



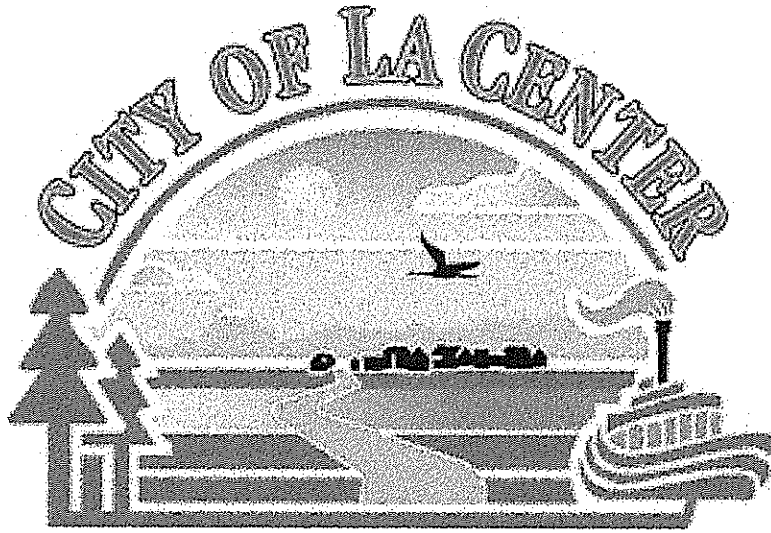
**Final Environmental Impact Statement  
La Center Comprehensive Plan Amendment**

Prepared by



10625 N.E. 204th Place  
Bothell, WA 98011  
(425) 485-0433

December 19, 2006



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## Fact Sheet

Title	City of La Center Urban Growth Area Expansion And Related Land Use Actions -- Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)
Description of Proposal and Alternatives	The Proposal is to expand the Urban Growth Area (UGA) of the City of La Center to create employment and promote economic development; and related actions to amend the City's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan, Development Regulations and Capital Facilities Plans. This is a non-project action as defined in WAC 197-11-774. Three expansion alternatives are considered: 1) No Action; 2) Clark County 2005 Discussion Map, incorporating 1,220 acres of additional area in the UGA; and 3) La Center Preferred Alternative, incorporating 2,033 acres of additional area. Under the No Action Alternative, La Center would maintain its existing UGA boundaries, and future growth would be guided by existing zoning.
Proponent	City of La Center, Clark County, Washington
Proposed Adoption Date	Early in 2007, depending upon Clark County adoption schedule
Lead Agency	City of La Center 214 East 4th Street La Center, WA 98629
Responsible Official and Contact Person	Jeffrey Sarvis Public Works Director 419 E. Cedar Avenue, Suite 201 La Center, WA 98629 (360) 263-7661
Permits and Approvals Required	Approval by the La Center City Council of changes to the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan maps, policies and Capital Facilities Plans. Approval by the Board of Clark County Commissioners of Amendments to the County Comprehensive Plan.
Authors and Principal Contributors to the FEIS	Gerald Smedes, Ph.D., Principal Author Linda Dennis Smedes & Associates 10625 NE 204 <sup>th</sup> Place Bothell, WA 98011  Dennis Petrequin Wastewater, Buildable Lands and Population Cascade Design Professionals, Inc. 2780 SE Harrison Street, Suite 104 Milwaukie, OR 97222

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Date of Publication of DEIS	May 1, 2006
Date of Publication of FEIS	December 19, 2006
Time and Place of Public Hearings	No further Public Hearings have been scheduled on this proposal. The City Council will hold a public hearing prior to adopting amendments to its Comprehensive Growth Management Plan.
Locations of Copies of FEIS and Technical Reports Available for Public Review	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>City of La Center</u></p> City Hall                                  Public Works 214 East 4th Street                  419 E. Cedar Ave., Suite A201 La Center, WA 98629
Locations of Copies of FEIS	La Center Public Library 1402 NE Lockwood Creek Road La Center WA 98629
Cost of Copy of FEIS to Public	Cost of copies from the City of La Center is \$20 each. Copies for sale will be available at City Hall, 214 East 4th Street, La Center, WA 98629.

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# Executive Summary

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The City of La Center proposes to expand its Urban Growth Area (UGA) boundary to include additional lands to the north, west and east of the existing UGA, and extending to the four quadrants of the La Center Junction of Interstate 5. This expansion will meet a long-standing goal of the City to create industrial and commercial lands and allow for a more sustainable economic future. It will diversify the local economy and create good jobs for present and future citizens. It will also provide new lands for urban residential, parks and open space uses.

The City's Preferred Alternative would add 2,033 acres of industrial, commercial, residential and conservation uses. It would cluster the industrial and commercial designations in the vicinity of I-5, and provide higher density residential uses in transitional areas. This Alternative would "close the loop" by connecting across the East Fork Lewis River in the area southwest of the existing City Limits. The area along the river bottomlands would be designated as Parks and Open Space, and the residential area south of the bottomlands would remain in five-acre residential zoning.

The Preferred Alternative will create a better balance of jobs and population among the cities in northern Clark County, and will better equalize the land allocations and jobs/population ratios so that cities have an equitable share of jobs. At the current time, La Center has a population of approximately 2,095, or 0.56 percent of the County total, but only 800 jobs (for a jobs-to-population ratio of 1:2.6). The Preferred Alternative would result in a population increase to 9,827 over 20 years, or 1.68 percent of the County population. The expected addition of 3,265 jobs would improve the City's jobs-to-population ratio to 1:2.4.

The major benefits of the City's Preferred Alternative include:

- It clearly achieves the City' principal objectives of establishing commercial lands and job creation and diversification of the tax base, and establishing a clear southern boundary of the City's future growth pattern.
- It creates a logical and cost-effective option for extending the City's sewer service to the industrial, commercial and high-density residential lands surrounding the La Center Junction.
- It provides flexibility in meeting the transportation demands of the future. It would allow the option of constructing a second bridge across the East Fork Lewis River to take pressure off the La Center Road Bridge. The transportation demands on this bottleneck will continue to grow regardless of any changes to the UGA boundary, as a result of continued growth in the surrounding rural areas.

Clark County has also considered alternative land use designations and a reduction of 229 industrially designated acres compared to the City's Preferred Alternative. The lands covered and the range of impacts of these variations are all within the scope of the County's 2005 Discussion Draft Alternative (described in this EIS) or the City's Preferred

Alternative. The County's Preferred Alternative addresses the City's principal objective of reaching I-5 and diversifying the economic base of the City, and the environmental impacts of this alternative are very similar to those of the City's Preferred Alternative. However, the County's suggested alternative limits the economic potential of the expanded UGA, and does not provide as much opportunity to meet the diverse housing needs of the growing population.

Further, the County's Preferred Alternative may make the City's preferred routing of utilities and vehicular traffic across a second bridge less viable economically, because of the reduction and segregation of industrial lands east of Interstate 5. Neither the City nor Clark County has fully evaluated the impact of the County's Preferred alternative. This Alternative would not provide for the needed flexibility in meeting transportation demands. Without the potential for a new bridge, traffic growth will place unacceptable congestion loading on the La Center Road bridge and the downtown areas, and jeopardize the timely response capability of emergency services.

Both the City's Preferred Alternative and the County's Preferred Alternative will result in increased urban growth in and around La Center. This growth will have impacts (both positive and negative) on: earth; water and wetlands; plants and animals; land use, community growth and economy; transportation; and public services and utilities. Mitigation measures are already in place or readily available to mitigate the adverse impacts identified. No unacceptably negative impacts have been identified that would preclude the adoption of either of these alternatives. Aside from the differences summarized above for traffic and sewer service, the impacts and potential mitigation measures are quite similar for both of these action alternatives.

