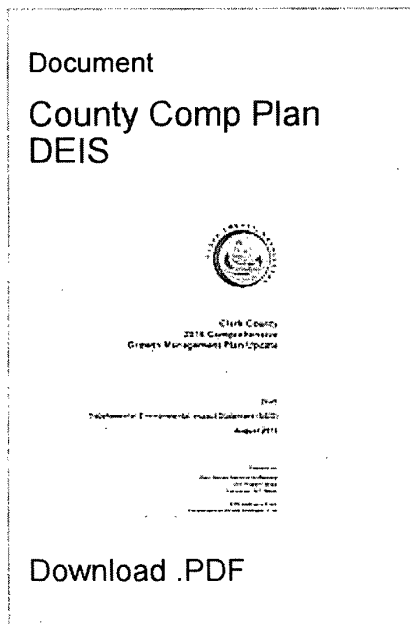


County releases draft land-use study

Document analyzes Madore option to reduce rules



By **Kaitlin Gillespie**, Columbian county government reporter
Published: August 5, 2015, 11:34 AM
Updated: August 5, 2015, 8:28 PM



Nearly four months after the Clark County council moved its Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update along for environmental review, the draft supplemental environmental impact statement for the plan was released Wednesday.



The 164-page environmental impact statement on land-use planning doesn't make for light reading, but the subject matter is among the most important things county government does. The update and its four proposed alternatives will guide 20 years of land-use policy — including where homes, jobs and other resources will go — as Clark County's population continues to grow.

"You've got to show how big you're going to grow," deputy community planner Gordy Euler said.

The results of the draft impact statement echo what planners have been saying for months. The potential of more lots in rural areas of Clark County — proposed in Alternatives 2 and 4 — than allowed by current zoning may mean that additional road improvements,

emergency services and school bus routes would be needed, Euler said.

The proposals

The county is considering four alternatives to its Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update, all of which have the potential to increase the number of available lots:

- Alternative 1, which would make no changes to current zoning, has the potential to create 7,073 lot in unincorporated Clark County.
- Alternative 2 would correct zoning inconsistencies throughout the county and reduce minimum lot sizes for properties zoned for forest and agriculture. Alternative 2 has the potential to create 8,220 new lots.
- Alternative 3 expands the urban growth boundaries of the cities of Battle Ground, La Center, Ridgefield and Washougal. It has the potential to create 7,043 new lots.
- Alternative 4 would reduce minimum lot sizes for properties zoned rural, forest and agriculture. Alternative 4 has the potential to create 12,401 new lots.

This year's comprehensive plan update has been mired in controversy since the Clark County council

requested — and Councilor David Madore developed — the fourth growth alternative. Proponents of the plan say it will give rural landowners more freedom to subdivide and profit from their land. Opponents say it runs the risk reducing land available for jobs, farms and habitat.

The draft impact statement, however, does not classify alternatives as being good or bad, nor does it specify the costs associated with each alternative. The county council will select a preferred alternative, which could use any combination of components from some or all of the four proposals, and the Community Planning Department will determine the cost, Euler said.

Environmental impacts

It should come as no surprise that Alternative 4, based on the number of lot sizes, has the greatest environmental impact, particularly in the areas of transportation, emergency services and school bus routes.

“With the potential to create over 12,000 new lots over the majority of the county, it could significantly change transportation facilities and services in the rural county areas,” according to the draft impact statement, prepared by Seattle-based Environmental Science Associates. “This amount of development would create a need for expanded transportation facilities in all areas of the county.”

It’s a logical progression, Euler said. If more people live in rural areas, they’ll need more ways to get into urban centers for services. School buses will need to drive farther to reach students. Sheriff’s deputies and firefighters will need to drive more to reach emergencies.

“For us (the cost is) going to be primarily roads,” Euler said.

Most of that new development would require road improvements and additional bus routes, according to the draft impact statement. Clark County and C-Tran have not budgeted for such improvements yet.

In addition, most of the unincorporated areas targeted by Alternative 4 are not served by public utilities and services.

“The infrastructure needed, such as power lines, schools and other support services would also change the character of rural Clark County,” according to the report.

Those changes won’t happen quickly, according to the draft impact statement, but the cost to improve roads and C-Tran bus lines could be prohibitive.

Alternative 2 poses the same risks to a lesser extent, while Alternatives 1 and 3 pose a low risk for impacts to infrastructure and services, according to the report.

Next steps

To read and comment on the draft supplemental environmental impact statement, visit clark.wa.gov/planning. Comments can be submitted online or emailed to comp.plan@clark.wa.gov.

Comments also can be mailed to Clark County Community Planning, Attn: 2016 Comp Plan Record, P.O. Box 9810, Vancouver, WA 98666-9810.

