8.0 Public Facilities and Utilities

8.1 Overview

The GMA mandates that comprehensive plans include provisions for the designation of lands for public facilities and utilities. Future development is dependent upon the availability of these services. Clark County is served by a number of public facility and utility providers. The following briefly describes the services and providers that could be affected by growth in Clark County.

8.1.1 Fire Protection

Clark County Fire & Rescue (CCF&R) provides emergency services to the cities of Battle Ground, La Center, Ridgefield, Woodland and the portions of unincorporated Clark County surrounding these communities. Their service area encompasses 162 square miles. The cities of Camas, Vancouver and Washougal have municipal fire departments that provide emergency services within those incorporated areas. The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the US Forest Service also provide services within their respective jurisdictions. Each provider or jurisdiction establishes levels of service for response times.

Fire Station 33

Photo courtesy Fire District 3

8.1.2 Police Protection

The cities of Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Vancouver and Washougal provide local law enforcement services through their local police departments. The Clark County Sheriff's Department provides services in those areas outside the city boundaries and in the Town of Yacolt. The USDA Forest Service Law Enforcement and Investigations division provides law enforcement within US Forest Service lands. The Washington State Patrol has police jurisdiction throughout the state. Facilities include the county jail, a leased office for the inter-jurisdictional Clark-Skamania Narcotics Task Force, the 911 Clark Regional Communication Agency, and the Child Abuse Intervention Center. Larch Corrections Center is the only State detention facility in Clark County. Service providers typically use ratios of staff to population and response time to measure level of service. Table 8-1 shows the current commissioned officer rates for each of the jurisdictions.

8.1.3 Public Schools

There are nine school districts within Clark County which include Green Mountain, La Center, Battle Ground, Ridgefield, Hockinson, Vancouver, Evergreen, Camas, and Washougal. Schools are not subject to the direct concurrency requirements of the GMA, but are required by existing state law to be adequately provided and available before land divisions can be approved. Planning for new school facilities within UGA's can be difficult due to the amount of land needed to meet minimum facility requirements. Some students attend schools in the City of Woodland.

Table 8-1. Number of Commissioned Law Enforcement Officers per 1,000 Population

Agency	Total Population in 2013	Total Commissioned Officers	Rate Per 1,000	Standard Officer per 1,000
Clark Co. Sheriff	209,325	131	0.63	1.3
Battle Ground P.D.	18,130	21	1.16	1.5
Camas P.D.	20,320	25	1.23	1.64
La Center P.D.	3,015	8	2.65	2
Ridgefield P.D.	5,545	8	1.44	1.6
Vancouver P.D.	16,5084	187	1.13	1.3
Washougal P.D.	14,580	18	1.23	1.52

Source: *The Crime in Washington 2013 Annual Report*, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

8.1.4 Parks and Recreation

The Clark County Parks Department was formed in January 2013 after dissolution of the joint Vancouver-Clark Regional Parks and Recreation Department. The Clark County Parks Department is currently working on an update to the 2007 Vancouver-Clark Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. The Plan establishes minimum standards for neighborhood, community, and regional parks and urban open space in order to maintain the quality of life and recreational opportunities desired by County residents. Each of the cities has their own parks and recreation facilities, though not all of them have adopted minimum standards for acreage and types of park land. Planning for growth must take into consideration space needed for recreational facilities as UGA's are expanded and development occurs.

8.1.5 Libraries

Photo courtesy FVRLD

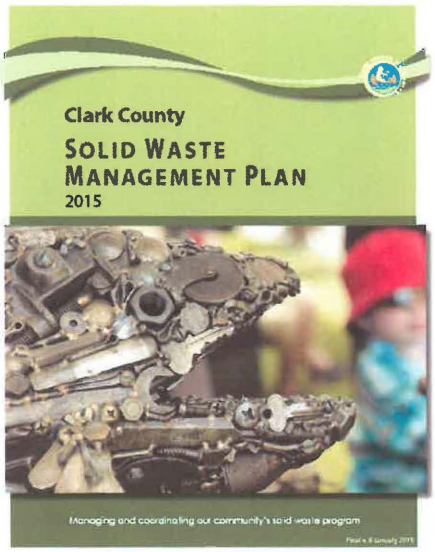
The Fort Vancouver Regional Library District (FVRLD) serves all of Clark, Skamania and Klickitat Counties and the City of Woodland in Cowlitz County. The FVRLD has 11 libraries within Clark County and Woodland, 2 bookmobiles, a Vancouver operations center, and an interlibrary online loaning system. In addition, the Camas public library contracts with FVRLD for services. The level of service standard used by FVRLD for planning purposes relates to collection size, rather than facility square footage. Based on projected populations, the FVRLD assumes the need for a collection size of 1.7 print/physical items per capita (FVRLD, 2013). Other library facilities in the County include the Clark County Law Library in Vancouver, and the WSU-Vancouver campus library.

