



**BOARD OF COUNTY COUNCILORS  
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 20, 2015**

The Board convened in the Councilors' Hearing Room, 6th Floor, Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin Street, Vancouver, Washington. Councilors David Madore, Jeanne E. Stewart, and Tom Mielke present.

PUBLIC HEARING: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE - PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The purpose of this hearing is to take public testimony on the Planning Commissions' recommendation for a preferred alternative. The Board will deliberate and select a preferred alternative. The selected preferred alternative will be analyzed in a final SEIS.

MADORE: Okay. We're ready. All right.

Calling the meeting to order. This is the public hearing for the comprehensive plan update. This is to allow our community, along with each of the jurisdictions within Clark County, to come together, collaborate to plan for the future so that we have enough resources, enough land available for our community to grow appropriately and provide for the necessary infrastructure investments as well. What I'd like to be able to do is I'd like to lead, to start with Oliver, if you don't mind.

In the starting out here, we have a notebook with Tab 1, subject says Criteria For Choosing a Preferred Alternative, upon what information, what knowledge do we base our future going forward? What criteria do we use to plan for our future? There are two documents I'd like to be able to bring up and I'd like for our citizens to be able to see what I'm seeing here, because the information that

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we all use in order to plan, to make informed decisions is crucial. We need to know it's that we're all on the same page. It's known good data, and if somehow we get different answers, we need to find out why is it different. Our decisions are only as good as the information it's based on. So the two documents, I'd like to be able to just simply walk through them - and if you'd be patient - to see the content of both of these documents and then we can open it up for discussion, dialogue.

The first one has to do with the overall expected growth for Clark County, so I want to just read through this, and if you can follow along on the screen, that would be good.

STEWART: Mr. Chair?

MADORE: Yes, ma'am.

STEWART: This document is from where?

MADORE: Both of these, I've authored both of these documents.

STEWART: Okay. And has staff seen these?

MADORE: The documents were prepared this morning. I do not plan to act on these documents this morning. I plan to introduce them, because it would be not realistic for us to be able to somehow see

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these for the first time and then act on them. We need to be able to be -- the public process, especially for the comp plan update is a very formal process. Process is very important, and the steps we take in order to engage the public, engage the each of the jurisdictions needs to be inclusive.

STEWART: So is it fair to say that this information is from your perspective about how we -- how the growth management update factors that are related to it?

MADORE: Yes.

STEWART: Thank you.

MADORE: Okay. All right. The need to correct the Clark County population growth rate forecast. On December 18, 2013, a 1.12 percent population growth rate was chosen for the next 20 years based primarily upon this graphic found on Page 7 of the PowerPoint presentation shared at that hearing. Each of these, you'll see there's a source here, each of these documents or the information in these documents, the original source is -- there's a link there to verify that these are backed up by. You can go to the original source to verify that, yep, sure enough, it's there.

So if you look in that first graph, you'll see that there's a time period from 2007 to 2013. It's a relatively short time period for

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us to base a 20-year projection on. And during that time period, if you recall, that included the recession, and so we see the results of the recession happening during that time.

And when you look at that information, what's on the left, on the vertical axis, here is the percent in growth of our county during that time countywide. And it appeared, if we just simply look at that image, it looks, well, a reasonable amount there is to pick a middle point, 1.12 percent and that's what we adopted for our 20-year plan going forward. That's how much we plan to grow going forward.

So I'll continue to read. Rather than the actual long-term trend, the ground focus was a snapshot of the great recession. Much has changed since that time and numerous requests have been made to increase that number. Housing and rent costs have continued to increase; vacancies have continued to be among the lowest in the state; affordable housing continues to be hard to find; and homelessness is growing worse.

These problems naturally occur when a chronic land shortage results due to underestimating the needs of the community. One of the goals of the Growth Management Act is to correct the inadequate supply of land to meet the needs. The key is better planning that corrects the pattern of underestimating community growth by choosing a more accurate and realistic population growth projection for the future.

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The table there at the bottom, the OFM stands for the Office of Financial Management, and by law, we have to stay within the low and the high boundaries of what they project for our community. They publish those numbers on their website. Those numbers in the first two columns, the 2015 and the 2035, come directly from their website. They started with the Population of the low of 420-some thousand at the time at 2015 low and 497,000-something on the high. And the 2035 has a rate of growth that's very conservative to start, medium and then more aggressive on the high.

The next column is the Population Difference. That's just simply subtracting 2015 from 2035 and that's the Population Difference. The right most column, Annual Growth Rate, that's just simply an extrapolation of the percentage of growth during that time and is expressed in the annual growth rate. So .45 percent, 1.12 percent was right in the middle. That's what we chose, and 1.58.

