



# development capacity analysis GIS model

---

overview	3
methodology	5
model inputs	19
model results	28
project contacts	29

## overview

---

The City of Portland is embarking on a new effort – the [Portland Plan](#) – to plan for the long-term future of our city. In order to begin the discussion about the future of Portland, it is important to establish a basic understanding of the City today. The Development Capacity Analysis GIS model provides information about the amount of existing and allowed development that is useful for establishing our current and future residential and employment capacity.

Maximum land use intensities are controlled by establishing floor area ratio (FAR) limits, total number of multi-family residential units, or minimum lot sizes for new development. FAR is the ratio of a building's total square footage to the square footage of the underlying development parcel. These limits govern building bulk, and - among other objectives – create reasonable certainty for utility and transportation providers regarding the intensities of use for which they must provide infrastructure. FAR and building height limits are the primary limiting factor on development in employment, commercial, and high-density residential areas. In multi-family and single-family residential areas, capacities are determined by the allowed number of residential units, rather than maximum building square footages. The specific criteria for determining allowed capacity are described in detail in subsequent sections of this document.

All analysis is based on the City of Portland's "Comprehensive Plan Designations" rather than existing zoning. The Comprehensive Plan Designations reflect the current adopted land use plan for the City of Portland. This plan guides the future growth and development of the city.

There were several reasons for conducting this analysis:

- › to quantify the existing development capacity within Portland under current zoning regulations;
- › to identify likely redevelopment scenarios and prospective clusters of future development activity by identifying sites that are significantly underutilizing their allowed development capacity;
- › to generate development capacity statistics for different areas of the City to highlight the differences in terms of existing and allowed development capacity;
- › to serve as a basis for predicting residential and employment capacity under existing comprehensive plan designations.

***Important note: This is a “supply-side” analysis. The model does not consider nor predict market demand for new construction. It only identifies lands within the City that could potentially become available for development/redevelopment should market demand exist.***

There are several advantages to a GIS-based modeling approach:

- › it relies on documented, geographic information that can be distributed and viewed both by both City staff and the public (via web applications such as [www.PortlandMaps.com](http://www.PortlandMaps.com));
- › it applies uniform decision-making across the specified geographic area or areas;
- › a GIS-based approach allows for all of the information that determines why things are mapped the way they are to be part of the resulting data, allowing people to better understand the decision making process;
- › a GIS-based approach is transferable and replicable;
- › the results of the GIS model is not static – as the inputs to the model change, the model results can be updated, thus allowing the model to incorporate changes in zoning regulations, assumptions, etc., thus making the capacity analysis easy to update and maintain over time.

There are disadvantages to this approach as well:

- › the results are only as accurate as the data that goes into the model – with this in mind, the City has made an ongoing effort to improve the accuracy and quality of our GIS-based “development” information such as our citywide 3D building model;
- › the model is limited to GIS data that currently exists – for example, the City has very detailed building information for some parts of the City, and outdated building information for other areas. We are in the process of developing an improved City of Portland building model from regional [LIDAR](#) data.

The model is a single “script” written in Arc Macro Language (AML). The model itself runs in ESRI’s ArcInfo Workstation (currently version 9.3). It is completely automated, requiring roughly 2 hours to process all of the areas within Portland’s jurisdiction.

## methodology

---

The Development Capacity Analysis (DCA) GIS model consists of 3 basic steps:

1. calculate existing building square footages and allowed development limits (in terms of building square footage, number of units, or number of allowed lots);
2. identify “constrained” properties (i.e., significant environmental or historic resources);
3. identify development parcels significantly underutilizing their allowed development capacity (using less than 20% of available capacity, not including any development bonuses or incentives).

Each of these steps is discussed in detail in the following sections. Refer to the [Model Inputs](#) section below for more information on each of the GIS data inputs (development parcels, 3D building model, etc.).

### *1. Calculate existing building square footages and allowed development limits*

The first step in the DCA model is to calculate existing building square footage and allowed development limits. This allows for a determination of how much of each development parcel’s allowed capacity is being used (or not used). **Figure 1** presents an overview of this process, described in detail below.

#### Existing building square footages

Existing building square footages are calculated using the City of Portland’s 3D building model. Where building square footage is known (meaning the 3D building GIS dataset building “feature” is attributed with a known square footage), that information is used by the model. Known square footages are usually derived from building permit information, but other sources are used as well (such as information from the building’s developer).

