



Clark County 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update Scoping Report

Introduction

Clark County is updating its Comprehensive Growth Management Plan. The current plan, adopted in 2007, covers the period from 2004 to 2024. The update will cover the 20-year period from 2015 to 2035. The scheduled completion of the updated plan is June 2016.

The update will review policies and elements of the plan with an eye toward population and employment growth over the next 20 years. With this growth comes potential for increased demand for residential, commercial and industrial land, parks, schools, services, utility facilities and roads. The 2016 update focuses on future land use needs in unincorporated urban areas, but has links to planning in cities, rural areas, and the Town of Yacolt.

Clark County is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to inform the new Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update. The SEIS is being prepared in accordance with Washington's State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), which requires environmental review at the plan level when a government agency is preparing to adopt or amend a plan such as the Comprehensive Plan. On July 30, 2014, Clark County issued a Scoping Notice initiating a 30-day public comment period from July 30, 2014 to September 1, 2014.

Purpose of Report

This report describes how Clark County conducted public involvement and outreach activities to support scoping and provides a summary of comments received from local jurisdictions, public agencies, tribes, stakeholder organizations, and the general public through the close of the scoping comment period. Clark County will consider this information to identify potential improvements and environmental issues for study in the Comprehensive Plan Update SEIS.

This report is organized into the following sections:

- SEPA and the Comprehensive Plan Update Process
- Scoping Process
- Summary of Comments
 - Comments from jurisdictions, agencies, and tribes
 - Comments from stakeholder organizations
 - Comments from the general public
- EIS Alternatives

SEPA and the Comprehensive Plan Update Process

As part of the plan update, an environmental review of proposed changes to the comprehensive plan must be undertaken. This is a requirement of the State Environmental Policy Act, or SEPA. Alternatives are being developed that represent a range of options that will be considered for distribution of population, employment, and development in the county from 2015 to 2035. Because growth in Clark County had lagged since the growth plan was last updated in 2007, the county intends to rely on the final environmental impact statement written for that update. The county will supplement that final EIS with new environmental analysis,

as needed. The draft SEIS will examine elements of the built and natural environment and generally describe what the effects of 20 years growth might be.

When the draft SEIS is completed, it will be reviewed by the public, the Planning Commission and the Board of Clark County Commissioners, who will hold a public hearing. The Board will select a preferred alternative which will be discussed in the final SEIS in the spring of 2015.

The process to update the Comprehensive Plan will take a renewed look at the county's needs taking into account the projected regional population, employment, and transportation growth. This will be done in coordination with the cities' growth management strategies established in regional land use, transportation, and economic development plans. Upon completion of the environmental review process, the Board of County Commissioners will decide what revisions to the Comprehensive Plan should be made, if any, potentially resulting in adoption of an updated Comprehensive Plan.

Scoping Process

The environmental review process begins with what is called scoping. Scoping helps county staff determine which improvements and environmental issues will be studied in the SEIS. The formal Scoping Notice was issued by Clark County in accordance with SEPA requirements on July 30, 2014. Between July 30th and September 1, 2014, this important process:

- Gave the general public, local jurisdictions, public agencies, tribes, and other stakeholder organizations a chance to learn more about the Comprehensive Plan Update and provide comments, and
- Helped Clark County identify a range of alternatives to consider in the SEIS and which environmental topics to address when evaluating growth scenarios.

Information about the project and the scoping process was broadcast using a variety of methods aimed at reaching a diverse cross section of the community. To advertise information about the project, including the scoping comment period and public scoping meetings, Clark County:

- Published newspaper advertisements in the *Columbian* on Sunday, August 10, 2014 and Friday, August 15, 2014;
- Published a newspaper advertisement in the *Reflector* and the *Post-Record* on August 13, 2014;
- Issued a press release on August 11, 2014;
- Interviewed on Oregon Public Broadcasting radio on August 20, 2014 inviting citizens to comment on the future plans for Clark County.

Clark County held a series of evening public scoping meetings as shown below:

8/19/2014 at the Vancouver: Community Library
8/20/2014 at the Lacamas Lake Lodge in Camas
8/27/2014 at the Ridgefield Community Center
8/28/2014 at the Battle Ground Community Center

More than 70 Clark County residents attended these meetings.

