

A composite image showing a street scene on the left and a close-up of a tram on the right. The tram is white with a large yellow flower graphic on its side. The street scene includes a tram, buildings, and a traffic light.

# 2024 Transit-Oriented Development Bill

## IMPACT ANALYSIS

**Puget Sound Regional Council**

**Regional TOD Committee**

MAR 15, 2024

**Tiernan Martin** // Director of Research, Futurewise

# Planning for Washington's Future

Futurewise works throughout Washington state to encourage healthy equitable and opportunity-rich communities. and to protect our most valuable farmlands, forests, and water resources through wise land use policies and practices.

[Overview](#) [Water, Fish & Wildlife](#) [Farms & Forests](#) [Livable Communities](#)

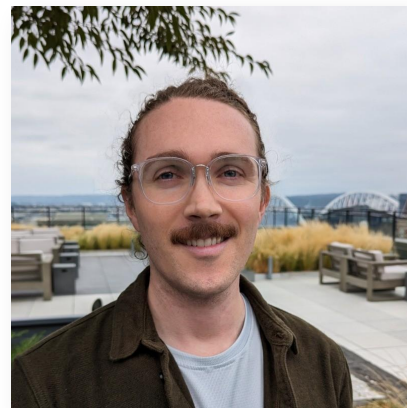
From small towns of 5,000 to cities of 500,000 or anywhere in between, Futurewise believes that the elements of a strong, resilient community are the same. You should have a healthy home you can afford. You should be able to walk, bike, roll, and take transit to get where you need to go. You should have access to food from local farms. You should enjoy stunning natural spaces and wildlife habitats.



# *Futurewise* Lobby Day 2024

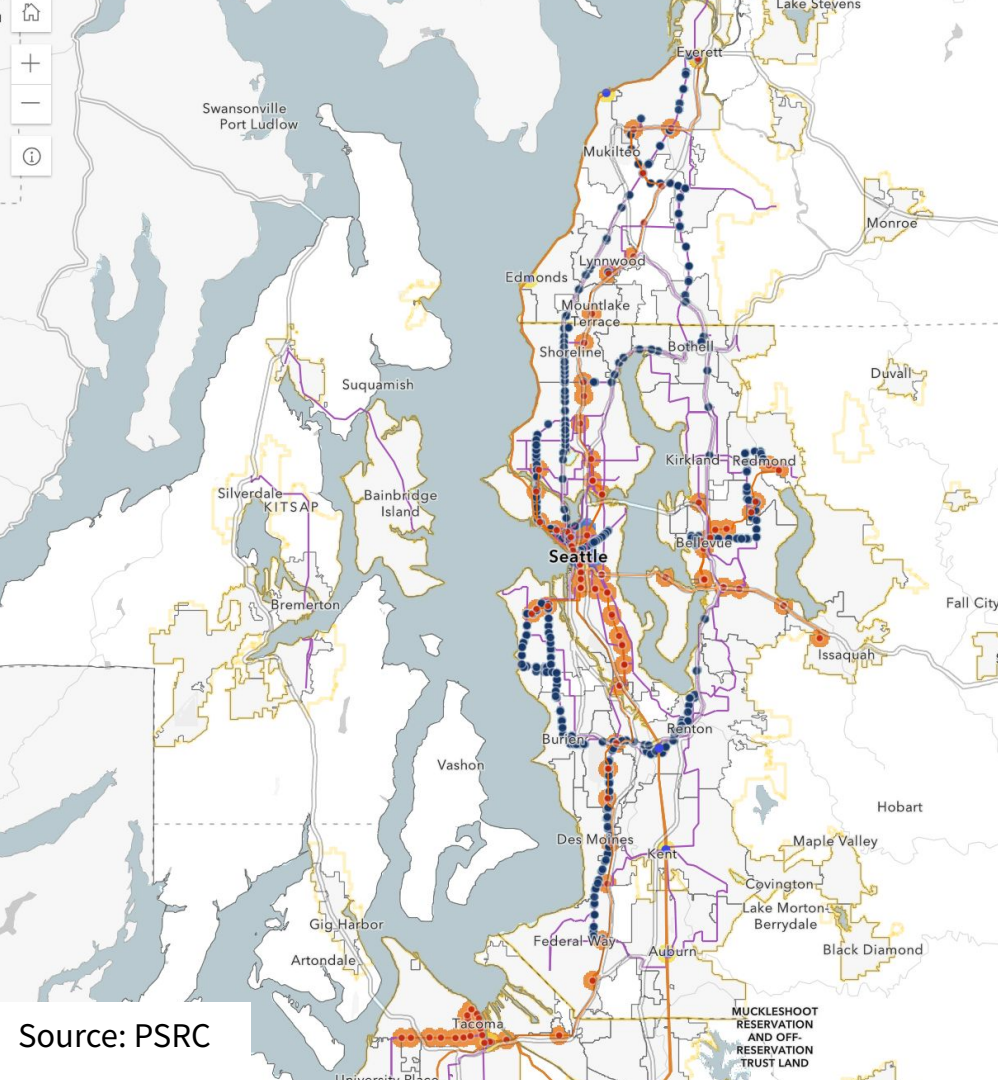


## *Connecting Communities*



**Tiernan Martin**

Director of Research  
Futurewise  
[tiernan@futurewise.org](mailto:tiernan@futurewise.org)

