

**From:** [Jeffrey Delapena](#)  
**To:** [Chuck Houghten](#)  
**Cc:** [Cnty 2025 Comp Plan](#); [Jenna Kay](#); [Oliver Orjiako](#); [Jose Alvarez](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Scoping Comments for Clark Co Washington Plan  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 4, 2024 3:12:19 PM

---

Good day, Charles,

Thank you for your comments regarding the Comp Plan EIS Scoping. I have forwarded them to staff, and will add these to the Index of Record.

---

**From:** Chuck Houghten <cjhoughten@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 4, 2024 2:58 PM  
**To:** Cnty 2025 Comp Plan <comp.plan@clark.wa.gov>  
**Subject:** Scoping Comments for Clark Co Washington Plan

**EXTERNAL:** This email originated from outside of Clark County. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello - please find my comments attached - if you have problems retrieving them or any questions, please let me know!

Thanks

Charles Houghten

360-852-3470

June 4, 2024

Charles Houghten

16909 NE 227<sup>th</sup> Ave

Brush Prairie, WA 98606

Clark County Washington

Comprehensive Plan Update – Scoping Comments

To: Oliver Orjiako and the Clark County Planning Team:

Thank you for your initial efforts in developing the Clark County Washington Comprehensive Plan Update – a Twenty-Year Plan for 2025 – 2045. I attended your Open House meeting in Vancouver, last week and provided some comments at that time. My comments herein are in addition to those comments.

**Scoping Period:**

I encourage the planning team to conduct extensive outreach to the community throughout this process. Three Open House events do not seem enough for such an important project as determining the future growth and direction of development for the County. Also, your comment period seems too short. A 30-day comment period for Scoping should be encouraged and, I would urge you to state that “to be most useful to the Planning Team, please have your comments to us by June 5<sup>th</sup>, however, we will accept comments throughout the Planning Process...” or something similar. Having a strict cut-off time for receiving comments at this point in the process seems inappropriate. It would have been helpful to have more time for comments following your Open Houses.

I appreciated your Open House meeting and availability of staff to address questions. I expected and would have enjoyed a bit more of a Presentation Overview of the Planning Process and planning elements and assumptions that the County Councilors and Planners have already determined. But I understand your desire to avoid Q&A with the full audience and instead focus discussion at your “stations.” The printed and on-line information you

have provided is very helpful. However, your maps need to be improved for readability, level of detail and accuracy – both on-line maps and printed presentation maps.

### **Planning Process:**

Your presentation of the Planning Process is very general and does not explain where and when future opportunities for public input will occur. I encourage you to have and explain more detailed milestones in your process, including:

- Scoping Report – Publicly announce what you learned during the Scoping Phase – what's next?
- Preliminary Alternatives – You present basic concepts for alternatives at this point; however, you will be developing a range of preliminary alternatives prior to having selected a range of plan alternatives to be analyzed in your EIS process. I encourage your team to have public review and comment opportunities on a set of Preliminary Alternatives that you seriously consider carrying forward and identify alternatives that may have been suggested or considered, but you now plan to dismiss. Another round of Open House meetings, a short public comment period (up to 30-days), news articles, etc., during this period.
- Draft Plan and Draft EIS – I hope that you will plan for extensive outreach and opportunities for public review and comment during a minimum of 30-days following the release of your Draft County Plan and EIS. Make the plan clear and distinct from the EIS analysis of alternatives and impacts.
- Outreach Opportunities – I hope that the Planning Team will consider additional outreach to small community groups and associations that may want more information about the Plan Development. Keep the public informed throughout the Planning Process for input opportunities as well as general information and progress reports.
- Final Plan and EIS – Again I would encourage the public release, 30-day notice and invitation for comments (of a more critical nature at this juncture) on the pending final plan prior to its final approval.

### **Range of Alternatives:**

Please consider the following ideas as you develop your range of alternatives.

- **No-Action Alternative** – You will have to do full analysis of the “Status Quo.” This will be more of a Baseline of current conditions within the County than an

alternative to be considered for adoption since it will not meet the newly determined Planning targets and assumptions.