If the building square footage is not known, it is estimated using the 3D building model. First, a predominant use is assigned to each building based on the Multnomah County Assessor “property codes”. The property codes are consolidated into a small number of general categories – office, institutional, multi-family residential, etc. – and each one of these general categories is assigned an average floor-to-floor height based on standard development practices relating to each use. These assumptions are shown in Table 1.

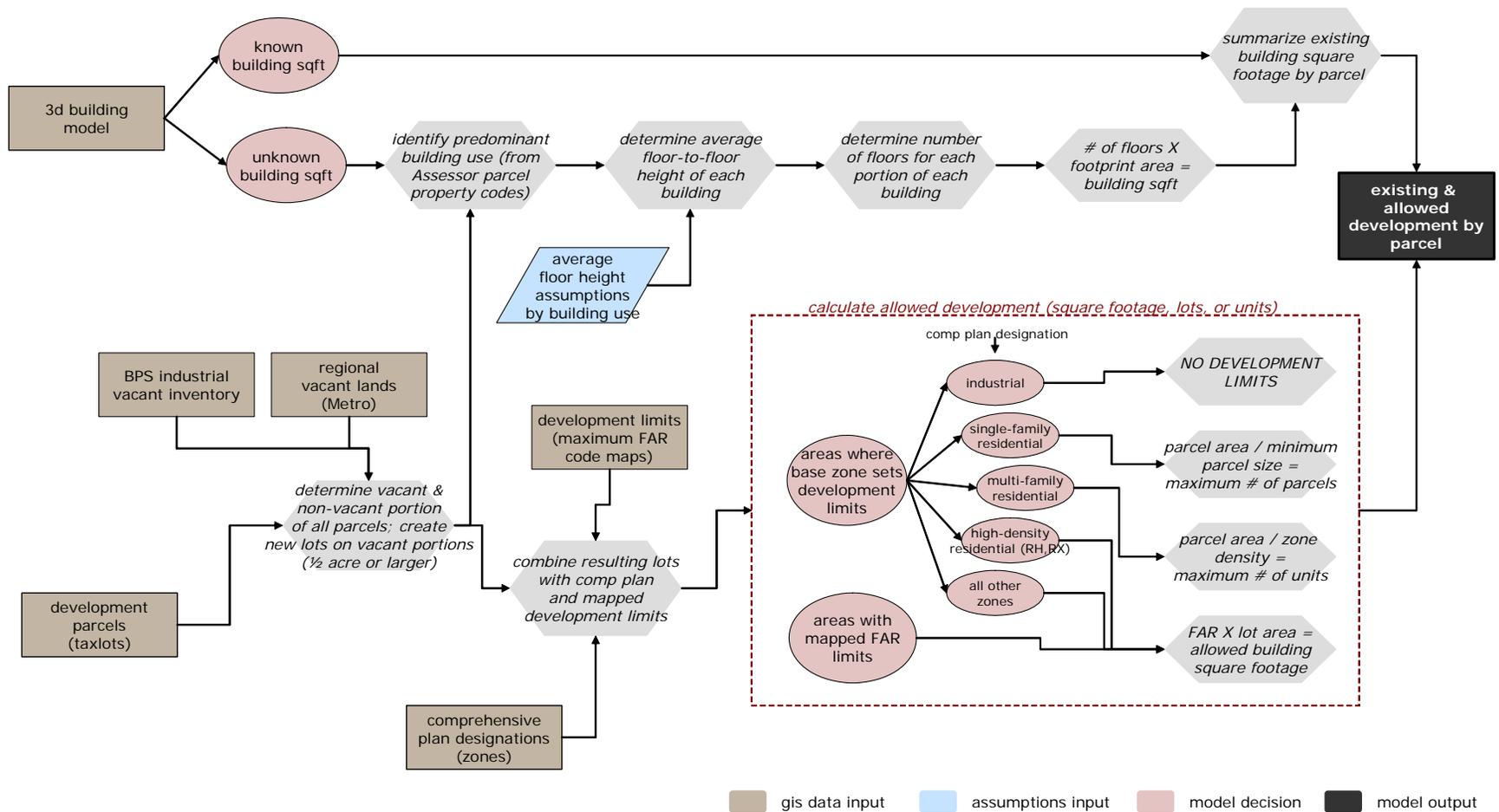


Figure 1. Development Capacity Analysis GIS model Step #1: Calculate existing and allowed development.

