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CLARK COUNTY

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Madore to public: Talk amongst yourselves

The Clark County commissioners' work session on marijuana was attended by more than 100 people. That's a huge crowd, considering that a reporter from

County growth plan: Pick a number

Revised 20-year plan will rely upon updated population projection

By ERIN MIDDLEWOOD
Columbian staff writer

Planning for new houses, businesses, roads and schools in Clark County over the next couple of decades first requires picking a number: Will Clark County grow by 24,000 or 240,000 between now and 2035?

Clark County commissioners will consider that question at 10 a.m. Jan. 21 in the sixth-floor hearing room of the Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin St.

Washington's Growth Management Act requires the county to

project population growth and plan accordingly.

Counties must revise their 20-year plans every eight years. Clark adopted a revision in 2007. Now it's beginning work on a plan for growth between 2015 and 2035.

"The population number is the key driver in terms of how the county anticipates to grow in the future," said Oliver Orjiako, the county's community planning director.

The number of anticipated newcomers will dictate how much land commissioners make available for housing development, which in turn will determine needs for roads, schools and other services.

The 2007 plan expanded urban boundaries based on an assumption that population would grow about 2 percent each year to reach

584,000 residents by 2024. Actual growth has fallen short of that.

"Over the last four or five years, we barely got to 1 percent," Orjiako said. "This is the result of the deep recession."

The county commissioners don't pull their population figures out of thin air. They pick from the state Office of Financial Management's low, medium or high forecast.

OFM's most recent figures predict that Clark County's current population of 430,000 will reach between 460,000 and 681,000 in 2035.

Orjiako said the most likely figure lies in between — 562,000.

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Update

■ **Previously:** Clark County commissioners in 2007 adopted a land-use plan that anticipated more population growth than has been experienced since.

■ **What's new:** Clark County commissioners are beginning work on a revised 20-year growth plan for 2015 through 2035.

■ **What's next:** Commissioners will meet at 10 a.m. Jan. 21 in the sixth-floor hearing room of the Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin St., to discuss what population projection should form the basis of Clark County's 2035 land-use plan.