

# Chapter 2 Background and Context

## Planning Area Description

The City of DuPont spans approximately 5.8 square miles (3,755 acres) and is bordered by several key landmarks. To the northwest, it meets the shoreline of Puget Sound, while the southern boundary is defined by Interstate 5 and the JBLM Golf Course. The eastern edge is marked by DuPont-Steilacoom Road.

The city is bordered to the northeast, east, and southeast by the JBLM Military Reservation. To the south and west, the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge stretches across the tidal flats, and Puget Sound forms the western border. DuPont is situated about five miles from the nearby communities of Steilacoom to the north and Lakewood to the northeast.

## Historic Development Patterns

### Original Peoples and European Settlement

Historically, the DuPont area and its surroundings were inhabited by several Native American tribes collectively known as the Salish people. In more recent times, the region was utilized by the Hudson's Bay Company, its subsidiary the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, and the E.I. du Pont de Nemours Company.

European settlement in the area began in 1833 when the Hudson's Bay Company established a cabin and storehouse at the mouth of Sequalitchew Creek, later named Nisqually House. That same year, Fort Nisqually was constructed as a key trading and supply center for both Native American tribes and early U.S. settlers. In 1843, the fort was relocated west of Edmond Marsh and south of Sequalitchew Creek, to the east of what is now Center Drive.

As defined by the 1854 Treaty of Medicine Creek, the land is part of the traditional territory of the Nisqually Tribe. Additionally, numerous prehistoric sites have been discovered through field surveys conducted for the Weyerhaeuser Export Facility and Glacier Northwest (formerly Lone Star Company), underscoring the area's rich cultural history.

## Industrial Roots

Industrial activity in DuPont began in 1906 when the E.I. du Pont de Nemours Company acquired the Fort Nisqually property and started building a munitions and explosives plant. The plant produced explosives used to clear stumps for the railroad's westward expansion and to prepare fields for farming in the region. This marked the dawn of the Industrial Era in the American West. In 1909, the DuPont Company began developing what is now the Historic Village to accommodate its workers. By 1917, the company town had grown to include 100 homes.

## A City is Established

The City of DuPont was first incorporated on March 26, 1912, primarily to allow the legal sale of liquor under state law. However, following the enactment of Prohibition, the city disincorporated on November 2, 1926, as the sale of liquor became illegal.

DuPont was reincorporated on May 11, 1951, at which time the company housing was sold to private residents. On January 16, 1970, DuPont became a Code City. Explosives production continued until the late 1970s, when the property was acquired by the Weyerhaeuser Company.

The City expanded its boundaries in 1977 by annexing the 33 lots of a subdivision known as El Rancho Madrona, located west of the JBLM Golf Course. In 1987, the City annexed property that was exchanged between the U.S. Army and Weyerhaeuser Company to make the boundaries more even. This change resulted in 285 acres of military land west of the DuPont Steilacoom Road being inside the City Limits.

Construction of Center Drive began in 1989, with the first phase starting at DuPont Steilacoom Road. The final phase was completed in 1997, connecting the road to Interstate 5. The initial phase focused on providing utility services and improving access to business properties. The improvements were deliberately made to entice development to the area.

The costs associated with preparing for development have been substantial. Weyerhaeuser Real Estate Company invested approximately \$60 million in infrastructure, including water systems, major roads, sewer service, and the Center Drive/I-5 Exit 118 interchange. These initial costs, coupled with the expectation of having a full range of services before the community was built out, were recognized as necessary major development components.

## Land Use Influences and Constraints

### Soil Contamination Remediation

In 1985, Weyerhaeuser initiated an investigation of the former DuPont Works property, now known as the Old Fort Lake Subarea, to assess the presence of hazardous substances. The investigation revealed that the soils in the production areas of the former DuPont Works site were contaminated with chemical compounds linked to explosives manufacturing. See the XX Section in the Natural Environment Element (in Chapter 5) for more information.

Remediation of the site was conducted under a Consent Decree with oversight from Washington State Department of Ecology.

