

Planning Commission Workshop



Community Development • 125 NW Chehalis Avenue, Chehalis, WA 98532 • Phone: (360) 740-1146

STAFF REPORT

ONALASKA SUBAREA PLAN

Date: February 24, 2025

Staff: Mindy Brooks, Director

BACKGROUND

On February 14 the Planning Commission received materials for the February 25 workshop on the Onalaska Subarea Plan. The commissioners were asked to provide any questions to staff by February 21. Those questions have been compiled below, and staff have provided answers. All materials for the workshop can be found on the Planning Commission calendar for the [February 25 workshop](#).

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

- 1. Is most of the housing and population located within the Subarea? Or do they have any "High Valley-type" [referring to Packwood] neighborhoods in the outlying areas?**

There are no large neighborhoods outside of the Urban Growth Area similar to High Valley.

- 2. In the Land Capacity Analysis, it states that the Subarea can accommodate 324 new dwelling units, but only 20 can be multifamily. What is limiting that?**

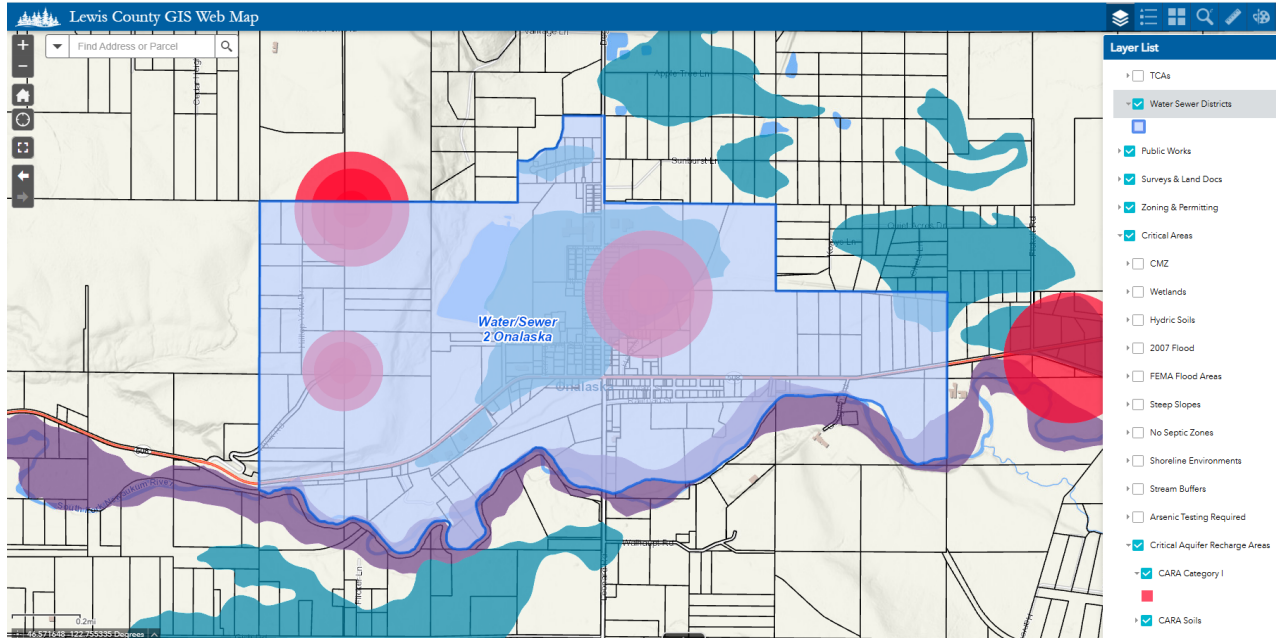
The Land Capacity Analysis explains what the current zoning is likely to accommodate. There are assumptions about how much multifamily housing is likely to occur based on the current zoning, constraints (e.g. critical areas, sewer), and market constraints. The Land Capacity Analysis is not regulatory and does not dictate what is allowed to be built, it simply estimates what is likely to be built at full build out under current conditions.

