

# Introduction

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## The Background

Clark County adopted its first comprehensive plan on May 10, 1979. The plan included a map that identified appropriate levels of development on all lands in Clark County. In rural areas, the plan designated and conserved forest, agricultural and mining land while setting varying levels of housing densities for rural residential areas. The Plan also identified areas appropriate for urban intensity housing, commercial and industrial development.

Urban growth areas were adopted around each city along with adopted policies which limited the types of services permitted outside of urban areas. These policies were intended to help protect the rural character of rural lands and focus urban development within urban areas. The plan also included chapters related to transportation planning (including adopting an arterial road plan as a part of the countywide plan map), identifying Heritage areas and creating policies on improving community appearance.

In 1980, countywide zoning was applied that helped implement the adopted Comprehensive Plan. Newly established zoning districts included Forest, Agriculture, Rural Estate, Rural Farm and Suburban Residential for rural areas. Urban zoning districts were adopted and applied on the countywide zoning map that provided a broad range of housing densities and distinguished between different intensities of commercial uses.

In 1990, the Washington State Legislature passed the State Growth Management Act or GMA (RCW 36.70A.010). The passage of GMA significantly changed the requirements for local planning. Under the GMA, each county is required to adopt a comprehensive plan. The law requires that each county required to plan under GMA do so in consultation with its cities:

- plan for a 20-year population forecast provided by the State Office of Financial Management (OFM) and distribute this forecast equitably and realistically throughout the county;
- collectively identify urban growth areas for each city and town using service standards and land development suitability as measures; and,
- draft plans which, at a minimum, include land use, transportation, housing, utilities, capital facilities, and rural elements.

In 1991 the legislature amended the GMA to require adoption of "countywide" planning policies that would provide a procedural framework for coordinated production of comprehensive plans. A Steering Committee comprised of elected officials from Clark County jurisdictions began working on countywide planning policies in the summer of 1991. In August 1992, the Board of County Commissioners adopted the policies.

## The Goals

Prior to adopting the Growth Management Act, the Legislature found that uncoordinated and unplanned growth, together with a lack of common goals expressing the public's interest in the conservation and wise use of our lands, posed a threat to the environment, sustainable economic development, and the health, safety and high quality of life enjoyed by residents of the state. The Growth Management Act demonstrated the Legislature understands that greater regulation of property use is necessary to accomplish the goals set out in the GMA and awareness that land is

scarce, land use decisions are largely permanent, and, particularly in urban areas, land use decisions affect not only the individual property owner or developer, but entire communities.

The GMA established thirteen planning goals (RCW 36.70A.020) to guide the creation and adoption of comprehensive plans and development regulations in the counties and cities that are required to or choose to plan under the Act. These goals provided the basis for the policies in the Community Framework Plan. They include the following:

**Urban Growth:** Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.

**Reduce Sprawl:** Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.

**Transportation:** Encourage efficient, multi-modal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.

**Housing:** Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.

**Economic Development:** Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and disadvantaged persons, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services and public facilities.

**Property Rights:** Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.

**Permits:** Applications for both state and local permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.

**Natural Resource Industries:** Maintain and enhance natural resource based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.

**Open Space and Recreation:** Encourage the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks.

**Environment:** Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.

**Citizen Participation and Coordination:** Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.

**Public Facilities and Services:** Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimums.

**Historic Preservation:** Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.

The GMA in Washington has been amended numerous times since its original adoption in 1990. A list summarizing the amendments made by the Legislature, between 1995-2006 to Chapter 36.70A of the Revised Code of Washington is included in Appendix C. All applicable Revised Code changes are included in Clark County's Comprehensive Plan 2004-2024.

## The Vision

Clark County is in the midst of continual change. As with any rapidly urbanizing area, problems exist that spark the need for managing growth:

- Growth throughout Clark County has sometimes been haphazard and without adequate availability of social and environmental services as well as public facilities;
- Prime agricultural, needed industrial and undeveloped lands have sometimes been inappropriately converted into low density sprawl;
- Transportation planning and infrastructure development have sometimes been inconsistent with other aspects of land use planning and sometimes have not been constructed in a timely manner;
- Access to education, training and living wage employment has sometimes been limited and inequitable; increasing housing costs has lead to limited affordability for an increasing number of residents;
- Local government processes and requirements have sometimes been inadequate to respond appropriately to changing conditions and quality of life value shifts;
- Natural resources, air quality and water quality have sometimes been degraded;
- Open and natural space development opportunities have been lost;
- Lands, structures and sites of historical and/or archeological significance have sometimes been compromised or sacrificed to other uses; and,
- Public processes at the neighborhood, community and inter-community levels have sometimes been inadequate and lacking in coordination.