For each public scoping meeting, the following format and agenda were used:

- Guests arrived and signed in at a welcome station.
- Guests picked up a seven-page handout explaining the scoping and SEIS process. The handout is on the Comprehensive Plan webpage.

- Guests toured the open house where Clark County staff answered one-on-one questions and engaged in discussions with members of the public. The following displays were set up around the room as part of the open house:

Station 1: “Welcome”—At this station, guests signed in, were provided a brief orientation, and were offered a Long-Range Plan Update 11x17 folio handout.

Station 2: “Current Comprehensive Plan Zoning Map”—At this station, guests were provided with the existing designations for future growth.

Station 3: “Planning Assumptions”—This station provided the projections for future population, employment, and urban/rural proportion assumed in the next 20-years.

Station 4: “Possible Alternatives”—This station highlighted three possible alternatives for study in an EIS (see discussion below).

Station 5 “Environmental Constraints and Built Environment”—This station provided two informational displays: the location of environmentally sensitive areas and the location of development coded by residential, commercial and industrial.

Station 6: “Transportation”—This station focused on the transportation network in the county and illustrated the planned improvements on current roads and proposed new streets.

Station 7: “Parks”—This station provided the public with a map of the existing parks and their distribution across the county.

Station 8: “Food System Council”—This station was staffed by Food System Council members and displayed the importance of locally grown food and the need to preserve agricultural areas for a growing population.

At each open house, Gordy Euler, Planning Manager, provided opening comments in a Power Point presentation, outlining the importance of gathering feedback on the long range vision of the county. There were several ways to submit formal scoping comments, including the following:

- Comment forms at the meetings to submit written comments
- Webpage address to submit comments: www.clark.wa.gov/planning/2016update/comments.html;
- Email address to submit comments: comp.plan@clark.wa.gov; or
- Mailing address to provide written comments
Community Planning
Comp Plan Comments
P.O. Box 9810
Vancouver WA 98666

The meeting handout, the exhibits at the stations, and the Power Point presentation are all on the Comprehensive Plan Alternatives webpage.

Summary of Comments

Thirty-eight comments (38) were received during scoping via public meetings, emails, letters, and online. During the formal scoping period, comments were received from stakeholder organizations, members of the general public, and governmental agencies.

A summary of comments is presented below.

General Comments

Several comments received addressed a concern with greater density and the subsequent impacts on emergency services, schools and parks. A few comments addressed the importance for reviewing and

correcting the rural resource land zoning and designations. Staff received advice that quality of life needs to be considered when designating land for job production. One comment would have liked to see an open house meeting in rural Clark County. Finally, a citizen voiced preference for using Alternative 3 (city-initiated actions) as the preferred scenario.

Agriculture/Farms

This category received the most comments, specifically from by citizens in northern Clark County. Many comments received during the scoping period stressed the importance of preserving agricultural lands. Several residents expressed the county's soils as a valuable resource for the production of local foods. A number of commenters would like the county to allow for smaller parcel sizes with agriculture zoning in order to provide for a greater abundance of farms.

Parks

All comments related to parks desired the parks system to be linked, with a network of biking and walking trails serving as connection between parks. The preservation of green space is important and should be addressed for the Comprehensive Plan and at development review. One comment specifically called for the need to connect Vancouver Lake to the Port of Ridgefield.

Planning Assumptions

One citizen would like to see more alternatives that specifically addressed promotion of open space, clean water, stormwater, wetlands, wildlife/fish, natural areas, wildfires, slopes, soils, transportation, public services, and affordable housing. A specific comment addressed the need for the county to be brought into compliance with case #96-2-00080-2.

Site Specific Request

Staff received five comments from property owners generally wanting the ability to develop their property, by means of lifting urban holding designation, bringing the property into an urban growth area, or conducting a sub-area plan. One comment addressed rezoning rural Amboy to one acre minimum. Another commenter had concerns about a new road proposed adjacent to their property and a rezone of a nearby tax lot to industrial.

Transportation

Three comments were received regarding transportation: support for extending 192nd Ave across the Columbia River, the need for light rail extension into Clark County, and the need for realistic growth rates used to plan the transportation system.