Table 1: Average floor-to-floor height assumptions by predominant building use.

use	average floor-to-floor height
commercial	14'
industrial	19'
institutional	12'
multi-family residential	10'
office	14'
single-family residential	10'
<i>all other uses/unknown use</i>	12'

Next, the number of stories for each portion of each building – each *polygon* making up the building’s form -- is determined by dividing the height of the polygon by the average floor-to-floor height as determined by the predominant building use (**Table 1**). The base area – or *footprint* – of each component polygon is multiplied by the number of stories to arrive at the total estimated floor square footage for that portion of the building. The total square footage of the building is calculated by combining the square footage of all the component polygons.

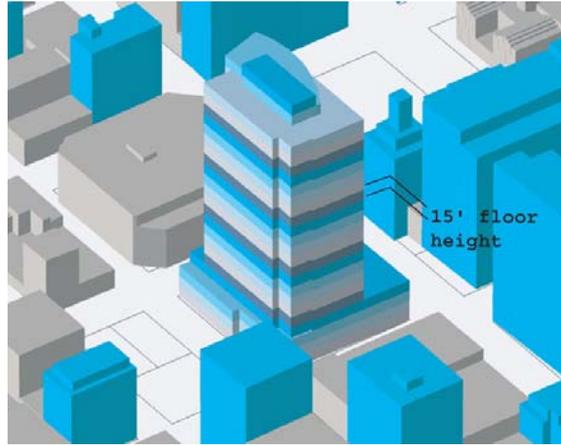
The total building square footage for each development parcel is then calculated as the total square footage of all buildings on the parcel. Because some parcels contain only a portion of a building's footprint, square footages were weighted based on the percentage of the building footprint within each parcel. **Figure 2** illustrates this process.

Allowed development capacity

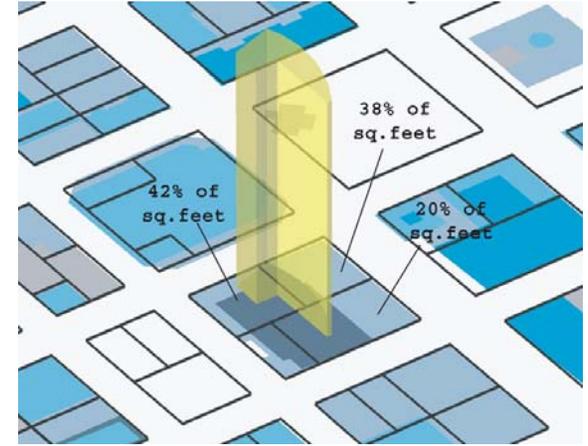
Before calculating the allowed development capacity of each parcel, portions of parcels that have been identified as vacant by Metro (in their regional vacant lands inventory) or the Bureau of Planning & Sustainability (in their industrial/employment lands inventory) are divided into “new” development parcels. This allows these areas to be evaluated separately from the larger lot that they are within.



(a) height of each building polygon is derived from the 3D model



(b) each polygon is divided into floors; each floor's square footage can then be calculated



(c) total square footage of each building polygon is then assigned to a parcel based on the % area in each parcel

**Figure 2.** Estimating total building development parcel building square footage.

There are two ways development limits are applied to parcels in Portland:

1. by code maps that delineate FAR and height limits for particular areas of the City (such as the Central City Plan District);
2. by the parcel's zone (or in this case, the parcels comprehensive plan designation).

**Figure 3** illustrates. If there is no code map showing a development limit for the parcel, than the comprehensive plan designation determines the limits. Note that some designations, like "industrial sanctuary", have no development limits.

The parcel data is combined with both the code map FAR limits GIS data and the zoning GIS data (which contains both current zoning and comprehensive plan designations). For each parcel, a determination is made as to which of these two apply. Once this is determined, allowed development capacity is calculated as follows:

