

Clark County growth plan update nears end

County projects shortfall for transportation needs



By **Katie Gillespie** ([/author/katiegillespie](#)), Columbian County Government Reporter

Published: May 16, 2016, 11:05 PM

Public Meetings

- What The Clark County council and Clark County Planning Commission will have a series of joint and separate public hearings over the next few weeks to discuss the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update

- Where All meetings will be at the Public Service Center, Sixth Floor, 1300 Franklin St , Vancouver

- When

6:30 p.m. Thursday: Joint public hearing on entire plan update, including environmental impact statement

6:30 p.m. May 24: Joint public hearing on entire plan update, including environmental impact statement

6:30 p.m. June 2: Planning Commission deliberations

10 a.m. June 21: Clark County council deliberations

To Learn More

To view the remaining Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update materials, visit

clark.wa.gov/community-planning/plan-adoption
(<http://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/plan-adoption>)

It's the beginning of the end for the Clark County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update, as the council prepares to issue its final decisions on the remaining chapters of the 20-year growth plan



Now, the county faces the adoption of a capital facilities plan, which will outline how to pay for the plan in the coming years. County managers are projecting a multimillion-dollar funding shortfall when it comes to adequately funding transportation services

The Clark County Council and Planning Commission will hold a series of meetings over the next month and a half to deliberate and make its final decisions on the county's growth management plan, which creates a plan for how and where Clark County will accommodate its population growth over the next 20 years

The council adopted its zoning plan in March, creating a plan that according to the Final Environmental Impact Statement will create about 8,024 new parcels across Clark County. Over the course of years, those lots will need to have access to services such as water, electricity, transportation and public services.

Most significant in the county's capital facilities plan is the challenge of paying for transportation improvements, according to county documents. Over the course of 20 years, Clark County projects a \$158.1 million shortage. The plan predicts the county will need to spend \$691.2 million on transportation to implement the preferred alternative.

"The revenue shortage for funding the needed transportation improvements in 20 years is the most significant shortfall," said Matt Hermen, a planner at Clark County.

Hermen went on to say that the Growth Management Hearings Board, which hears appeals on county comprehensive plans, has consistently required that estimates for revenues meet the estimated expenses for 20-year planning periods, or else "a reassessment of the land-use plan would be required."

What that means for county policy remains to be seen, and will likely be debated in the coming weeks. County Chair Marc Boldt, no party preference, could not be reached for comment Monday.

Hermen noted, however, that the county's six-year transportation improvement plan, which lists high-priority projects for Clark County, is funded.

The county kicks off its series of meetings Thursday with a joint public hearing of the Clark County council and planning commission at 6:30 p.m. The two boards will only hear public testimony, and will not have deliberations.

The county council is slated to make its final decision on the growth plan on June 21, nine days in advance of the Commerce Department's June 30 deadline to submit the plan.



Katie Gillespie (/author/katiegillespie)

Columbian County Government Reporter

☎ 360-735-4517

👤 @newsladykatie (<https://twitter.com/newsladykatie>)

✉ [Send an Email \(mailto:kaitlin.gillespie@columbian.com\)](mailto:kaitlin.gillespie@columbian.com)

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John Ley · Camas, Washington

The Columbian reports that housing demand exceeds supply in Clark County. And yet our GMA plan wants to restrict growth for the next 20 years?

"the Final Environmental Impact Statement will create about 8,024 new parcels across Clark County"

So over the next 20 years, in a county with roughly 450,000 citizens, they are allowing for only 8,024 new parcels for homes to possibly be built? It sure seems low to me.

And sadly, the current proposal will not remedy the loss of property rights our rural landowners experienced over 20 years ago, when Clark County was the only county in the state to INCREASE minimum lot sizes for rural landowners. We had a chance to rectify that injustice, but 3 of the 5 Councilors thought otherwise. So the matter will be decided in the courts.

<http://www.columbian.com/. /demand-for-homes-exceeds ./>

Reply  1 20 hrs



Bret Bucher · Real Estate Broker at Realty Pro, Inc

Figure the reality, Residential New Construction 107 Million up 23% from the same period of last year 1st Quarter 2016, meaning it is absolutely impossible to meet the demand of housing in Clark County, and it could easily take 3 years to get an approval on a subdivision. Rents have gone up 35% since 2012, and there is no slow down. And like I have explained before the Columbian starting talking about a housing crisis, we have a serious rapid problem ahead for tenants!

Reply 18 hrs Edited



John Ley · Camas, Washington

The GMA was supposed to be a planning "tool", not to "control" the people, but to allow cities and counties, to anticipate future growth patterns and prepare to address the needs of what "the people" will make happen as they freely chose to grow businesses, build new homes, and pursue their dreams.

Instead, we're seeing government use the GMA in an effort to control the people, force them to live in ever more expensive and crowded neighborhoods, and restrict their property rights.


Reply 21 hrs



Jeffrey Gibbons

From above "Hermen went on to say that the Growth Management Hearings Board, which hears appeals on county comprehensive plans, has consistently required that estimates for revenues meet the estimated expenses for 20-year planning periods, or else "a reassessment of the land-use plan would be required."

This makes perfect sense to me. If we cannot afford the impact of growth it should not be allowed. No matter what growth alternative is finally adopted any growth should pay for itself. Why would we allow growth without also paying for the related infrastructure? Eventually we would have to pay for it or more likely just live with a lessened quality of life for everyone. Pay as you grow! Put in place and fully implement impact fees on new building. If a project does not pencil today, wait for tomorrow.

Reply  2 21 hrs



John Ley · Camas, Washington

An honest question, my friend. Re "If we cannot afford the impact of growth it should not be allowed."

How do you STOP people from moving to Clark County? How do you make it illegal for people to move here? That's the logical conclusion to " growth should not be allowed"

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The GMA here in Clark County stole property rights from rural landowners over 20 years ago. Once consequence has been the significant rise in "unaffordable housing". Additionally, we have eliminated any "affordable farms" in our county, due to 20 acre minimum lot sizes

Reply  1 21 hrs



Jon Van Natta

You stop people from moving here by using the laws of supply and demand, a basic cornerstone of capitalism. Make landowners who seek development, developers and the people moving in pay for all the necessary infrastructure. That will kill growth dead, as deadbeats won't be ripping off the rest of us anymore.

Reply  1 16 hrs

Eric Stefik Portland State University

The County seems to have these grand plans that consume all transportation dollars, while local streets go begging for smaller things, like traffic signs. In the Minnehaha area on NE 63rd St, west of the Safeway and Chase bank, there is an essentially unmarked intersection, already the site of one fatality. Despite housing developments along both sides of NE 58th Ave, pedestrians and cross traffic have virtually no protection from cars and large trucks barreling along, at 45 mph or more, on NE 63rd St. I have contacted the county which claims to be "studying the matter", while recognizing it is on a list of most dangerous intersections. It is truly a challenge to cross on foot or by vehicle on NE 58th Ave.


The County doesn't seem to be master plans or funding for signs and potholes, just "studies" that continue to neglect the developments we already have.

Reply 22 hrs



Lynn Carman Felida, Washington

The barn door is wide open now, I thought GMA was about controlled growth not allowing it all over Clark County? Ya think you have road problems now just wait until this is approved??

Reply  1 23 hrs



Thom Rasmussen Salmon Creek, Washington



Just think about how bad it would have been with that stupid Alt 4 in place

Reply 23 hrs



Jon Van Natta

Road problems? What road problems? You mean the traffic back up on I-5 that goes from Bellingham to the I-5 bridge at 8 00 am every morning?

Reply 16 hrs

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