8.1.6 Solid Waste

The Clark County Public Works Department operates the Recycling/Solid Waste program. The County contracts with private companies for recycling and municipal solid waste (MSW) collection, sorting, processing and disposal services. Waste Connections provides garbage, recycling and yard waste collection services in the cities of Vancouver, Battle Ground, La Center and Washougal, the Town of

Yacolt, and unincorporated Clark County. The County does not have a licensed landfill within its boundaries. Clark County and the City of Vancouver contract with Waste Connections, Inc. to collect and process MSW, and then transport it to the Finley Buttes and Wasco County landfills in Oregon.

Waste Control, Inc. provides garbage and recycling collection services in the Woodland vicinity and transports those wastes to the Cowlitz County Landfill. The City of Camas provides collection services for its residents. There are also three transfer stations, one in Washougal and two in Vancouver, which accept solid waste. Some household hazardous wastes are collected with curbside services, with limitations. All three of the transfer stations also accept household hazardous wastes for recycling.



8.1.7 Water Systems

Clark Public Utilities (CPU), a customer-owned, municipal corporation provides domestic water service to customers in approximately 200 square miles, including the City of La Center, the Town of Yacolt, much of the unincorporated urban areas, and to 23 independent water systems. The Cities of Battle Ground, Camas, Ridgefield, Vancouver, and Washougal generally provide water service to their urban areas. In addition, there are approximately 917 independent water purveyors within the county (Ecology, 2011). The remainder of the county's population gets their water from private wells. The source for virtually all water in Clark County, public and private, is from groundwater aquifers.

8.1.8 Electrical Systems

CPU also supplies electrical service to all of Clark County with a system of 54 substations/switching stations and approximately 6,600 miles of transmission and distribution lines. The River Road Generating Plant creates approximately one-third of the power supplied by CPU with combined-cycle combustion turbines fueled by natural gas. The remainder of CPU's power supply is purchased from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

8.1.9 Sanitary Sewer

The 2007 Comprehensive Plan identified the need for additional sanitary sewer services in Clark County to accommodate anticipated growth. As a result, 12 of the local sanitary sewer service providers in the county prepared a study to plan for growth and infrastructure needs. As a result, Clark County, Clark Regional Wastewater District, and the Cities of Battle Ground and Ridgefield are forming a new regional partnership, the Discovery Clean Water Alliance (DCWA). The remaining service providers continue to provide service for their respective areas as described in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan.

8.2 What has changed since 2007?

8.2.1 Fire Protection

Some changes have been made to the distribution of services within the fire districts since the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. In 2008, Clark County Fire Districts 11 and 12 combined to form Clark County Fire and Rescue. The emergency medical service and ambulance service response standards have not changed since the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. The Washington State Surveying and Rating Bureau

(WSRB) is an independent property insurance rating bureau for the state of Washington. As described in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan, the WSRB publishes standard response times by classification for fire protection services. The standards are shown in Table 8-2, below.

Table 8-2. Emergency Medical Service and Ambulance Service Response Standards

	Urgent/Priority	Not Urgent/Priority
First Response		
Urban	4.59 minutes	8.59 minutes
Suburban	5.59 minutes	12.59 minutes
Rural	10.59 minutes	20.59 minutes
Ambulance Response		
Urban	7.59 minutes	11.59 minutes
Suburban	10.59 minutes	17.59 minutes
Rural	17.59 minutes	29.59 minutes

Table 8-3 summarizes information about the service area, emergency response times, and WSRB rating for fire protection services. The WSRB ratings correspond to a Protection Class of 1 through 10, where 1 indicates excellent fire protection capabilities, and 10 indicates the capabilities, if any, are not considered adequate.

Table 8-3. Fire Protection Providers

District	Area (sq mi)	No. Stations	Avg. Response Time, 2012 (min)	WSRB Rating
Municipal				
Camas*	12	2	6	4 5
Vancouver	93	10	6:38 fire; 5:18 EMS	4
Washougal*	6	1	3-4	5
Fire Districts				
CCFD No. 2	35	1	8.5	8
CCFD No. 3	83	4	6	5
CCFD No. 5**	42	Combined with City of Vancouver		
CCFD No. 6	37	3 + 1 joint	3:41	3
CCFD No. 10	68	6	6.3	8
CCFD No. 13	36	2	6.3	8 – District 13 6 – Yacolt
Clark County Fire & Rescue	160	9 full time 2 volunteer	5.5 fire 4.5 EMS	4

CCFD = Clark County Fire District

*The Camas and Washougal Fire Departments have combined into one department since the 2012 WSRB Rating.

