Land Use feature I was able to calculate the maximum development capacity for each parcel and compare it to the total square footage of built structures as recorded in the Pierce County tax data. Results from this analysis is visualized on the map in the center. Parcels were also aggregated by zone and visualized in the 3D map above.

## ANALYSIS RESULTS

Zoning Designation	Zoning Designation Description	Total Number of Parcels	Total Area of Parcels in Zoning Designation (SQFT)	Total of SQFT of As-Built Structures	Number of Vacant/Undeveloped Parcels	Total Square Footage of Vacant/Undeveloped Parcels	Maximum Allowable Square Footage for Zoning	Underutilized Development Capacity (SQFT)	Proposed Orton Junction Annexation (SQFT)	Orton Junction Maximum Development Capacity (SQFT)
CBD	Central Business District	117	915,655	346,240	34	255,235	2,746,965	2,400,725		
GC	General Commercial	151	6,744,344	1,060,635	54	2,664,635	15,174,774	14,114,139	4,836,398	10,881,896
HDR	High Density Residential	240	4,529,396	892,531	18	1,211,785	6,114,684	5,222,153		0
IC	Interchange Commercial	50	5,769,742	191,627	41	4,619,133	18,463,176	18,271,549	1,045,385	2,352,116
LDR-4	Low Density Residential 4,000	41	1,633,715	81,385	12	602,296	1,960,458	1,879,073		0
LDR-6	Low Density Residential 6,000	1,023	10,577,554	1,715,640	70	647,636	12,693,065	10,977,425		0
LDR-72	Low Density Residential 7,200	205	2,442,593	370,318	12	206,781	2,564,723	2,194,405		0
LDR-85	Low Density Residential 8,500	607	16,683,565	1,176,838	56	7,068,834	17,517,743	16,340,905		0
LDR-12	Low Density Residential 12,000	95	20,406,433	414,325	40	9,151,031	21,426,755	21,012,430	2,464,899	5,546,023
M1	Light Industrial	257	69,660,368	10,101,895	150	30,022,179	146,286,772	136,184,877		0
M2	Medium Industrial	73	5,990,723	1,034,622	34	2,095,974	14,377,737	13,343,115		0
MDR	Medium Density Residential	454	6,543,262	1,161,373	51	1,452,406	6,870,425	5,709,052		0
MUD	Mixed Use Development	20	494,016	71,210	7	159,661	1,185,638	1,114,428		0
NC	Neighborhood Commercial	23	1,350,610	75,972	8	866,214	3,038,872	2,962,900		0
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>3,356</b>	<b>153,741,976</b>	<b>18,694,611</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>61,023,800</b>	<b>270,421,787</b>	<b>251,727,176</b>	<b>8,346,682</b>	<b>18,780,035</b>

## CONCLUSION

Although this is a high level general analysis, it clearly shows how underutilized parcels are in Sumner. The purpose of the this analysis was not to get into the politics of land ownership or architectural aesthetics, rather to show that with creative development practices as seen in other parts of the world, Sumner could benefit from looking within their current boundaries to meet their long term development needs and meet Washington's Growth Management goals.