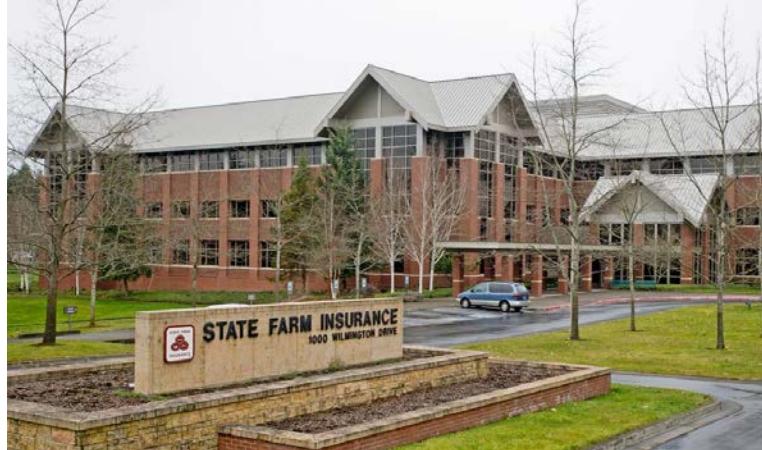
These site conditions and characteristics have limited the types of development (particularly residential projects) to ensure a safe and healthy environment. As lands that have been remediated, such as the Old Fort Lake Subarea, are prepared for redevelopment, there is focus on creating unique Villages using Subarea plans, with planned residential development located within mixed use areas, while adhering to Ecology's guidelines as to the appropriate uses based on safety concerns. Some zoning designations, such as Manufacturing and Research may be applied in cases where it is useful to capitalize on recently approved sites for corresponding types of development. In the case of Old Fort Lake Subarea, there is a strong focus on future light manufacturing and research land uses in the adopted 2018 Subarea Plan which is being updated to focus more on residential development in order to meet future housing needs.

Similarly, in Sequalitchew Village there is a focus on a blend of light manufacturing, research, and a range of residential options.

## Other Land Use Influences

In late 2020, the community was impacted by the closure of State Farm Insurance, a major employer. The company's iconic brick office building, set in a park-like campus on Wilmington Drive and visible from Interstate 5, was a key component of the city's image and a center for activity. The 52-acre property, located within the DuPont Station Village and just east of the McNeil Station commercial area, once accommodated over 1,500 people employed for State Farm<sup>1</sup>.

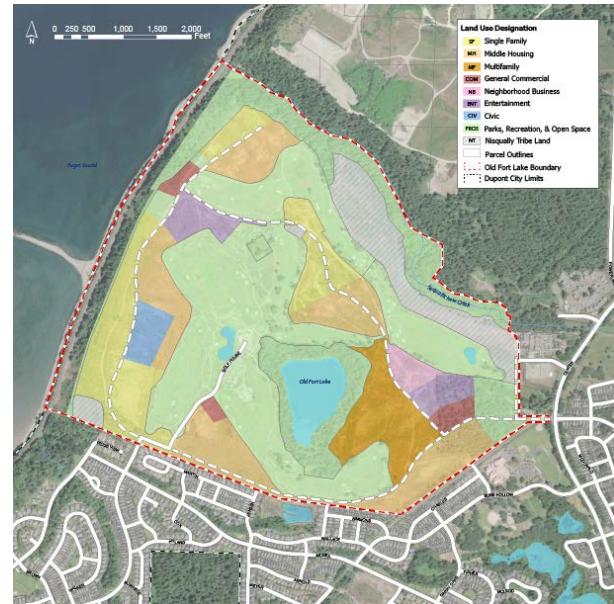
In 2022, to encourage revitalization, the city changed the property's land use designation from Office to Mixed Use District and accordingly rezoned it from Office to Mixed Use District-2. The City of DuPont no longer has any land strictly dedicated to office uses. Instead, the new Mixed Use District designation allows for a mix of uses, including commercial, retail, office, public and quasi-public, and residential, providing the flexibility needed to support future revitalization efforts with broader options.



<sup>1</sup> Like many businesses nationwide, State Farm shifted to remote operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving the campus inactive. As remote work became more prevalent, State Farm had already begun adjusting its operations prior to the pandemic.