There will be two joint public hearings between the Clark County councilors and the Clark County Planning Commission on the draft impact statement at 6 p.m. Sept. 1 and 6 p.m. Sept. 3 at the Publi

Service Center, 1300 Franklin St., in downtown Vancouver.

The Planning Commission will make its recommendations on a preferred alternative at its regular meeting at 6:30 p.m. Sept. 17. A Clark County council board hearing has tentatively been scheduled for 10 a.m. Oct. 20. After that hearing, a final supplemental environmental impact statement will be prepared on the preferred alternative.

Tom Gibson

Camas, Washington

It shouldn't surprise anyone that David Madore is suggesting that we radically increase the budgets for several stakeholders, including a number of departments at Clark County, without ever figuring out how he will pay for it. That is what is so radical about it. The Republican Fairy isn't going to make this all better no matter how many Ayn Rand novels you read.

Reply · Aug 7, 2015 4:16pm

**Lynn Carman**

Felida, Washington

Would someone please check to see if it is legal to have a joint meeting of the Planning Commission and the Board at the same time or is this the Boards way to micro manage the Planning Commission to their way of thinking? In the past the Planning Commission had their own meetings and then would give their recommendation to the Board, then the Board would have their own meetings. Alternative #1 it the best choice due to it's already set and all the other will just screw up GMA all the more. They are not abiding by the RCW so again they will thumb their noses to being told they have to do something about growth.....the barn door is wide open and welcome to those folks headed this way! Buyer Beware!!

Reply · 2 · Aug 6, 2015 6:53am

**Katie Gillespie**

County Government Reporter at The Columbian

The way Gordy Euler explained this one to me is it makes it easier for the public to comment. When the planning commission makes their recommendation for a preferred alternative, that will be at their own separate meeting. If you want to comment at a meeting, however, now you don't have to go to both a planning commission meeting and a county council meeting.

Reply · Aug 6, 2015 9:29am

**Lynn Carman**

Felida, Washington

Katie Gillespie thanks Katie, I have also heard from Ms Cook and I still have more questions. So if the Council hears the comments with the Planning Commission why then do they need another hearing? What laws/RCW govern the two separate entities to have a joint meeting? Ms Cook stated in her email the last go around of GMA they did this. There is the appearance to much micro management is going on??? Thanks again Katie. Things change so fast and I have caught a couple winging it things they have done that were in error.

Reply · Aug 6, 2015 9:55am

**Lynn Carman**

Felida, Washington

The last one was in Febr when the City of Ridgefield went to the Council with their expansion and not the Planning Commission. Love Chris Horne telling the Council I was right.

Reply · Aug 6, 2015 9:57am

**Katie Gillespie**

County Government Reporter at The Columbian

Lynn Carman You are asking some fabulous questions here that I don't have the answers to. Or the caffeine in my system to even be able to think about. Here's an item in the GMA that addresses public process. As you can see, it is very, very broad.<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=36.70A.140>

Reply · Aug 6, 2015 10:32am

**Lynn Carman**

Felida, Washington

Katie Gillespie, thank you.....all one can do is ask questions since they change that they do

at the drop of a hat down there. Here is what I just got from Ms Cook;
 "In 2007, the Commissioners were Morris, Boldt, and Stuart. The reason for holding joint hearings are so that the PC and the BOCC all receive the same testimony and so that the public don't need to testify twice. The first hearing will be for staff to give it's report and for the public give testimony. The separate hears later are for deliberation and voting.

The law that governs development of the Comprehensive plant is Chapter 36.70A RCW. The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), which governs adoption of an environmental impact statement is Chapter 4321C RCW."

If I have further questions I should contact the County's Planning Dept. and that legal is there for the county so if I have further legal questions I should contact an attorney.

Reply · Aug 6, 2015 11:05am



Katie Gillespie

County Government Reporter at The Columbian

Lynn Carman Cook's explanation is the one I heard from Euler, too.

Reply · Aug 6, 2015 1:53pm



Lynn Carman

Felida, Washington

Katie Gillespie, Thanks, I thought it was all compiled for everyone to read as they are to keep this to pass along to the State? So where they have the meeting separate or joint it's a part of the record and shouldn't be file in the round bin.

Moving on to digest the 164 page report where I find some of the endangered plants and animals/birds environments being taken up for development, not smart growth in my book? Plus love the list of what can be found in the waterways, every citizen should be aware of what they are swimming in.

Reply · Aug 7, 2015 7:09am



John M. Kowalski

Camas, Washington

Alternative 4.... greatest environmental impact. It all goes back to Madore and his lack of leadership. The man is obviously unaware that the rural areas are interdependent with the urban and suburban areas, which is what this study implies. Instead Madore and his doppelganger have tried to create conflict between rural and non-rural areas.

Reply · 2 · Aug 6, 2015 6:45am



Christine Blackford

Things aare becoming even more interesting. Thanks Kaitlin.