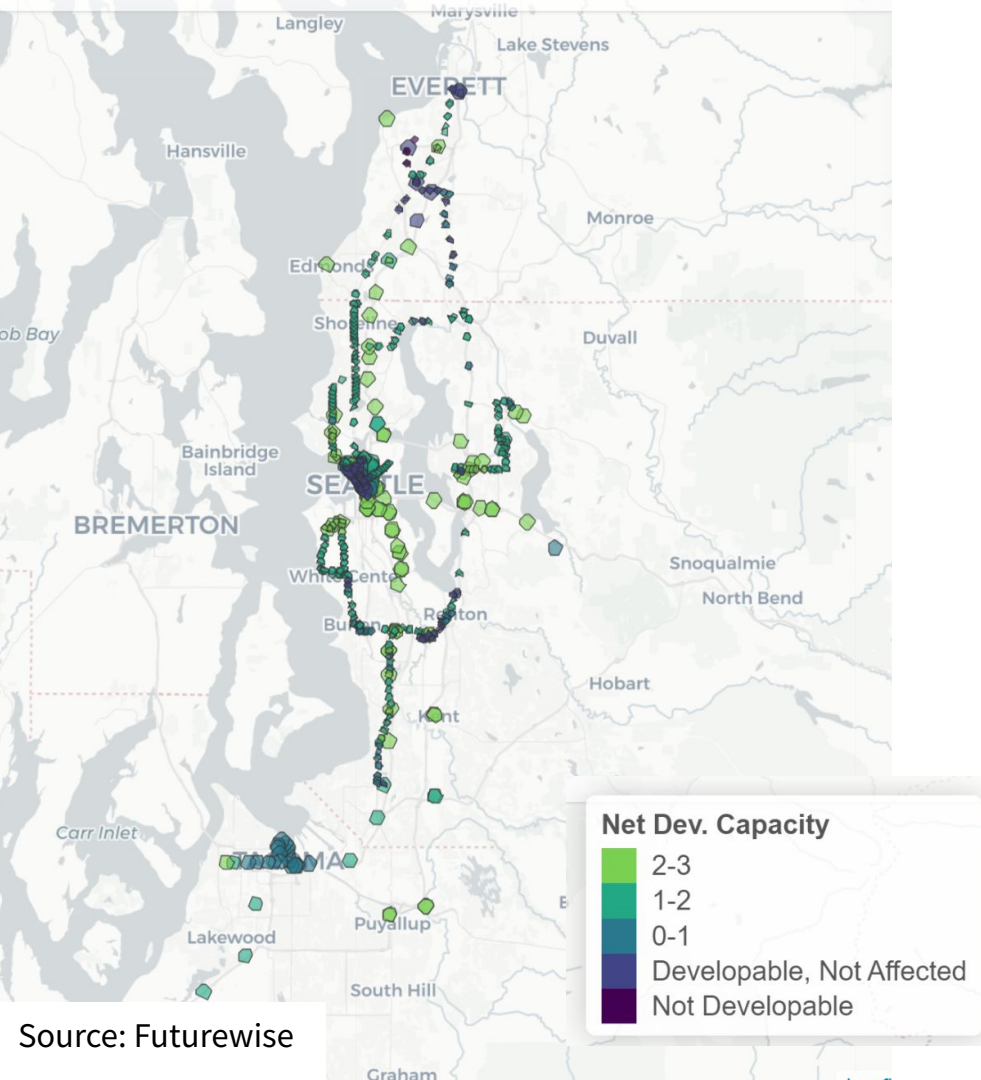


Source: PSRC

# Research Goals

Gain a better understanding of the TOD bill's potential impacts by answering the following questions:

1. How much development capacity would the bill unlock?
2. How would those impacts be distributed throughout the Puget Sound region?



# Study Findings

1. How much development capacity would the bill unlock?

**Up to 1.8 billion ft<sup>2</sup>**

2. How would those impacts be distributed throughout the Puget Sound region?

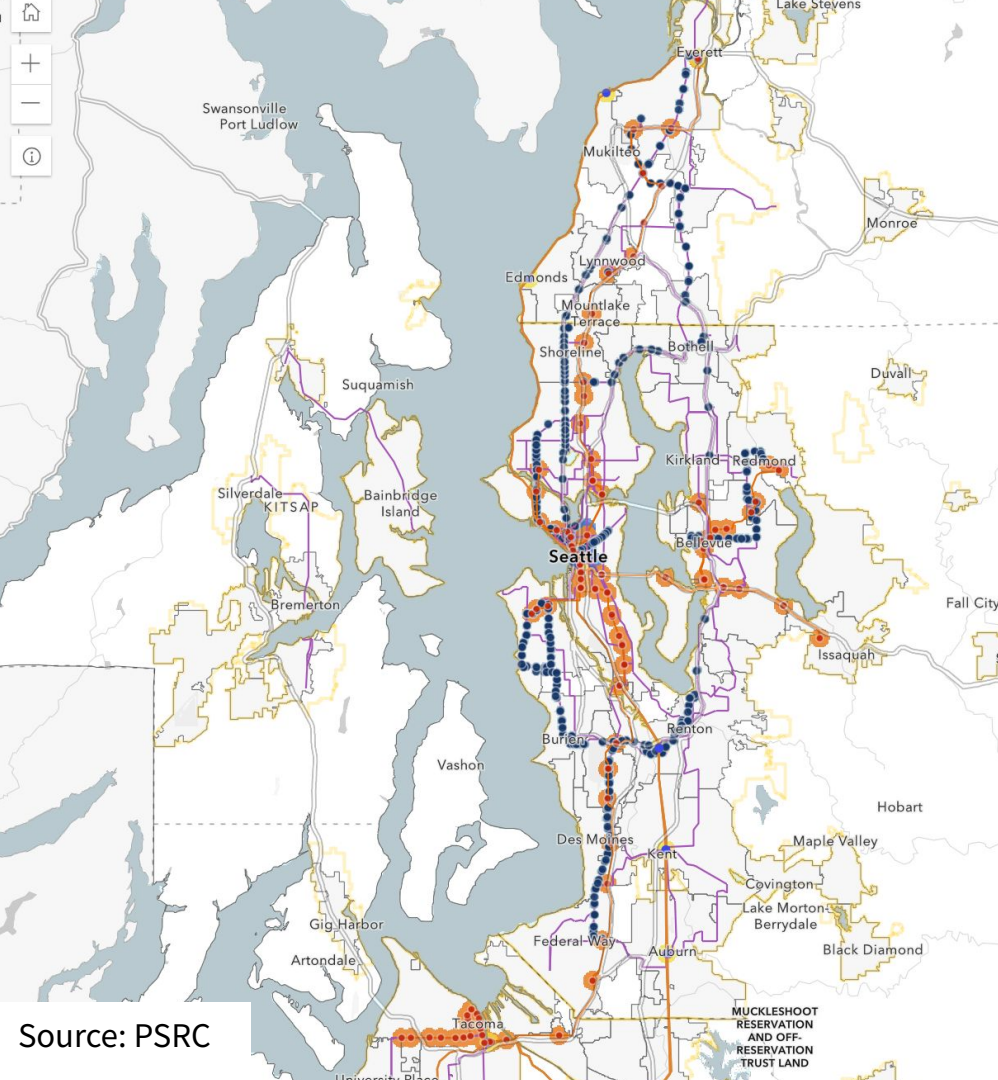
**Varies significantly by station area type and by city**



Photo: Ryan Packer

# House Bill 2160

- Would require cities to allow larger buildings near transit
- Uses floor area ratio (FAR) as the primary regulatory tool for adding development capacity
- Differentiates between rail transit and bus rapid transit, with higher requirements for the former
- Prohibits parking minimums within transit station areas
- Requires 10% of units to be affordable at 80% AMI



# Method Overview

Approximately **116,000 parcels** would be affected by the bill

	Filters	Parcels
<b>Step 1</b>	Snohomish, King, Kitsap, and Pierce counties	3.4 million
<b>Step 2</b>	Within UGAs & Cities	1.08 million
<b>Step 3</b>	Within ½ mile of light rail, commuter rail, or streetcar and/or within ¼ mile of BRT	116,635

Source: PSRC

# Estimating Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

FAR (  $\frac{\text{Total Bldg. Area}}{\text{Total Lot Area}}$  ) is equivalent to:

**Max # Floors × Max % Lot Coverage**

This method allows for the conversion of common alternatives to FAR (maximum building height and maximum lot coverage) into an *FAR equivalent*.

This enables an “apples to apples” comparison between current regulations and the bill’s proposed regulations.

