

Clark County

2016 Comprehensive Growth Management Plan Update



CHECKING IN ON OUR FUTURE

Final

Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

April 2016

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Clark County 2016 Comprehensive Growth Management Plan Update

**Final
Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS)
April 2016**

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SEPA Fact Sheet

Project Title

Clark County 2016 Comprehensive Growth Management Plan Update

Project Description

Clark County is proposing to revise its Comprehensive Growth Management Plan (the Comprehensive Plan) to comply with the requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA). The revisions focus on county-initiated technical changes as well as minor changes to Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) to accommodate projected growth to the year 2035. The County's objective for the 2016 Plan is to make adjustments to the existing plan to account for the conditions that have changed since the last comprehensive plan update in 2007. The vision has not changed – projected demand for jobs and housing will be accommodated based on new growth assumptions; land use patterns that reflect local principles and values will be implemented; and impacts on the environment, schools, and the cost of infrastructure will be minimized.

An environmental review based on the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) is part of the revision process. This Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) updates baseline information provided in the Final EIS on the 2007 Comprehensive Plan update, and documents changes in impacts, if any, for the Preferred Alternative growth scenario.

The Draft SEIS published August 5, 2015 evaluated four alternatives to manage growth to 2035: Alternative 1 – No Action, Alternative 2 – Countywide Modifications, Alternative 3 – City UGA Expansion, and Alternative 4 – Rural, Agriculture, and Forest Changes.

On February 23, 2016 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.

Project Location

Clark County and the cities of Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Vancouver, and Washougal, and the Town of Yacolt.

SEPA Lead Agency and Project Proponent

Lead Agency

Clark County
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Project Proponent

Clark County Community Planning, 3rd Floor
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 Vancouver, WA 98660
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Permits and Licenses Required or Potentially Required

This is a non-project action. No permits are required for the Comprehensive Plan Update.

This Final SEIS has been prepared under the direction of Clark County Community Planning with support from the Clark County Geographic Information Systems Department and the following:

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Date of Issue of Final Supplemental EIS

April 27, 2016

Additional Environmental Review

Specific projects selected to implement the Clark County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan may undergo additional SEPA review in the form of a SEPA Checklist, SEPA EIS, or addendum to this Non-project EIS, as appropriate.

Documents Incorporated by Reference:

Clark County 2007, Growth Management Plan Update Final EIS
 Clark County 2006, Growth Management Plan Update Draft EIS

Location of Background Documents

Clark County Community Planning, 3rd Floor
 1300 Franklin Street
 Vancouver, WA 98660

Website: <https://www.clark.wa.gov/community-planning/options-and-impacts-alternatives>

Additional Copies

Copies of this document have been printed and made available for review at the following locations:

Vancouver City Hall, 415 W. 6th Street
 Camas City Hall, 616 NE 4th Avenue
 La Center City Hall, 214 E. 4th Street
 Battle Ground City Hall, 109 SW 1st Avenue
 Washougal City Hall, 1701 C Street
 Ridgefield City Hall, 230 Pioneer Street
 Woodland City Hall, 230 Davidson Avenue

Yacolt Town Hall, 202 W. Cushman Street

Libraries:

Fort Vancouver Regional Library, 901 C Street, Vancouver

Westfield Mall Branch, 8700 NE Vancouver Mall Drive, Vancouver

Three Creeks Branch, 800-C NE Tenny Road, Vancouver

Cascade Park Branch, 600 NE 136th Avenue, Vancouver

Washougal Branch, 1661 C Street

Camas Public Library, 625 NE 4th Avenue

Battle Ground Branch, 1207 NE 8th Way

Ridgefield Branch, 210 N. Main Avenue

Woodland City Library, 770 Park Street

In addition, the document and background information is available on the County's web page at

<https://www.clark.wa.gov/community-planning/options-and-impacts-alternatives>

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Summary

Clark County's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan must address state growth management goals and be consistent with the County-wide 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 the growth that actually occurs are compared at least every eight years to enable corrections to be made. Assumptions made for accommodating growth in the 2007 plan 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. This requires corresponding changes to the County's Plan. 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 has changed the conclusions of the previous plan regarding the ability of the current urban growth areas to accommodate future population, jobs, and the vision of the communities.

What Is Being Proposed?

Clark County and the Cities of Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Vancouver, and Washougal, and the Town of Yacolt are proposing to revise their Comprehensive Growth Management Plans (the 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 changes to Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) to accommodate projected growth to 2035. This Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) evaluates the potential environmental impacts of the Preferred Alternative, as required by SEPA.