The first step in addressing such challenges was to develop a vision of a desirable future. The Community Framework Plan was adopted in April 1993, as Clark County's long term vision of what the county could become. Conceptual in nature, it proposes changing past trends, which, if left unchecked, could result in problems similar to those experienced by other regions that failed to adequately plan for future growth. The Framework Plan envisions contained urban growth areas and rural centers within larger natural resource and rural areas. Consistent with the Growth Management Act, the Framework Plan emphasizes distinctions between urban, rural and resource to maintain a range of options for living which are valued by county residents.

The purpose of the Framework Plan was to establish consensus about which lands will eventually be committed to urban uses and which should remain rural. It continues to have a major role in defining life in Clark County—where we will work and shop, the types of housing we will live in, where our children will go to school, the lands that will serve as natural resources, the amount of open space we will enjoy, and how we will travel from place to place. The Framework Plan continues to be the foundation for Clark County's Comprehensive Plan 2004-2024 (20-Year Plan).

The 20-Year Plan has been developed to manage Clark County's growth in ways that will result in a better future for our community. It describes a future that will protect and conserve natural,

financial and human resources to continue the quality of life enjoyed by Clark County's residents. The Plan could not have been successfully completed without extensive, broad-based citizen participation throughout the process. That level of participation must continue to occur for successful ongoing implementation and monitoring of the 20-Year Plan.

Clark County residents generally recognize continued growth will continue over the next 20 to 50 years, but, at the same time, they are concerned with some of the impacts growth may generate. Although the exact amount of growth and its timing are unknown, through the growth management planning process, general consensus has been developed about where growth should occur and what it should look like. Growth management can be generally defined as the combined use of a wide range of techniques by a community to determine the amount, type and rate of development the community desires and to channel that growth into designated areas.

In the next 20 years, Clark County and its cities will grow in population (to an estimated 584,310 people) and jobs (to an estimated 230,000). As a result, the character of the county will continue to change in ways which reflect the ongoing urbanization of city areas. This will include demographic changes such as:

- increased household growth and residential densities in some areas;
- an increased percentage of smaller households;
- increased percentages of older residents and residents with special service needs;
- increased racial, ethnic and cultural diversity;
- an increased need for equitable education and training as well as lifetime learning opportunities;
- increased percentages of workers employed in the service sector and of households with two or more workers;
- an increased percentage of residents living on fixed incomes;
- an increased need for varying types of housing including affordable housing;
- increased housing construction and land costs;
- increased travel demand, traffic volume and registered vehicles; and,
- an increased need to preserve and protect the natural environment.

Given the trends and changes coming to Clark County, maintaining and/or enhancing our quality of life will require considerable foresight, ongoing cooperative and broad-based planning, consistent monitoring of Plan implementation, and revisions to the 20-Year Plan where necessary to assure a high quality of life. This will require diligence on the community's part, not only to make sound decisions now but to monitor the 20-Year Plan in the future. While the 20-Year Plan will be updated over time to reflect changing attitudes and circumstances, it is important to remember that once development occurs it cannot easily be reversed. The results of the decisions the community makes or fails to make now will be with us for generations to come. Through the planning process we have learned that most of us desire a high quality of life. That vision is comprised of:

- healthy, safe and productive neighborhoods and communities;
- friendly, cooperative and engaged residents who celebrate diverse backgrounds, ethnicity and cultures;
- a variety of housing options;
- a county where sustainable populations of salmon and other native species are a testimony to a healthy ecosystem; where our well being is supported by the integrity of the ecosystem

we share with other living species; and where, by ensuring healthy habitat for all inhabitants of Clark County, we ensure the quality of life we value.

- a thriving, sustainable economy with private and public workplaces and business centers that act responsibly toward their employees and the communities that foster their success;
- quality schools meeting the educational and training needs of all residents;
- public and private institutions working in true partnership with the community to deliver high quality services; and,
- open, responsive and accountable local government that works to create a true sense of community and to create democratic processes on all levels.