**CCFD No. 5 contracts with the City of Vancouver to provide service

8.2.2 Police Protection

As population and the economy change, so do the statistics for crime rates. In 2012, most Washington law enforcement agencies began reporting crime incidents via the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) which groups offenses into different categories than had previously been reported. The 2006 Comprehensive Plan EIS listed the statistical data for Violent Crimes and Property Crimes. The NIBRS reports offenses as Group A or Group B offenses. Both violent and property crimes are included in Group A, while Group B includes offenses not previously recorded under those categories. For the purposes of this analysis however, the data reported in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan EIS is shown with the 2013 data for comparison. The following table summarizes the latest crime statistics for Clark County communities.

Table 8-4. Crime Statistics by Community

Agency	2004				2013			
	Violent Crimes		Property Crimes		Group A Offenses		Group B Offenses	
	Total	Rate Per 1,000	Total	Rate Per 1,000	Total	Rate Per 1,000	Total	Rate Per 1,000
Clark Co. Sheriff	271	1.5	5,372	28.9	6,202	29.6	4,064	19.4
Battle Ground P.D.	30	2.1	436	30.7	706	38.9	260	14.3
Camas P.D.	9	0.6	588	38.3	744	36.6	263	12.9
La Center P.D.	4	2	17	8.5	146	48.4	32	10.6
Ridgefield P.D.	2	0.9	104	47.4	139	25.1	38	6.9
Vancouver P.D.	642	4.2	8,455	55.3	11,005	66.7	2,614	15.8
Washougal P.D.	26	2.4	513	47.6	630	43.2	152	10.4

Source: *The Crime in Washington 2013 Annual Report*, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

8.2.3 Public Schools

Within the nine school districts serving Clark County, there have been minimal changes to the existing facilities. Table 8-5 summarizes the current facilities by school district.

Table 8-5. Current Clark County School District Facilities

School District	Number of Public Schools		
	Elementary	Middle School	High School
Battle Ground	6	6	2
Camas	6	2	2
Evergreen	21	6	5
Green Mountain	1	*	*
Hockinson	1	1	1
La Center	1	1	1
Ridgefield	2	1	1
Vancouver	21	6	5
Washougal	3	2	2

*The Green Mountain School is a Kindergarten through 8th grade program and is the only school in the District. High School Students attend La Center High School.

8.2.4 Parks and Recreation

Planning for Clark County parks has changed since the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. As described above, the Clark County Parks Department was formed in January 2013 after dissolution of the joint Vancouver-Clark Regional Parks and Recreation Department. As a result, the County created the Parks and Trails division of the Public Works Department. Parks and Trails is preparing a Draft Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Update that, at the time of this publication, is out for public review. This long-range plan is intended to guide the development of parks, trails, sports fields and other amenities through the year 2020. The plan is scheduled to be approved in September 2015.

Since the last Comprehensive Plan update, several parks and recreation projects have been completed. A summary of the existing Clark County park facility acreage is shown in Table 8-6.

Table 8-6. Existing Clark County Park Facilities

Park Type	Developed (acres)	Undeveloped (acres)
Neighborhood Parks	420	172
Community Parks	937	51
Regional Parks	5,060	550
Conservation and Greenway	1,114	1,811
Open Space	56	1,567
Regional Trails	60	n/a

Source: Clark County GIS, 2014.

8.2.5 Libraries

New library facilities completed since the 2007 Comprehensive Plan include:

- A new Battle Ground Community Library was completed in 2009, which replaced the old library on Main Street.
- A new Cascade Park library (Vancouver) was completed in 2009 to replace the old building.
- A new Vancouver Community Library is constructed in 2011 to replace the Mill Plain Blvd. building.
- The Mall Library Connection in Vancouver was remodeled in 2013.

In 2013, the FVRLD completed a Strategic Facilities Plan to determine what service improvements were needed. As a result of that study, new or enlarged library facilities are being planned for Washougal, Woodland and Ridgefield. They are currently soliciting public involvement in that planning process and preparing a pre-design study.