The County's objective for the 2016 Plan is to make adjustments to the existing plan to account for the conditions that have changed since the last comprehensive plan update in 2007. The vision has not changed – projected demand for jobs and housing will be accommodated based on new growth assumptions; land use patterns that reflect local principles and values will be implemented; and impacts on the environment, schools, and the cost of infrastructure will be minimized. To evaluate the impacts of growth on the environment, this 2016 FSEIS updates baseline information provided in the 2007 FEIS and documents changes in impacts, if any.

What Is the Growth Management Act?

In 1990, Washington adopted the GMA, RCW 36.70A, which requires certain counties and cities to develop and adopt comprehensive land use plans that anticipate the needs of population and employment growth. Plans must look forward at least 20 years.

The GMA requires that comprehensive plans consist of these elements: land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, rural (for counties), transportation, economic development and parks and recreation (36.70A.070 RCW).

A comprehensive plan may also include additional optional elements that relate to the physical development within the jurisdiction. Examples of optional elements include: schools, historic preservation and community design (36.70A.080 RCW).

The Growth Management Act (GMA) was enacted by the state legislature in 1990. It requires high population counties and fast-growing counties to develop comprehensive plans to balance the needs of housing and jobs with preservation of resource lands (for agriculture, forestry and mining) and critical areas (such as habitat, wetlands and areas subject to flooding).

The GMA also requires jurisdictions to periodically review their comprehensive plans and implement development regulations in their entirety and, if needed, revise them. Clark County is required to have this review and revision completed by June 30, 2016, and every eight years thereafter (36.70A.130(5)(b) RCW). Opportunities for public participation in this process have been provided via multiple public meetings, open houses, and planning commission and Board of County Councilors (BOCC) hearings. Two hearings were held specifically to take public testimony on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) on September 3 and September 10, 2016, and a public comment period on the DSEIS was provided from August 5 to September 17, 2016 per 36.70A.035 RCW.

More about the history of planning in Clark County and the 2016 update process can be found on the County's webpage: <https://www.clark.wa.gov/community-planning/2016-plan-update>.

What Is the State Environmental Policy Act?

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), enacted in 1971, requires local jurisdictions to evaluate potential environmental impacts of actions they approve or undertake. The most common evaluation looks at potential environmental impacts of a proposed project, such as a new road or big box store. It also requires environmental review of a large non-project action, such as adoption of a planning document like a new comprehensive plan. The SEPA process prescribes elements to be evaluated, and if it is determined that significant impacts to the environment are probable, an environmental impact statement or EIS, is prepared. An EIS is the forum for discussing alternative actions and the probable impacts from those actions. The EIS document is shared with residents, interested organizations, federal, state and local agencies, and tribes to obtain input on the findings. People can comment on the alternatives, mitigation measures, probable significant adverse impacts or other relevant topics. Because the EIS process for the last major update of the County Comprehensive Plan thoroughly evaluated the impacts of large-scale growth alternatives, and the proposed changes for this update are generally anticipated to be of a similar or lesser-scale than in the previous analysis, the County has determined that an update or supplement to that analysis through this Supplemental EIS, would be the appropriate method for disclosing the impacts of alternatives to accommodate projected growth through 2035.

What Are the Assumptions for Growth in 2035?

The following table summarizes the assumptions used in the development of the three growth alternatives. For additional details, see Chapter 1.

Table S-1. Summary of Planning Assumptions

Item	Assumption
Total population projection for 2035	577,431 total county population
Projected new residents	128,586 new residents
Urban/rural population growth split	90% of new growth in urban areas; 10% in rural areas
Annual population growth rate	1.26% assumed per year
Housing type ratio	Up to 75% of one housing type
Persons per household	2.66 persons per household
New jobs	100,022 new jobs
Jobs to household ratio	1 job for every 1 dwelling unit*
Residential infrastructure deduction	27.7% deducted from gross residential land supply
Commercial/industrial infrastructure deduction	25% deducted from gross commercial/industrial land supply
Vacant Land per Vacant Buildable Lands Model (VBLM) definition	Vacant if residential building value is less than \$13,000 Vacant if commercial/industrial building value is less than \$67,500
Market factor – % of additional land added to supply over that specified as needed to accommodate growth to provide flexibility	15% additional residential land capacity 15% additional commercial, business park, industrial land capacity

* This is the jobs to household ratio goal for 2035.

What Were the Alternatives to Accommodating Growth?

Clark County last updated its comprehensive plan in 2007. At that time about 12,000 acres were added to urban growth areas (UGAs) to accommodate growth through 2024 for an expected population of 584,000. As stated above, an EIS was prepared that outlined potential impacts from growth. Because of the recession that began in 2008, most of the predicted growth has not occurred. As a result, most of the land brought into UGAs has not developed. Given this fact, along with a smaller growth rate, only minimal expansion of UGAs is proposed in 2016. Clark County will still grow, but not at the growth rate projected in 2007.