The City has also considered a No Action Alternative that would not expand the UGA. This alternative would not achieve any of the City's objectives, and would not address the inevitable growth pressures in this area. These growth pressures will result in increased rural development in the area without any additional mechanisms to limit or mitigate the resulting impacts on earth, water and wetlands, vegetation clearing and traffic congestion. Expansion of the wastewater treatment system will still be needed, but the costs would have to be paid by a limited number of users within the existing UGA.



# Section 1

## Summary

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# Section 1 Summary

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## 1.1 PROPOSAL

The coordinated actions anticipated by the City of La Center include adopting changes to its Urban Area Comprehensive Plan, including amendments to the land use map and Urban Growth Area (UGA) boundary, and amending the City's Development Regulations and Capital Facilities Plan.

## 1.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL

La Center's objective in this proposal is to expand its existing UGA. The expanded UGA would include areas to the north, west, and east of the existing UGA on the north side of the East Fork of the Lewis River, and extend south and west on the south side of the river to include lands surrounding the La Center Junction of the Interstate 5 freeway. The expanded UGA will provide new lands to be zoned for commercial, industrial and urban residential uses, and for parks and open space.

## 1.3 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this proposal is to provide additional residential, commercial and industrial growth opportunities. Providing for the commercial and industrial uses will diversify the City's economic base, and allow for a more sustainable economic future. There is a very limited potential for development of commercial enterprises within the City and its UGA, and no land currently zoned for industrial uses. A meaningful increase in this type of development, with its associated tax base, requires extending the UGA to areas near the Exit 16 interchange of Interstate 5.

## 1.4 ALTERNATIVES

The City of La Center has a long history of public involvement in its land use planning processes. For over a decade, the City has identified a need and desire to expand the UGA to the La Center Junction. In the spring of 2005, the City Council held a public work session to review five possible study alternatives for expansion of the La Center UGA. The Council selected a Proposed Action to accomplish its economic growth objectives. City staff and consultants reviewed this alternative, and also coordinated with Clark County regarding urban growth opportunities. The County has identified an Alternative for expanding UGA's that would provide an additional 1,220 acres in La Center's UGA. The City has identified a Preferred Alternative that includes this area, plus additional lands for industrial, residential, and conservation uses for a total of approximately 2,033 additional acres. This Environmental Impact Statement will also evaluate the No Action Alternative, which establishes a baseline against which the environmental effects of the UGA Expansion Alternatives can be compared. The No

Action Alternative would retain the existing UGA, and not provide additional land for potentially increased density of development. The two other alternatives would expand the UGA in different ways. The total area considered for UGA expansion under these two alternatives is considered the Planning Area for purposes of this EIS.

## **1.5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

A Scoping Process was used to identify environmental issues to consider in this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS includes evaluation of the existing conditions, environmental impacts and mitigation measures for the following issues:

- Earth
- Water and Wetlands
- Plants and Animals
- Land Use, Community Growth and Economy
- Transportation
- Historic and Cultural Preservation
- Public Services and Utilities

Table 1-1 is a summary of environmental impacts of the three alternatives. Impacts for Alternatives 2 and 3 are expressed as the amount of impact above and beyond what would be expected with growth and development under the No Action Alternative.

## **1.6 MITIGATION MEASURES**

For many potential impacts, existing federal, state and local laws and regulations are already established and apply to developments that could be allowed as the proposal is implemented. These mitigation measures are described in the sections relating to the elements of the environment to which they apply. Additional mitigation measures that are incorporated into the proposal, or could be used to reduce potential impacts, are also discussed.

Table 1-2 provides a summary of mitigation measures.

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACTS THAT CANNOT BE MITIGATED**

The proposal is a non-project action to change the land use designation of an area adjacent to La Center's UGA. The significant impact of the proposal is to change the potential future land use of this area from predominantly rural uses to more urban densities and types of land uses. As development proceeds under the UGA designation, the character of the area will transition from a rural to an urban environment. This land use change will be permanent.

The greater density of development will also result in a greater amount of vegetation clearing, soil disturbance and impervious surface. The secondary impacts of these

**Table 1-1 Summary of Impacts**

	Alternative 1 -- No Action	Alternative 2 -- Clark County 2005 Discussion Map	Alternative 3 -- La Center Preferred Alternative
<b>Earth</b>			
Modification of Topography and Disturbance of Soils	Limited increase as UGA develops at rural densities.	Substantial increase in modification of soils. Minor changes to topography as development proceeds at urban densities.	Substantial increase in modification of soils, and minor changes to topography. Changes similar to Alt. 2, but slightly greater area affected.
Increase in Impervious Surface	Up to 41 acres of impervious surface due to increased density of development.	Up to 287 acres of impervious surface in the 1,220 acre expanded UGA.	Up to 434 acres of impervious surface in the 2,033 acre expanded UGA.
Soil Erosion and Sedimentation	No significant erosion or sedimentation expected.	No significant erosion or sedimentation expected.	No significant erosion or sedimentation expected.
Geological Hazards	No geological hazards created under any of the three alternatives.		
<b>Water and Wetlands</b>			
Surface Water Quality	Impacts could result from road and utility line construction land clearing, residential development, increased impervious surface, and septic tanks. Potential impacts caused by these activities include increased thermal pollution, sedimentation, eutrophication, loss of fish and wildlife habitat, and flooding. These impacts are not expected to be significant.	Impacts from commercial, industrial and increased density residential development will maintain buffers from streams, and will be similar to those under No Action. The greater amount of soil disturbance, construction and other activity would increase the potential for these impacts.	Impacts from commercial, industrial and increased density residential development will maintain buffers from streams, and will be similar to those under No Action. The greater amount of soil disturbance, construction and other activity would increase the potential for these impacts.
Wetlands	12 acres within UGA subject to impacts from agriculture, timber, land clearing, residential development, and septic tanks would continue, but impacts are not expected to be significant. Potential for impacts from failing septic systems.	124 acres of wetlands added to UGA. Impacts from commercial, industrial and increased density residential development will increase. Developments will maintain buffers from wetlands.	316 acres of wetlands added to UGA. Impacts from commercial, industrial and increased density residential development will increase. Developments will maintain buffers from wetlands.

<b>Plants and Animals</b>			
Priority Habitats	Some possibility that priority habitats and plant species could be affected under all of the alternatives. No significant loss of such habitat or species is expected.		
Fish and Wildlife	Increased vegetation clearing and impervious surface will continue to impact fish and wildlife. Livestock and septic systems will affect fish and wildlife habitat. No significant impacts expected in Planning Area.	Increased land clearing and construction will impact habitat, and change the composition of the wildlife. Less impact from livestock and septic systems.	Increased land clearing and construction will impact habitat, and change the composition of the wildlife. Less impact from livestock and septic systems.
Listed Species	No significant impacts on listed species are expected under any of the alternatives.		
<b>Land Use, Community Growth and Economy</b>			
Land Use	Area will remain primarily in rural land use, including rural residential, agriculture, and timber.	Up to 1,220 acres will be converted from primarily rural uses to urban density residential, commercial, and light industrial uses.	Up to 1,833 acres will be converted from primarily rural uses to urban density residential, commercial, light industrial and public uses. The 200-acre area along the river will be maintained as parks and open space.
Population	Population will increase gradually from 2,095 to 3,500 by 2024.	Population will increase more rapidly, to 8,642 by 2024.	Population will increase more rapidly, to 9,827 by 2024.
Housing	Number of dwelling units could increase to a total of 1,515 in the City and its UGA.	Up to 1,697 new dwelling units could be developed in the expanded UGA.	Up to 2,138 new dwelling units could be developed in the Expanded UGA.
Employment	Gradual increase in employment in La Center area.	Up to 2,086 new jobs can be created in the area by new commercial and industrial development.	Up to 3,190 new jobs can be created in the area by new commercial and industrial development.
Economy	Current development trends will gradually increase tax base in the area. City will continue to be vulnerable to changes in gambling tax revenues.	Commercial, industrial and increased density residential development will add up to \$500 million to the tax base.	Commercial, industrial and increased density residential development will add up to \$688 million to the tax base.