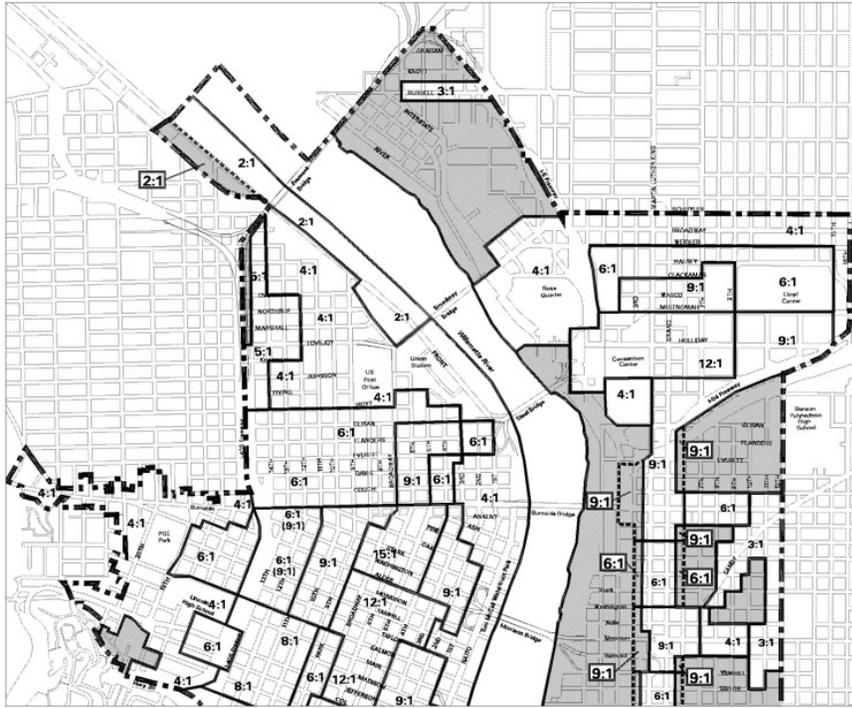
1. areas with mapped FAR limits (per code maps)

Where FAR limits are determined by a code map, the total allowed FAR is calculated by multiplying the total lot area by the FAR limit. For example, a 20,000 square foot lot with a FAR limit of 4:1 would have an allowed development capacity of 80,000 square feet. Note that the model only considers "base" FAR. Any additional FAR – *bonus FAR* – that results from having certain amenities (i.e., bike parking) or building features (i.e., ecoroofs) are not currently taken into consideration when determining "underutilized" lots. They are, however, calculated for each lot where the bonus FAR limit is known, so this information is in the output dataset.

2. areas where the base zone sets development limits

Where the development limits are determined by the base zone, development limits can be expressed as not only building square footage, but – in residential zones – as allowed lots and residential units as well. The limits are calculated as follows:

- i. industrial parcels (IS zones): no development limits (FAR and height limitations do not apply to industrially-zoned lots).
- ii. single-family residential parcels (R2.5, R5, R7, R10, R20 & RF zones): development limits are expressed as the allowed number of development parcels based on the minimum lot size of the zone. The total parcel area is divided by the minimum lot size to determine the total number of allowed parcels. If, for example, a parcel in an R5 zone is 20,000 square feet, that parcel could be subdivided into four 5,000 square foot lots (the minimum lot size in a R5 zone is 5,000 square feet.) Note that resulting values are rounded differently based on the maximum number of lots. Refer to the [Single-Dwelling Zones Land Division Guide](#) for more information.



Map 510-2

Floor Area Ratios

(a) FAR limits map from Title 33 zoning code

**Table 130-3  
Summary of Development Standards in Commercial Zones**

Standard	CN1	CN2	CO1	CO2	CM	CS	CG	CX
Maximum FAR (see 33.130.205)	.75 to 1	.75 to 1	.75 to 1	2 to 1	1 to 1 See 33.130.253	3 to 1	3 to 1	4 to 1
Maximum Height (see 33.130.210)	30 ft.	30 ft.	30 ft.	45 ft.	45 ft.	45 ft.	45 ft.	75 ft.
Min. Building Stbks (see 33.130.215) Street Lot Line or Lot Line Abutting an OS, RX, C, E, or I Zone Lot	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lot Line Abutting other R Zoned Lot	See Table 130-4	See Table 130-4	See Table 130-4	See Table 130-4				
Garage Entrance Setback (see 33.130.250.E)	5/18 ft	5/18 ft	5/18 ft	5/18 ft				
Max. Building Stbks (see 33.130.215) Street Lot Line Transit Street or Pedestrian District	None 10 ft.	None 10 ft.	None 10 ft.	None 10 ft.	10 ft. None	10 ft. None	None 10 ft.	None 10 ft.

