Clark County Update

by Gary Albrecht, Clark County

The county-wide residential summary report for Clark County in 2007 shows the addition of 752 new multi-family units to the Clark County inventory, the second-highest number of new multi-family units between 2003 and 2007. In 2007, the county added 2,017 new single-family units, the lowest single-family total in the same period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>SFR Units</th>
<th>MFR Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2,017</td>
<td>752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2,394</td>
<td>736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3,884</td>
<td>451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>3,647</td>
<td>676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>3,218</td>
<td>908</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.clark.wa.gov/longrangeplan/review/plan-monitoring.html

Three Creeks Special Planning Area

The Three Creeks Advisory Council was appointed by the Board of Clark County Commissioners (BOCC) to assist with transportation, land use planning, and related issues. The Council will focus on the new Three Creeks Special Planning Area, which includes unincorporated urban areas around Hazel Dell, Felida, Lake Shore, Salmon Creek, and the Clark County Fairgrounds.

The 27.5-square mile special planning area includes the area from the Chelatchie Prairie Railroad bridge near NE 63rd Street on the south, Vancouver Lake and the BNSF railroad on the west, NE 209th Street on the north, to NE 72nd Avenue on the east. For more information, contact Troy Rayburn, Senior Policy Analyst, at troy.rayburn@clark.wa.gov.

Infill Task Force

The infill task force, appointed by the BOCC in January and composed of representatives of neighborhoods, developers, engineering consultants, and an advocate for affordable housing, has met three times so far and has toured infill development in the county. Additional meetings are scheduled and are open to the public. Please see the infill project web page at http://www.clark.wa.gov/longrangeplan/projects/infillcode.html. Project completion is scheduled for January 2009.

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So You Want an Interchange?

by Evan Dust, Senior Planner, HDR Engineering, Portland Oregon

Interstate interchanges are high-cost transportation investments. Before a new interchange can be permitted, the requirements of federal policy must be met, and that means satisfying the requirements of the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) Interchange Justification Report (IJR). Chapter 1425 of WSDOT’s Design Manual (M 22-01) describes how the agency satisfies them. This article summarizes federal policy and the WSDOT process and briefly discusses an emerging issue: interchange-specific land use policy.

Interchange Justification Report

Before an interstate access can be changed, an FHWA-approved IJR must be completed. Approval is based on the additional interchanges policy summarized in the following eight components:

1. No new access unless there is no local system solution that works for the horizon-year and meets the purpose identified for the new access.

2. A wide range of alternatives, including transportation system management, must be considered.

3. A change in access must not have a significant adverse impact on the safety and operation of the interstate for existing and horizon-year traffic volumes.

4. Interchanges that allow interstate access to and from only one direction are strongly discouraged. Proposed interchanges must meet applicable interstate system standards.

5. Proposed interchanges must consider and be consistent with local and regional land use and transportation plans. The new interchange must be included in applicable metropolitan and/or statewide transportation plans before its final approval.

6. If the interchange is just one of many to be proposed in the same area, a systems analysis must show that they will work together.

7. If local improvements (either by development or a jurisdiction) will be needed for the proposed access to work as described, there must be a commitment that they will be provided.

8. A request for new or modified access must discuss the planning requirements for it and the status of the environmental review of the proposal.

WSDOT Uses Step-Wise Process

WSDOT does not start with the IJR. The first step is the initial study report which addresses need (see #1 above) and, if need is demonstrated, then the preparation of the IJR goes forward. The IJR must include the information from the initial study and address the rest of the federal policy points.

If the IJR achieves provisional approval, environmental review follows; if its results are favorable, the IJR is approved. Then your community’s interchange proceeds to the next step: engineering.

Conclusion

Getting a new interchange for your community is not a simple process and the goal cannot be attained in isolation; rather, demonstrating the need for an interchange requires strong evidence developed in cooperation with local, regional, and state transportation agencies.

The policies emphasize that:

• No new or modified access to the interstate will be planned until the need is proven. Fixing the

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Highway 99 Subarea Plan

Team 99, a group of residents, businesses and property owners, is developing strategies to revitalize Highway 99 and nearby neighborhoods. An open house to review the draft supplemental EIS and the draft subarea plan will be scheduled in 2008. The Planning Commission and the BOCC will review a draft subarea plan and hold public hearings before taking formal action. If adopted by the Board, the plan will become part of the county’s 20-year Comprehensive Growth Management Plan.

Updates

Rural Planning—A 2-year rural plan update will begin this year to look at Rural 5, 10, 20 and Agriculture (AG) land designations, with a task force examining how to smooth transitions between these zoning districts. The task force will see if the county can go lower than 20-acre minimum lot size designation for AG parcels. The task force will also review the rural centers, cluster development provisions in Title 40 Unified Development Code, the definitions of economically viable agricultural land and rural character, farmland preservation policies, the sustainability of the county food supply, and the definition of the viability of small farms.