The column just to the left of the right one is Rural Population Difference at 14 percent. If we were to simply use those numbers, pick one, two or three, low, medium or high and calculate 14 percent, that would be the amount of additional people that we'd have to accommodate in the rural community. That's all those areas outside the urban growth boundary. You notice that they range from 50- -- about 5500 to 25,000-and-something.

The next page is the - I believe that a number of you have double-sided

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printing, so look on the back page of that first page - the Actual Population Growth Rate. This provides a longer term perspective. Our actual long-term population growth history provides the most reliable basis for estimating our future growth rate. The historical trend should include at least 20 years and should consider major effects due to temporary conditions that significantly influenced that trend. Outliers should be understood to avoid forecasting a normal future based on a transient exception.

The following graphic provides that more information -- provides that more informed and current basis. So if you look at that graph, you can bring that center there, you'll see that the time frame is much expanded. It ranges from 1991 through 2015. 2015 is included because the Office of Financial Management - I'll refer to them as OFM - released, published a news release on June 30 that included everything through April 1st, and that news release indicated that Clark County is one of the fastest growing counties in the state and that we are back up above two percent in our growth rate. So the numbers shown there, the red squiggly line that goes, takes a dip and then jumps back up, that's the actual population growth rate per year. The line axis there is the annual growth rate in percent.

So you can see it starts out in 1991, the blue line is more of an averaging out, so you can kind of see the overall trend of what's going on there. It starts out at about four percent, ends up at three percent, which stays above two percent except for the recession, and

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the recession is that shaded area there in the oval where we had an exception, and then we jumped back up with the latest numbers being above two percent.

So this is, you notice there is dotted lines there as well, the 1.12 percent and the low, medium, high, those dotted lines are the same choices that the OFM gave us to be able to choose. So we chose that middle one thinking at the time looking only in the -- basically in that oval considering that period of time that would be what we would base the future on looking at that window. And if we look at the broader scope, this is meant to expand our horizons so we don't come too nearsighted there, the sources shown there, you can click on that link.

The OFM news release for April 1st, 2015, update confirmed that Clark County's current population growth rate has returned to the normal pre-recession rate and is now at 2.04 percent. The low, medium and high choices published by the OFM in 2012 are all well below the actual historic basis -- and that's what we used too. That's where those choices come from. They haven't updated that. We still have to be able to choose from those. And below the -- in other words, their choices was below the historic basis and below the OFM's current published growth rate.

The next page. Per the law of supply and demand, failing to provide the expected need for residential land results in unaffordable homes

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and increased homelessness. Even higher prices afford even smaller homes and lesser apartments contrary to the written Growth Management Act goals. Vancouver now has the distinction of having the fastest growing rent prices in the nation. And this graphic is what was published. This made national news. You'll notice that the highest one on there, 14.3 percent represented the City of Vancouver which is about 40 percent of Clark County. They don't evaluate or publish counties; they publish cities. So that's their best indication that we are unique, something is unique about our community.

I also looked in the OFM, they talked about -- they publish the vacancy rates for each of the communities, and our vacancy rate going way back has been one of the lowest counties in the state as well. So this has been not just short-term; this has been a long-term that we have unaffordability going in here and not enough housing according to the OFM numbers.

The GMA requires that we plan to provide sufficient land for housing and employment growth for the next 20 years as highlighted in the following excerpt from the -- this is a section from the Growth Management Act itself. Counties and cities that are required or choose to plan under RCW, there's a reference, shall ensure that, taken collectively, adoption of and amendments to their comprehensive plans and/or development regulations provide sufficient capacity of land suitable for development within their jurisdictions to accommodate their allocated housing and employment

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growth, including the accommodation of, as appropriate, the medical, governmental, and educational, institutional, commercial and industrial facilities related to such growth as adopted in the applicable countywide planning processes and consistent with the 20-year population forecast from the Office of Financial Management. Where that leaves us is this last paragraph.

Therefore, the population growth rate forecast for Clark County should be corrected to the high OFM choice which is still well below the actual normal long-term growth rate average. If that correction is deemed to be too much of a change because we don't think we have enough time at this point, then a smaller correction should be chosen as near as possible to that goal that we can achieve at this point. Projected employment should also be proportionately increased as required by the GMA.