Other market trends have affected the region and DuPont. One is a low supply of housing, causing significant housing price increases and a lack of more affordable entry-level housing. In early 2023 DuPont City Council placed a moratorium on development within the Old Fort Lake Subarea until a new Subarea Plan and its zoning and design standards could be updated to meet the City's residential needs. A Subarea Plan for the area was initially adopted in 2018 to incorporate a variety of land uses with a larger emphasis on commercial, retail and light manufacturing type uses. The new Subarea Plan is designed to increase housing densities to include allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs), middle housing (which includes duplexes, triplexes through six-plexes) and multifamily, which is intended to respond to the Council's intent but also meet recent state legislative requirements aimed at increasing the supply of more affordable housing types. Commercial, retail and entertainment-type uses are also allowed. The Subarea Plan is intended to be adopted concurrent with this citywide Comprehensive Plan.

State Farm Building. Source: Tacoma News Tribune



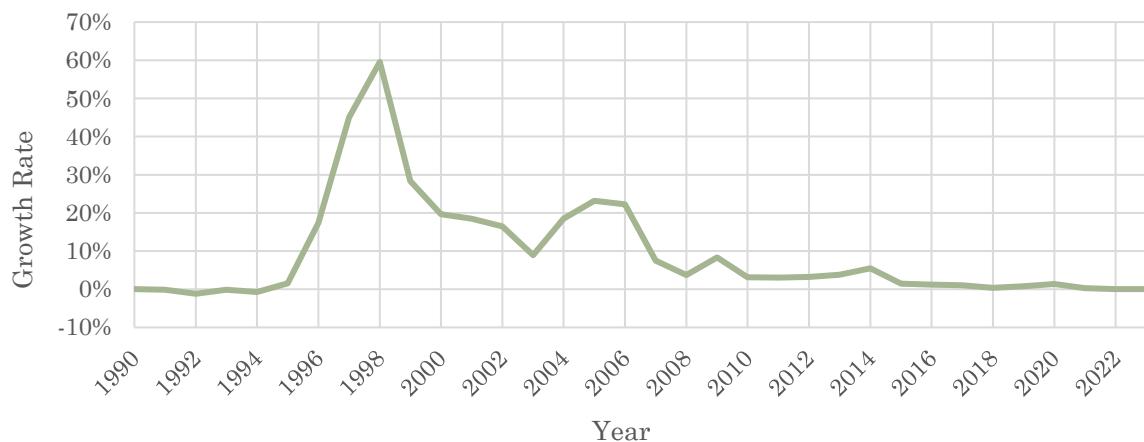
Old Fort Lake Subarea Plan Future Land Use Map.

The other market trend is related to a change in buying habits from the traditional brick and mortar retail store to online purchases and home delivery. This has increased the demand for more distribution warehouses and impacted the viability of any retail stores. In DuPont the Industrial and Manufacturing Research Park zoning districts have been developed with more distribution type uses and many of the retail uses in DuPont Station have struggled to survive or closed.

## Population Characteristics

### Population Growth

The number of residents in the City has increased significantly since development of Northwest Landing began in 1994. In 1995, it was estimated that DuPont had a population of 588, which had increased to 8,199 by 2010<sup>2</sup>. Figure 1-1 depicts the growth rate and reveals the dramatic growth experienced in the 1990s has leveled out and become a steadier, more predictable growth rate. According to the Washington State



Office of Financial Management (OFM), DuPont's population was 10,151 in 2020 and estimated to be 10,180 in 2024<sup>3</sup>.

### Population Growth Overview

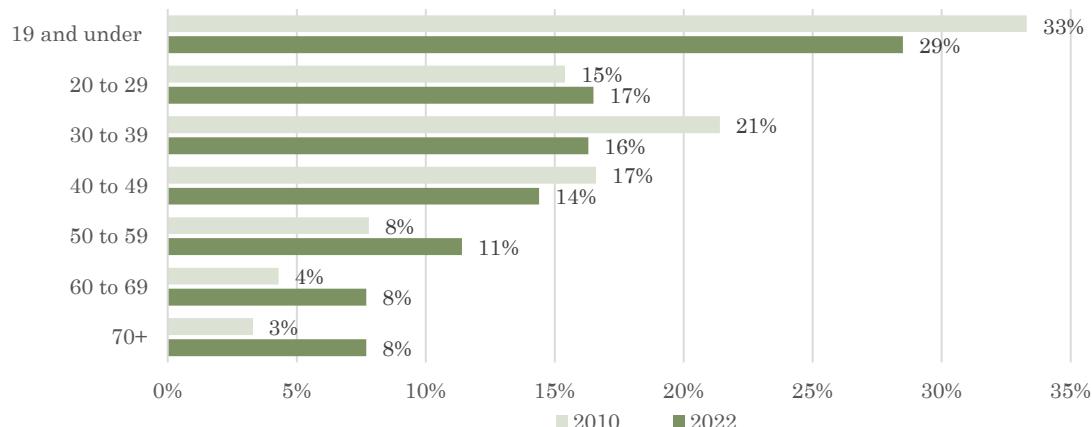
Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Decennial Census, DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171), Table P1, 2010, <https://data.census.gov/table/DECENNIALPL2010.P1?g=160XX00US5318965>. Accessed on June 6, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Washington State Office of Financial Management. OFM April 1 Population Estimates published June 28, 2024. <https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/population-demographics/population-estimates/april-1-official-population-estimates/>. Accessed August 1, 2024.