8.2.6 Solid Waste

Since the 2007 Comprehensive Plan, the County and Vancouver have continued to contract with CRC (now owned by Waste Connections, Inc.) to receive and process MSW. In addition to the Finley Buttes Landfill used previously, CRC now also transports MSW from the new Washougal Transfer Station (opened in 2009) to the Wasco County Landfill in Oregon. Yard waste service was expanded in some of the County's rural areas in 2007, and several sites for the E-Cycle Washington program were opened in 2009. The County also purchased the closed Leichner Landfill in 2012 and is now in the process of evaluating reuse options.

The Clark County Solid Waste Management Plan was recently updated, with adoption of the final plan in June 2015. Changes to the system in the Plan focus mainly on continuation, or adoption, of programs focused on waste reduction, recycling, and other management processes. The Plan sites the need for continued evaluation of waste disposal needs in the north county area due to increased development, although no new facilities are planned at this time. No new MSW landfills are planned to be sited in Clark County.

8.2.7 Water Systems

CPU has completed several major projects since the 2007 Comprehensive Plan which include:

- 2008 – Added a second water reservoir in La Center and upgraded aging and undersized water mains.
- 2010 – Completed the South Lake Well Field which added approximately 3.6 million gallons of water per day to the existing capacity.
- 2011 – Constructed a new 24-inch transmission line connecting the South Lake Water Facility with Hazel Dell, and a 16-inch line to connect to the Battle Ground system. CPU developed a new well field near Paradise Point to serve the northern area.
- 2012 – Obtained water right to tap the Carol J. Curtis Well Field to provide approximately 20,000 acre-feet, or double the capacity of the current supply.
- 2013 – Finished construction of a new reservoir providing an additional 500,000 gallons of water. A new transmission line serving La Center and the northern service area was also completed.

8.2.8 Electrical Systems

CPU has completed several major projects since the 2007 Comprehensive Plan which include:

- 2009 – Approved an agreement to purchase power from the new wind project in eastern Oregon.
- 2010 – Implemented the Project Energy Savings pilot program in south Hazel Dell, Rose Village and Fourth Plain Village neighborhoods for energy savings in 123 homes. CPU completed a LEED Gold certified office space expansion.
- 2011 – Replaced the turbine at the River Road Generating Plant resulting in improved performance. CPU executed a new contract with the Bonneville Power Administration to balance the power supply in Clark County by buying or selling electricity as needed. CPU installed the first public electric vehicle charging station in the County.
- 2012 – Completed "the largest energy efficiency project in utility history (CPU 2012 Annual Report)" to reduce energy use.

8.2.9 Sanitary Sewer

The Clark Regional Wastewater District is currently planning for or constructing several upgrades to their systems, including the Discovery Corridor Wastewater Transmission System. This project will convey wastewater from the Ridgefield UGA to the Salmon Creek Wastewater Management System and includes construction of new pump stations and conveyance lines. The St. Johns and Cougar Canyon Sewer Trunkline Restoration project was also recently completed. As stated in Section 8.1.9, the cities of Battle Ground and Ridgefield combined their wastewater systems with Clark County to form the Clark Regional Wastewater District. The Town of Yacolt developed a General Sewer Plan that has been approved by the Department of Ecology. The plan was adopted by the Town in 2012 and they are securing financing to implement the plan.

The City of Camas General Sewer and Wastewater Facility Plan was updated in 2010 to address the additions to the City's UGA as well as new commercial development in the Grass Valley area. Some infrastructure upgrades resulting from that process have been completed while others are ongoing.

8.3 Environmental Impacts

8.3.1 What methodology was used to analyze impacts to public facilities and utilities from each of the alternatives?

The public service and utility providers within the County were contacted to provide input on existing levels of service, operational constraints, facility needs, and other factors used to determine whether the Comprehensive Plan Alternatives would impact their services. In addition, service statistical and annual reports, facilities plans and other planning documents were reviewed for service records and planned infrastructure changes.

8.3.2 What are the impacts to public facilities and utilities from each alternative?

Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative

As described in the 2007 FEIS, increased demand for public facilities and utilities is related to population and employment growth in Clark County. Under Alternative 1, there would be no expansion of UGA's and development would continue under the current zoning and land use designations. Urban growth and development over the next 20 years would occur primarily within existing UGAs on land already

targeted for urban development. However, the current zoning does allow for some growth in the rural county areas. Approximately 7,000 new lots could be created under full build-out conditions of Alternative 1. Impacts from development under Alternative 1 would be the same as those identified in the 2007 FEIS.