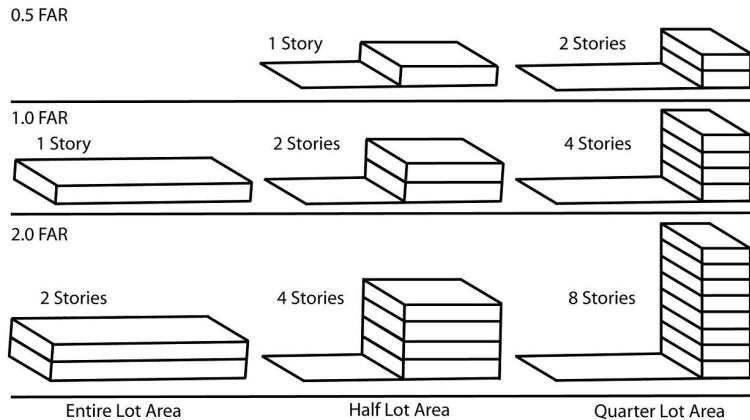


Image Source: City of Seattle



# Analysis Metrics

## Total Net Development Capacity

The total net development capacity ( $T_{NDC}$ ) is calculated as the sum of the net development capacity for each parcel, adjusted by the parcel's area and eligibility based on specific criteria. We define it as follows:

$$T_{NDC} = \sum_i (NDC_i \cdot A_i \cdot I_i)$$

Where:

- $NDC_i$ : the net development capacity for parcel  $i$ .
- $A_i$ : the geometric area of parcel  $i$ .
- $I_i$ : an indicator function that equals 1 if parcel  $i$  satisfies all of the following conditions: it is within a station area, it lies within a zoning district where residential use is permitted, and it is within an urban growth area; otherwise,  $I_i$  equals 0.

## Area-Weighted Mean of Development Capacity

To calculate the mean net development capacity, weighted by the proportion of the area that each parcel occupies within the eligible region, we use the following formula:

$$AWM_{NDC} = \frac{\sum_i (NDC_i \cdot A_i \cdot I_i)}{\sum_i (A_i \cdot I_i)} \quad (3)$$

This calculation divides the sum of the net development capacity of each parcel, adjusted by its area and eligibility, by the total eligible area. This method results in a weighted mean that reflects the proportional impact of each parcel, with larger parcels having a greater influence on the overall metric.

# Limitations

- Changing Development Regulations (HB 1110)
- FAR Averaging
- Additional Restrictions on Development (critical areas)
- Measurement of Transit Proximity
- Lot Coverage Assumptions
- Omission of Other Development Regulations
- Homeowner Association (HOA) Restrictions

# Results

	Parcels (n)	Land Area (mi <sup>2</sup> )	Added Dev. Capacity (ft <sup>2</sup> )	AWM <sub>NDC</sub>
All Station Area Parcels	116,635	79	1.83B	-0.67

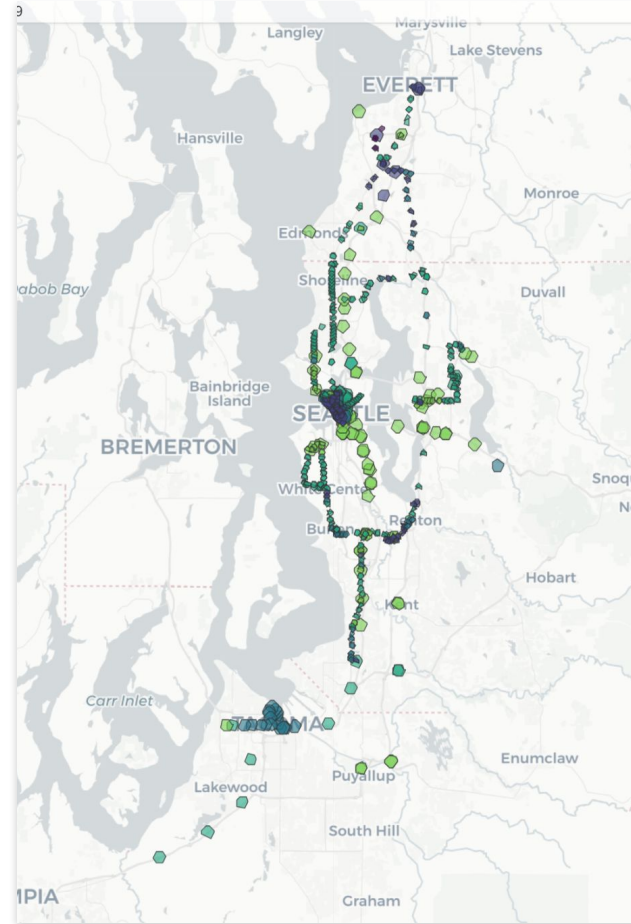
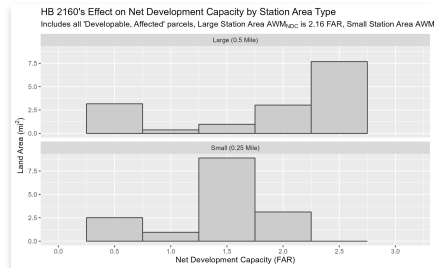
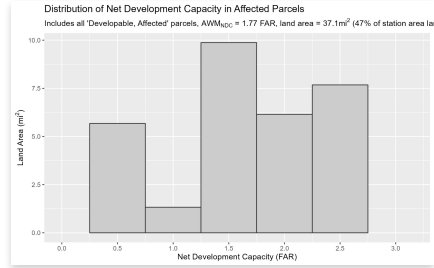
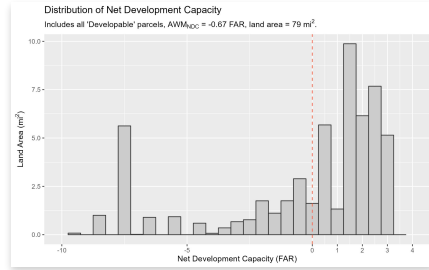
## Analysis Groups

Developable, Affected	90,042 (77.2%)	37.1 (47%)	1.83B (100%)	1.77
Developable, Not Affected	18,510 (15.9%)	20.2 (26%)	--	-5.14
Not Developable	8,083 (6.9%)	21.4 (27%)	--	--

