1.0 Project Description

1.1 What is being proposed?

Clark County’s Comprehensive Growth Management Plan must address state growth management goals and be consistent with the Community Framework Plan (countywide planning policies), as well as meet the requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA). Comprehensive plans are based on a set of assumptions that may not be realized over the lifespan of the plans. For that reason, comprehensive plans and growth that actually occurs are compared at least every eight years to enable corrections to be made. Clark County is scheduled to have an updated comprehensive plan by June 2016.

Clark County and the Cities of Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Vancouver, and Washougal, and the Town of Yacolt have or are proposing to revise their Comprehensive Growth Management Plans (Comprehensive Plans) to comply with the requirements of the GMA. The revisions focus on county-initiated technical changes to the comprehensive plan as well as minor city-proposed changes to Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) to accommodate projected growth for the next 20 years (out to 2035).

Assumptions used in planning for growth in 2007 did not anticipate the economic downturn that followed in 2008, and from which recovery is still in process. Other conditions in the county, as well as state and federal laws, have changed, requiring corresponding changes to the County’s Plan with this update. In addition, improvements in technology and data gathering/interpretations to more accurately map existing conditions and field determinations of available buildable land have recently been accomplished, which may change the conclusions of the previous plan regarding the ability of the current urban growth areas to accommodate future population, jobs, and vision of the communities.

1.1.1 Summary of the SEPA Process

The 2007 Comprehensive Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (2007 FEIS) included a full inventory of existing environmental conditions at the time of evaluation, along with an analysis of potential impacts to the environment from implementation of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan and mitigation to minimize those impacts. The Draft 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) incorporated by reference the full build-out conditions of the preferred alternative analyzed in the 2007 FEIS, and refers to it as the No Action Alternative (Figures 1-1 and 1-2).

Based on input during the scoping process, four alternative scenarios were developed to provide the framework for evaluating the impacts of growth on the environment: Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative; Alternative 2 – Countywide Modifications; Alternative 3 – City UGA Expansion; and Alternative 4 – Rural, Agriculture, and Forest Changes. For additional details on each alternative, see Chapter 1 of the DSEIS for the Clark County 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update. The DSEIS was published on August 5, 2015. The DSEIS was distributed to agencies and jurisdictions with interest in the project and made publicly available for review. During the 30-day public comment period, 154 commenters submitted a total of 227 communications via email, letters, and oral testimonies for a total of 696 individual comments. The commenters included state and local agencies, organizations, and many members of the public. The individual comments along with Clark County’s responses to those comments are available in Appendix A.
Figure 1-1: 2007 Comprehensive Plan Map (Existing Conditions)
Figure 1-2: Current Zoning Map
The most common topics from the comments received were the alternatives, land and shoreline use, and socioeconomics.

Of the approximately 670 comments submitted, over 200 discussed the alternatives. Most of the alternatives-related comments either: supported Alternative 1 (21%), supported Alternative 4 (21%), or provided a general comparison or ranking of the alternatives (18%). Of the approximately 125 comments on land and shoreline use, the majority discussed zoning (30%), development patterns (30%), or general land and shoreline use issues (18%). Some comments also discussed housing (10%) and the methodology used (3%), while fewer comments discussed cost and critical areas (approximately 2% percent each). While not a topic covered in the DSEIS, over 70 comments discussed socioeconomic issues. Most of these comments covered economic stability (47%), community character (20%), quality of life (15%), or socioeconomic conditions in general (15%).