Commercial Code—This update is scheduled to begin in spring 2008 and will determine whether the county has too many commercial districts, decide whether the current commercial uses are distinguished between commercial districts, and identify how commercial districts should look.

Industrial Code—This update will start this spring or early summer.

Transportation Corridors Visioning Study

The Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council has completed a transportation corridors visioning study. The land use assessment indicated that, based on existing policies and urban growth areas, the county will tend to grow outward with some densification in already-established urban and rural centers, along with continued growth in cross-Columbia River trip-making. The travel demand implied by these growth patterns is for regional and sub-regional trip-making and indicates a need for new sub-regional corridors to accommodate shorter trips. To review the complete report, please go to www.rtc.wa.gov.

A map included in the visioning study shows several potential regional corridors in the county as well as potential new Columbia River crossings.

Check it out


So You Want an Interchange? continued from page 2

local system is preferred over modifying an existing access, which in turn is preferred to creating a new access.

• The interstate is the primary transportation facility in this process regardless of what that means to the local system.

• The solution must fit the community and the environment.

The land use effects of new interchanges is an emerging issue and policy is emerging to address them. The State of Oregon requires a specific land use and transportation subarea plan for every new interchange (an Interchange Area Management Plan); WSDOT does not have a similar policy. Clark County briefly had a comprehensive plan policy and implementing code that required consideration of the long-term impact of comprehensive plan amendments on horizon-year interchange capacity. It is possible that these policy efforts will expand as the public grows weary of the constant transportation-land use cycle.

Endnotes


2 Interchange Justification Report is a relatively new title for this report, known earlier as an Access Point Decision Report and 8-Point Report.

3 WSDOT, “WSDOT Design Manual,” http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Publications/Manuals/M22-01.htm, accessed April 25, 2008. (Please note: Since this article is a summary, please see the Design Manual chapter for answers to questions not addressed here.)


5 The horizon-year is usually 20 years from the year that the new interchange would open. Setting the horizon-year 20 years out meets a federal policy expectation that an interchange will provide at least 20 years of serviceable life. While interchanges typically last longer than 20 years, they must provide acceptable traffic operations only for that 20-year period.

Announcements

Help Wanted

Senior Planner/Policy Analyst
(Vancouver or Portland)

Maul Foster & Alongi, Inc. (MFA) is searching for a Senior Planner/Policy Analyst to manage projects; be involved in project development, strategizing and refinement, regulatory permitting and negotiations; and coordinate internal staff, other company disciplines, and subconsultants. Will serve as primary project contact and participate in internal and external marketing.

Requirements: 5-10 years of relevant experience including land development, land use and policy planning, site planning, and master planning

- Prior successful project management experience
- Experience in large-scale master planning and residential/commercial/industrial projects
- Experience in public speaking/presentations
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Bachelors in design-oriented or planning field; advanced degree preferred.
- Current professional registrations or certifications preferred.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office and Microsoft Project

The salary is negotiable depending on experience. Send your cover letter and resume via email with the subject heading Senior Planner/Policy Analyst Position to HR@mfainc.org.

Climate, Commerce, Community — A Call to Action

2008 Southwest Washington Sustainability Conference and Trade Show

July 10-12, Vancouver, Washington

Keynote speaker: Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

Environmental activist, attorney and author of “Our Environmental Destiny”

The conference features three separate tracks - climate, commerce and community - with thought-provoking speakers from across the country sharing global knowledge and practical experience.

The conference will lead into a new community event, GreenFest, Saturday, July 12, along the Columbia River at Marine Park and the Water Resources Education Center, 4600 SE Columbia Way. Greenfest workshops and activities are free and designed to engage people of all ages in learning and making day-to-day practices more sustainable.

For further information and registration, go to www.cityofvancouver.us/conference

Summer 2008 Southwestern Washington Planners’ Forum

Hosted by the Skamania County Department of Planning and Community Development, the forum will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Thursday, July 17, 2008, at the Rock Creek Community Center, 710 SW Rock Creek Drive, in Stevenson.

The session will include updates on decisions by the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board, CTED grants and events, and Ecology programs, as well as a panel discussion on “A Greener Shade of Green: Sustainable Planning and Development Practices.”

The forum is sponsored by the Washington State Chapter of the American Planning Association, the Planning Association of Washington, and the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development.

Planners on the Move

Mitch Kneipp has been promoted from Senior Planner to Planning Manager at the City of Washougal.

The Board of Clark County Commissioners selected Marty Snell, formerly the county’s Community Planning Director, to direct its Community Development Department and designated Oliver Orjiako as the Interim Director for Community Planning.