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. As information from this Draft SEIS and other criteria was made available, decision makers continued to guide further development of the Plan. For additional details on each alternative, see Chapter 1 of the DSEIS for the Clark County 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update.

What are UGAs? They are areas where urban growth will be encouraged. Counties and cities planning under the GMA must cooperatively establish the urban growth areas and cities must be located inside urban growth areas. Growth outside urban growth areas must be rural in character.

Alternative 1 – is also referred to as the **No Action Alternative**. This alternative would not change the current UGA boundaries, policies, or regulations as adopted in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan and subsequently updated to 2014.

Alternative 2 –Countywide Modifications. This alternative incorporates changes in policy direction and land use/zoning, integrates the Clark County BOCC’s principles and values, acknowledges existing development trends, and resolves map inconsistencies throughout the County.

In the Rural Area:

1. **Create a “Rural Lands” designation** – a single designation would be implemented by R-5, R-10, and R-20 zones;
2. **Consolidate some Forest Resource designations** – reduce minimum parcel areas in some zones as recommended by the Rural Lands Task Force;
3. **Create Rural Center comprehensive plan designation** – replace various commercial designations to match current zoning;
4. **Create one Urban Reserve Overlay comprehensive plan designation** – retain underlying zoning or change to R-5.

In the Urban Growth Areas:

1. **Create one new Commercial comprehensive plan designation** – consolidate multiple urban commercial designations;
2. **Apply new Public Facilities comprehensive plan designation and zoning district** – create new classifications to include schools, utilities and government buildings;
3. **Create new Urban Holding Overlay comprehensive plan designation** – retain underlying zoning;
4. **Adjust the Battle Ground UGA** – for consistency with existing uses;
5. **Adjust the Ridgefield UGA** – for consistency with Community goals;
6. **Adjust the Vancouver UGA** – implement Discovery-Fairgrounds and Salmon Creek Subarea Plan recommendations and remove Urban Reserve Overlay and Urban Holding in specific areas;
7. **Adjust the Washougal UGA** – Correct inconsistency between County and City zoning.

Alternative 3 – City UGA Expansion. The Cities of Battle Ground, La Center, Ridgefield, and Washougal are considering expanding their urban growth areas by less than 320 acres to support job and residential growth.

Alternative 4 – Rural, Agriculture, and Forest Changes. Like Alternative 2, Alternative 4 incorporates changes in policy direction and land use/zoning. The changes are proposed to correct discrepancies between the actual predominant parcel sizes and the existing zoning in rural areas; encourage clustering options to preserve resource lands, open space, and non-residential agriculture uses; and provide additional economic opportunities in the rural areas. Alternative 4 includes:

1. **A single “Rural Lands” designation** – implemented by R-1, R-2.5, and R-5 zones.
2. **A reduction in Forest Resource minimum parcel size** – add FR-10 and FR-20 to the existing FR-40 and FR-80 zones.
3. **Replacement of an Agriculture zone** – replace the AG-20 zone with AG-5 and AG-10.

What is the Preferred Alternative?

On February 23, 2016 the Clark County 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.

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 seven years. This information would also be used to resolve any technical or mapping inconsistencies. Some zoning designations would be altered to reduce the minimum parcel 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.

What Are the Environmental Impacts of The Preferred Alternative?

Table S-2 summarizes the analysis found in Chapters 1-8.

Table S-2. Summary of Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

Resource	Preferred Alternative
Earth Resources	Zoning changes could have individually small but cumulatively moderate impacts on prime soils and forested areas. Mitigation would be provided by localized protection.
Water Resources	Incremental increase in impacts to hydrology and water quality resulting from potential for more intensive development of over 64,108 acres. Individually small, but cumulatively moderate, impacts on aquatic resources. Potential localized impacts with UGA changes; could be mitigated during project-specific review.
Fish & Wildlife Resources	Incremental increase in impacts to fish and wildlife habitats, threatened & endangered species, migratory species, and wetlands resulting from potential to create 8,024 new parcels and increased density. UGA expansions could result in potential localized impacts to fish and wildlife habitats, threatened & endangered species, migratory species, and wetlands; could be mitigated during project-specific review.
Energy & Natural Resources	Incremental increase in use of energy and natural resources resulting from potential to create 8,024 new parcels. Incremental development over time would minimize impacts.
Land & Shoreline Use	Incremental increase in impacts to land and shoreline use resulting from potential to create 8,024 new parcels which could affect opportunity for large-scale agricultural production but would increase opportunity for rural housing.
Transportation	Incremental increase in impacts to the transportation system resulting from distribution of higher travel demand over a larger geography compared to concentrated urban areas. Infrastructure costs could be prohibitive.
Public Facilities & Utilities	Incremental increase in impacts to public facilities and utilities resulting from potential to create 8,024 new parcels which distributes the need to provide services over a larger geography, compared to concentrated urban areas. Opportunities for new development may be delayed until services and facilities are available.