### **The Community Framework Planning Process**

The citizen participation process for the Community Framework Plan resulted in the expression of a wide variety of opinions regarding appropriate population densities, property rights, provision and costs of public facilities and services and whether all urban development should occur within cities. Beginning with workshops and surveys conducted in 1991, planning staff collected and analyzed opinions that resulted in the identification of the six top issues which were:

- preserve open space and natural areas;
- protect property rights and keep taxes low;
- continue to permit large lot rural development;
- encourage land development that preserves a sense of place and a feeling of community;
- encourage development of high capacity transit including light rail; and,
- develop a better balance of employment opportunities and housing in the county.

In 1992, county staff refined concepts into three alternative community framework plans. Each of these three plans achieved different goals expressed by the public in the 1991 public processes. In June and July 1992, a second round of public workshops was held, illustrating the three alternatives with maps and written information. County and city planning staff participated in the workshops by providing information and explaining the features of each alternative. A newsletter describing the alternatives and inviting comment was mailed to every household. Approximately 700 people attended the 1992 workshops and more than 750 people gave written responses. The majority of participants preferred the concept known as the “Hometown” alternative, which conserves resource lands and natural areas and allows for the development of a high capacity transit system. Written comments also indicated that the following features appealed most to the respondents:

- preservation of open space;
- a compact development pattern, with employment, shopping and a choice of housing located close to each other;
- preservation of rural lands; and,
- the potential for development of alternative types of transportation including light rail.

The county then prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Community Framework Plan. It identified the potential negative impacts associated with each alternative. Using this information and the input from the second round of public meetings, in October 1992 the county and its cities, prepared and distributed for comment a draft Community Framework Plan. In addition, a newsletter describing the draft plan and many of its key policies was mailed to every household. It invited residents to attend upcoming county meetings and indicated that a DEIS was available.

A third round of public meetings ("Previews") was held in December 1992, with more than 200 people attending. As with previous meetings, there were diverse opinions with respect to densities, property rights and government controls. Frequent comments included:

- hometown alternative is the best alternative plan concept and reflects values from previous public input;
- no more strip malls are wanted and there is need to blend existing strip development into more user-friendly places;
- the county needs more open space, parks and trails, and needs to preserve the beauty of Clark County;
- urban areas should have more dense development (including "granny" flats, duplexes, condominiums, and mixed-use development) with large open spaces as buffers and with high density development placed in urban areas and near transportation facilities;
- passed-over parcels should be developed (infill) before allowing new development outside urban areas; and,
- land zoned for industrial uses should be increased.

Other comments emphasized the need to:

- preserve the character of the existing neighborhoods;
- provide larger lots (1/2 to 5 acres in size);
- develop incentives to conserve resource lands;
- adopt right to farm and harvest ordinances;
- ensure that rural centers do not have high densities; and,
- reimburse residents for down-zoning.

To further verify the direction provided at the public meetings in June, July and December 1992, a random sample survey was conducted in November and December 1992. More than 400 residents were selected on a statistically valid basis. The results are documented in the Clark County Planning Survey, dated January 12, 1993, by Riley Research Associates.

The survey found that residents favored the description of the Hometown concept, as well as the individual components described. While the average rating was 6.33 on a 10-point scale, 84 percent rated the plan a 5.00 or higher. The highest rated components, in descending order, included the following:

- preservation of resource lands;
- strict design and appearance standards in high-density developments;
- directing of rural development to towns;
- requiring larger lots in rural areas; and,
- directing a larger share of transportation to mass transit.

Comments received in response to the DEIS, both written and oral, were addressed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Draft Community Framework Plan.

## The Process

The county's 20-Year Comprehensive Plan 2004-2024 builds upon the efforts undertaken during the process of developing the Community Framework Plan and the 20-Year Plan revised in 1997 and 2004.

Goals and policies in the 20-Year Plan are designed to further reflect the consensus achieved and, more specifically, to answer the questions about how we will live and plan for longer term development in Clark County over the next 20 years. The overall goal of the plan is to provide maximum flexibility for each county resident to pursue his or her own goals and community goals by:

- providing a more detailed analysis of existing and likely future conditions as a basis for decisions;
- minimizing government regulation and review while protecting the public interest; and,
- setting regulations that are straightforward so that professionals are not required to interpret them.