(b) FAR limits as determined by zone

Figure 3. Examples of 2 different methods of applying development limits to parcels.

- iii. multi-family residential parcels (R1, R2, R3 & IR zones): development limits are expressed as the allowed number of residential units based upon maximum density of the zone. The total parcel area is divided by the maximum density to determine the total number of allowed units. If, for example, a parcel in an R1 zone is 20,000 square feet, that parcel is allowed 20 multi-family units (the minimum zone density in a R1 zone is 1,000 square feet.) Note that resulting values are rounded differently based on the maximum number of units. Refer to the [Multi-Dwelling Zones Land Division Guide](#) for more information.
- iv. high-density residential parcels (RH & RX zones): development limits are expressed as the allowed building square footage based on the maximum floor-area ratio (FAR). The total parcel area is multiplied by the maximum FAR to determine the total allowed building square footage. If, for example, a 20,000 square feet parcel has an FAR of 4:1, an 80,000 square foot building is allowed on that lot. Note that only “base” FAR is considered. Maximum FAR of comprehensive plan designations are determined by comparing them with existing base zones. Comprehensive plan FAR limits used by the development capacity model are listed in **Table 2**.
- v. all other parcels: same as high-density residential (item iv. above); allowed building square footage is based on maximum FAR.

The final output of Step 1 of the model is a GIS dataset that contains the existing building square footage and allowed development (square footage, units, or lots) for every tax lot within the City of Portland.

## *2. Identify “constrained” properties*

The second step in the Development Capacity Analysis model is to identify “constrained” properties where development is limited or not desirable. Constrained properties are excluded from determination of Portland’s total available development capacity. **Figure 4** summarizes the process of identifying constrained properties. The specific types of constraints are described in detail below.

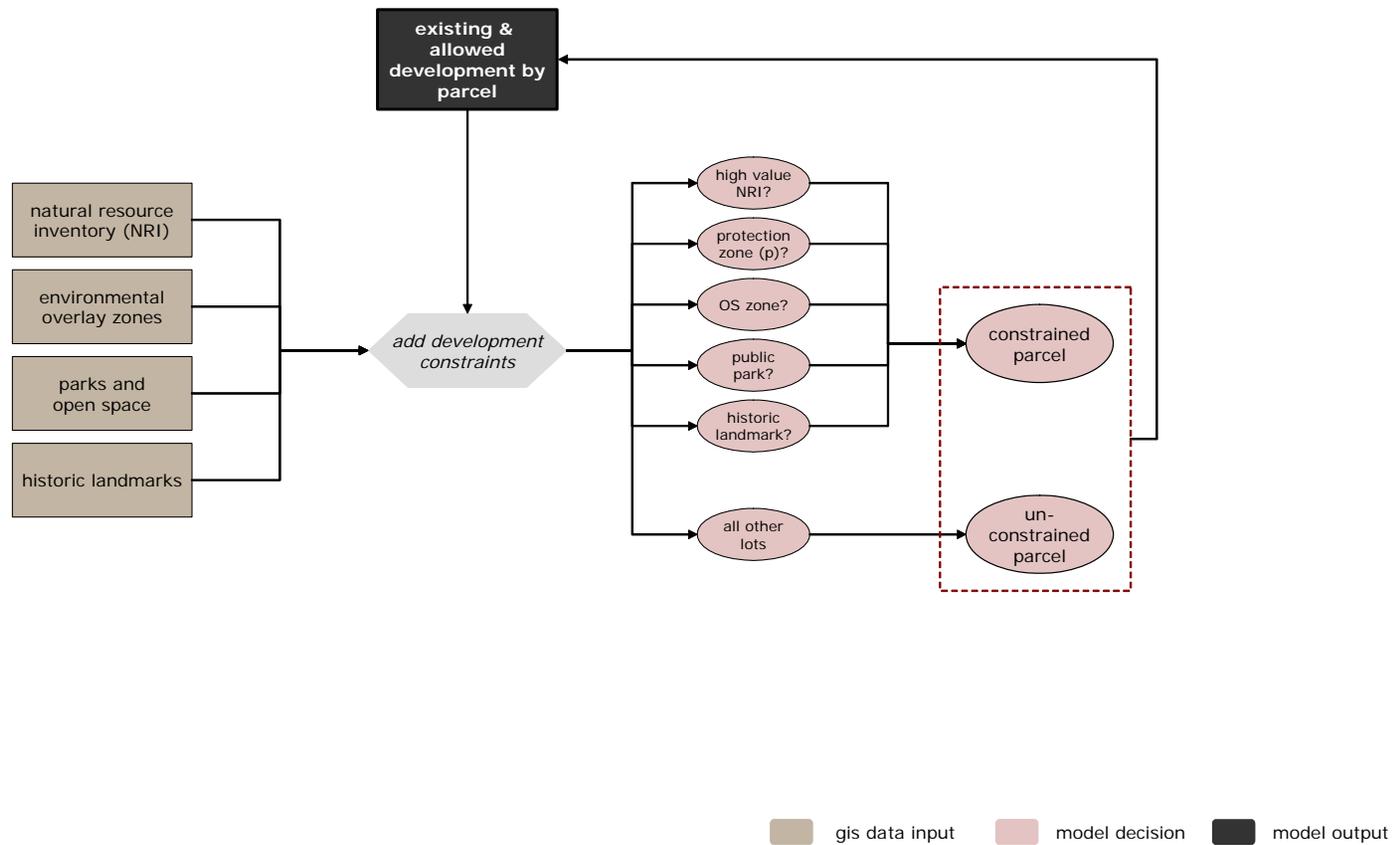
**Table 2.** Maximum base floor-area-ratios (FAR) by comprehensive plan designation (for GIS modeling purposes)