## Age Distribution

According to 2022 census data, the median age of a DuPont resident is 34.2 years of age and the population consists predominately of families with children. Nearly 28.5 percent of the total population is under the age of 20 and 34 percent of all households have children under the age of 18 almost entirely in married-couple households (American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates). Even though there is a high prevalence of families with children, Census data shows that the population has been aging since 2010 and DuPont is becoming an older community. This trend and the anticipated needs of the future population age distribution is important to consider when planning for future housing and services in DuPont.

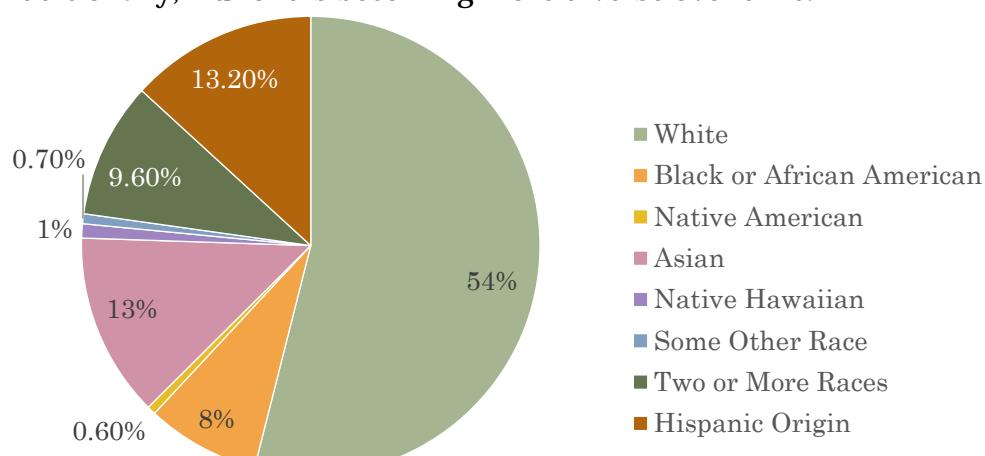


### Population Age Cohorts

Source: 2010 and 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

### Diversity

Two indicators of diversity among the city's population are income levels and race and ethnic mix. The most accessible information on those indicators is available from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. DuPont's population is predominately white and is more ethnic diversity in the City than in Pierce County. Additionally, DuPont is becoming more diverse over time.



### Ethnic Diversity in DuPont

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

The job mix in DuPont has led to median incomes which are generally higher than other neighboring communities. Median household income was estimated at \$106,695 in 2022. This is slightly higher as compared to Pierce County (county-wide) which was \$91,486 for the same year. However, the Census Bureau reports statistics on the Fort Lewis-DuPont Census County Division and the reported median income of that demographic was \$71,822, perhaps capturing unique circumstances for the community at large. In terms of income, households representing racial minorities fare considerably better than their Pierce County counterparts.

