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STAFF REPORT

TO: Clark County Planning Commission

FROM: Oliver Orjiako, Director
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DATE: June 4, 2015

SUBJECT: 2015 Buildable Lands Report

PURPOSE

The purpose of this staff report is to present the 2015 Buildable Lands Report.

BACKGROUND

GMA requires the county and its cities to provide sufficient land to accommodate specific population and employment targets. This report responds to and satisfies the review and evaluation requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) in RCW 36.70A.215, commonly referred to as the “buildable lands” statute. Clark County has completed work on the 2015 Buildable Lands Report (BLR). Under GMA, Clark County and its cities are required to review and evaluate the adequacy of suitable residential, commercial and industrial lands inside the Urban Growth Area (UGA) for accommodating projected population and employment growth during the remaining portion of the current 20 year GMA planning horizon (i.e., to 2035).

METHODOLOGY

This is the third buildable lands review and evaluation report completed by Clark County and its cities. The BLR is based on the methods and approaches first developed and used by the county and cities for the two previous buildable lands reports prepared by Clark County in 2002 and 2007. It followed a framework for coordinated county and city data collection and analysis originally established in 2002 presenting a series of basic, quantifiable indicators in Clark County tracking how they change each year. Clark County continued to coordinate with its cities using the Clark County Community Framework process to compile data that shows the progress of each community’s comprehensive plan toward the goals of sprawl reduction and concentrated urban growth identified in the Growth Management Act. The 2015 analysis was informed by actual development densities observed since the 2007 BLR. Each community collects development data, which is forwarded to the county and added to a central database located at this webpage:

http://www.clark.wa.gov/planning/comp_plan/monitoring.html#capacity

2015 BLR RESULTS

It is important to note that the observed densities occurred at a period of a deep recession having a significant impact to development occurring in the housing sector.

Following are the major observations presented in this report:

- Residential development within urban growth areas of Clark County consumed 1,245 acres with a density of 4.7 dwelling units per acre. Based on the VBLM, there are 7,513 net buildable acres that can accommodate 51,436 households. At 2.66 persons per household urban growth areas can accommodate 136,820 persons.
- There were 1,387 building permits issued in the rural area on 7,799 acres. Given the underlying zoning, the total vacant and development potential in the rural area is 9,390 lots. Assuming 2.66 persons per household, there is potential for additional rural capacity of 24, 977 persons. Overall, the county can accommodate 161,797 persons.
- Review of development indicates that 43% of all residential development occurred on land with some environmental constraint. More importantly, this percent does not imply that development is occurring on lands with critical areas, because in general environmentally constrained lands are not being developed.
- Building permit review and evaluation has indicated that commercial and industrial development in the UGAs during the period consumed 3,372 acres of land. Commercial uses consumed 2,704 acres and industrial uses consumed 668 acres. Based on the 2015 VBLM inventory there are 2,057 net buildable commercial acres and 3,982 net buildable industrial acres.

PROPOSED ACTION

No action is needed, as this is an informational work session. The Board of Clark County Councilors will have an informational work session on June 10, 2015. They are not planning to take any action on the 2015 BLR. Staff will submit this Report to Washington State Department of Commerce before the June 30, 2015 deadline.