<b>Historic and Cultural Preservation</b>			
Archaeological Sites	No impacts on archaeological sites are expected under any of the alternatives.		
Historic Properties	No sites on state or national register sites; historic properties may be modified at owner's discretion.	Some historic sites are in Expanded UGA, but no significant impacts are expected.	Some historic sites are in Expanded UGA, but no significant impacts are expected.
<b>Transportation</b>			
	Significant increase in traffic congestion, particularly on sections of NW La Center Road including the bridge, on NW Timmen Road, and on 4th Street.	Greater increase in traffic congestion, primarily in the same areas as for Alternative 1. Added cut-through traffic will impact livability and vitality of downtown area. Many unknowns in earthwork and structural issues in widening La Center road may significantly increase cost. Dependence on single primary access across river could affect emergency services.	For One-bridge alternative, impacts are very similar as for Alternative 2. Two-bridge alternative improves emergency access to La Center, and improves livability and vitality of downtown area by diverting some traffic away from the second bridge.
<b>Public Services and Utilities</b>			
Fire and Emergency Services	Existing tax revenues are expected to adequately fund these services by Fire District # 12.	Increased tax revenues are expected to adequately fund any additional needs for these services.	Increased tax revenues are expected to adequately fund any additional needs for these services.
Police	Existing tax revenues are expected to adequately fund these services.	Increased tax revenues are expected to adequately fund any additional needs for these services.	Increased tax revenues are expected to adequately fund any additional needs for these services.
Schools	Continued growth in the La Center and Ridgefield School Districts will be accommodated by projected tax revenues and other funding sources.	Increased development will add students. Tax revenues and impact fees will also increase substantially.	Increased development will add students. Tax revenues and impact fees will also increase substantially.

Municipal Water Supply	Implementation of current Water System Plan will address needs under current trends.	Proposed amendments of Water System Plan will address facility, operational and funding requirements for expanded service.	Proposed amendments of Water System Plan will address facility, operational and funding requirements for expanded service.
Municipal Wastewater	Sewage treatment and collection planning is currently underway by the City.	Sewage treatment and collection planning is currently underway by the City. This planning will address facility, operational and funding requirements for expanded water service.	Sewage treatment and collection planning is currently underway by the City. This planning will address facility, operational and funding requirements for expanded water service.
Stormwater	The City's Storm Water and Erosion Control Program is expected to prevent surface and ground water quality degradation, and prevent erosion and sedimentation of surface water bodies.	Increased land clearing and impervious surface, but developers will be required to demonstrate proper stormwater management practices.	Increased land clearing and impervious surface, but developers will be required to demonstrate proper stormwater management practices.
Parks and Recreation	Gradual increase in need for parks and recreation facilities. Funding from impact fees and other sources.	Increased need for parks and recreation facilities. Substantially increased funding from impact fees and property taxes.	Increased need for parks and recreation facilities. Substantially increased funding from impact fees and property taxes.

**Table 1-2 Summary of Mitigation Measures**

<b>Mitigation Measures</b>	
<b>Earth</b>	
Modification of Topography and Disturbance of Soils	Critical areas ordinances protect streams, steep slopes, geologically hazardous areas.
Increase in Impervious Surface	Stormwater management to prevent impacts from runoff on sensitive areas.
Erosion and Sedimentation	Best Management Practices will be used for stormwater and erosion control.
Geological Hazards	Development prohibited in geologically hazardous areas, unless engineering report indicates safety. Buffers from geological hazards.
<b>Water and Wetlands</b>	
Surface Water	Maintain buffers from streams. Follow Best Management Practices for stormwater and erosion control.
Wetlands	Maintain buffers from streams and wetlands. Follow Best Management Practices for stormwater and erosion control. Mitigation required for impacts to wetlands.
<b>Plants and Animals</b>	
Land Cleared of Vegetation	Maintain buffers around sensitive areas. Identify rare plants and priority habitats prior to construction. Revegetate disturbed areas promptly.
Priority Habitats	Maintain buffers around sensitive areas. Identify rare plants and priority habitats prior to construction. Revegetate disturbed areas promptly. Consultation with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife if potential impacts to priority habitats.
Fish and Wildlife	Maintain buffers around sensitive areas. Revegetate disturbed areas promptly.
Listed Species	No significant impacts on listed species are expected under any of the alternatives. Maintain buffers and consult with federal authorities as required.



**Land Use, Community Growth and Economy**

Land Use, Community Growth and Economy	Use Urban Holding overlays to maintain large parcel size to provide orderly transition for rural to urban residential densities.
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**Historic and Cultural Preservation**

Archaeological Sites	Notify authorities if sites are discovered, for appropriate mitigation.
Historic Properties	No specific mitigation indicated.

**Transportation**

Traffic Impacts	Revise level of service standards. Adjust planning policies and assumptions to encourage population growth in UGAs rather than rural areas. Implement access management techniques. Construct or expand roadway system, including road widening, adding turn lanes, and possibly constructing a new bridge.
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**Public Services and Utilities**

Fire and Emergency Services	Tax revenues are mitigation for increased capacity requirements. Enforce building and fire code requirements.
Police	Tax revenues are mitigation for increased capacity requirements. Potential agreement with Cowlitz Tribe regarding police protection.
Schools	Tax revenues are mitigation for increased capacity requirements. Increasing impact fees or requesting additional levies are potential mechanisms to augment those funds.
Municipal Water Supply	System development charges and user rates will be set at levels to cover costs of service.
Municipal Wastewater	System development charges and user rates will be set at levels to cover costs of service.
Stormwater	Stormwater and erosion control requirements enforced by City.
Parks and Recreation	Impact fees and property taxes.

changes, such as impacts on streams, wetlands and adjacent land uses, will be reduced through the application of mitigation measures.

Increased growth and development in this area will significantly increase traffic in a limited network of roadways. Both public and private sector investments will be needed to improve the capacity of the transportation system in this region of Clark County.

## **1.8 MAJOR CONCLUSIONS AND SIGNIFICANT AREAS OF CONTROVERSY**

The City of La Center has experienced significant population growth and economic development in recent years. However, the City is vulnerable to changes in economic circumstances that could jeopardize the economic base upon which it relies for a substantial portion of its revenues. In order to create a more stable economic foundation, the City will need to create new opportunities for commercial and industrial development. The location and physical setting of the City present very limited opportunities to create new employment and economic activity in the community. The City has determined that the only course of action that can improve the economic condition of its residents and establish a more stable economic foundation for the City is to expand its UGA. This can create employment and promote economic development in the area by providing additional land for commercial and light industrial development.

Commercial and industrial development in an expanded UGA can provide up to 3,190 new jobs by 2024, and add over \$685 million in assessed valuation to the local tax base. These changes can significantly improve the economic condition of La Center, its citizens, other taxing jurisdictions and the entire region of northern Clark County.

No substantial environmental impacts have been identified that would pose serious concerns about either of the UGA Expansion Alternatives, and no significant impediments have been shown to preclude adopting this proposal. Serious efforts will be needed to refine the City's land use planning framework, utility plans and transportation system. Many of these efforts are already underway.

A significant change in potential land use is always a matter of differences of opinion, and therefore controversy. Not all citizens agree that increased urbanization of the area is appropriate. Controversy over the rate and type of development in the area around La Center will not be resolved by the environmental review contained in this document. The City of La Center will continue to balance the needs and concerns of all its citizens as it makes decisions regarding the size and location of the UGA, and moves toward implementing its future course.

## Section 2

# Background and Objectives

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## Section 2 Background and Objectives

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The City of La Center is located east of Interstate 5 at Exit 16 in northern Clark County, Washington, along the foothills of the Cascade Mountain Range. The southern border of the City runs along the picturesque East Fork of the Lewis River. Residents and visitors enjoy an abundance of wildlife and outdoor activities in the rolling hills, wetlands and city parks. A small General Commercial District includes various businesses and stores and the City's municipal offices. Four card rooms also operate in the downtown area. A variety of residential properties are located in and around the City.