1.1.2 What are the planning assumptions used in developing the alternatives to manage growth?

The Board of County Councilors (BOCC) adopted a number of assumptions that are used to guide land use planning for the next 20 years. The following table summarizes these assumptions, which were used in the development of the growth alternatives that are the subject of this document. Assumptions for the 2007 Comprehensive Plan are shown for comparison.
## Table 1-1. Summary of Planning Assumptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumption Factors</th>
<th>2007 UPDATE</th>
<th>2016 UPDATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population projection</td>
<td>584,310 total county population</td>
<td>577,431 total county population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected new residents</td>
<td>192,635 new residents</td>
<td>128,586 new residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban/rural population growth split</td>
<td>90% of the population in urban areas; 10% in rural areas</td>
<td>90% of the population in urban areas; 10% in rural areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual population growth rate</td>
<td>2.0% assumed per year</td>
<td>1.26% assumed per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of new dwelling units</td>
<td>66,939 new urban dwelling units; 7,438 new rural dwelling units</td>
<td>43,517 new urban dwelling units; 4,835 new rural dwelling units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average residential urban densities</td>
<td>Vancouver = 8 units/ net acre; La Center = 4 units/net acre; Remaining cities = 6 units/net acre; Yacolt = no minimum</td>
<td>Vancouver = 8 units/ net acre; La Center = 4 units/net acre; Remaining cities = 6 units/net acre; Yacolt = no minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing type ratio</td>
<td>Up to 75% of one housing type</td>
<td>Up to 75% of one housing type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons per household</td>
<td>2.59 persons per household</td>
<td>2.66 persons per household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of new jobs</td>
<td>138,312 new jobs</td>
<td>100,022 new jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees per acre</td>
<td>20 per commercial acre; 9 per industrial acre; and 20 per business park acre</td>
<td>20 per commercial acre; 9 per industrial acre; and 9 per business park acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs to household ratio</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1 job for every 1 dwelling unit*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential infrastructure deduction</td>
<td>27.7% deducted from gross residential land supply</td>
<td>27.7% deducted from gross residential land supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial/industrial infrastructure deduction</td>
<td>25% deducted from gross commercial/industrial land supply</td>
<td>25% deducted from gross commercial/industrial land supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Land per Vacant Buildable Lands Model (VBLM) definition</td>
<td>Vacant if residential building value is less than $13,000; Vacant if commercial/industrial building value is less than $67,500</td>
<td>Vacant if residential building value is less than $13,000; Vacant if commercial/industrial building value is less than $67,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absorption Rate</td>
<td>Redevelopable land would absorb 5% of projected population &amp; job growth</td>
<td>Redevelopable land would absorb 5% of projected population &amp; job growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market factor – % of additional land added to specified supply to accommodate growth for market flexibility</td>
<td>10% additional residential land capacity 0% for commercial, business park, industrial land capacity</td>
<td>15% additional residential land capacity 15% additional commercial, business park, industrial land capacity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This is the jobs to household ratio goal for 2035.
1.2 The Preferred Alternative

On February 23, 2016, after consideration of the DSEIS analysis and all public comments received, the Clark County Board of County Councilors (BOCC) selected a preferred alternative for the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update. Under Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 197-11-655, a preferred alternative can be a compilation of various features from any of the alternatives analyzed in the DSEIS. The Preferred Alternative for the Clark County 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update includes components of the No Action Alternative (Alternative 1), Alternative 2, and Alternative 3 as analyzed in the DSEIS.

The County Geographic Information System (GIS) department ran the vacant buildable lands model (VBLM) and rural capacity estimate on the Preferred Alternative based on revised information received since the DSEIS was published in August 2015 (Appendix B). The summary results of the VBLM capacity analysis indicate that in aggregate, Clark County can accommodate population growth of 135,122 persons, which is sufficient to accommodate the 20-year projected population growth of 128,586. The updates to the VBLM and rural capacity estimates account for minor changes in the planning assumption numbers (Table 1-1) and in the potential new parcels created by full build-out of the Preferred Alternative as compared to the DSEIS.

Under the Preferred Alternative, the current plan would be re-adopted. Furthermore, updates would be made to accommodate revised planning assumptions and existing development trends, and to incorporate necessary changes in policy direction, updates to land use/zoning designations, and the BOCC’s principles and values. The original intent of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan would be refined based on new studies undertaken over the past nine years. This information would also be used to resolve any technical or mapping inconsistencies. Some zoning designations would be altered to reduce the minimum lot area and provide more parcels. And lastly, the urban growth areas (UGAs) of Battle Ground, La Center, and Ridgefield would be expanded to better support residential and employment growth, as described in more detail in the following sections.