comp plan designation	FAR
CG	3:1
CS	3:1
CX	4:1
EX	3:1
IR	2:1
IS	N/A
ME	3:1
NC	.75:1
OC	1:1
OS	0:1
R1	N/A
R10	N/A
R2	N/A
R2.5	N/A
R20	N/A
R3	N/A
R5	N/A
R7	N/A
RF	N/A
RH	2:1
RX	4:1
UC	3:1

Types of constrained properties

There are several types off constrained properties that the DCA model identifies:

1. "high value" Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) areas: areas within the City that have been identified as having high riparian and/or wildlife habitat resource value based on the Bureau of Planning & Sustainability's Natural Resource Inventory GIS Model. These areas contain valuable natural resources; therefore, development in "high" value areas is usually not desirable.



**Figure 4.** Development Capacity Analysis GIS model Step #2: Identify constrained properties.

The factors that determine whether an area receives a high value include proximity to streams and wetlands and presence of flood plain or vegetation. For a complete description of the Natural Resource Inventory Update project, refer the [NRIU Project website](#). Refer to the [NRI GIS Model Report](#) for specific information on the GIS model ranking criteria, data sources, and data outputs. *Note that the high value areas used by the development capacity model excludes areas ranked high ONLY because they are within a "special habitat area".*

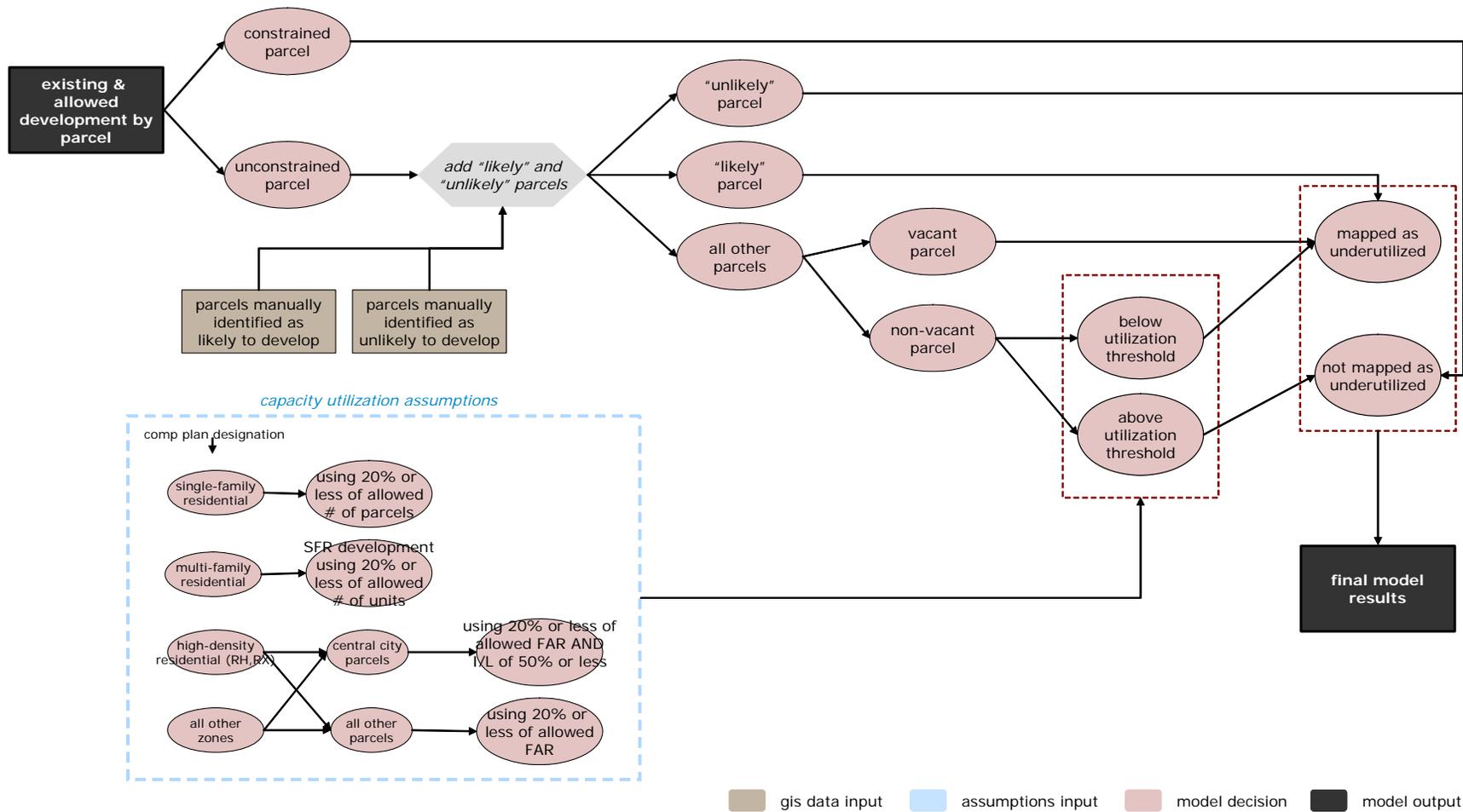
2. areas within a designated protection zone ('p' overlay): areas within an existing environmental protection overlay per City of Portland zoning maps. The environmental protection zone provides the highest level of protection to the City's most important natural resources. Development will be approved in the environmental protection zone only in rare and unusual circumstances. For more information on the City's environmental overlay zones, refer to [Chapter 33.430](#) of the City of Portland Planning and Zoning Code.
3. Open Space zones (OS): areas designated as open space zoning, which is intended to preserve and enhance public and private open, natural, and improved park and recreational areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan. For more information, refer to [Section 33.100](#) of the Planning and Zoning code.