Again, this is only my view. I don't speak for the Council. I've done individual homework and this is the case that I owe to the citizens and to my colleagues to convey the basis upon which a recommendation is made. So I would like to be able to -- there's one other view here and that has to do with the rural community. How do we plan for the rural community and how do we differentiate that? How do we somehow have different standards for them? And this second paper addresses that. So if you will follow with me, I'll be happy to just go over this and then we can come back and we can welcome the dialogue on both of these.

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This paper here is just simply the need to plan for realistic rural population growth. Unrealistic assumptions overstated the rural capacity: That's in our DEIS. The SDEIS, that's the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement, that's SDEIS, has overstated the rural capacity of Alternative 1, Alternatives 1, 2 and 4 to accommodate potential population growth by making the following unrealistic assumptions:

Remainder lots of already developed cluster developments with permanent covenants prohibiting further development should be counted as rural parcels that will develop.

The second assumption. Large scale commercial forestry parcels owned and operated by major forest industry companies with long-term commitments to continue those operations located in those areas with no basic infrastructure should be counted as parcels that will develop.

All rural parcels should be counted as parcels that will develop including 100 percent of an environmentally constrained areas.

Now, these are the assumptions that were used that were analyzed in the DEIS.

All rural parcels that lack sufficient space for septic systems and

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state mandated well clearances due to environmental constraints should be counted as parcels that will develop.

All reasonable assumptions used by the vacant buildable lands model inside the urban growth boundaries, including the never to convert deductions and market factor deduction should be omitted outside the urban growth boundaries. We have two sets of standards there.

The historical basis of the 20 year, the last 20 years of Clark County Assessor GIS records documenting the actual urban/rural split between 85/15, that's 85 percent inside, 15 percent outside the urban growth boundary, and 86/14 should be disregarded. A 90/10 urban/rural split should be used instead. So these are the assumptions that have been -- that have produced the numbers in the DEIS that we've all been working with.

The next table is the actual documentation from the Clark County Assessor's GIS records. In there we see a long-term history from 1995 to 2014, and the columns move across from a Countywide Population, you'll see its increase year-by-year, Rural Population and the Percent of Rural Population.

In other words, if you look at, for instance, 1995, you got 43,000-and-something as the numerator; the denominator is 29,000 or 279,000-and-something. That ratio ends up being 15.5 percent, and the integer values of those when you consider what is the urban/rural

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split, that's the right-most column, so that's 84/16.

As we read across there, each of these records you'll see the actual amount of growth according to our own records as basically started out at 84/16, hovered at 84/15 and we've been at 86/14 since 2004, we're still there.

Correcting the rural calculations with more reasonable assumptions. The rural VBLM, that's the Vacant Buildable Lands Model, has been updated to include the following assumptions, and the calculations for all of the numbers that we examine, how many lots will develop into potential new households is all based on the map.

Every map, every parcel on the map has a serial number to it, has specifications to it, how many gross acres are there, how many critical land acres are there, is there a dwelling there already, is there not, what's the zoning, how many potential lots can you get out of that, all of those turn into, you run it through software, and out comes an Excel spreadsheet that will tell you exactly how many lots potentially can develop using that grid criteria. We see how many were developed, were used already in the book, in the EIS book. This is a new model that I'm proposing that we use that I believe would be more realistic.

The rural VBLM has been updated to include the following assumptions:

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Parcels that cannot reasonably be expected to develop should not be counted as likely to develop. Those include remainder lots of already developed clustered developments that are prohibited from further development. These have been marked as "exclude" on the maps used for Alternative 1 and Alternative 4.

So each of the -- in the GIS database, not only if you click on any one of those parcels, a record comes up. There are fields in that record, and one of those fields that have been added is a exclude, and exclude will allow each one of those to be identified said, well, you shouldn't count that as something that's going to develop, and so one-by-one each one of those have been identified and marked.

Parcels located in areas far from any infrastructure and parcels owned and operated by major forest industry companies with long-term commitments to continue operations on those parcels should not be counted as likely to develop. These have been marked as exclude on the maps used for Alternative 1 and Alternative 4.

Rural parcels that have less than one acre of environmentally unconstrained land for septic and well clearance should not be counted as likely to develop.

And I would just point out that there's a difference between -- we have a VBLM model for inside the urban growth boundary, normally those parcels don't have septic. Our policies are to use sewer and PUD

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water there. You don't have a well normally and you normally don't have septic inside, but outside our policy is not to include septic connection as considered to urban resource, and so septic systems take area more than a footprint of a home and the driveway, and there's also specifications that are mandated that require distance between the septic drain field and a wellhead.