Table 1-2 summarizes the difference between full build-out conditions under the existing Comprehensive Plan and zoning and the full build-out conditions under the Preferred Alternative.

Table 1-2 Comparison of Rural Build-out Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Existing Conditions 2007 Comprehensive Plan</th>
<th>2016 Preferred Alternative</th>
<th>Net Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of New Parcels</td>
<td>Acreage Affected</td>
<td>Number of New Parcels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>5,195</td>
<td>34,438</td>
<td>5,383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>4,356</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>14,582</td>
<td>1,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UR</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other**</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>3,437</td>
<td>479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>7,039</td>
<td>57,119</td>
<td>8,024</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Rural Capacity Estimate excludes property in the current use program for Timber and Designated Forest Land.

**The ‘Other’ category is a combination of all other zoning designations that have vacant or underutilized parcels per the Rural Capacity Estimate, which are not directly affected by the zoning changes proposed in the Preferred Alternative. The exception is the Urban Reserve-10 zone that will be converted to R-5 upon implementation of the Preferred Alternative.
1.2.1 Rural Clark County

The Preferred Alternative includes changes to rural County lands that would organize and consolidate some comprehensive plan land use designations County-wide. Some additional changes are also proposed to affect more localized areas. See Figures 1-3 and 1-4 for depictions of the Comprehensive Plan Map and Zoning Map, respectively, under the Preferred Alternative.

1. Rural Lands

Under the Preferred Alternative, Rural-5 (requiring a minimum of 5 acres per lot), Rural-10, and Rural-20 comprehensive plan land use designations would be consolidated to create a single “Rural Lands” designation that would be implemented with R-5, R-10, and R-20 zones. In addition, some parcels zoned R-20 adjacent to agricultural and forest parcels would be rezoned to R-10 (see discussion under Agricultural and Forest Lands below). An estimated 5,383 new parcels could be created under full build-out conditions in the Rural zones if all parcels were developed to the maximum extent possible. This includes parcels that would result from a zone change from R-20 to R-10 and those in Urban Reserve (UR) that would be converted to R-5. However, only 188 of the 5,383 potential new parcels are a direct result of the proposed changes under the Preferred Alternative (see Table 1-2).

2. Resource Lands

   a. Forest Lands

The Preferred Alternative includes replacing the FR-40 zoning designation with an FR-20 zoning designation. Parcels zoned FR-40 would be rezoned to FR-20, with a new minimum parcel size of 20 acres. An estimated 412 new parcels could be created under full build-out conditions in Forest zones. Only 25 of the 412 potential new parcels are a direct result of the changes proposed in the Preferred Alternative (see Table 1-2).

   b. Agriculture Lands

The Preferred Alternative also includes replacing the AG-20 zoning designation with an AG-10 zoning designation. Parcels zoned AG-20 would be rezoned to AG-10, with a new minimum parcel size of 10 acres. An estimated 1,750 new parcels could be created under full build-out conditions in the Agriculture zone. The changes under the Preferred Alternative account for 842 of the potential 1,750 new parcels (see Table 1-2).

   c. Rural Centers

The GMA requires counties to designate ‘limited areas of more intensive rural development.’ In Clark County, such areas are called Rural Centers; Amboy, Fargher Lake, Brush Prairie, and Hockinson are examples. The Preferred Alternative would combine the “Rural Center Commercial (CR-2)” and “Rural Commercial (CR-1)” into a single comprehensive plan designation of “Rural Commercial.” The only major difference between the zones is that CR-2 parcels are located in Rural Centers and CR-1 parcels are not.
Figure 1-3: 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update
BOCC Preferred Alternative - Comprehensive Plan

The preferred alternative for comprehensive planning in Clark County, as of February 23, 2016, is shown in the map. This alternative is compared to the preferred alternative in the 2004 Comprehensive Plan. The map highlights areas for specific uses such as urban, rural, industrial, mixed use, and commercial. It also includes preferred urban growth areas, urban center mixed use, rural center residential, and other designations. The map is a valuable tool for understanding the planned development and land use across the county.
d. Urban Reserve