4. Publicly-owned parks and community centers.
5. Federal, State, and local landmarks: parcels officially registered as historic landmarks.

### *3. Identify development parcels significantly underutilizing their allowed development capacity*

The final step in the Development Capacity Analysis model is to identify parcels that are significantly underutilizing their available development capacity, determined in Step #1 above. **Figure 5** provides an overview of the process, described in detail below.

#### Constrained properties

Parcels or portions of parcels identified as "constrained" in Step #2 above are not mapped as underutilized. Note that the existing building square footages and allowed development capacity *have* been calculated for these areas, so the total available development capacity can be calculated from the final DCA model results.



**Figure 5.** Development Capacity Analysis GIS model Step #3: Identify underutilized parcels.

## Unconstrained properties

Unconstrained properties are evaluated as follows:

### 1. "Likely" & "Unlikely" parcels

The initial outputs of the Development Capacity Analysis GIS model in Portland's Central City were reviewed thoroughly by BPS staff. Based on staff knowledge, parcels that were known to have high development or redevelopment potential and were not identified by the DCA model as underutilized were "manually" flagged as underutilized and included in subsequent model outputs. These "likely" parcels are all mapped as underutilized regardless of the existing or allowed development capacity.

Parcels that were not identified as constrained in Step 2 of the model, but that are known to have a very low likelihood for development or redevelopment, were manually flagged as "unlikely" to develop, and therefore not included in the final map of underutilized parcels.

A similar review of the DCA model results is undergoing for areas of Portland outside the Central City.