- **County Plan without changing current City Growth Boundaries** – This alternative would be developed within the current city growth boundaries, where the planning targets and assumptions would be achieved, without major changes to development outside those boundaries. An alternative like this could likely be labeled as the environmentally preferable alternative, as it would likely protect more agricultural lands, natural areas, and improve/potentially not degrade wildlife habitat, water quality and other environmental measures.
- **County Plan with Focused Growth and Development along Major Highway Corridors** – An alternative of this nature would have the increased population and development targets directed within a given area (say 1 mile for example) of our major highways in the County – e.g. I-5, I-205 and State Highway 14.
- **County Plan with Focus on Existing Cities** – Under this alternative, the population and development targets would be focused on what each individual city in the county projects.
- **Climate Smart and Resilience Plan** - Based on the best available science and other information, what alternative actions are best for Clark Counties residents and businesses in terms of addressing future climate change issues, and keeping the county strong, adaptable, and resilient.

### **Vision of the County’s Future:**

It is interesting that your handouts noted the 50-year vision document (Framework Plan) of 1993. I had not heard about this previously. I concur that a broad long-term vision is needed to help the “framework” of the County Plan. It seems perhaps that a new 50-year (or longer) vision needs to be developed or the existing vision statements reviewed and updated at this time, not one from over 30 years ago. This does not need to be a new document – just some key vision statements that address where the County expects to be in 50 to 60 years out in terms of population, development, natural environment, quality of life, etc.

### **Development of Goals and Objectives – Performance Measures:**

I encourage the County to develop clear Goal statements along with Objectives and/or Performance Measures that may be used to measure success in achieving the planning vision and goals. Some of these may be derived from some of the “Planning Assumptions”

that the County has presented to us. The alternative plans may have various means or strategies to achieve the goals and objectives. For example, there could be goals and objectives for different types of housing units (in different communities and zones); miles of different levels of roadways, miles of pedestrian and bicycle paths, time spent in traffic, acres of agricultural land, acres of parks, etc.

I would like to take issue with some of the statements about housing sizes and prices, and what is needed for the future population. Your statements imply that smaller homes for small families or single people don't include small homes on small, medium or large sized lots. Although apartments and smaller dwellings units will happily accommodate many of these families, we shouldn't dismiss the desire and interest in the county for small houses on small lots, medium sized homes on medium sized lots, and large homes on large lots. It seems that recent housing developments in the county are either large homes on small lots or apartments. More diversity of housing types is important for a more diverse community throughout the county. However, I don't expect to see high density housing in rural areas for example. Zoning is an important function for future developments and direction from the County Plan should clearly inform local zoning.

**Accommodating increased population and new developments while protecting our natural resources and environmental quality:**

We know that Clark County will experience more population growth and economic development, and along with that impacts to our daily lives and our environment. I hope that the County Planners and County Council will take this very seriously and design well thought out alternatives to address the growth and associated issues and affects including an assessment of the quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors, along with other factors.

It is extremely important that the County and Cities work to protect and improve our incredible natural environment here, including our streams, wetlands, forests, and prairies, along with the native plants and animals that reside here as well. Developments should be focused away from sensitive areas, with liberal set-backs designated to protect them. Work with State, Federal, Tribal, and Private conservation partners to help identify and protect important natural areas and provide opportunities for public use and enjoyment of them.

The County Plan should also address the need for and improvement of existing parks and play areas and designation of new parks, open space and trails linking parks and natural areas. We need more improvements to pedestrian and bicycle routes along our roads and

to recreational and commercial destinations. There are many neighborhoods, both suburban and rural, that have people of all ages on bicycles and walking/jogging, but no sidewalks or even road shoulders in many cases.

Transportation and Utility Infrastructure and corridors should be carefully reviewed and analyzed for the most efficient and effective systems and locations, while minimizing impacts.

The County Plan should encourage protection of agricultural areas and promote sustainable programs that support the local economy. All plan alternatives will need to evaluate the contributions and effects of climate change, and the selected plan should have the goals and objectives to minimize if not eliminate the county's overall contribution to greenhouse gas and CO2 emissions.

Additionally, there may be nothing more important than Educational, Emergency and Health Services. Hopefully, nothing gets in the way of promoting and providing excellence, for all people and all levels of need, in pursuit of educational, health and emergency services in the County.

A final note at this point in your process.... Some staff members at the Open House mentioned the "minimum requirements" of SEPA for the Planning Process and EIS development. I hope that here in Clark County that our planning, public involvement and investment in the future of Clark County will go beyond the minimum and display excellence in our vision for a positive, productive and healthy future.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments during this phase of the Clark County Planning Process.

Charles Houghten

[cjhoughten@gmail.com](mailto:cjhoughten@gmail.com)

360-852-3470

Cc: Interested Parties