- 3. The well capacity can accommodate 262 additional hookups. Is there a site identified for another well location if population increases at projected rates?**

No expansion has been planned yet. As development gets closer to reaching capacity, Lewis County Water/Sewer District 2 will need to update their plan and identified what is needed to accommodate additional population.

- 4. Also, where are the 2 wells located?**

On the next page is a map of the well sites and critical aquifer recharge areas (CARAs), one of which is in the UGA.



5. What is in place to protect the river and residences which seem to be very close to the Water Treatment Plant? Are there any neighborhood reports of odors or other nuisances?

The Critical Areas Ordinance and Shoreline Master Program, as well as the Department of Health rules, protect rivers, streams, wetlands, aquifers and residents from impacts from any impacts associated with development including wastewater treatment plants. Additional information about the rules can be found here:

- [Lewis County Code 17.38, Critical Areas Ordinance](#)
- [Lewis County Code 17.25, Shoreline Management](#)
- [Shoreline Master Program](#)
- [WA Department of Health Wastewater Rules and Regulations](#)

6. Also, there is a line that simply "waste that is unable to be treated" is taken to Longview. What makes some waste "untreatable"? How often does this occur? Was this part of the initial design?

These are great questions, but we will need to reach out to Lewis County Water/Sewer District 2 for that detail of answers. I can do that, but we won't have an answer by February 25.

7. There wasn't much information on emergency services in the existing conditions.

There is a Fire Department located in Onalaska. It's where the CAC met. They are limited in capacity, just like all the rural fire districts, and need to do additional planning for growth. Page 26 include goals and policies for services. PF1.3: Provide adequate emergency services and facilities to serve existing and new residents and businesses.

8. Pg. 29 Land Use Concept states "STMU...does not support affordable housing options". With sewer and water in place, why wouldn't property owners be able to build multifamily?

The reason is because STMU is a zone that implements the Type 1 LAMIRD designation. The Washington rules for LAMIRDs say that the type of development needs to be similar to the existing in terms of character and scale. Therefore, the STMU development regulations limit multifamily housing. In order to promote affordable housing options, which include townhouses, quadplexes, apartments, the zoning designation needs to be changed to match the UGA designation so the development regulations can support multifamily housing instead of limiting it.

9. Residential High (RH) zone does not mention single family housing, is it encouraged or discouraged or neutral?

The CAC intends to discourage single family housing in the RH zone.

10. Please describe the evolution from LAMIRD to subarea plan to UGA.

The LAMIRD designation was placed in the late 1990's, similar to all other LAMIRDs in Lewis County. LAMIRDs, per state law, are required to remain the same size, scale and character as what existed when the LAMIRD was designated. This does not leave room to plan for and manage growth; however, some LAMIRD experience growth and development simply based on market factors that drive people to buy, sell and develop their property.

Leading into the 2017 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update, a subarea plan was completed; however, it did not address the full suite of topics that are necessary for a subarea plan. For example, there were no goals for housing included in the 2017 Onalaska Subarea Plan. The LAMIRD was assessed for capacity; however, the industry standard for Land Capacity Analysis was not used. The UGA was designated with the 2017 Periodic Update; however, the second step of implementing the UGA was not completed. This second step of updating zoning designations and development regulations is necessary to implement the goals and policies adopted in the Subarea Plan. Because this second step was not completed for Onalaska, the zoning was not changed. This should not have happened, and it created the problem you highlighted in question 8. The zoning STMU should have been removed because it implements the LAMIRD designation, which was removed, and zoning that implements the UGA should have been applied. We are fixing this now.

11. What, if anything, did change when Onalaska was designated as a UGA?

Nothing changed. The UGA doesn't have its own regulations. The UGA has to be implemented with local zoning designations and development regulations. This is what is being done now to fully implement the UGA that was adopted in 2017.