

Clark County Comprehensive Plan 2016 Update

Planning for growth 2015 – 2035

2016 Population and Employment Allocation – Issue Paper 4

Purpose

This memorandum provides a basic framework and starting point from which the county and its cities may consider population and employment allocation.

Background

In July 2013, Clark County began the process of updating its Comprehensive Growth Management Plan to meet the 2016 periodic update requirement of Chapter 36.70A.140 RCW. Several issue papers have already been prepared to allow the Board to make decisions about the update:

In “Issue Paper 1 - Comprehensive Plan Overview”, Community Planning presented a summary of the county’s Planning Assumptions, the 2013 vacant and buildable lands model (VBLM) inventory, and population and employment projections.

In “Issue Paper 2 – Population and Job Projections”, Community Planning presented background information for a discussion with the cities and the Town of Yacolt on population and job planning assumptions for 2015 through 2035. On January 21, 2014, the Board of Clark County Commissioners adopted the Office of Financial Management (OFM) medium population of 562,207 for the twenty year period ending 2035 (Res. 2014-01-09).

In “Issue Paper 3 – Community Planning presented employment forecasts and suggested a high employment forecast based on input from Washington Employment Security Department (ESD) . Issue Paper 3 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 twenty year period ending 2035 (Res. 2014-04-01).

This issue paper (Issue Paper 4) will discuss 2016 population and employment allocations.

Methodology

Allocation of population and jobs is a key step in the planning process. There are three options for allocating that can be used by the Board:

- 1) placing growth where it has historically occurred within the urban growth areas (UGA) as documented by U.S. Census;
- 2) allocating growth by UGA based on the vacant and buildable lands model plus the potential capacity for jobs and population by considering factors such as FPIAs, redevelopment, filling vacancies, etc.;
or
- 3) allocating growth by UGA according to the proportion of the total county identified vacant and buildable lands (used since 1994).

The following are essential to the outcome regardless of which method is used:

- Maintain coordination and consistency with local comprehensive plans;
- Use official state population forecasts from OFM (already adopted);
- Use the employment projections from ESD (already adopted);
- Use estimates of the existing VBLM capacity for growth of the UGAs to inform decisions on allocation of growth targets;
- Continue using the inventory of available VBLM inventory information; a practice since 1994;
- Allow for flexibility where necessary;
- Consider impacts of the recent stormwater regulations on infrastructure needs. Identified vacant and buildable residential lands reflect a 27.7% infrastructure deduction;
- Carrying capacity is assumed on vacant or underutilized single family and multifamily lands, at 4-5 units per acre for urban low, and 9-16 units per acre for urban high, and 4- 18 units per acre of mixed use; and,
- The urban/rural growth percentage split remains at 90/10.

Countywide Population Allocation

Table 1 below shows the current population estimate, 2014 vacant lands model capacity, and the 2035 population forecast should the Board use allocation option number 3 as listed above. Option 3 is the methodology we are proposing. The cities have concerns that the allocation shows a reduction in capacity from the 2007 Comprehensive Plan.

The 2035 population allocation to UGA's is based on determining the potential population that can be accommodated by the 2014 Vacant Lands Model yield potential (151,764 based on a yield of 57,054 housing units at 2.66 persons per unit) and figuring the share of the total potential VLM population by UGA. The 2014 to 2035 growth allocation by UGA is calculated by applying the UGA share of the VLM to the total population for the urban area (113,004 = 125,560 – 12,556). The 12,556 represents the 10% rural allocation. The 125,560 is the total growth expected between 2014 (436,647) to 2035 OFM Medium Projection of 562,207. For example, the Battle Ground UGA accounts for about 15.5% of the VLM Population yield (23,560/151,764). So they were allocated 15.5% of the 2014-2035 urban area population growth. (113,004/15.524% = 17,543)

Table 1: 2035 Population Forecast by UGA.

UGA	January 1, 2014 Population Estimates	2014 to 2035 VBLM Population Allocation	2035 Estimate
Battle Ground	20,163	17,543	37,705
Camas	22,049	12,361	34,410
LaCenter	3,163	3,551	6,714
Ridgefield	6,150	14,374	20,523
Vancouver	307,767	57,976	365,743
Washougal	15,502	6,615	22,118
Woodland	88	252	339
Yacolt	1,653	333	1,986
County	60,112	12,556^	72,668
Total	436,647	125,560	562,207

Source: Clark County, Geographic information System and Community Planning
 Note: ^ 10% based on 90/10 urban/rural planning assumption

Countywide Employment Allocation

The GMA does not dictate a data source that must be considered in planning for future employment. For the 1994, 2004, and 2007 planning efforts, the number of anticipated new jobs in Clark County was developed by the Washington State Employment Securities Department. The forecasts were based on anticipated population growth, workforce participation, unemployment, and percentage of Clark County employees who commute to Oregon for work.

Table 2 below shows the number of net new jobs based on allocation method number 3 as listed above. The Board chose to plan for a total of 91,200 net new jobs. According to the 2014 vacant land model, the county has capacity for 85,452 net new jobs. Public sector employment is not accounted for in the model. ESD estimates up to 7,400 new public sector jobs over the next twenty years. We anticipate that most of those public sector jobs will occur on existing facilities, and therefore will not require new lands.

Table 2: 2015-2035 Employment Forecast by UGA.

UGA	2014 VBLM
Battle Ground	11,635
Camas	12,503
La Center	1,367
Ridgefield	11,895
Vancouver	42,774
Washougal	4,766
Yacolt	513
Woodland	0
Sub Total	*85,452

Source: Clark County, Geographic information System and Community Planning
 *Note: Existing assumptions of total potential jobs not captured by the vacant lands model increase the capacity by 16,775 jobs for redevelopment and 7,400 public sector jobs, thus increasing the total potential job capacity from 85,452 to 109,627.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Much has changed since Clark County first adopted its Comprehensive Plan in 1994. The county's demographic characteristics have continued to change. Community Planning recommends that population and employment lands be allocated to each UGA based on the above methodology.

NEXT STEPS

With respect to individual UGA allocations, a limited number of alternative land use scenarios should be identified. The scenarios should be used to inform the county on transportation modeling and a SEPA Threshold Determination. Proposals from the cities should also be considered.