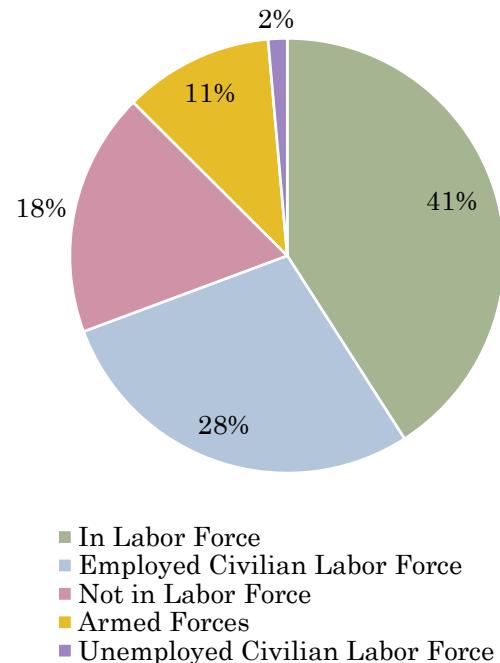
### Employment

It is estimated that 7,613 people within the City of DuPont were age 16 or older in 2022, and almost 70 percent of them are in the labor force (see Figure 1-4. DuPont Employment Status). Of those in the labor force 18.8 percent are in the Armed Forces.

Since 2012 civilian workforce employment among DuPont residents has increased by 34 percent (or 3.4 percent per year)<sup>4</sup>.

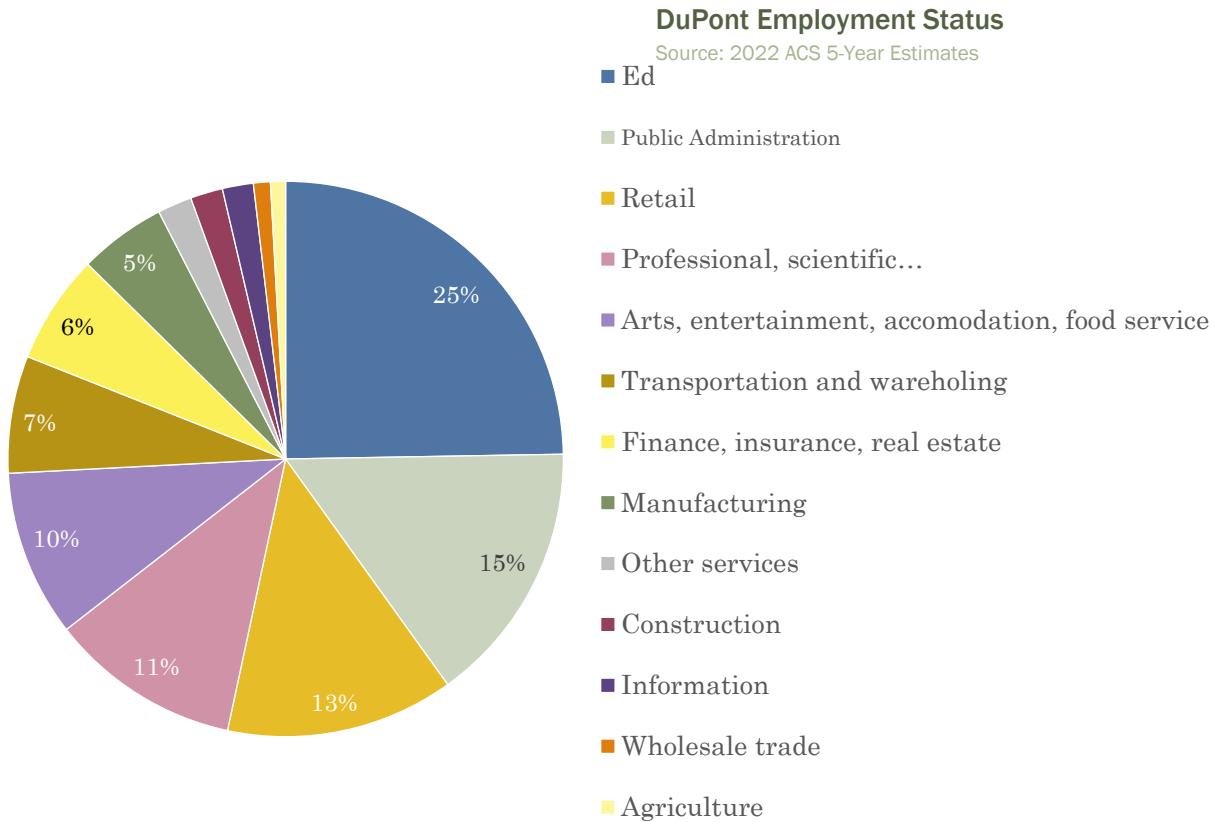
Population growth in the same ten-year period has increased by 16.8 percent.

Probably the most pertinent employment statistic is the percentage of the labor force employed in the Armed Forces- 18.8% in DuPont and only 1% in the state as a whole. This provides some context for planning considerations in the DuPont community.