Washington's Growth Management Act (GMA, RCW 36.70A) requires counties and cities to plan to manage growth in a way that allows for the efficient use of land and resources. Counties and cities planning under the GMA must adopt comprehensive plans that address land use, housing, public facilities and services, utilities, rural development and transportation. Clark County and the City of La Center both adopted such plans in 1994, and amended and updated them in 2004. The GMA requires counties to designate Urban Growth Areas (UGA) within which urban growth shall be encouraged and outside of which only non-urban growth can occur. UGA's are identified to include cities and adjacent areas that are designated for growth over a 20-year period. Within these areas, urban levels of services should be available, or capable of being provided in the future.

Clark County is revising elements of its current Comprehensive Growth Management Plan. The revisions will consider the pace and character of recent development, and the amount of land available for homes and businesses. The Board of Clark County Commissioners has implemented an extensive public process to determine the scope and direction of possible changes in urban growth boundaries to adjust the supply of available land. A draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) has been prepared on the proposed revision. Through the environmental impact review process called for under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), the County will provide information to the public about the choices among proposed growth alternatives.

At a work session on December 13, 2005, the commissioners agreed to three alternatives to receive detailed study prior to any further action. These alternatives are:

- Alternative 1: A "No Action" alternative reflecting the growth plan adopted in September 2004.
- Alternative 2: The "2005 Discussion Map" alternative, which encompasses values, principles, planning assumptions, and growth projections identified by the commissioners to guide additional work.
- Alternative 3: A "Geographic Flexibility Map" alternative to examine lands that could be used to adjust or refine Alternative 2, to create a more formal proposal for new boundaries.

Clark County is continuing to evaluate these alternatives, and various detailed options that could meet the needs of the County, the cities and the citizens.

As a part of the County process, the City of La Center has evaluated potential changes to its UGA boundary that could benefit the City and its citizens. The City of La Center has a long history of public involvement in its land use planning processes. For over a decade, the City has identified a need and desire to expand the UGA to the intersection of La Center Road and Interstate 5 (the La Center Junction). In the spring of 2005, the City Council held a public work session to review five possible study alternatives for expansion of the La Center UGA. La Center has set an objective of expanding its UGA to achieve two major goals:

- Capture the La Center Interchange of I-5 to establish commercial and industrial lands for job creation and diversification of the tax base
- Establish a clear southern boundary of the City's future growth pattern

Last summer, the City identified a UGA expansion area that would accomplish these goals, and directed its consultant team to conduct studies and prepare an EIS to support a request to Clark County to adopt the new UGA boundaries. During the course of that review, and in the context of the evolving County process, the City identified opportunities to modify the proposal to plan for future growth of La Center in a more coordinated and efficient way to benefit the citizens of the City. The City has considered several changes to the original proposal that will accomplish the City's objectives, and present better opportunities for orderly and coordinated growth over the next 20 years.

The City of La Center has prepared this EIS in support of its Preferred Alternative for UGA Expansion. This EIS will be considered by Clark County as the County reviews its overall options for growth planning. Three alternatives for the City's UGA Expansion are considered in the EIS:

- Alternative 1 – No Action. This Alternative assumes no changes to Clark County's September 2004 Comprehensive Growth Management Plan and the City of La Center's December 2004 Growth Management Plan. This Alternative would retain the existing UGA, and not provide additional land for potentially increased density of development.
- Alternative 2 – This Alternative reflects Clark County's Alternative 2, a "2005 Discussion Map" alternative. It would add 1,220 acres to La Center's UGA.
- Alternative 3 – The City of La Center Preferred Alternative, includes the lands in Alternative 2, plus additional industrial lands in the southwest quadrant of the La Center junction of Interstate 5, additional residential lands, and additional parks and open space. This alternative would add approximately 2,033 acres to the City's UGA.

Alternatives 2 and 3 would increase the size of the UGA by expanding it primarily to the south and west. This will provide additional land for commercial and light industrial development, and create opportunities for new jobs and economic growth. Providing for these uses will diversify the City's economic base, and thereby protect it against potential changes to existing revenue sources. The City currently relies upon revenues from gambling taxes for almost half of its General Fund revenues. While the City has

enjoyed a positive relationship with these businesses, the lack of economic diversity has created a potentially unstable economic situation for the City. Any changes in legal, economic or market conditions that resulted in a significant decrease in these revenues would seriously impact the City's ability to provide the services needed by La Center's citizens. For example, a statewide legislative change in gaming policy, or an initiative to the people that affected gambling operations or competitiveness could have a significant impact on La Center's budget, services, and jobs. Expanding the UGA will also help to meet the County's need to accommodate additional commercial, industrial and residential development.

The coordinated actions anticipated by the City include adopting changes to the City of La Center Comprehensive Growth Management Plan, including amendments to the land use map and Urban Growth Area, and amending the City's Capital Facilities Plan. These are all non-project actions as defined in the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA, RCW 43.21C). This EIS has been prepared in compliance with SEPA and the SEPA Rules in WAC 197-11.

## **2.2 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROPOSAL**

The purpose of this proposal is to provide additional residential, commercial and industrial growth opportunities by extending the UGA boundary and designating additional lands for these uses. This will create opportunities for new employment in the community, and help to improve the City's economic stability by diversifying the economic base. It will also help to meet the County's need to accommodate additional commercial, industrial and residential development.

La Center believes that it is possible and desirable to exceed current projections of growth in the community, and increase employment by a greater amount. This proposal is designed to accommodate a more vigorous expansion of employment than is possible under the existing UGA boundary, with a related increase in residences and infrastructure.

La Center's objective in this proposal is to expand its existing UGA to include additional land adjacent to the existing City Limits and UGA. The expanded UGA would include small areas east, west and north of the existing UGA, and larger areas to the south and west of the existing UGA. It would extend beyond the Interstate 5 freeway, to encompass all four quadrants of the La Center Junction at Exit 16. The changes in residential zoning would accommodate up to 5,751 additional persons, bringing the projected population of La Center and the UGA to 9,827 by 2024.

The purpose of the changes to the City and County policy documents is to guide planning decisions and physical development in the areas adjacent to the existing City UGA, so the projected commercial, industrial and residential development will occur in designated areas where the necessary public facilities and services can be provided efficiently. These changes will encourage a smooth transition from County jurisdiction to City jurisdiction as both developed and undeveloped areas within the expanded UGA are potentially annexed by the City in the future. They will also establish a positive and appropriate transition from rural to urban land uses. This will provide certainty to

residents, property owners and developers regarding the nature and extent of future development in the City and the UGA.

The areas La Center is considering for addition to the UGA are outside of the City limits, and therefore under the jurisdiction of Clark County. Any expanded UGA must be approved by Clark County. If Clark County agrees to the City's proposal, the UGA will be identified in the County's Comprehensive Plan. The pace of development over the 20-year planning horizon cannot be known with certainty. However, as the UGA develops and requires City services, it is expected that the area will be annexed to the City. La Center's Comprehensive Plan includes goals and policies for land within the city limits, as well as for the UGA. The alternatives considered in this EIS include the expected changes in the City's Comprehensive Plan and Capital Facilities Plan that would be necessary to support anticipated development in the expanded UGA for the next 20 years.

## **2.3 HISTORY OF LA CENTER PLANNING PROCESSES**

For many years, the City of La Center has recognized a need to diversify and stabilize its economic base, and to continue to improve its services to the community. For over a decade, the City has expressed its clear intention to connect to and provide City services to the La Center Junction of Interstate 5. During the initial 1994 planning process under the GMA, La Center proposed to expand its UGA to I-5. The expansion at that time would have allowed the City to access this regional "River of Commerce," and provide opportunities for balanced economic growth. The City and County considered various alternatives to accomplish this expansion. In the preparation of the County's Comprehensive Plan in 1994, an alternative boundary was considered for the La Center UGA. This boundary extended south and west via a narrow "cherry stem" along La Center Road, and included much of the area around the I-5 junction that is the subject of the current proposal. That alternative was also considered as an alternative in the County's consideration of potential amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and UGA boundaries in 2003-2004. Although this alternative was not ultimately accepted, the County has identified an "industrial reserve" and an "urban reserve" in this area.