### **The Community Involvement Process**

Over the past three years, the growth management update process, has involved the people of Clark County (both interest groups and individuals) in an early and continuous way in planning to comply with the review and update requirements of the Growth Management Act. This community involvement program included the processes that led to the updated 20-Year Comprehensive Growth Management Plan.

The planning process involved staff from the eight cities and Clark County; individuals and interest groups; and representatives from the special districts, other agencies and utility providers in a broad-based, public driven effort

Most major planning programs involve a citizen involvement component, but it is rarely the central focus of the effort. In the case, of the 2007 Plan update, the county wanted every interested party to have an opportunity to participate in the planning process in a meaningful way, and to use the program to develop new relationships with affected agencies and groups. The typical approach of appointing a special citizen's advisory committee was explicitly rejected in favor of outreach to the general public at all key decision points and hands-on involvement from affected agencies and groups.

The comprehensive plan update public involvement program has been successful in ensuring citizen participation as the center of the planning process, and has lead to a multi-faceted dialogue with other agencies and the public to develop a consensus-based growth management program. The 2004-2024 comprehensive growth management plan update included the following components:

- **A Steering Committee** of Mayors and County Commissioners to review and comment on regional growth management related policies and programs.
- **A Technical Advisory Committee** of planning staff from the county, eight cities, and special districts including the school districts, Port of Vancouver, C-TRAN and Clark Public Utilities to coordinate technical analysis and suggest appropriate policies to the Steering Committee.
- **A newsletter** were sent to every household in the county (over 100,000 households) reporting on the 20-Year Plan's update purpose, policy decisions, next steps and informing residents of upcoming opportunities for involvement. The newsletter was sent in May 2007.
- A mailing list was established for **mailing to those with specific** interest in the GMA update process. Information was mailed to those residents who indicated an interest in more specific information on growth management topics (over 2,555 people).
- **A speaker's bureau** of staff planners who went to every organization or group requesting a presentation on the growth management planning update program. They talked to several hundred people at public and private organization meetings.
- **Cable television broadcast** of growth management worksessions and hearings.

- **News releases** to all media to explain the issues and process to them. The county also bought advertising in local newspapers to announce public meetings.
- The **urban** areas were reviewed by each city with the assistance of county staff liaisons.
- Joint sponsorship and staffing of the **Youth Town Hall** 2004, 2005, and 2006 annual program focusing on growth management, environmental and transportation planning.
- **Open Houses** were held throughout the county to explain key issues and get public input on alternative long term approaches to the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan. Planning open houses were staffed by the cities and county staff.
- An ongoing effort to have **with concerned citizens** regarding their specific requests and other growth management related issues.
- A **website** that was updated weekly with “what’s new”, policies, notice of meetings, copies of staff reports, agendas, minutes, maps, a glossary, timelines, contact info, data and complete documents.
- A series of **public hearings** before the County Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners prior to adoption of the 20-year Plan update were held. The public hearing were televised on CTV and aired 8-10 times each.
- **Major information materials** such as the DEIS and FEIS were distributed through the Community Planning Department, Vancouver; North Clark County Resource Center, Battle Ground; Sheriff’s Office precincts and branch libraries. Hard copies and CD-ROMs were provided. Materials could also be downloaded from the county’s web site.
- In May 2005, the Clark County Board of Commissioners adopted a **Public Outreach Plan** as a continuation of the outreach process that supported the adoption of the September 2004 plan. The outreach plan was intended to ensure opportunities for citizens to find out about activities related to the plan and to provide opportunities for citizen input.
- A series of public **workshops** before the Board of County Commissions in order to give the public and other elected officials an opportunity to ask questions and gain a better understanding of the implications of growth management for their jurisdiction or special district, and to discuss the issues with other public officials in the same position.
- A major exhibit at the **Clark County Fair** to reach as many residents as possible with information about growth management and the comprehensive plan update.

