

# Clark County Comprehensive Plan 2016 Update

Planning for growth 2015 – 2035

SEPA Scoping – Issue Paper 5

## Purpose

This memorandum provides a basic framework and starting point from which the county and its cities will launch the environmental impact review process under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). This process will be used to inform the public about three proposed growth alternatives, advertise the county's intent to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), and provide an opportunity to comment on the scope of impacts to be examined in the SEIS.

## Background

In July 2013, Clark County began updating its Comprehensive Growth Management Plan to meet the 2016 periodic update requirement of RCW 36.70A.140. Community Planning prepared the following issue papers to help the Board of County Commissioners make decisions about the update:

- Issue Paper 1 - Comprehensive Plan Overview: A summary of the county's Planning Assumptions, 2013 vacant and buildable lands model (VBLM) inventory and population and employment projections.
- Issue Paper 2 – Population and Job Projections: Background information for a discussion with the cities and the town of Yacolt on population and job planning assumptions for 2015-2035. On Jan. 21, 2014, the Board adopted the state Office of Financial Management's (OFM) medium population projection of 562,207 for the 20-year period ending 2035 (Res. 2014-01-09).
- Issue Paper 3 – Employment forecast based on input from Washington Employment Security Department (ESD). It was revised as Issue Paper 3.1 to include the 2014 VBLM information. On April 29, 2014, the Board adopted the high employment forecast of 91,200 net new jobs for the 20-year period ending 2035 (Res. 2014-04-01).
- Issue Paper 4 – Population and Job Allocation: On June 24, 2014, the Board identified the methodology for allocating growth by UGA and adopted preliminary allocations for initial review (Res. 2014-06-17).

This issue paper, Issue Paper 5, will discuss the environmental impact review process under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and seek Board direction on development of alternatives.

## SEPA Process

Enacted in 1984, the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requires local governments to evaluate environmental impacts that could result from actions they approve or undertake. The most common evaluation is to discuss potential impacts of a proposed development on various resources and qualities of the environment listed on the SEPA checklist. There also are non-project actions that are reviewed, such as adoption of code language or a new plan or policy. The completed checklist is shared with federal, state and local agencies, Indian tribes, neighborhood organizations and interested parties.

Large development projects, such as an asphalt plant, and certain non-development projects, such as expansion of an urban growth area, require a more in-depth SEPA review, including, 1) identification and analysis of potential project-related impacts, and 2) consideration of possible alternatives to the proposed action. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is prepared, discussing any potential impacts. The county prepared an EIS in 2007, issuing both a draft EIS (DEIS) and a final EIS (FEIS). Comments on alternatives presented in the draft were used to determine a preferred alternative that was the focus of analysis in the FEIS.

For the 2016 update, the county is proposing to add to the 2007 environmental analysis, as needed, by preparing a supplemental EIS (SEIS). Under SEPA, analysis of a plan's impacts is not required to be site-specific, but rather give an overview of impacts that could be expected under the alternatives.

The EIS process under SEPA begins with a scoping process. That is when the county seeks public input and Board direction to define issues related to the comprehensive plan update that will be addressed in the draft SEIS. The preferred alternative studied in the final SEIS and eventually adopted by the Board will reflect local jurisdictions' input, Board directives, guiding principles and values and countywide planning policies. The SEIS and comprehensive planning process will end with adoption of an updated comprehensive growth management plan for Clark County.

## Methodology

Since Clark County's 2007 Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update, conditions in the county, as well as state and federal laws, have changed, requiring corresponding changes to the plan. The Board has adopted planning assumptions and principles and values that provide policy direction for reviewing and updating the county's growth management plan by June 2016.

As stated above, preparation of an EIS must include alternatives, including a 'no action' alternative that maintains the status quo. Possible alternatives for review in the EIS are listed below.

**Alternative 1: No Action Alternative.** This alternative is the adopted Comprehensive Plan as amended in July 2014, with the current urban growth boundaries, planning assumptions, policies and implementation ordinances.

### Alternative 2: County-Initiated Actions.

- a) Urban growth areas adopted in July 2014.
- b) Rural Land amendments to the Zoning Map, such as AG-20 to AG-10, FR-40 to FR-20 and R-20 to R-10, where needed.
- c) Washougal UGA amendments to the Zoning Map to reflect county zoning and application of Urban Holding.
- d) Vancouver UGA amendments to the Zoning Map to remove the Three Creeks Overlay.
- e) Removal of Urban Holding in the Vancouver UGA area known as Fisher's Swale.
- f) New Public Facility zone.
- g) Eliminate Comprehensive Plan Chapter 1 Table 1.6, Mixed Use footnote and subsequent Comprehensive Plan and Zoning changes.
- h) Streamline commercial zones from three to two.

- i) Zoning Map changes to include property owner site-specific requests, particularly within the Salmon Creek and Discovery planning areas.
- j) Zoning Map cleanup of Urban Reserve application consistency, UR-10, UR-20 and UR-40; Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map cleanup of Urban Holding application consistency.
- k) New Arterial Atlas Map for bicycles.
- l) At the request of property owners, sites that meet Board directives and other criteria. The new planning assumptions, policy direction, principles and values defined by the commissioners will be used in this alternative.

**Alternative 3: City-Requested Actions.**

- a) Urban growth areas adopted in July 2014.
- b) Expansion areas proposed by cities in July 2014.

After the scoping process, land use alternatives will be developed based on technical analysis, input from cities, the Board’s principles and values and results of the environmental scoping and analysis. From the DSEIS, a preferred alternative will emerge, providing a 20-year land supply and meeting the 2014 planning assumptions and policy directions.

**NEXT STEPS**

During four open houses in August, the public is invited to comment on the scope of impacts to be examined in the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. All open houses will be 7 - 8:30 p.m. Here are the open house dates and locations:

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| Tuesday, Aug. 19   | Fort Vancouver Community Library, 901 C St., Vancouver          |
| Wednesday, Aug. 20 | Lacamas Lake Lodge, 227 N.E. Lake Rd., Camas                    |
| Wednesday, Aug. 27 | Ridgefield Community Center, 210 N. Main Ave., Ridgefield       |
| Thursday, Aug. 28  | Battle Ground Community Center, 9123 E. Main St., Battle Ground |