<sup>4</sup> That number is slightly reduced to 31 percent when you consider total employment, meaning those in the Armed Forces as well.

Figure 1-5 shows the industries that DuPont's civilian labor force is employed in. The educational services, healthcare, and social assistance industry employs the largest segment of DuPont's civilian workforce at 25 percent.



#### DuPont Employment by Industry

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Employment in the manufacturing industry, once almost 40 percent of the City's civilian labor force, continues to shrink and as of 2022 ACS Estimates is right around 5 percent, lower than Washington state as a whole. DuPont's civilian labor force employment in the construction industry is also lower compared to the state at nearly 2 percent versus 7 percent. Public administration is a much larger segment of City's civilian labor force compared to the state at 15 percent versus 5 percent, perhaps due to DuPont's proximity to the state capitol.

## Current Land Uses

Permitted land uses are established through the City's zoning districts. Table 1 lists the City's current zoning classifications as of July 2024 and categorizes them into zone types as defined by the Pierce County Buildable Lands Report. The total acreage is the sum of the parcel acreage within that zoning classification and the percentage represents the portion of the City within that zoning classification. Discussions in the Land Use Chapter show acreages for land use designation for each Village.

### DuPont Zone Classifications

Zone Classification		Zone Type <sup>1</sup>	Total Acres <sup>2</sup>	Percentage
CB	Community Business	Commercial	58.1	1.82%
COM	Commercial	Commercial	18.2	0.57%
CP	Community Park	Parks and Recreation	59.1	1.85%
IND	Industrial	Industrial	138.1	4.32%
MRP	Manufacturing Research Park	Industrial	478.1	14.96%
MUV	Mixed Use Village	Mixed Use	519.7	16.26%
MXD	Mixed Use	Commercial	58.8	1.84%
MXD-2	Mixed Use	Commercial	52.1	1.63%
NP	Neighborhood Park	Parks and Recreation	26.1	0.82%
OS	Open Space	Open Space	705.7	22.08%
R-12	Residential-12	Residential	72.2	2.26%
R-3	Residential-3	Residential	54.5	1.71%
R-4	Residential-4	Residential	463.6	14.50%
R-5	Residential-5	Residential	284.8	8.91%
RR	Residential Reserve	Residential	207.2	6.48%

Source: 2022 Pierce County Buildable Lands Report, 2024 City of DuPont zoning

<sup>1</sup>For purposes of the Buildable Lands inventory and analysis.

<sup>2</sup>Represents parcel acreage (not zone coverage).

## Housing

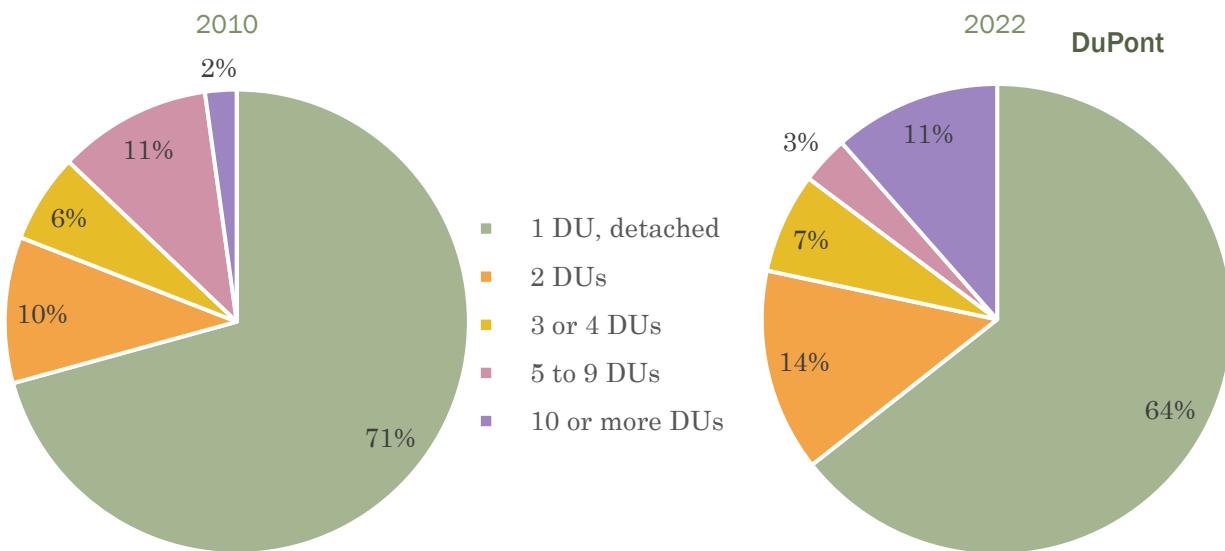
In 1994, there were 229 residential units in DuPont, 76 percent were single-family homes and 24 percent were multifamily homes. Overall density was 3.2 units per residential acre. Since 1994, there have been 3,562 housing units built with the bulk of this growth occurring in the decade between 1996 and 2006. Table 2 illustrates how the total number of housing units and types in DuPont has evolved over the past 30 years.