*"Cherish your visions and your dreams as they are the children of your soul, the blueprints of your ultimate achievements." - Napoleon Hill*

### **Clark County, Washington**

Clark County is rich in local lore and tied to the earliest settlements in the Pacific Northwest. Chinook Indian villages dotted the banks of the Columbia River when the Lewis and Clark expedition arrived in 1806. By 1825, Ft. Vancouver one of the oldest settlements in Washington, was established by the Hudson's Bay Company.

Clark County had its beginning as the District of Vancouver established by the Oregon Provisional Government on June 27, 1844. The district encompassed all of what is now the state of Washington. In 1845, the provisional government changed “district” to “county” and in 1849 changed “Vancouver” to “Clarke” in honor of the explorer William Clark of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Many years later, the Washington State Legislature corrected the county’s name to “Clark” removing the “e” on the end. In 1849, the Hudson's Bay Company transferred its headquarters to Ft. Victoria in

British Columbia and abandoned Ft. Vancouver. In that same year, the Vancouver barracks became the largest military installation west of the Mississippi River.

### **Settlement**

When the Donation Land Claim Act passed Congress on September 27, 1850, it brought a rush of settlers from all over the country in pursuit of a better future. The “Great Migration” on the Oregon Trail occurred in 1852. Today Clark County is comprised of eight municipalities surrounded by a rural landscape.

1. **Battle Ground** (incorporated 1951) lies in the heart of the agricultural belt and is the home of the oldest dairy plant.
2. **Camas** (incorporated 1906) is situated on the bank of the Columbia River and charts its origin to the 1883 paper mill. Camas is the second largest city in the county.
3. **La Center** (incorporated 1909) sits on the east fork of the Lewis River and was known as a business and navigation center for river commerce.
4. **Ridgefield** (incorporated 1909) is located on the bank of the Columbia River and was an important trading center.
5. **Vancouver** (incorporated 1857) is located on the bank of the Columbia River and flourished as a waterfront town. Vancouver is the fourth largest city in the state and the second largest city in the Portland Metropolitan Area.
6. **Washougal** (incorporated 1908) is at the gateway to the Columbian River Gorge. It was a terminus for Columbia River riverboat traffic and home to a woolen mill established in 1908.
7. **Woodland** (incorporated 1906) flourished as a waterfront town situated at the junction between the Columbia and Lewis rivers. Woodland straddles both Cowlitz and Clark Counties.
8. Town of **Yacolt** (incorporated 1908) is situated north of the east fork of the Lewis River and was a major logging hub that connected to the cross county railroad.

On April 1, 2015, the state Office of Financial Management ranked Clark County as the fifth largest county in the state with a population of 448,500 and is known for the Washington State University – Vancouver branch campus and technology business clusters.

### **Geography and climate**

Located in southwest Washington State, Clark County is approximately 70 miles from the Pacific Ocean. It is physically compact, measuring approximately 25 miles across in either direction encompassing 656 square miles. The Columbia River forms the western and southern boundaries of the county with over 40 miles of river frontage. The Columbia is the only fresh-water harbor for ocean-going commerce on the entire west coast of North America. While the Columbia River forms the county’s southern and western boundaries, the Lewis River forms the northern perimeter and the Cascade Mountain range the eastern border.

Clark County lies within a geographic basin created by the Cascade and Pacific Coast mountain ranges. The climate in the county is influenced by this geography which produces mild wet winters and moderately dry summers. Annual rainfall averages 41.3 inches a year with about 70 percent of the annual precipitation between the months of November and March. The average high temperature in July is 79.9°F and the average low temperature in January is 33.7°F. The marine influence of the Pacific Ocean contributes much to the temperate climate.

### **Comprehensive planning**

Clark County, as with any rapidly urbanizing area, is constantly adapting to meet the need of its residents. A brief summary of planning history is below:

1935 Clark County established the first county planning department and planning commission.

1961 Clark County adopts first *Comprehensive Plan* (1961 Plan) on April 27, 1961 with the corresponding map on October 2, 1961. In 1959, the state legislature approved a new statute (Chapter 36.70 Revised Code of Washington), which applied specifically to county, regional and joint planning programs. [Commissioner's Journal book 25929 and 16235 respectively]