So that the reasonable amount they're consulting are septic system designers out there and the well people, drilling people, is one acre. Sometimes it can be one to two acres, but normally you can -- the two acres will allow -- with larger parcels, you normally can go out into environmentally constrained area and do something there, but you need at least one acre that's useful for septic and building.

Lots that are up to 10 percent smaller than the minimum lot size should be counted as provided by county code. If you have a .9-acre lot and the minimum is one, our county code will allow you to still develop that lot.

The adopted vacant buildable lands model, the VBLM, used for urban areas assumes that a percentage of properties that have an existing residence will likely not divide further. That's the model that we have been -- that's been adopted for years and it's been used for properties inside the urban growth boundary. Some of them don't develop. That 30 percent, that same 30 percent never to convert assumption should be applied to rural parcels as well. What's good

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for the goose is good for the gander. If it's a universal principle, apply it countywide.

The adopted VBLM used for urban areas assumes that a percentage of vacant properties will likely not divide further. That same 10 percent never to convert assumption should be applied to rural parcels as well.

The adopted VBLM used for urban areas assumes a 15 percent residential market factor to provide a reasonable margin for the law of supply and demand to satisfy the GMA affordable housing goal. That same 15 percent factor should be applied to rural parcels as well.

The adopted VBLM used for urban areas includes a 27.7 percent infrastructure deduction for urban parcels for roads and stormwater. Because rural parcels are much larger than urban parcels, no infrastructure deduction is assumed for rural parcels.

Incorporating updated assumptions and mitigations: Alternative 1 defines 60 percent of existing R parcels as nonconforming. 70 percent of existing parcels, AG parcels as nonconforming. 80 percent of existing forest parcels as nonconforming. Alternative 4 corrects this fundamental mismatch between Alternative 1 and the actual ground truth of existing conditions. The local rural character as informed by the existing predominant lot sizes serves as the evidence base for Alternative 4.

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In contrast to an all or nothing approach that accepts or rejects an unchangeable draft, the concerns and recommendations expressed by the SDEIS, citizen testimony and city representatives have provided valuable feedback to make Alternative 4 better. As a result, Alternative 4 has been updated to lessen impacts and mitigate concerns.

The more realistic assumptions defined above have been incorporated.

Larger minimum lot sizes have been preserved near the urban growth boundaries to better provide for the future, potential future employment lands.

AG-20 zones have been included to better satisfy the GMA goal of providing a variety of lot sizes. In contrast to the single 20-acre zone of Alternative 1, Alternative 4 provides three zones, AG-5, AG-10 and AG-20.

Clustering is recognized as an important option that is integral to the R, the AG and the forest zones to minimize environmental impacts and to preserve open space or open resource and space in large aggregated areas.

The actual numbers:

The following table documents the actual potential capacity of the

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rural area to accommodate the potential population increase for Alternative 1 and Alternative 4, using these updated assumptions compared to those considered in the Environmental Impact Statement.

So in that table, you see we have which Rural Zone is the left-most column and we have the three rural zones, Rural, Agriculture and Forest, and we have going across columns to the right, Alternative Capacity per the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. Those numbers come right out of the book. So did the third, the Alternative 4 capacity per the DSEIS come right out of the book.

So those numbers, if you look at the bottom, you'll see that the Alternative 1, according to our publication, has 7,000 new potential lots or households, and Alternative 4 over 12,000. We have our adopted assumption assumes that each household can accommodate, will accommodate, 2.66 persons. So if you multiply each of those potential new home sites times 2.66, you get the bottom numbers. That's the potential new population growth that can be accommodated by each of those.

So you'll notice something about this. The two columns per the DSEIS are very large. Alternative 1 says we can accommodate over 18,000, almost 19,000 people. Alternative 4 says we can accommodate almost 33,000 people. Those were based on the assumptions that I first read on the first page. The other two columns to the right of those are the Actual Capacity using the new assumptions.

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The Actual Capacity, and I want to say that the -- our GIS staff is working on these numbers, they are comparing because these numbers came from my own analysis and software working on each one of those lots in the Excel file and then I've submitted the algorithms, the methods to be able to - not algorithms. It's really simple math - and their numbers are not agreeing. I don't know who's right.

I hope that we can find out whatever those numbers are. They need to be known good. And like our math teacher used to say, show your work. All of these are not based on some basic statistical analysis; they're all based on individual lots one by one by one that have a record that would say how many new potential households can that lot create.

So the Alternative 4 and Alternative 1 capacity, the Alternative 1 capacity is much less, less than 2700 lots, according to the map, as I see it compared to the 7,000. Which one's right? How can we make a decision for a 20-year plan with a ratio that's almost three to one here? And regarding Alternative 4, 12,400-and-some versus 5700, huge difference. So we'll move on here.