## Station Area Types

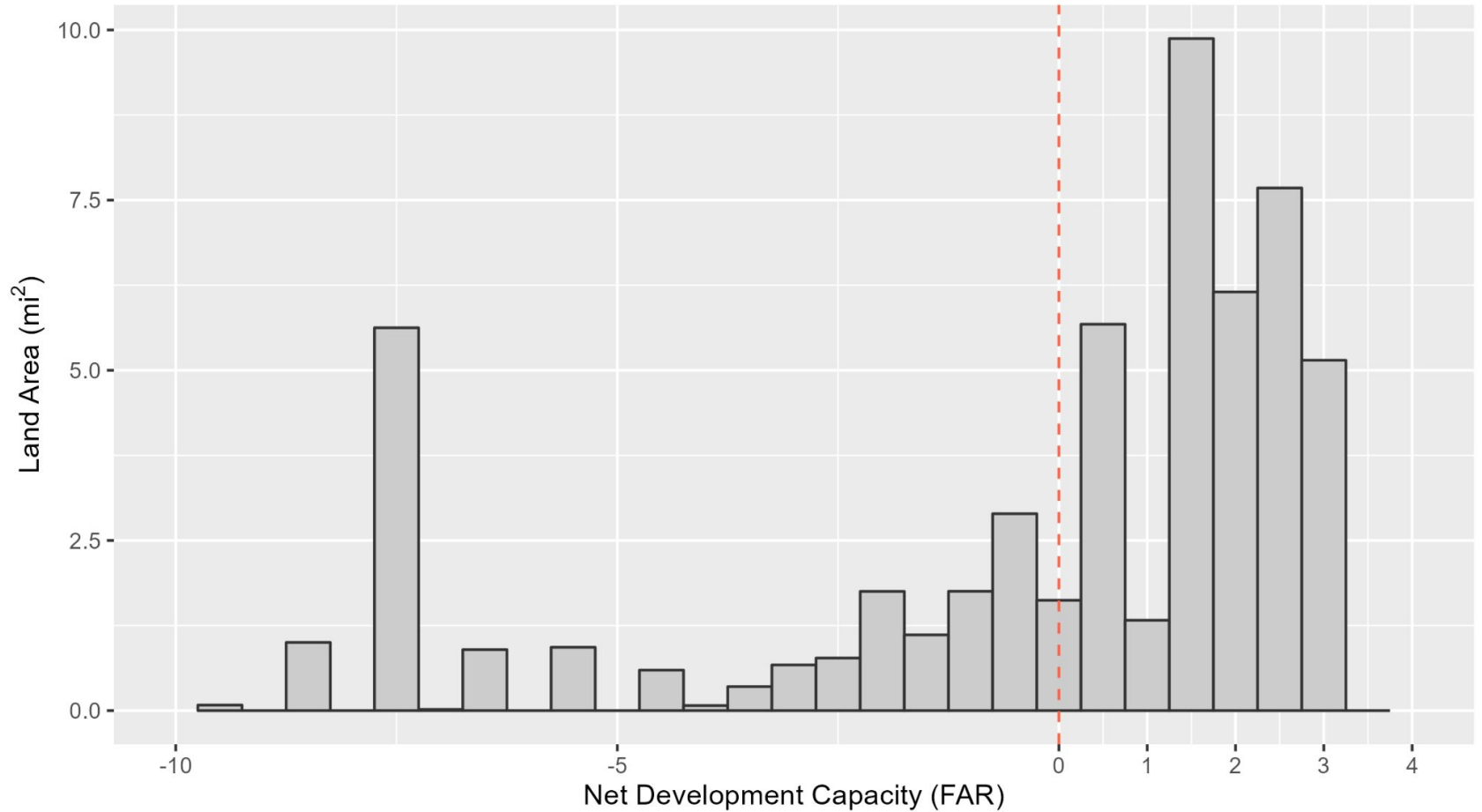
Large (0.5 Mile)	75,416 (64.7%)	47.6 (60%)	1.23B (67%)	-0.96
Small (0.25 Mile)	41,219 (35.3%)	31.1 (40%)	600.04M (33%)	-0.27

# Results



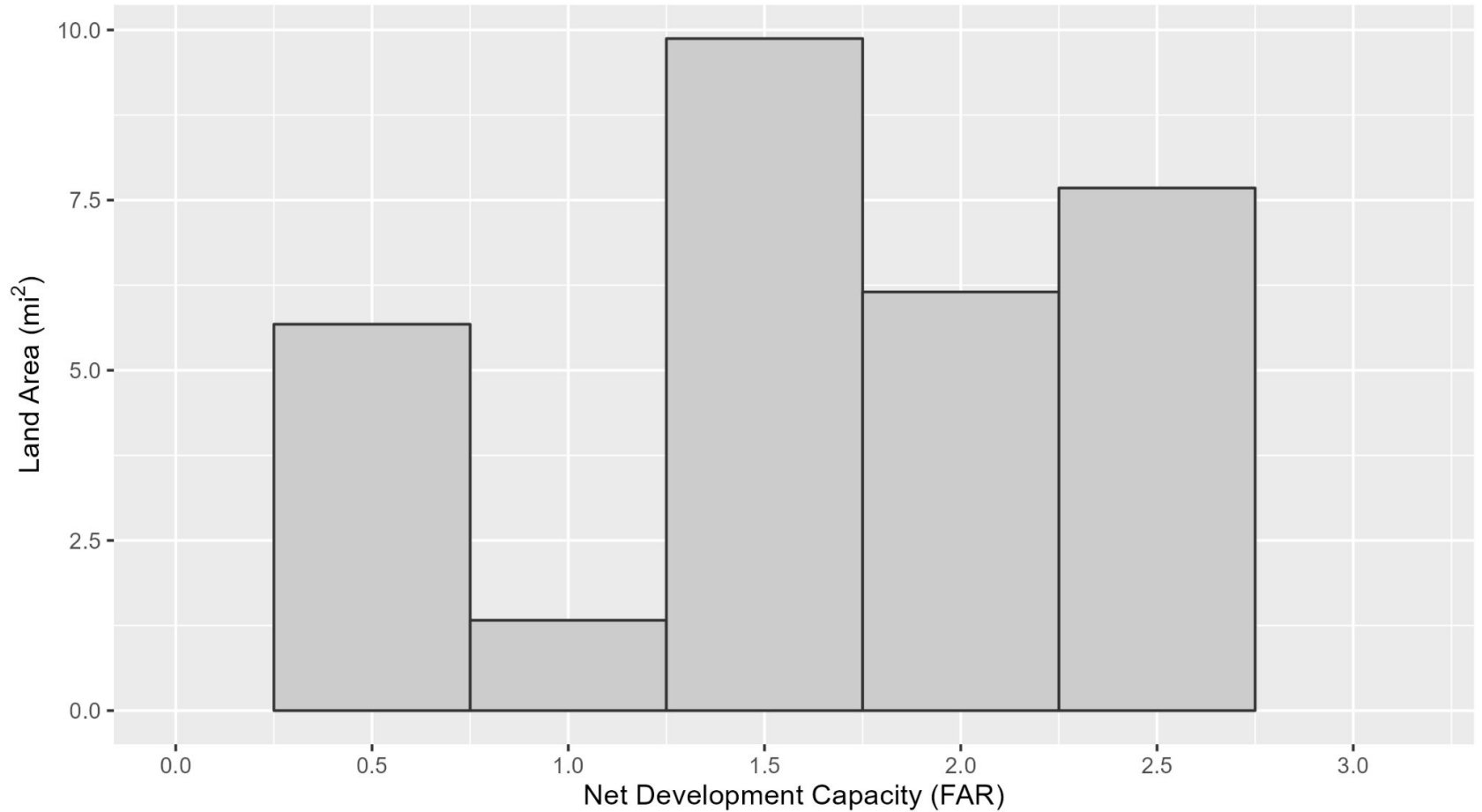
# Distribution of Net Development Capacity

Includes all 'Developable' parcels,  $AWM_{NDC} = -0.67 \text{ FAR}$ , land area = 79  $\text{mi}^2$ .