Alternative 2 – Countywide Modifications

The zoning changes proposed in Alternative 2 would reduce minimum lot size requirements could result in increased development, up to 8,200 new parcels, in the areas zoned for rural, agriculture, and forest resources. Sewer and water services are generally not provided in rural resource areas and potential new development would be required to install water wells and septic systems (see also Chapter 3 Water for potential impacts to water quality from wells and septic systems). The potential for increased development could result in a need for more emergency services and school transportation. Development within rural areas would be spread out over a much larger area than within the incorporated areas and their UGAs. A portion of the potential development would occur where at least some infrastructure currently exists; however, most of this area is not served by public utilities. Public Service support for these areas is less efficient due to travel times (such as for emergency services) and the amount of infrastructure needed (such as for new transmission lines).

Full development under this alternative would not happen quickly, but incrementally over the planning period. Individual projects would be required to undergo additional environmental analysis under SEPA; however, the cumulative impact of adding additional public services and utilities to support the development allowed under Alternative 2 could be significant. The infrastructure needed, such as power lines, schools, and other support services, would change the character of rural Clark County.

Alternative 3 – City UGA Expansion

Expansion of the city growth boundaries in Alternative 3 would result in increased development in some presently undeveloped areas as well as areas that are partially developed. The proposed UGA expansions are already served by emergency services; however, more intense development could result in an increased number of service calls. Development would also result in the need for expansion of other public facilities and utilities. All new development would be required to provide adequate utility service prior to approval and individual projects would be required to undergo additional environmental analysis under SEPA. Alternative 3 is not expected to have any significant impacts on public facilities and utilities in Clark County.

Alternative 4 – Rural, Agriculture, and Forest Changes

Alternative 4 has the potential to create the most impacts to public facilities and utilities in Clark County due to the amount of development that could occur with the proposed reduction in minimum lot sizes. With the potential to create approximately 12,400 new lots over the majority of the county, it could significantly increase the demand for facilities and services in the rural county areas.

Sewer and water services are generally not provided in rural resource areas and potential new development would be required to install water wells and septic systems (see also Chapter 3 Water for potential impacts to water quality from wells and septic systems). The potential for increased development could result in a need for more emergency services and school transportation. Development within rural areas would be spread out over a much larger area than within the incorporated areas and their UGAs. A portion of the potential development would occur where at least some infrastructure currently exists; however, most of this area is not served by public utilities. Public

Service support for these areas is less efficient due to travel times (such as for emergency services) and the amount of infrastructure needed (such as for new transmission lines).

Full development under this alternative would not happen quickly, but incrementally over the planning period. Individual projects would be required to undergo additional environmental analysis under SEPA; however, the cumulative impact of adding additional public services and utilities to support the development allowed under Alternative 4 could be significant, mainly due to the costs of installing infrastructure. The infrastructure needed, such as power lines, schools, and other support services, would also change the character of rural Clark County.

For these reasons, Alternative 4 would likely have significant impacts to public facilities and utilities in Clark County.

How do the potential impacts between the alternatives compare?

Table 8-7 is a comparison of the impacts to public facilities and utilities from the proposed alternatives.

Table 8-7. Impacts to Public Facilities and Utilities from Proposed Alternatives

Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative	Alternative 2 – Countywide Modifications	Alternative 3 – City UGA Expansion	Alternative 4 – Rural, Agriculture, and Forest Changes
Lowest potential for impacts of all alternatives. More intensive development could affect the levels of service provided in those areas.	Second highest potential for impacts of due to potential for more intensive development spread across a larger geography. Development allowed under the new zoning could be delayed until services can be made available.	Low potential for impacts to infrastructure and services. No expansion of service areas would be required.	Highest potential for impacts of due to the most potential for intensive development spread across a larger geography. Development allowed under the new zoning could be delayed until services can be made available.

8.3.3 Are there adverse impacts that cannot be avoided?

Inevitably, population and employment growth would result in an increased need for all public facilities and utilities. Unavoidable adverse impacts are related to the expenditure of resources to serve that growth. Unavoidable adverse impacts would result only if the revenue was not available to expand public facilities and utilities to the required levels of service.

8.4 Mitigation

8.4.1 Are there mitigation measures beyond regulations that reduce the potential for impacts?

Some form of phased development could be mandated in new expansion areas until public services and utilities meet adopted standards. Additional mitigation measures identified in the 2007 FEIS that are applicable to the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update include:

- Increase communication and coordination among service providers during subarea planning processes to improve service delivery and ensure adequate access to public facilities;

- Improve development regulations to facilitate siting of public facilities and utilities and to improve public safety;
- Explore use of GMA concurrency approaches to help finance school, fire, and park facilities;
- Examine opportunities to co-locate facilities;
- Engage the community in creative funding for schools and libraries; create programs to improve public safety; and encourage conservation of water and energy resources.