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ACRONYMS

AAGR – average annual growth rate

ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act

ADT – Average Daily Traffic

AG – Agriculture

AMR – American Medical Response

BMP – best management practices

BNSF – Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railroad

BOCC – Board of County Councilors

BP – Business Park

BPA – Bonneville Power Administration

BYCX – Chelatchie Prairie Railroad Association

C – Commercial

CARA – Critical Aquifer Recharge Area

CCC – Clark County Code

CCFD – Clark County Fire District

CCF&R – Clark County Fire & Rescue

CFP – Community Framework Plan

CMAQ – Air Quality Improvement Program

CMC – Camas Municipal Code

CPU – Clark Public Utilities

CREDC – Columbia River Economic Development Council

C-TRAN – Clark County Public Transportation Benefit Area Authority

CWA – Federal Clean Water Act

CWPPs – County-wide Planning Policies

CWSP – Clark County Coordinated Water System Plan

DCD – Department of Community Development

DCWA – Discovery Clean Water Alliance

DEIS – Draft Environmental Impact Statement

DNR – (Washington State) Department of Natural Resources

DOE – (Washington State) Department of Ecology

DOH – (Washington State) Department of Health

DSEIS – Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

EIS – Environmental Impact Statement

EMS – emergency medical services

ESA – Endangered Species Act

FEIS – Final Environmental Impact Statement

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency

FIRM – Federal Insurance Rate Map

FR – Forest Resource

FSEIS – Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

FVRLD – Fort Vancouver Regional Library District

GHG – greenhouse gas

GIS – global information systems

GMA – Growth Management Act

HCA – Habitat Conservation Area

HCDP – Housing and Community Development Plan

HHW – household hazardous waste

HOV – high occupancy vehicle

HUD – U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

I – Industrial

I-5 – Interstate 5

I-205 – Interstate 205

ITS – Intelligent Transportation System

LCSCI – Lower Columbia Steelhead Conservation Initiative

LID – low impact development

LOS – level of service

LOS E/F – level of service rating of E/F (close to failing or failing level of service)

LRT – Light Rail Transit

MAP21 – Moving Ahead for Progression in the 21st Century

MGD – million gallons per day

ML – Light Industrial

MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization; regional planning organization required by federal regulations (for Clark County it is RTC).

MSA – Metropolitan Statistical Area

MSW – municipal solid waste

MTP – Metropolitan Transportation Plan

NMFS – National Marine Fisheries Service (now NOAA Fisheries)

NOAA – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency

NRCS – Natural Resource Conservation Service

OFM – Office of Financial Management, State of Washington

PDX – Portland International Airport

PHS – Priority Habitat and Species Program

PIA – Portland International Airport (formerly PDX)

PMSA – Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area

PVJR – Portland Vancouver Junction Railroad

R – Rural

RC – Rural Center

RC-MX – Rural Center Mixed Use

RCO – Washington State Recreational Conservation Office

RCW – Revised Code of Washington

ROW – right of way

RTC – Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council

RTP – Regional Transportation Plan

RTPOs – Regional Transportation Planning Organization; created by GMA (RTC is the RTPO for Clark, Skamania and Klickitat counties.)

SCWTP – Salmon Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant

SEIS – Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

SEPA – State Environmental Policy Act

SMA – Shoreline Management Act

SMP – Shoreline Master Program

SR – State Route, Washington

STE – Sensitive, Threatened and Endangered species

SWCAA – Southwest Washington Clean Air Agency

TAZ – Transportation Analysis Zone

TDR – Transfer of Development Rights

TIF – Transportation Impact Fees

TIP – Transportation Improvement Program

TSM/TDM – Transportation System Management / Transportation Demand Management

UBC – Uniform Building Code

UGA – urban growth areas

UH – Urban Holding

UR – Urban Reserve

USDA – U.S. Department of Agriculture

USFWS – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

VBLM – Vacant Buildable Lands Model

VHA – Vancouver Housing Authority

VHT – vehicle hours traveled

VMT – vehicles miles traveled

WAC – Washington Administrative Code

WDFW – Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

WSDOT – Washington State Department of Transportation

WSRB – Washington State Surveying and Rating Bureau

WSU – Washington State University

WUCC – Water Utility Coordinating Committee

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