Urban Reserve lands are on the fringe of the UGAs. The Urban Reserve designation is intended to protect areas from premature land division and development that would preclude efficient transition to urban development. Currently there are Urban Reserve and Industrial Urban Reserve overlay comprehensive plan designations. They are implemented with the Urban Reserve-10 zoning overlay and Industrial Urban Reserve-20 zoning overlay. Under the Preferred Alternative, the County would create one comprehensive plan overlay - Urban Reserve (UR) - that would be added to the Overlay Districts section of the Unified Development Code (Chapter 40.250). The Urban Reserve overlay would be implemented via an UR-10 zoning overlay for future urban residential development and an UR-20 zoning overlay for all other types of future urban land development. There are approximately 577 acres of proposed Rural and Agricultural zoning under the Urban Reserve overlay. These lands would retain the underlying zoning; there are 70 UR-10 parcels (307 acres) that don’t currently have an underlying zone and they would be given R-5 zoning. There would be no changes to the uses that are allowed within the overlay. The purpose is to have UR applied as a true overlay.

3. Urban Growth Areas
   a. Commercial Lands

Presently, Clark County has three urban commercial comprehensive plan designations (Neighborhood, Community, and General). Under the Preferred Alternative, these designations would be consolidated into one Commercial (C) designation. This would affect approximately 2,900 acres scattered throughout the county. Existing zoning would remain. The purpose behind consolidating the Commercial designations is to make it easier to change zoning designations when there is a change in conditions.

   b. Public Facilities

Presently, Clark County does not have a public facility comprehensive plan or zoning designation. Under the Preferred Alternative, such a designation would be created, which would include existing schools, utilities, and government buildings and facilities.

   c. Urban Holding

An Urban Holding (UH) overlay is applied when lands that are brought into urban growth areas do not have the necessary infrastructure to support development. In these cases, criteria are established that must be met in order to remove the urban holding overlay to allow the land to develop with the underlying zoning. There are currently three UH zoning overlays: Urban Holding-10, Urban Holding-20, and Urban Holding-40, and no comprehensive plan Urban Holding overlay. Under the Preferred Alternative, an Urban Holding (UH) overlay plan designation would be added to the Overlay Districts section of the Unified Development Code (Chapter 40.250). This overlay would be implemented with a zoning designation of Urban Holding-10 (UH-10) for residential and Urban Holding-20 (UH-20) for all other uses. These lands would retain the underlying zoning, which would apply when the UH overlay is removed. There would be no change to the uses that are allowed within the overlay. The purpose is to provide a predictable land use pattern for the future once necessary infrastructure is in place, but preventing premature development of UH areas until such infrastructure is available.
d. **Battle Ground UGA**

Battle Ground has a number of parcels (less than 60 acres) with an Industrial (I) comprehensive plan designation, UH-40 overlay, and Business Park (BP) zoning that are currently in urban low residential use, including Whispering Meadows I and II, Camellia, and Windsong Acres. One parcel is vacant yet surrounded on four sides with urban low residential use. The Preferred Alternative would change this area to urban low density residential, R1-20, UH-10 overlay. This change would make the land use and zoning designations consistent with how properties are being used and reduce the potential for an incompatible land use to locate in the midst of residential use in the future.

The Preferred Alternative would add 82 acres, currently designated R-5, to the Urban Growth Area along the existing east boundary as Mixed Use with an Urban Holding Overlay area near Dollars Corner (Figure 1-5). The area would accommodate mixed residential and commercial uses.

e. **Vancouver UGA Modifications**

Under the Preferred Alternative, six changes would be made to the Vancouver UGA. Each proposed change is described in more detail below:

1) **Remove reference to the Three Creeks special planning area:** The Three Creeks special planning area was created during the adoption of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. The intent was to conduct further detailed planning efforts in the unincorporated urban areas around Hazel Dell, Felida, Lake Shore, Salmon Creek and the County Fairgrounds. The subarea planning effort is nearly complete and removal of the overlay is appropriate. Four subarea planning efforts were initiated: Highway 99, Pleasant Highlands, Discovery/Fairgrounds and Salmon Creek/University District. The Highway 99 Subarea Plan was adopted in 2008 (Clark County, 2008) and the Pleasant Highlands Subarea Plan was initiated in 2012 with the effort ongoing.