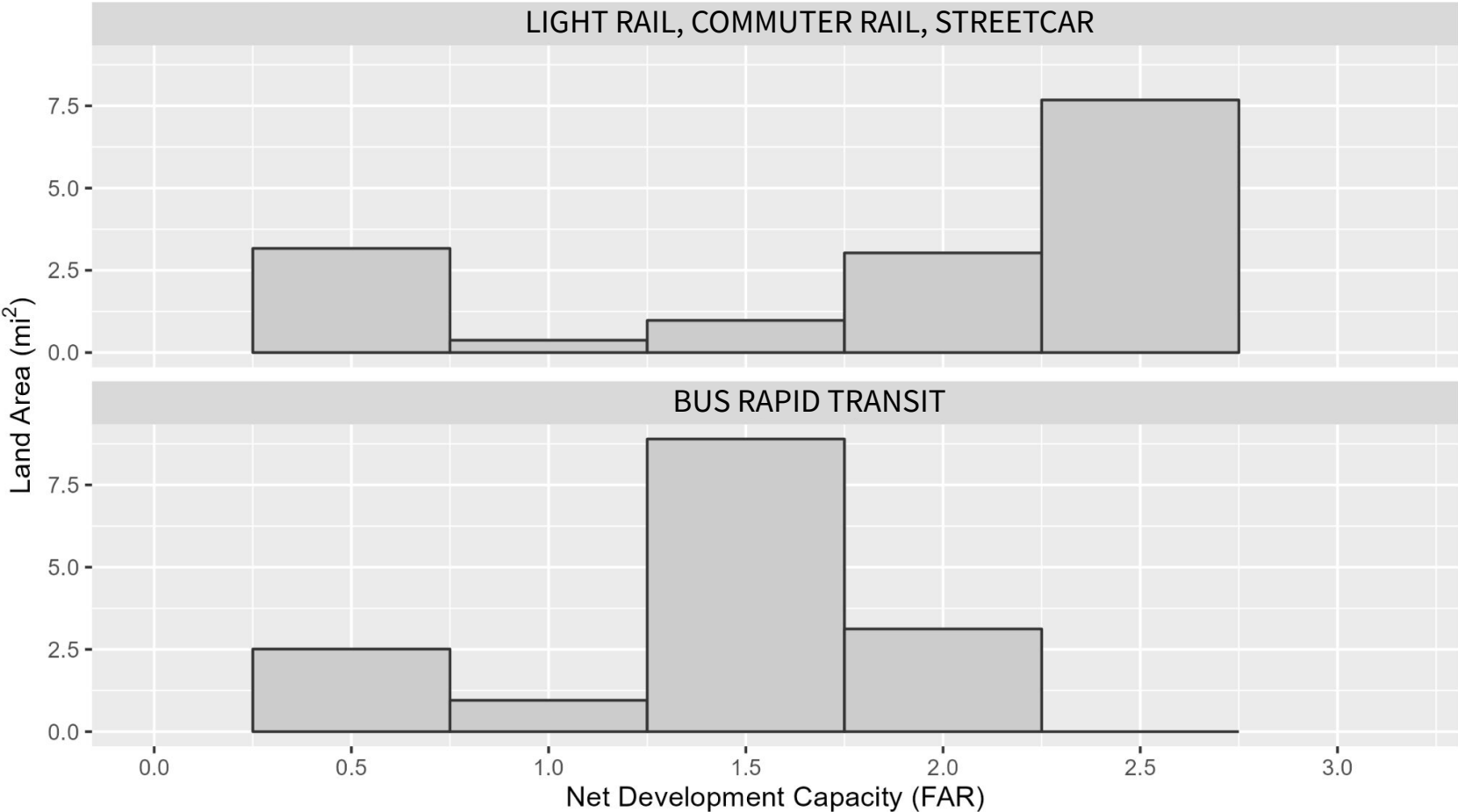
# Distribution of Net Development Capacity in Affected Parcels

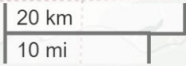
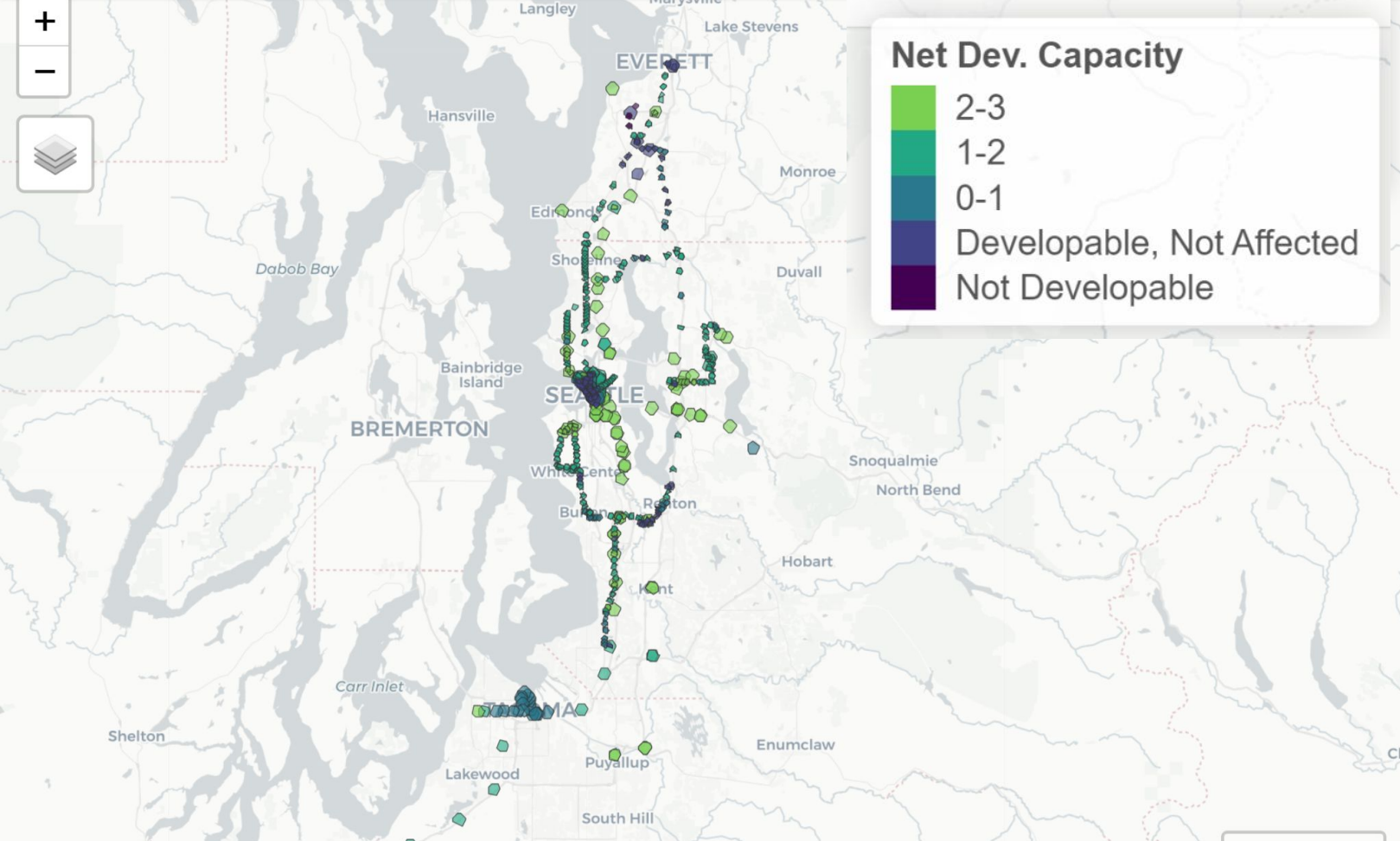
Includes all 'Developable, Affected' parcels,  $AWM_{NDC} = 1.77$  FAR, land area =  $37.1 \text{ mi}^2$  (47% of station area la)



# HB 2160's Effect on Net Development Capacity by Station Area Type

Includes all 'Developable, Affected' parcels, Large Station Area  $AWM_{NDC}$  is 2.16 FAR, Small Station Area  $AWM_{NDC}$  is 1.0 FAR