In November 1999, Clark County and cities within the County began the process of amending their comprehensive plans to meet current requirements of the GMA, as well as to reflect changes in conditions in the County and controlling laws and regulations. At that time, the City of La Center again considered the potential of expanding its UGA to include areas around the I-5 junction. In the Comprehensive Plans adopted by the City and the County in 2004, the City's UGA was expanded to the south of the East Fork of the Lewis River, including additional area primarily to the south of La Center Road. Although this change did not extend west to I-5, it was viewed by the City as an interim step that would facilitate the ultimate expansion to the vicinity of Exit 16 on I-5. The City offered to work with the County on a Sub-Area Plan for the purpose of ultimately bringing the La Center Junction into the City's UGA.

The City's 2004 Comprehensive Plan (La Center, 2004) includes several Goals and Policies that clearly identify the City's intention to expand to this area in the future. For example, Land Use Policy number 1.4.1 addresses "Development at the Interstate-5 Junction." It states that:

*The La Center junction, the intersection of the La Center Road and Interstate-5 (I-5), should become an employment area for the benefit of the citizens of La Center and north Clark County. **Annexation of the La Center Junction is the primary land use objective of this policy.** (Emphasis added)*

Economic Development Policies 5.1.6 (c) and 5.1.7, and Urban Growth and Annexation Policy 8.3.7 also make it clear that expansion of the UGA, with associated development and provision of services, is a priority for the City in planning for its long-term growth and economic stability.

In April 2005, the Board of Clark County Commissioners initiated a review of the elements of the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan adopted in September 2004, the pace of recent development, and the amount of land available for homes and businesses. They scheduled a series of meetings to re-examine planning assumptions and land use designations aimed at meeting the need for homes and jobs over the next 20 years. These discussions will help determine the scope and direction of possible changes in urban growth boundaries to adjust the supply of buildable land.

In June 2005, the Commissioners approved policy assumptions for revising the growth management plan. These were later modified to provide further direction. The Planning Assumptions are included in Appendix 1. They include the following:

- The base year for the revised plan is 2004; the 20-year planning horizon ends in 2024.
- The population forecast for 2024 is approximately 584,310, based on an overall annual growth rate of 2 percent.
- Market factors of 10 percent for residential lands, and zero for industrial and commercial lands. The market factors are a way to provide additional land for choice sites selection.
- Infrastructure factors include 27.7 percent set aside for residential areas and 25 percent for commercial and industrial lands.
- The job creation goal of 1:1.75 (1 new job for every 1.75 new people) results in a goal to create 110,077 new jobs by 2024. This includes new jobs in both urban and rural areas.
- Commercial development will produce an average of 20 employees per acre; industrial development will produce 9 employees per acre.
- The assumptions identified various sources of jobs, including the proposed rural industrial land bank at the La Center junction.
- The commissioners also revised the approaches to addressing environmentally sensitive lands and underutilized residential land when evaluating the amount of additional land needed to accommodate anticipated growth.

The effect of these actions is expected to increase the amount of needed lands for residential and employment lands in Clark County during the 2004-2024 planning period.

When the County elected to re-examine the planning issues related to potential future growth, it invited cities in the County to identify potential UGA alternatives that would help to meet the continued growth pressures in the County. In a public work session on May 18, 2005, the La Center City Council reviewed five possible study alternatives for expanding its UGA. The alternatives included the No Action Alternative, and variations



of UGA Expansion including adding the existing reserve areas to the UGA, extending the UGA to the I-5 junction, and extending beyond the junction to the west. The City Council reviewed these alternatives in a public meeting on May 25, 2005, and directed city staff to engage professional land use, transportation, civil engineering and environmental services to assist the City of La Center in assessing alternatives for expansion of the La Center UGA.

In a public hearing on June 8, 2005, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 05-254, in which it reaffirmed the City's desire to expand the La Center UGA for the purpose of providing additional residential, commercial and industrial growth opportunities. The Resolution also adopted a public participation calendar for expansion of the UGA that established a schedule for numerous public work sessions, hearings and meetings. The Proposed Action was presented to the Board of Clark County Commissioners on June 14, 2005. The City's proposal was included in a "Maximum Study Area" to be examined by the County for expansion of urban growth areas to meet the projected need for jobs and homes over the next 20 years.

Since that time, Clark County has considered various options to accommodate increased growth in the County. The County has prepared a Draft EIS to address the range of options it is considering. La Center has maintained a dialogue with the County during this process, and has conducted technical analyses of various options for La Center. As this process has evolved, the City has identified opportunities to modify its original proposal to plan for future growth of La Center in a more coordinated and efficient way to benefit the citizens of the City. The Preferred Alternative is the best Alternative to meet the City's objectives, and to plan for an orderly and supportable growth of the community.

## Section 3

# The Proposed Action and Summary of the Alternatives

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## Section 3 The Proposed Action and Summary of the Alternatives

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### 3.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

La Center has a total area of 585 acres within the City Limits, and 336 acres within its existing Urban Growth Area (UGA). An additional area of 74 acres outside the UGA has been designated as an Urban Reserve. Of the total 921 acres of land within the City and UGA, only approximately 436 acres are considered to be buildable. The current population of La Center is approximately 2,095. A small amount of additional population is included within the City's UGA and Urban Reserve area. The City population was approximately 0.56 percent of the total Clark County population in 2005. Under provisions of the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A), Clark County has allocated a population projection of 3,500 within the City and its UGA by the year 2024. That represents the expected growth of the community under the current land designations, regulatory framework and expected growth.

The financial stability of the City is vulnerable to potentially dramatic changes in revenue from gambling taxes. If conditions beyond the City's control were to affect the revenues from the four card rooms located within the City, the City could lose a substantial portion of its General Fund revenues. To create opportunities for new employment in the community and improve the City's economic stability, the City proposes to expand the City's UGA to extend beyond the La Center Junction at Exit 16 on Interstate 5. This will provide approximately 2,033 additional acres of Industrial, Freeway Commercial, Urban Residential, and Parks and Open Space land uses. Of this new area, approximately 746 acres are considered to be buildable. The total City population that could be supported within the City and the expanded UGA is approximately 9,827. This represents 1.68 percent of the projected Clark County population in 2024.

The Proposed Action is a non-project action to amend the City of La Center's Comprehensive Plan and expand the City's UGA. This action is designed to create opportunities for new employment in the community, and help to improve the City's economic stability by diversifying the economic base. The City's Comprehensive Plan governs land use, housing, transportation, utilities, capital facilities, parks and open space, and zoning. An expanded UGA would become a part of this Plan, as a change to the Land Use Map. The area under consideration in this EIS is currently part of unincorporated Clark County. Expansion of the UGA would also require that Clark County amend its Comprehensive Plan to recognize this new UGA boundary and change the population allocation for La Center.

If the La Center City Council and the Board of Clark County Commissioners agree to enlarge the La Center UGA, the City will amend its Comprehensive Plan, including the Capital Facilities Plan, consistent with the new UGA boundaries. Amendments to these

planning documents will be subject to additional SEPA review as may be appropriate at the time they are promulgated.

Associated actions may include consideration of the following:

- Additional amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to describe more fully and accurately the Planning Goals, Objectives and Policies to achieve the City's Planning vision in the expanded UGA;
- Amend the City's Development Regulations to provide clearer direction regarding the standards for development of various land uses in the City and the UGA; and
- Amend the City's Capital Facilities Plan to describe standards of service and methods of providing City utility service in the expanded UGA, and to describe how those services will be financed.