1979 Clark County adopts second *Comprehensive Plan* (1979 Plan) on May 10, 1979. The plan included a map that identified appropriate levels of development on all lands in Clark County. In rural areas, the plan designated and conserved forest, agricultural and mining land while setting varying levels of housing densities for rural residential areas. The 1979 Plan also identified areas appropriate for urban intensity housing, commercial and industrial development. Urban growth areas were adopted around each city along with adopted policies which limited the types of services permitted outside of urban areas. These policies were intended to help protect the rural character of rural lands and focus urban development within urban areas. The plan also included chapters related to transportation planning (including adopting an arterial road plan as a part of the countywide plan map), identifying Heritage areas and creating policies on improving community appearance. [ORD. 1979-05-461]

1980 Countywide zoning was applied that helped implement the newly adopted comprehensive plan. [ORD. 1980-06-80]

1990 The state legislature adopted the Growth Management Act (GMA) as Chapter 36.70A. RCW.

1993 *Community Framework Plan* adopted on May 26, 1993. [ORD. 1993-05-41]

1994 *Clark County 20-year Comprehensive Growth Management Plan 1994-2014* (1994 Plan) resulted in a total of 41,229 acres or 64.42 square miles of urban growth areas. [ORD. 1994-12-47 and 1994-12-53] The 1994 Plan was remanded by the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board for inconsistency between population projections and capital facilities planning. The 1994 Plan also faced 67 appellants. To comply with the hearings board findings and subsequent appeals the county revisited the 35,000 acre Agri-Forest designation and

Rural Centers. [ORD. 1998-07-19] The remaining 3,500 acre review of non-resource designation was resolved in 2003. [ORD. 2003-09-12]

2004 Clark County 20-year Comprehensive Growth Management Plan 2004-2024 (2004 Plan) resulted in 6,124 acres or 9.57 square miles of urban growth areas added. There were 14 appellants that challenged the 2004 Plan. The Community Framework Plan was amended and incorporated into the 2004 Plan. [ORD. 2004-09-02]

2007 Revision of 2004 Plan (2007 Plan) added 12,023 acres to urban growth areas. Appeals challenged the 2007 Plan, arguing the county had erroneously moved 4,351 acres from agricultural designation to a non-resource designation and included those lands within urban growth areas. As a result of the appeals process, 1,500 acres of rezoned land was ruled invalid and those lands were removed from urban growth areas and again designated as agricultural lands. [ORD. 2007-09-13], [ORD. 2009-12-15], [ORD. 2014-07-03]

2016 Clark County 20-year Comprehensive Growth Management Plan 2015-2035 (2016 Plan) focusing on land for jobs. [ORD. 2016-XX-XX]

### **Growth management**

In 1990, the Washington State Legislature passed the Growth Management Act of 1990 (GMA). The GMA requires that counties and cities with state oversight plan and control where and how much growth occurs. The comprehensive plans developed by communities under this mandate will guide land use decisions in the future. Comprehensive plans must respond to the requirements of the GMA and all subsequent amendments.

The GMA established thirteen planning goals to guide the creation and adoption of comprehensive plans and development regulations in the counties and cities that are required to or choose to plan under the Act. The fourteenth goal was added in 2003. These goals provided the basis for the policies in the Community Framework Plan.

The GMA has been amended numerous times since its original adoption. A list summarizing the amendments made by the legislature and other related statutes are included in Volume 3. All applicable Revised Code of Washington (RCW) changes are included in the 2016 Plan.

### **Figure 1 | Growth Management Act Goals**

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| <p>1. <b>Urban Growth.</b> Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.</p> <p>2. <b>Reduce Sprawl.</b> Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.</p> <p>3. <b>Transportation.</b> Encourage efficient, multi-modal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.</p> <p>4. <b>Housing.</b> Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.</p> <p>5. <b>Economic Development.</b> Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and disadvantaged persons and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services and public facilities.</p> | <p>6. <b>Property Rights.</b> Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.</p> <p>7. <b>Permits.</b> Applications for both state and local permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.</p> <p>8. <b>Natural Resource Industries.</b> Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands and discourage incompatible uses.</p> <p>9. <b>Open Space and Recreation.</b> Encourage the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water and develop parks.</p> | <p>10. <b>Environment.</b> Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality and the availability of water.</p> <p>11. <b>Citizen Participation and Coordination.</b> Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.</p> <p>12. <b>Public Facilities and Services.</b> Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimums.</p> <p>13. <b>Historic Preservation.</b> Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.</p> <p>14. <b>Shorelines of the State.</b> The goals and policies of the shoreline management act as set forth in RCW 90.58.020 are added as the 14th goal.</p> |
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## **Community Framework Plan**