2) **Implement Discovery/Fairgrounds subarea comprehensive plan map and zoning changes:** This subarea is generally bounded by NE 209th Street on the north, NE 29th Avenue on the east, NE 164th Street on the south, and NW 11th Avenue on the west. In the 2007 Comprehensive Plan the area was approved for zoning at urban densities with a considerable amount of land designated for Light Industrial (IL) uses. The subarea planning effort recognized the environmental constraints in the area and recommended changing most of the IL zoning to Business Park uses. The zoning designations allow for more environmentally compatible site design while allowing for more jobs per acre.
Figure 1-5: UGA - Comprehensive Plan and Zoning - Battleground and La Center
3) Implement Salmon Creek subarea comprehensive plan map and zoning changes: This subarea is generally bounded by NE 190th Street alignment on the north, approximately NE 58th Avenue on the east, Salmon Creek and Interstate 205 on the south, and Interstate 5 on the west. The draft plan is consistent with Washington State University (WSU) and the City of Vancouver’s vision for future campus development and promotion of jobs and housing, with substantial acres designated as Mixed Use.

4) Change some parcels that have a Mixed Use comprehensive plan designation on approximately 335 acres in the Vancouver UGA to either rezone the property to Mixed use (MX) or change the comprehensive plan designation to be consistent with the current zone.

5) Remove UR adjacent to the UGA and replace it with R-5 and AG-20 zoning: Remove the Urban Reserve (UR-10) zoning designation along NE 50th between 199th and NE 179th (in the north Salmon Creek Vancouver UGA) and replace it with Rural (R-5).

6) Remove the UH in the Fisher Swale area between Vancouver and Camas: The Urban Holding (UH) designation (225 acres) within two areas of the Vancouver UGA, known as Fisher Swale, are proposed to be removed. The underlying Single Family zoning of R1-20, R1-10, and R1-7.5 would remain.

f. Washougal UGA

The Preferred Alternative would correct an inconsistency between County and City zoning classifications within the southern portion of the Washougal UGA. The proposal would replace the City zoning of AR-16 (13 acres) SE Woodburn Road and apply County zoning of R-18 and add an Urban Holding overlay; replace R1-15 zoning (132 acres) in several areas on the north side of the city with R1-10 zoning; replace 37 acres of Heavy Industrial zoning on Steigerwald Refuge property to Parks and Open Space; and remove Urban Holding 40 on property owned by the Port of Camas/Washougal and replace it with Urban Holding 20.
g. La Center UGA

The Preferred Alternative also proposes to add 17 acres to La Center’s UGA on the northern city boundary (Figure 1-5). The area is proposed to be added for a new elementary school site. The Comprehensive Plan designation is currently R-5.

The Preferred Alternative includes the addition of 56 acres\(^1\) to the UGA north of the existing southern portion of the La Center urban growth boundary (Figure 1-3a). The purpose is to accommodate the opportunity for additional businesses near Interstate 5. The Comprehensive Plan designation would be Commercial with a UH overlay.

h. Ridgefield UGA\(^2\)

The Preferred Alternative would add 111 acres on the north side of the City of Ridgefield, near I-5 (Figure 1-6). This additional area would be converted to residential uses. The current designation of Agriculture would be changed to a mix of low-, medium-, and mixed-use residential Comprehensive Plan designations all with an Urban Holding overlay.

\(^1\) This UGA expansion would only occur if La Center agrees to provide legal defense for the expansion, if required.

\(^2\) This UGA expansion would only occur if Ridgefield agrees to provide legal defense for the expansion, if required.
Figure 1-6: UGA Expansion – Comprehensive Plan and Zoning - Ridgefield

Source: Clark County 2014; OSM 2014; ESA 2014
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