## DuPont Housing

	1995	2001	2010	2020
Housing Units	233	1,086	3,241	3,791
Single Family	179	678	1,996	2,634
Multifamily	54	408	804	1,468

Source: ACS 5 year estimates

As of 2022<sup>5</sup> 64.6 percent of DuPont's housing units are detached single-family and 35.6 percent include two or more dwelling units, which includes attached single family housing types, such as row houses, duplexes, and townhomes. Meanwhile, the density has increased to 6.8 people per residential acre. The share of detached, singly-family residences in DuPont has fallen as other housing types have been added. This difference is mostly made up of larger apartment buildings and attached homes, such as duplexes.



## Housing Type Distribution

Source: ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates

<sup>5</sup> 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

According to the 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the overall average household size in DuPont is 2.49 (2.62 for owner-occupied units and 2.30 for renter-occupied units). DuPont's average household size has decreased from the 2010 estimate of 2.66 following the nation-wide trend. These household sizes have been used in all subsequent population estimates in this Plan.

## Jobs

Table 3 illustrates how the total number of jobs has evolved in DuPont over the past 30 years.

### DuPont Jobs

	1995	2001	2010	2020
Jobs	200	2,890	2,937	5,099

Source: ACS 5 year estimates

## Housing and Employment Growth and Capacity

As a part of Pierce County, DuPont is also under the planning umbrella of the Puget Sound Region Council (PSRC), which guides planning strategies for the entirety of the Puget Sound Region. VISION 2050 was adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council in October 2020. The PSRC is also tasked with providing growth targets and allocations for the region. The long-term plan for growth in the Puget Sound region through the year 2050, VISION 2050, provides a framework for how and where development will occur and how the region supports efforts to manage this growth.

Under the Growth Management Act, each county, in consultation with its jurisdictions, is responsible for adopting 20-year growth targets. The planning cycle for the next allocated 20-year growth targets is 2024 through 2044.

The City of DuPont is part of the High Capacity Transit (HCT) Regional Geography that was allocated 21% of the County's population growth (77,000) and 15% of the County's employment growth (29,000). Pierce County divided the population and employment growth targets for the HCT jurisdictions amongst each other and calculated independent housing growth targets based on persons-per-household assumptions.

## Housing and Employment Targets

The City adopts the 2044 housing and employment targets adopted by Pierce County Ordinance Number 2022-46. These targets and estimated capacities for the City of DuPont for the years 2020 through 2044 as identified in Pierce County's Buildable Lands Report are as follows:

- Population Growth: 5,184
- Housing Unit Growth: 1,960
- Employment Growth: 1,177

In 2021, Pierce County released a Buildable Lands Report, which used parcel data to analyze the ability of DuPont to meet its housing and employment targets under zoning at the time of the analysis. In 2023, in order to more deeply examine the parcel data in DuPont, document the changes in the intervening years, and address the shortfall in capacity, Dupont commissioned a Housing Capacity Analysis.

What follows is a discussion of how, where and whether DuPont intends to meet its housing and employment growth targets in order to absorb its share of the expected regional growth.

## Housing Capacity

With its unique history in the region, DuPont has developed largely as a series of planned communities between 1990 and today. Because of this development pattern, there are not many underutilized parcels, and the areas of DuPont vacant land are predominately large areas, such as the Old Fort Lake Subarea, which accounts for the vast majority of housing capacity in both reports. It is important to note that the Buildable Lands Report and DuPont Housing Capacity Analysis were prepared assuming no residential use for the State Farm property based on the (at the time) Office land use and zoning designations.