Source: Futurewise

Net Dev. Capacity

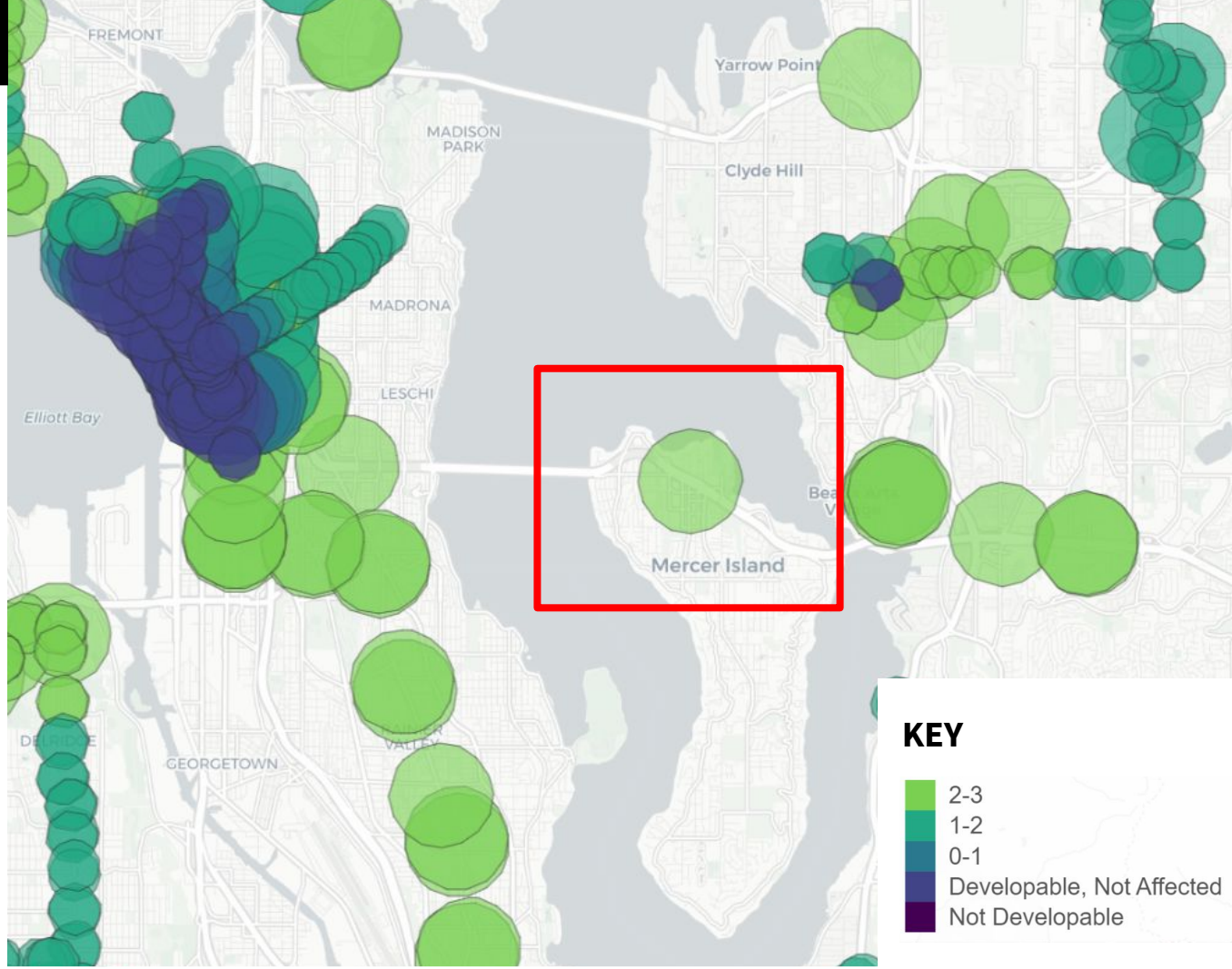
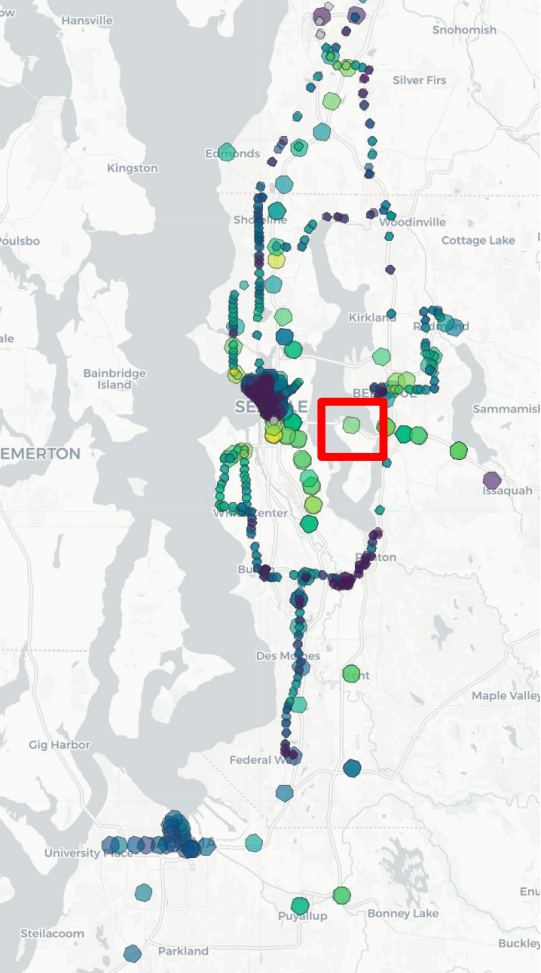