The *Community Framework Plan* was adopted in 1993; amended in 2000, 2001 and 2004. The extensive citizen participation process to develop the *Community Framework Plan* resulted in the expression of a wide variety of options regarding appropriate population densities, property rights, provision of public facilities and services and whether all urban development should occur within cities. This visioning document provides guidance to local jurisdictions on regional land use and service issues. The 2016 Plan is consistent with the concepts put forward in the *Community Framework Plan*.

## **Countywide Planning Policies**

The GMA, under RCW 36.70A.210, requires counties and cities to collaboratively develop Countywide Planning Policies (CWPP) to govern the development of comprehensive plans. The Washington

Administrative Code (WAC) 365-196-305 defines “the primary purpose of CWPP is to ensure consistency between comprehensive plans of counties and cities sharing a common border or related regional issues. Another purpose of the CWPP is to facilitate the transformation of local governance in the urban growth areas, typically through annexation to or incorporation of a city, so that urban governmental services are primarily provided by cities and rural and regional services are provided by counties.” In response to this requirement, CWPP were adopted in 1994; amended in 2004, 2007 and 2016; and are provided in each relevant element.

## **Comprehensive Plan organization and use**

The 2016 Plan is designed to reflect the uniqueness of Clark County and seeks to preserve those qualities. The 2016 Plan has been written to recognize and reinforce the positive characteristics which make Clark County a special place. The 2016 Plan builds upon the efforts undertaken during the process of developing the *Community Framework Plan*, 1994 Plan, 2004 Plan and 2007 Plan.

The organization of the 2016 Plan is described in the following outline. It is presumed that city policies are consistent with the county's plan. The major components of the 2016 Plan are as follows:

### **Plan Organization and Use**

This Plan aims to reflect the uniqueness of Clark County, and seeks to preserve those unique qualities. This Plan has been written to recognize and reinforce the positive characteristics which make Clark County a special place.

Clark County's 20-Year Plan contains a total of thirteen (13) elements, which cover not only the eight elements required by state law but optional elements that are important to the future success of growth management in the county.

It should be emphasized that the entire "Plan" consists not only of the 20-Year Comprehensive Growth Management Plan but also includes the *Community Framework Plan* and the attached 20-Year Plan map. For a thorough understanding of how the plan was developed, all components of the plan should be reviewed.

The organization of the 20-Year Plan is described in the following outline. Within certain elements and for certain cities, policies for urban growth areas are included within the county's plan. Otherwise, it is presumed that city policies are consistent with the county's plan. The major components of the 20-Year Plan are as follows:

### **Introduction**

#### **Community Framework Plan**

**Chapter 1:** The **Land Use Element** describes the way in which the Plan will allocate land for different purposes and will permit or encourage development at differing densities.

**Chapter 2:** The **Housing Element** describes housing needs and the direction the county and its cities will take to influence the type, location and affordability of housing throughout the county. The issues addressed include fair share housing, infill, accessory units and special needs housing.

**Chapter 3:** The **Rural and Natural Resource Element** describes the designation and proposed level of development for rural and natural resource lands in the county.

**Chapter 4:** The **Environmental Element** describes specific environmental goals and requirements as the basis for development regulations and general goals for land use planning and parks acquisition. Additionally, the element describes critical areas including wetlands, water recharge areas and wildlife habitat that are to be protected throughout the county.

**Chapter 5:** The **Transportation Element** describes the way in which key transportation components, including roadways, transit, freight, aviation and bicycle and pedestrian movement have been planned and integrated into other elements of the 20-Year Plan to further environmental, economic and other goals and policies. It highlights policies on various modes of transportation, identifies concurrency issues and includes capital facilities planning for transportation.

**Chapter 6:** The **Capital Facilities and Utilities Element** describes the investment in public infrastructure needed to support the land use, housing, transportation and economic development elements. Emphasis is on water, sewer and storm drainage, with fire protection, law enforcement, schools, libraries, government buildings and other facility needs also being discussed.