### 2. All other parcels

All non-constrained vacant parcels are mapped as underutilized, regardless of the allowed development capacity. Parcels are identified as vacant by Metro, in their regional vacant lands inventory, or the Bureau of Planning & Sustainability in their industrial/employment lands inventory. In addition, any non-industrial parcels where less 10% or less of the site area is developed AND where the Multnomah County Assessor has recorded the current land use as "vacant" are included in the vacant category. *Portions of parcels larger than ½ acre that are mapped as vacant are considered a separate parcel and are treated as such in all 3 steps of the DCA model.*

Non-vacant parcels are individually evaluated as "significantly underutilized" if they are below the capacity utilization threshold defined for their comprehensive plan designation. The following assumptions determine whether a parcel is above or below this utilization threshold:

- i. industrial parcels (IS zones): industrially-zoned parcels can not be evaluated because there are no FAR or other similar limits on allowed development. As a result, *only vacant industrial properties are mapped as significantly underutilized.*

- ii. single-family residential parcels (R2.5, R5, R7, R10, R20 & RF zones): single-family residential (SFR)-zoned parcels using 20% or less of their allowed number of development parcels – calculated using the land division assumptions in Step #1 of the DCA model – are mapped as underutilized. For example, a parcel that can be subdivided into 10 parcels under current land division rules is using 10% of it’s allowed development capacity (10 potential parcels ÷ 1 existing parcel = 10%).
- iii. multi-family residential parcels (R1, R2, R3 & IR zones): multi-family residential (MFR)-zoned parcels that currently contain single-family residential development (meaning 1 unit) and that are using 20% or less of their allowed number of residential units – calculated using the land division assumptions in Step #1 of the DCA model – are mapped as underutilized. For example, a MFR parcel with a single SFR unit that is allowed 10 residential units under current land division rules is using 10% of it’s allowed development capacity (10 potential units ÷ 1 existing SFR unit = 10%). SFR development on MFR parcels is identified using the Multnomah County Assessor “property code” information contained in the development parcel GIS data. Refer to the development parcel GIS data description for more information.
- iv. high-density residential parcels (RH & RX zones):
  - a. parcels within the Central City: high-density residential parcels within the Central City are mapped as underutilized if they are using less than 20% of their allowed FAR building square footage AND the parcel’s improvement-to-land (I/L) ratio is 50% or less. I/L ratios are calculated using Multnomah County Assessor real market land and improvement (building) values for the current tax year. Refer to the development parcel GIS data description for more information.

For example, a 20,000 square foot parcel that currently contains a 10,000 square foot building has a FAR of 5:1, an improvement value of \$50,000 and a land value of \$200,000. The percentage of capacity used by this parcel is calculated as:

$$\frac{\text{parcel area} \times \text{FAR}}{\text{existing building ft}} = \frac{20,000 \times 5}{10,000} = \frac{100,000}{10,000} = 10\%$$

The improvement-to-land ratio of this parcel is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{improvement value}}{\text{land value}} = \frac{50,000}{200,000} = 25\%$$

In this Central City parcel example, because the percentage of capacity used is less than 20% AND the improvement-to-land ration is less than 50%. It is therefore under the utilization threshold for SFR parcels, and thus mapped as significantly underutilizing available capacity.

Note that all calculations are based on base FAR and do not include additional square footages that might be allowed because of development and building features that qualify for FAR bonuses (residential development, bike lockers, etc.)

- b. parcels outside the Central City: high-density residential parcels within the Central City are mapped as underutilized if they are using less than 20% of their allowed FAR building square footage (regardless of the improvement-to-land ratio). Improvement and land values are not as accurate or consistently recorded outside Portland's Central City, so they are not used in other parts of the City at this time. The percentage of capacity used is calculated in the same way as lots within the Central City as described in (a) above.
  
- v. all other parcels: evaluated in the same way high-density residential per item (iv) above, with the same distinction inside and outside of Portland's Central City.

The final output of Step #3 is a GIS dataset that contains all of the parcels in the City of Portland with "attributes" identifying those that significantly underutilizing available capacity. There are many other attributes as well, including all of the information needed to make the decisions and calculations described in Steps 1 through 3 of the DCA model described above. For more information, refer to the [Model Results](#) section below.

## model inputs

---

The following GIS datasets are used by the Development Capacity Analysis GIS model. Many of these datasets are available for viewing by street address via [www.PortlandMaps.com](http://www.PortlandMaps.com).

### 1) development parcels (taxlots)