**Mercer Island, WA**

Photo: Dllu via Wikimedia Commons

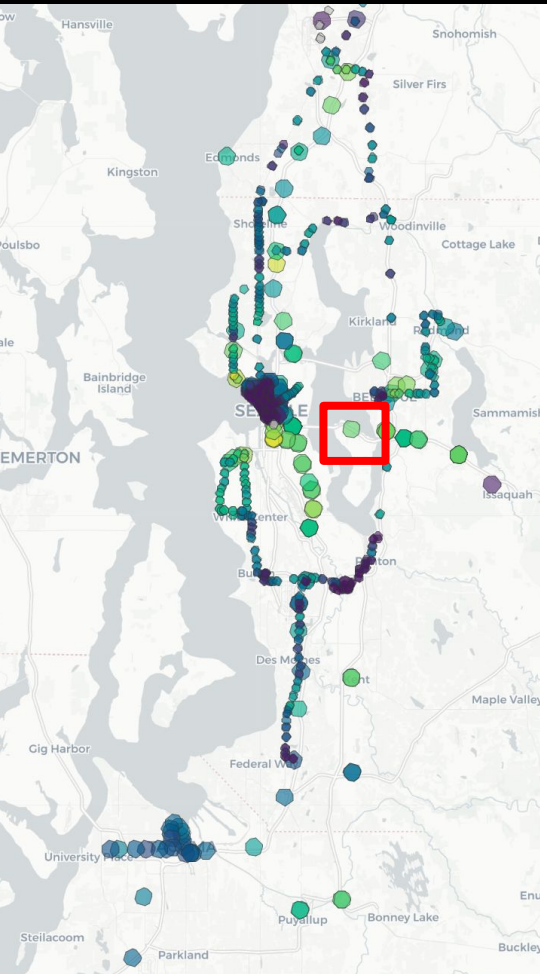
# Case Study: Mercer Island



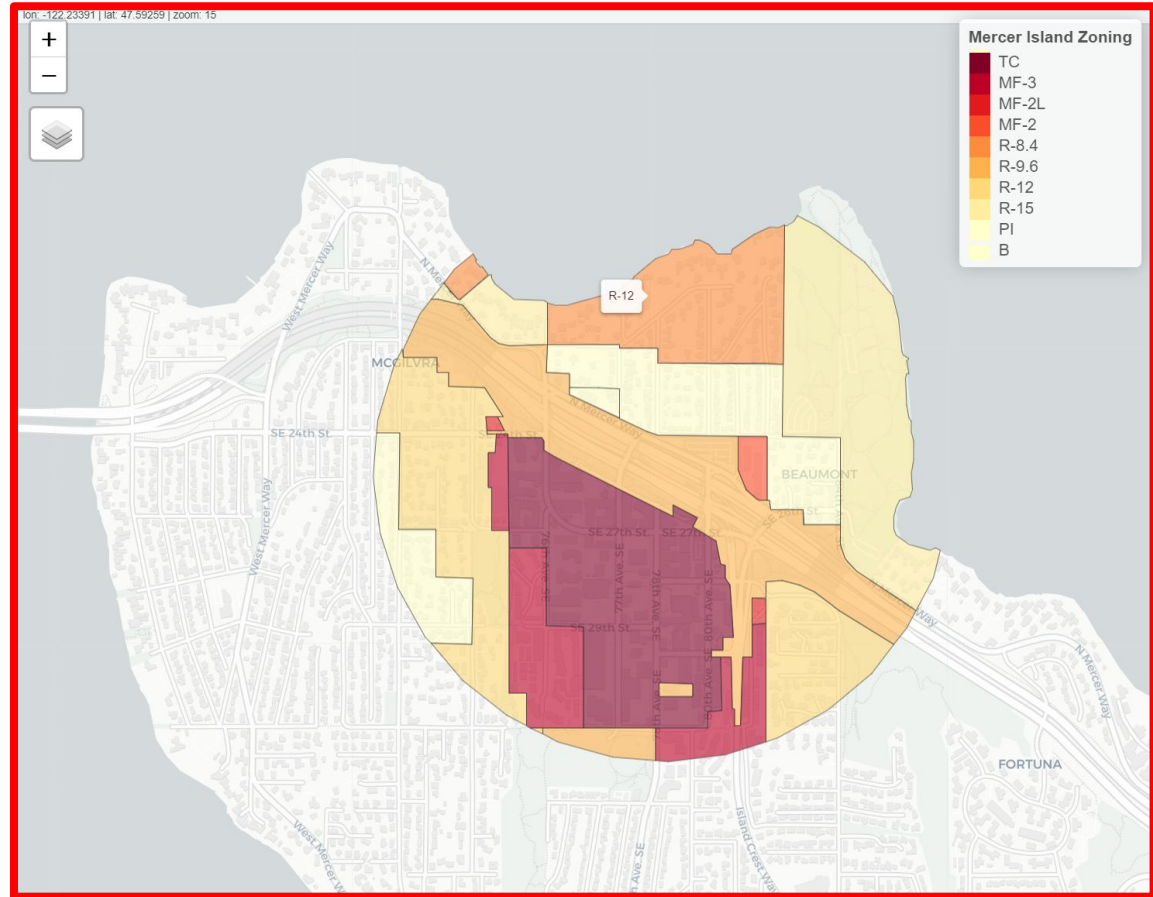
## KEY

- 2-3
- 1-2
- 0-1
- Developable, Not Affected
- Not Developable

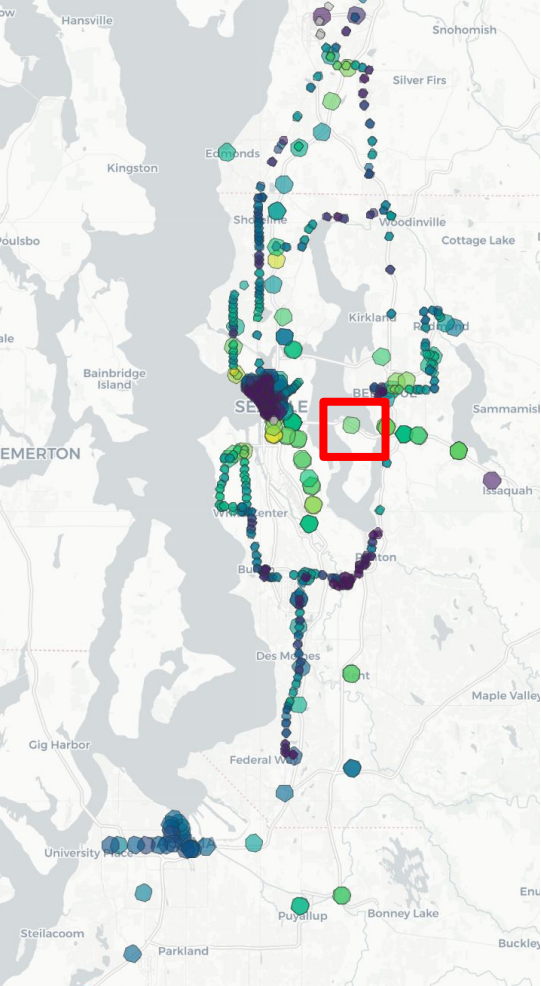
# Case Study: Mercer Island



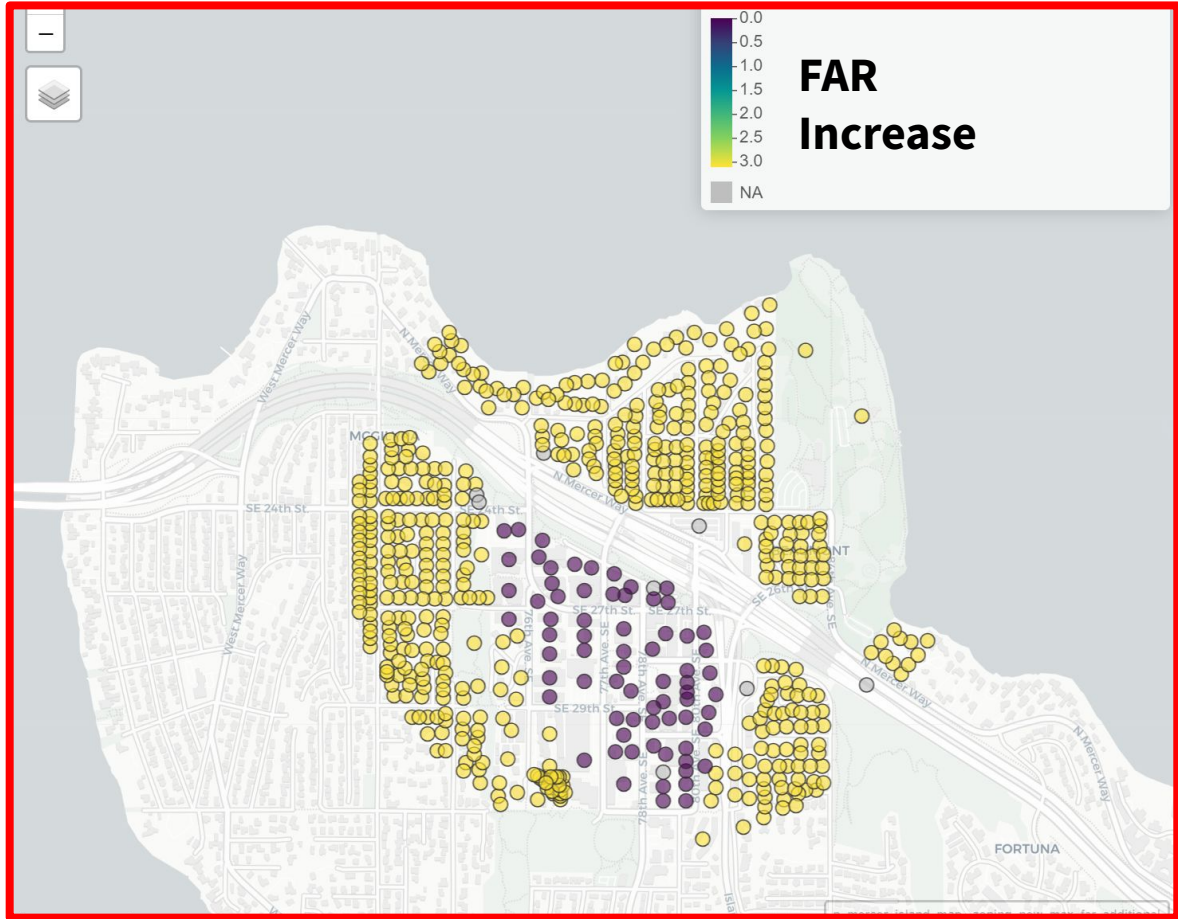
# Mercer Island's Current Zoning



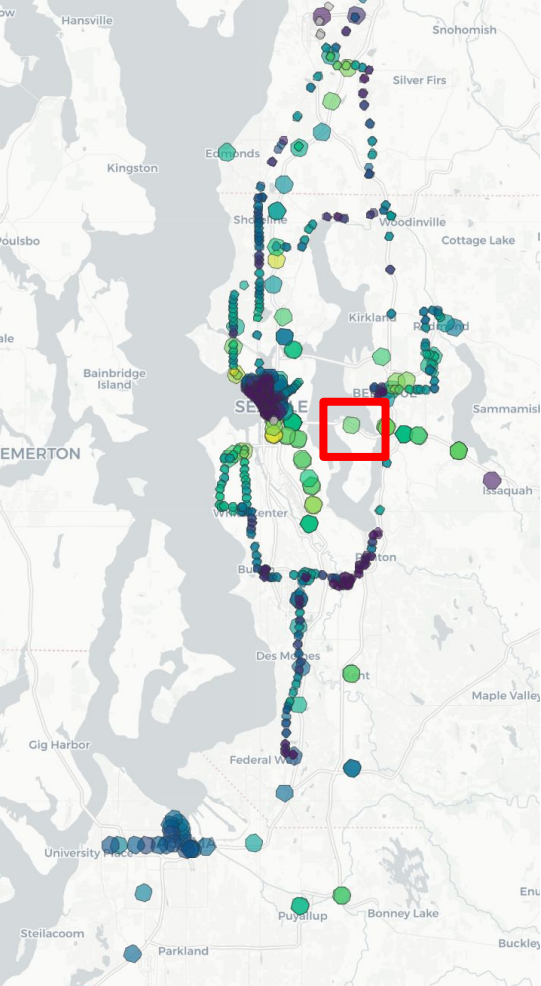
# Case Study: Mercer Island



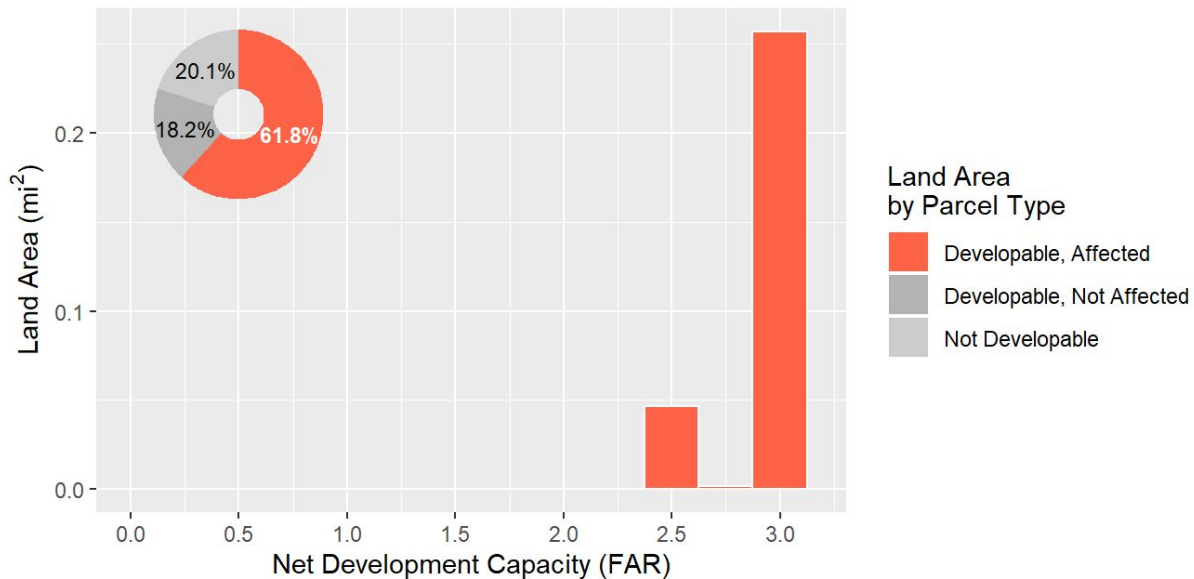
# Mercer Island Parcels by FAR Increase under HB 2160



# Case Study: Mercer Island



HB 2160's Effect on Net Development Capacity in Mercer Island, WA  
Area-weighted mean net development capacity ( $AWM_{NDC}$ ) is 2.2 FAR





# What's Next?

- Enhance accuracy of results by adding features (e.g., critical areas, homeowner associations)
- Explore the impacts of allowing station area average FAR vs a uniform minimum max FAR
- Compare development capacity of post-periodic comp plan update zoning with HB 2160
- Connect with local jurisdictions

# Unlocking Smart Growth: The Effects of a Proposed Transit-Oriented Development Law on the Puget Sound Region

Exploring the Impact of the Community and Transit-Oriented Housing Development Bill HB 2160 Across Washington State's Central Puget Sound Region

## AUTHORS

Tiernan Martin ✉

Alex Brennan ✉

## AFFILIATION

Futurewise

Futurewise

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## ABSTRACT

During the 2024 legislative session in Washington State, House of Representatives members introduced House Bill 2160, aiming to promote community and transit-oriented housing development. The bill would have required cities to permit developments of a specified scale within defined distances from high-capacity transit stops. This study assesses how the development capacity increases proposed by the bill compare to existing allowances. The results show a while the typical developable station area parcel already allows more development capacity than HB 2160, there is a significant amount of land that would be impacted by the bill. Specifically, for developable land currently zoned for lower development capacity than the bill would have required, the estimated average capacity increase would be an additional 1.79 floor area ratio (FAR). If adopted, this bill would have increased the development capacity of land near the region's public transit network by as much as 1.8 billion square feet.

## KEYWORDS

Transit-Oriented Development, Growth Management Act, Central Puget Sound Region, Washington State 2024 Legislative Session

# Full Report

<https://tiernanmartin.github.io/2024-transit-oriented-development-bill/>

## Contact

┌ ┌ **Tiernan Martin,**  
**future** Director of Research, Futurewise  
**wise** └ tiernan@futurewise.org