**Chapter 7:** The **Parks and Open Space Element** describes the direction and strategies to provide for parks and open space in the county. This element is linked to the land use plan and the proposed densities to guide the acquisition and development of parks. Plans for urban (active) parks, regional parks, open spaces and trails are discussed.

**Chapter 8:** The **Historic Preservation Element** describes directions and strategies to recognize and finance protection of historical and archaeological sites in the county.

**Chapter 9:** The **Economic Development Element** describes the policy direction and implementation strategies to provide for increased employment opportunities and higher family wages in the county. This element is linked to the land use and transportation elements as an integral part of the Plan.

**Chapter 10:** The **School Element** describes the policy direction and goals to provide full consideration to the importance of school facilities and encourage the development of sustainable learning environments.

**Chapter 11:** The **Community Design Element** describes policies and strategies to provide for design standards and the framework for consistent development in the county. Like historical and critical areas, community design is an element that can assist the community in achieving its potential. This element is included in order to encourage better designed development in the future.

**Chapter 12:** The **Annexation Element** describes the intent of designating areas within the urban growth boundary and provides for the annexation of the county's urban areas to cities.

**Chapter 13:** The **Shoreline Element** contains Clark County's Shoreline Master Program Goals and Policies. These goals and policies are implemented by Chapter 40.460 of the Clark County Code. These goals and policies, along with Chapter 40.460 and the Official Shoreline Map are adopted as the Clark County Shoreline Master Program.

**Chapter 14:** The **Procedures for Planning Element** describes how the plan is to be used and processes for amending and updating the plan.

The Community Framework Plan component of this document should be reviewed to obtain an understanding of the framework that the county and communities used to develop their 20-Year Plans. Guideline policies from the Framework Plan helped ensure the overall vision expressed by county residents would be achieved in the Growth Management Plans. The policies also help ensure that land uses and major infrastructure improvements can be planned for both within the 20-year horizon required by the GMA and the longer term development of the county.

The 20-Year Plan was developed following adoption of the Framework Plan. It contains the substance of the plan. For each element included there is generally an introduction, a discussion of that element's relationship to other elements, a description of existing conditions, estimates and projections of future needs, and goals and policies.

For some elements, strategies for implementation of goals and policies are also presented. Policies are intended as necessary to the achievement of goals, while strategies are more specific tools or activities which may help achieve adopted policies. The word "shall" is used to state explicit county commitment to following a policy and to requiring that it be followed by cities and towns. Use of that word indicates minimal flexibility or room for negotiation, while use of the word "should" implies either that there may be more consideration of varying interpretations and/or the policy is somewhat less defined at this point. The number of policies or strategies given for a particular goal in comparison with those for another goal should not be interpreted as an indication of the degree of commitment to the goal; all goals stated have equal commitment from the county. Likewise, no priority is intended by the order in which the thirteen (13) elements are presented.

### **Public participation**

The GMA requires the county and cities to conduct outreach to ensure early and continuous public participation in developing and amending comprehensive plans and development regulations in RCW 36.70A.140. The GMA also requires that local programs clearly identify schedules and procedures for public participation in the periodic update process in RCW ~~36.70A.130~~(36.70A.130 (2)(a)). The county developed the *Clark County Comprehensive Plan 2016 Update Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Scoping Schedule* to satisfy these requirements [RES. 2014-01-10].

### **Integration with other plans**

The 2016 Plan serves as an umbrella plan to ensure that the following plans are compatible and advance the goals described in the *Community Framework Plan*:

- [Highway 99 Subarea Plan, December 16, 2008](#)
- [Agriculture Preservation Strategies Report, March 2009](#)
- [Mill Creek Subarea Plan, June 23, 2009](#)
- [Clark County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, December 2010](#)
- [Clark County Economic Development Plan Final Edition, September 2011](#)
- [Shoreline Master Program, November 2011; amended December 2014](#)
- [Coordinated Water System Plan, January 2012](#)
- [Aging Readiness Plan, February 12, 2012](#)
- [Growing Healthier Planning for a Healthier Clark County Report, June 5, 2012](#)
- [Clark County Conservation Areas Acquisition Plan, March 2014](#)
- [Clark County Community Development Block Grant Program and Home Investment Partnerships Program Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan 2015-2019, July 2015](#)
- [Clark County Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, September 2015](#)