The 2021 Pierce County Buildable Lands Report allocated growth target for DuPont is 1,960 dwelling units. Using DuPont's 2020 zoning classifications, the Buildable Lands Report found the city to have capacity for 1,150 dwelling units (Figure XX) showing a deficit of 810 dwelling units. The assumed number of dwelling units for the Old Fort Lake Subarea at that time was 961 units.

In the 2023 DuPont Housing Capacity Analysis report, there were some slight adjustments, particularly for the R-5 vacant lands. That area has now been planned as the Patriot's Landing development, with a proposed 308 housing units. Additionally, in the intervening years, the Office (OFF) zoning designation, which had been in place for the large State Farm campus, has been eliminated in 2022 and replaced with MUV-2 zoning, which is not included in either report, as the property was assumed to provide jobs, not housing.

As both reports demonstrate, the ability for DuPont to reach its allocated housing unit growth target by 2044 depends upon the development of Old Fort Lake, with some flexibility for the redevelopment of the former State Farm Campus.

### City of DuPont 2020-2044 Housing Capacity (Dwelling Units)

Zone	Vacant	Underutilized	Vacant Single Unit	Pipeline	Total
CB	0	0	0	0	0
COM	0	0	0	0	0
IND	0	0	0	0	0
MRP	0	0	0	0	0
MUV 1-8	0	961	0	0	961
MUV 9	0	0	0	0	0
MXD	0	0	0	0	0
OFF	0	0	0	0	0
R-12	0	0	12	19	31
R-3	0	8	7	0	15
R-4	5	0	0	0	5
R-5	131	7	0	0	138
RR	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>976</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1,150 (-810)</b>

Source: Pierce County Buildable Lands Report 2021

### Housing Capacity Analysis Comparison

Zone	Pierce County Buildable Lands Report 2021	City's Housing Capacity Analysis 2023
CB	0	0
COM	0	0
IND	0	0
MRP	0	0
MUV 1-8	961	961
MUV 9	0	0
OFF/MUV-2	0	0
R-12	12	12
R-3	8	9
R-4	5	2
R-5	131	308
RR	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>1,342</b>
Additional Capacity Needed	810	618

Source: Pierce County Buildable Lands Report, 2021 and City of DuPont Housing Capacity Analysis 2023

## Employment Capacity

Commercial development has evolved in the same planned manner as residential development since around 1995. Currently, there are a few distinct employment zones in the City- two auto-oriented areas providing retail, hotel, restaurant and services; one on the west side (MXD) and one on the east side (COM) of DuPont adjacent to the I-5 freeway. There is another large portion of the north part of DuPont adjacent to the CalPortland gravel mine and JBLM. This area (MRP and IND) has been built out with warehouses and offices from roughly 2013 onwards. The State Farm office campus (OFF) adjacent to I-5 was not included in the analysis since it closed in 2020.

City of DuPont 2020-2044 Employment Capacity (Jobs)

Zone	Vacant	Underutilized	Pipeline	Total Jobs
CB	95	0	0	95
COM	40	39	4	102
IND	0	0	0	0
MRP	308	0	538	846
MUV 1-8	0	954	0	954
MUV 9	0	2,060	0	2,062
MXD	103	20	0	8
OFF	0	4	0	8
R-12	0	0	0	0
R-3	0	0	0	0
R-4	0	0	0	1
R-5	0	0	0	28
RR	0	0	0	0
Total Jobs	546	3,077	542	4,165 (+2,988)

Source: Pierce County Buildable Lands Report, 2021

The 2044 employment target for DuPont is for an additional 1,177 jobs from the 2020 baseline. Commercial development in DuPont has been mostly segregated from residential areas, despite having a mixed-use zoning category. There were no residential permits granted for that zone from 2013 to 2020 according to the Buildable Lands Report (BLR). Below is the BLR Employment Capacity table. Under the zoning in 2020, DuPont has a surplus capacity for 2,988 jobs.

## Old Fort Lake Subarea

As was evident in the housing capacity analysis, the main area expected to absorb employment growth is the Old Fort Lake Subarea, represented by zoning code MUV 1-8 and MUV 9. Since the publication of the BLR, the area has begun a subarea planning process with a recommended zoning change to balance the surplus of employment capacity and the housing deficit.