Accommodating the forecasted rural population with Alternative 4: Using these assumptions with Alternative 4, the rural area can accommodate 15,215 people. That's in the bottom right corner of that table. It's all math, new people. The following table shows the

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projected population growth for several options. If the medium OFM choice is retained, in other words, we just stay with what we got, a 87/13 urban/rural split would most closely fit the actual Alternative 4 rural population capacity. In other words, even if we don't change any of our adopted numbers, it can work if these numbers are correct.

So the OFM choice, again there was low, medium, high because we're not considering the low choice at this point, I have both the medium which we have selected and the high which we could select, those are the two entries in that table, and that would provide a countywide increase in population between the 115,000 on the 183,000 over the 20-year span and that would provide if we use the 86/14 split, that's a 14 percent of that goes into the rural area, those two numbers, 16,000 and something new residents in the rural area for medium, 25,000 and something for the high.

For the rural increase using the 90/10 split, which is what we've already adopted here, that would be 11,501, which is below the actual capacity, which means there's room. The high number there's not room. It would be under by about 3100 people, would not be able to accommodate them.

So those are the two basic documents and I'm not asserting that somehow I got my work right and staff got it wrong. Maybe mine's wrong and they're right. But I've checked and I've worked and I

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me -- to be built between the Ridgefield substation and the new Paradise Park substation. Our staff has also directed conversations with WSDOT staff about the fully funded realignment of the I-5/La Center Road intersection which will impact not only I-5, but also physically impact the 56 acres expansion area.

MADORE: Mr. Mayor, I need to be fair to each individual. Are you about ready to wrap it up?

IRISH: I'm just about ready to wrap up, sir. And, of course, if you've been out to the La Center interchange this week, you have seen or at least heard the tremendous amount of soil being moved around the tribal reservation which abuts the city's limits. We all know that development is occurring and will continue to occur around La Center interchange. We also know that La Center needs to create a job base of its own.

The simple solution, which the City of La Center will defend, is to approve our request and add a small amount of employment land to our urban growth area. Thank you for your time.

MADORE: Thank you, sir. Do we have the staff member from Battle Ground here? Okay. And if you could spell your name, please.

CRUMMETT: Thank you, Council members. My name is Sam Crummett, C-r-u-m-m-e-t-t. 109 SW 1st Street, Battle Ground, Washington.

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I'm here to represent the City of Battle Ground. The City of Battle Ground supports the Planning Commission's recommendation of Alternative 3. What this means for Battle Ground is it would take our city from what's currently a population of 20,000 and increase that to 40,000 in 2035. This is a moderate growth proposal that we are well underway and planning for in respect to our capital facility planning and this is something that meets the city's vision overall.

It also includes an 80-acre expansion to the west. This is for employment-based zoning which would help create jobs in the city and help utilize what's going to be a four-way lane expansion on State Route 502 which is essentially a five-mile connection from I-5 to our city. This growth proposal is also in concert where we have many of our impact fees set and our service development charges.

And then the second point I want to make is that the City is opposed to Alternative 4 or some version of Alternative 4 that would create the further parcelization in some of the rural lands in the county. How this affects Battle Ground is it's more difficult to convert parcelized land and near urban growth boundaries. We prefer to have larger tracks of land, whether that's a ten-acre parcel versus, for example, two-acre parcels. So we would urge you to keep your rural lands rural, and then once the City grows, then we would convert those more (inaudible) land to an urban development pattern.

This would also put a greater demand on our transportation systems.

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As you know, Battle Ground is at the heart of Clark County. State Route 502 and State Route 503 funnel through our city, and we along with the State Highway Department, are often on the hook to fix those problems as they arise. That's all I have at this time.

MIELKE: I have a question, if I may. You anticipate by the year 2035 to go from 20,000 to 40,000 in growth?

CRUMMETT: Correct.

MIELKE: That's what I thought. Thank you. I can see that.

MADORE: Thank you. Mitch from the City of Washougal, it looks like the last name is K-n-e-i-p-p. If I don't spell that correctly, feel free to correct it, please.

KNEIPP: You spelled it correctly. It's pronounced Kneipp.

MADORE: Kneipp.

KNEIPP: Thank you, Councilors. Good afternoon. The last time I was here I said that I was in favor of Alternative 3, Washougal was, and that we opposed Alternative 4. That hasn't changed, with the exception of the request, the specific request that Washougal had known as 3.E by the Planning Commission.

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