The Proposed Action, or any comparable UGA Expansion that falls within the range of impacts described in this Environmental Impact Statement, would involve changes to all three of these documents by official action of the City Council.

### **3.2 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

The purpose of this Final EIS is to compare and analyze the general impacts upon the environment of different alternatives for directing future growth in the area around the City of La Center, and between the City of La Center and an area west of the Exit 16 interchange of Interstate 5 (the La Center Junction).

This document is a programmatic EIS for a non-project action. The SEPA Rules recognize that there is normally less detailed information available on the environmental impacts of non-project actions. Therefore, they provide more flexibility in preparing EIS's on non-project actions. The City is required to discuss impacts and alternatives in the level of detail appropriate to the scope of the nonproject proposal and to the level of planning for the proposal. The EIS should emphasize alternatives, and evaluate alternative means of achieving the stated objective (WAC 197-11-442(2)). An EIS for a "comprehensive plan, community plan, or other areawide zoning or for shoreline or land use plans is limited to a general discussion of the impacts of alternate proposals for policies contained in such plans, for land use or shoreline designations, and for implementation measures" (WAC 197-11-442(4)). Although this EIS is focused on the broad level of impacts resulting from changes in land use, it does provide a substantial amount of detail that can be applied to later project-specific proposals for development within the expanded UGA.

SEPA also provides for phased review of agency decisions. General matters are covered in broader environmental documents, and more specific actions (such as actions on proposals for specific projects) are covered in narrower documents that concentrate solely on the issues specific to those actions (WAC 197-11-776 and 197-11-060(5)). Future projects and programs that implement changes in development within

the UGA will be subject to further environmental review, at a level of detail appropriate to those individual actions. Under the concept of phased environmental review, those future actions will require a greater level of detail regarding the scope of the individual development and its environmental impacts.

The City is considering three alternatives to evaluate different choices the community can make about its future growth. The No Action Alternative would maintain the existing Comprehensive Plan policies and land use designations. It would not expand the La Center UGA beyond its current boundary. The Clark County "2005 Discussion Map" Alternative and the City of La Center Preferred Alternative would expand the UGA as described more fully below, and establish new land use designations and development potential in this area. The City of La Center Preferred Alternative would expand the UGA to include industrial lands and additional commercial and residential lands, and designate additional parks and open space areas..

The City of La Center published a Draft EIS on May 1, 2006 and accepted comments from agencies and the public through May 31, 2006. As part of identifying the tradeoffs between different choices, the Draft EIS identified policies and related implementation measures that could be used to mitigate adverse impacts and create beneficial results. A final decision by the County and the City could include variations on the specific boundaries of the UGA, so long as the environmental impacts of that decision are within the total framework and range of impacts evaluated for the defined Alternatives.

This Final EIS has been prepared to address the impacts on the environment of the Alternatives. It includes a response to comments received on the Draft EIS. The City may take action on potential amendments to the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan after Clark County has amended its Comprehensive Plan to recognize the new UGA boundaries, change the zoning of this area, and adjust the population allocation for La Center in accordance with this change.

In order to implement these changes, the City will also amend its Capital Facilities Plan. The amended Plan will describe how the City will provide and pay for needed facilities and services in the area.

Future actions implementing the policy changes will be more detailed and site-specific in nature, and will have impacts that can be more definitively described and analyzed. These future actions will also be reviewed for potential environmental impacts under the process described in the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C) and City and County regulations.

### **3.3 ALTERNATIVES FOR EIS ANALYSIS**

For more than 10 years, the City has expressed its desire and intention to expand the UGA to include the La Center Junction of I-5. The 2004 amendments to the City and County Comprehensive Plans added a small area along La Center Road within the City's UGA. The City considered this move across the East Fork of the Lewis River to be an interim step toward the ultimate expansion to the I-5 junction. In the spring of 2005, the City studied several alternatives to accomplish this expansion. The alternatives included the No Action Alternative, and variations of UGA Expansion

including adding the existing reserve areas to the UGA, extending the UGA to the I-5 junction, and extending beyond the junction to the west.

The history of the City's planning process involving the UGA is described Section in 2.3 of this EIS.

The two UGA Expansion Alternatives and the No Action Alternative are evaluated in this EIS. They represent a range of alternatives that will allow the City to make informed decisions about directions for community growth.

### Alternative 1 – No Action

This Alternative assumes that growth in the City, the existing UGA and the proposed UGA expansion area will continue under the current trends of growth, and in accordance with the existing land use designations and regulatory framework. This provides a benchmark from which the action alternatives can be compared and evaluated – both in terms of the City's objective to create opportunities for new employment in the community and diversify and stabilize the City's economic base, and in terms of the potential environmental impacts.

Under this Alternative, the City would not change its UGA. The predominantly rural land use designations would remain in effect in the area between the La Center UGA and the area west of I-5. The existing Clark County regulations would apply to growth and development in that area. Further development of the area over the next 20 years would consist of moderately increased average density of residential uses, and the potential for some added industrial development in the County's Industrial Reserve near the I-5 interchange.

The La Center Urban Area Capital Facilities Plan would not be amended under this Alternative.

Under the No Action Alternative, the City would not take steps to address the priority issues identified in the existing Comprehensive Plan to create opportunities for new employment in the community, and help improve the City's economic stability by diversifying its economic base.

The location of the City limits and the existing UGA are shown in Figure 3-1.

### Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative

The County's 2005 Discussion Map Alternative would add approximately 1,220 acres to the UGA for the City of La Center. The expanded area includes 269 gross acres to be designated as urban residential area immediately north, east and west of the existing UGA, and 952 gross acres to the south and west of the southern extension of the UGA south of the river. The expanded UGA would include the following:

- Residential Lands – Add 269 gross acres of residential lands north of the river, and 404 gross acres of land south of the river. These residential lands would have a minimum density of four dwelling units per acre, with some areas to be designated for multi-family and higher density mixed use.

Figure 3-1  
La Center Urban Growth Area

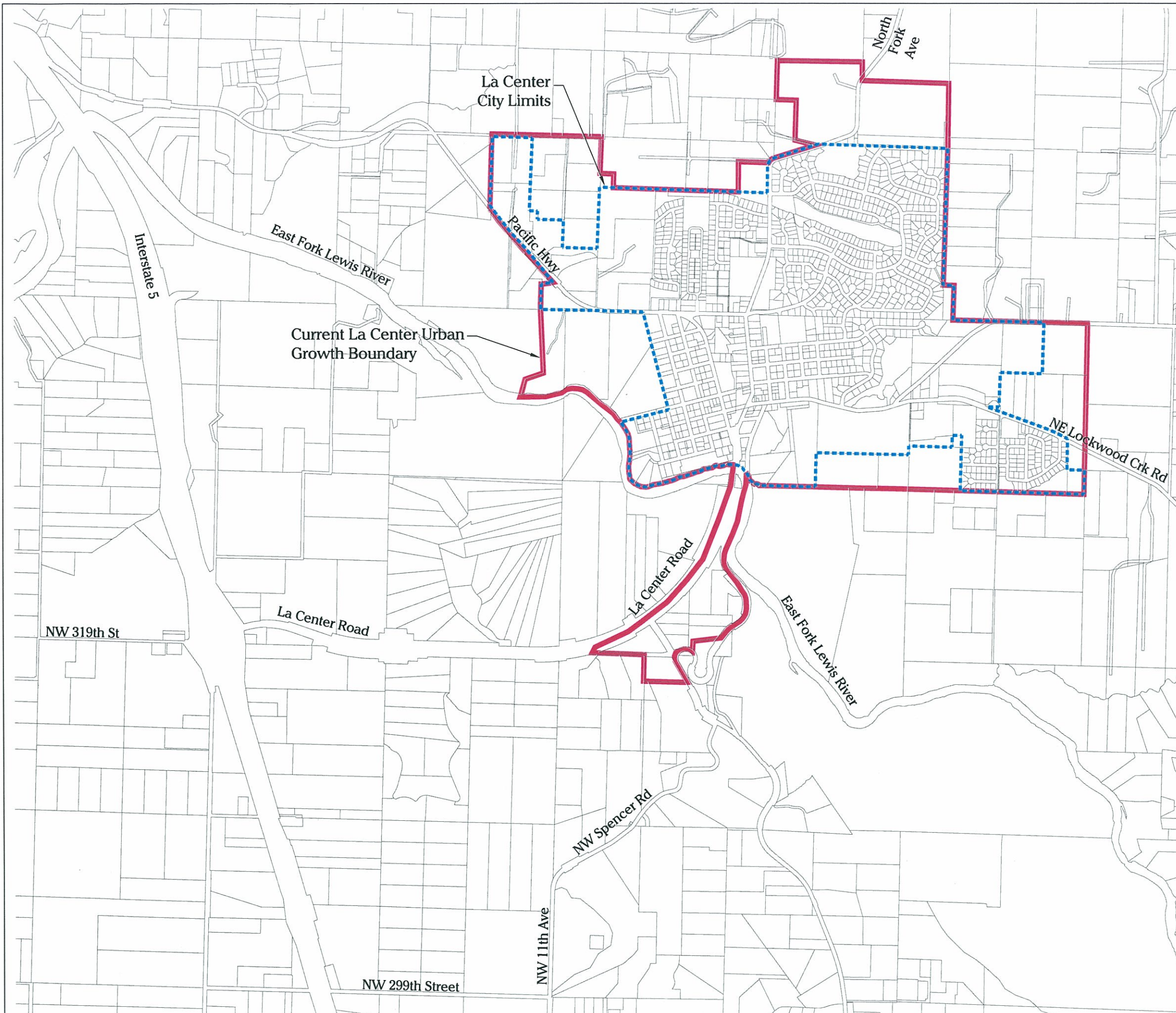
City of La Center  
Comprehensive Plan  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement



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SCALE IN FEET

Legend

- City Limits 
- Current Urban Growth Boundary 



- Commercial Lands – Add 66 gross acres of commercial lands near the La Center Junction of I-5. These are within areas designated for freeway commercial mixed use and mixed use residential/commercial.
- Industrial lands -- Add 369 acres of industrial lands in all four quadrants of the La Center junction. Part of this area is currently identified as a County Industrial Reserve.

Not all of this area would be developed at the designated levels of development density during the 20-year planning period. A substantial amount of the total area would be constrained by regulations to protect critical areas such as streams and wetlands, and provide buffers around them. Additional land area would be reserved for infrastructure such as roads and utility rights-of-way. Provision would also be made for public amenities such as greenbelts, parks and recreation facilities. Using Clark County Planning Assumptions and critical areas maps, approximately 208 acres would be constrained by environmental considerations. An additional 408 acres would be dedicated for infrastructure, leaving a net of 604 acres potentially developable, of which 35 acres of buildable land are included within the current Urban Reserve.

Under the proposed action, development of the City and expanded UGA would have the capacity to support a population of 8,642 by 2024.

The location of the City limits, the existing UGA and the UGA expansion under Alternative 2 are shown in Figure 3-2.

In order to facilitate the orderly development of these uses within the UGA, the City also proposes to update the La Center Urban Area Capital Facilities Plan. The update will address the projected need for capital facilities in this area, identify facilities needed within the initial 6-year planning horizon and over 20 years, and describe how the necessary public facilities will be provided concurrent with private development within the UGA.

### Alternative 3 – City of La Center Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative is to add approximately 2,033 acres to the UGA for the City of La Center. The expanded area includes 269 gross acres to be designated as urban residential area immediately north, east and west of the existing UGA, and 1,764 gross acres to the south and west of the southern extension of the UGA south of the river. The expanded UGA would include the following:

- Residential Lands – Add 269 gross acres of residential lands north of the river, and 712 gross acres of land south of the river. Most of these residential lands would have a minimum density of either four or six dwelling units per acre, with some areas to be designated for multi-family use.
- Commercial Lands – Add 66 gross acres of commercial lands near the La Center Junction of I-5. These are within areas designated for freeway commercial use.
- Industrial lands -- Add 641 acres of industrial lands in the vicinity of the La Center junction. Part of this area is currently identified as a County Industrial Reserve.
- Parks and Open Space – Add 200 acres of wetlands and other natural areas along the south side of the river.



Figure 3-2  
La Center Urban Growth Area  
Alternative 2

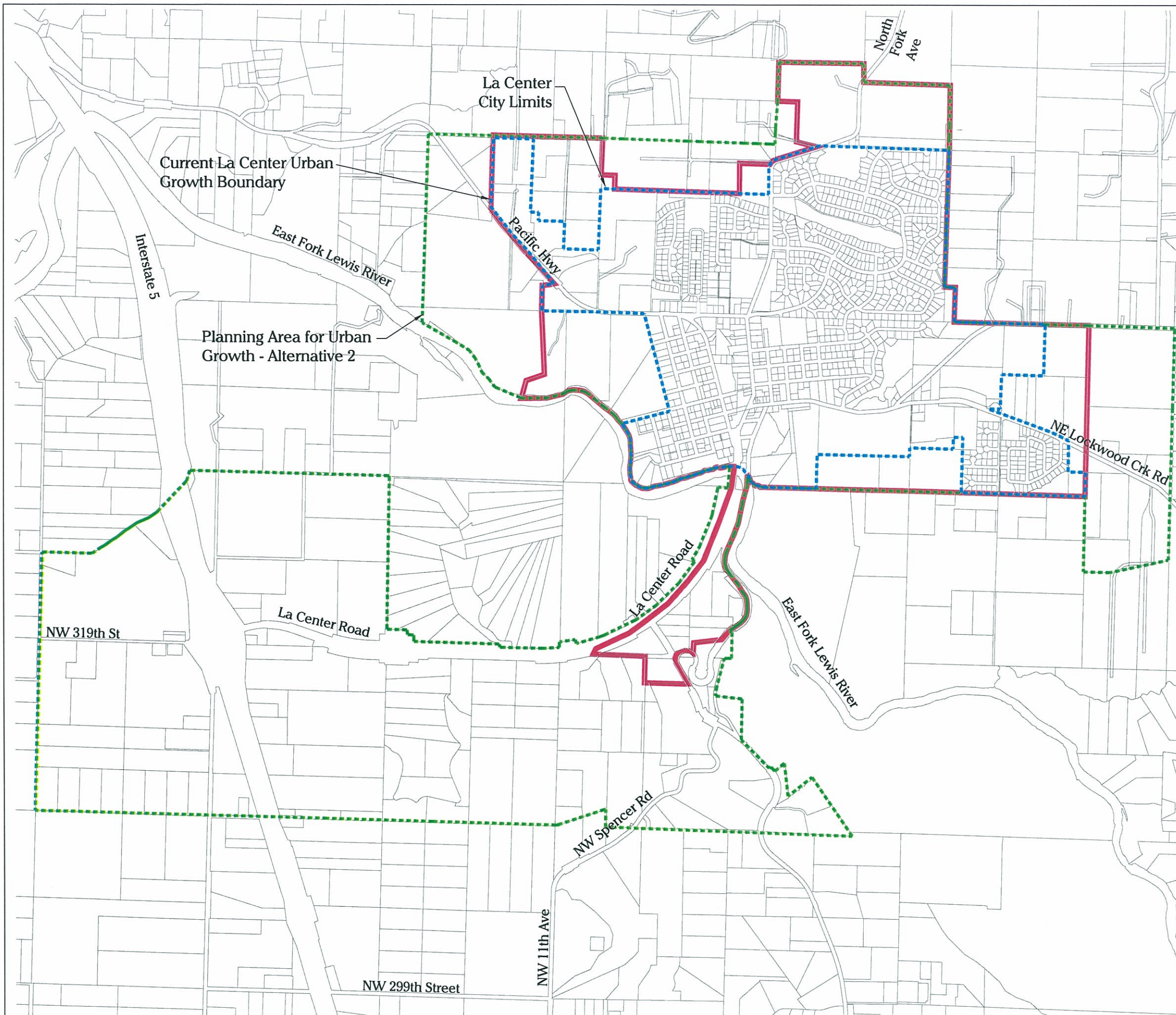
City of La Center  
Comprehensive Plan  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement



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SCALE IN FEET

Legend

- City Limits -----
- Current Urban Growth Boundary —————
- Planning Area for Urban Growth - Alternative 2 - - - - -



Not all of this area would be developed at the designated levels of development density during the 20-year planning period. A substantial amount of the total area would be constrained by regulations to protect critical areas such as streams and wetlands, and provide buffers around them. Additional land area would be reserved for infrastructure such as roads and utility rights-of-way. Provision would also be made for public amenities such as greenbelts, parks and recreation facilities. Using Clark County Planning Assumptions and critical areas maps, approximately 513 acres would be constrained by environmental considerations. An additional 594 acres would be dedicated for infrastructure, leaving a net of 746 acres potentially developable, of which 35 acres of buildable land are included within the current urban reserve.

Under the proposed action, development of the City and expanded UGA over the next 20 years would have the capacity to support a population of 9,827.

The location of the City limits, the existing UGA and the Proposed UGA expansion under the Preferred Alternative are shown in Figure 3-3.

In order to facilitate the orderly development of these uses within the UGA, the City also proposes to update the La Center Urban Area Capital Facilities Plan. The update will address the projected need for capital facilities in this area, identify facilities needed within the initial six-year planning horizon and over 20 years, and describe how the necessary public facilities will be provided concurrent with private development within the UGA.

### **3.4 PREVIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Previous environmental review by Clark County has described many aspects of the environmental issues under consideration in this EIS. For example, the EIS's for the County's 1994, 2004 and 2006 Comprehensive Growth Management Plans included consideration of urban levels of development in the area around the La Center Junction of I-5, and lands connecting this area to the City of La Center. The area evaluated in these documents as an alternative for the urban growth boundary for the City of La Center includes most or all of the lands covered by the current proposal by the City. The following documents are incorporated by reference in this EIS:

- Clark County, 1994. Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Comprehensive Growth Management Plans of Clark County, Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Vancouver, Washougal, and Yacolt. Clark County, 1994.
- Clark County, 2003. Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Comprehensive Growth Management Plans of Clark County, Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Vancouver, Washougal, and Yacolt. Clark County, September 10, 2003.
- Clark County, 2006. Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan of Clark County, Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Vancouver, Washougal, and Yacolt. Clark County, August 25, 2006.

Figure 3-3  
La Center Urban Growth Area  
Alternative 3

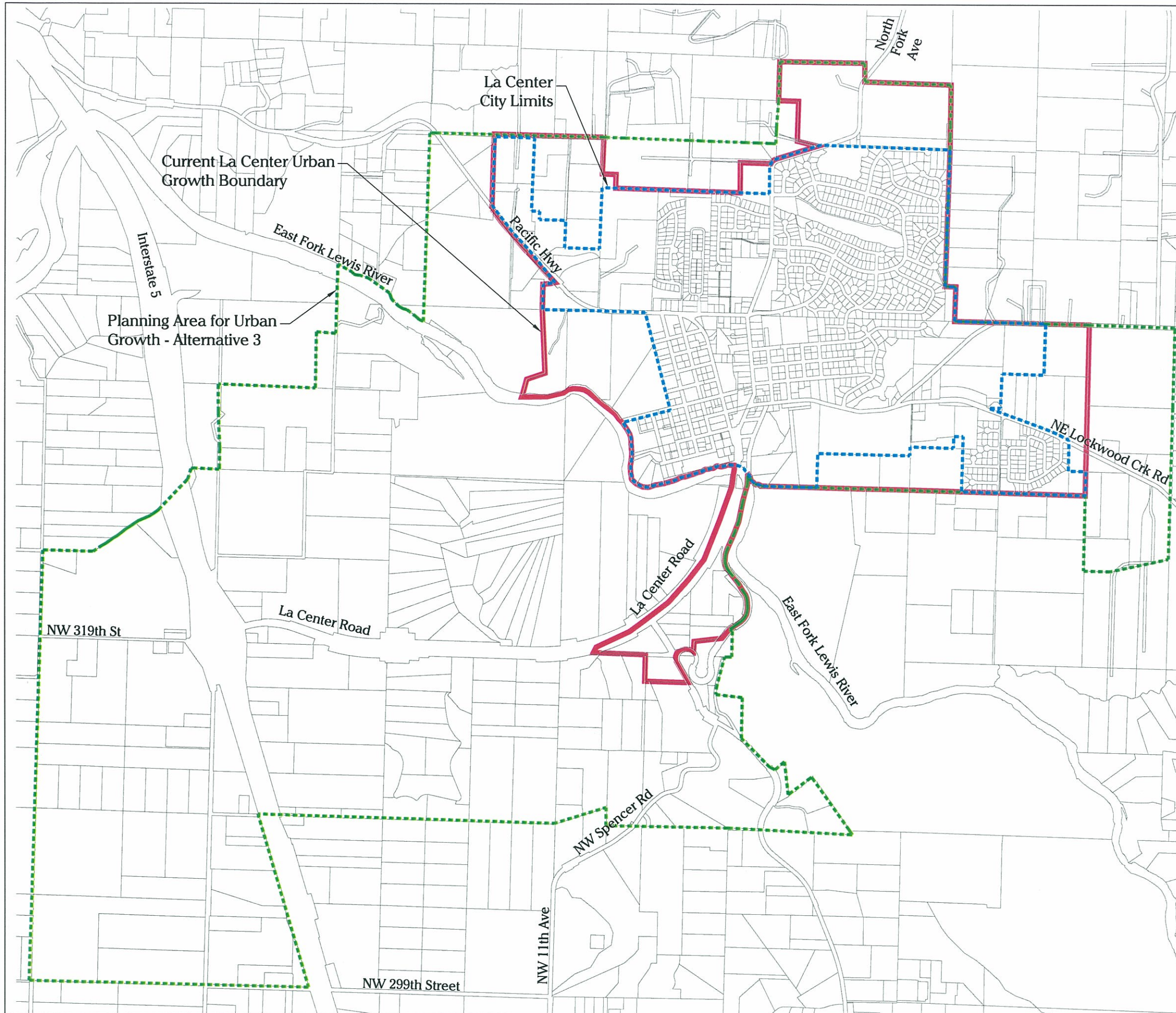
City of La Center  
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Draft Environmental Impact Statement



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SCALE IN FEET

Legend

- City Limits -----
- Current Urban Growth Boundary —————
- Planning Area for Urban Growth - Alternative 3 - - - - -



## Section 4

# Affected Environment, Significant Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

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## Section 4 Affected Environment, Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures

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### INTRODUCTION

This EIS evaluates the environmental impacts associated with a proposed change in the UGA for the City of La Center. The City is also considering amendments to the La Center Urban Area Capital Facilities Plan that will provide the needed public services to support growth in the City and the UGA. The City may proceed with this expansion under the Preferred Alternative, the Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative, or another alternative whose impacts are within the range of impacts described in this EIS. The No Action Alternative is evaluated in order to provide for comparison of the impacts resulting from changes to this baseline. The environmental evaluations for the Preferred Alternative and the Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative are based on the actions envisioned under those alternatives, including the associated changes in the City's Capital Facilities Plan. These environmental evaluations are focused on the area encompassed by the two UGA Expansion Alternatives. This combined area is referred to as the **Planning Area** for purposes of this EIS.

This proposal to expand the City's UGA is a non-project action. As discussed in WAC 197-11-442, there is normally less detailed information available on their environmental impacts and on any subsequent project proposals. The EIS will discuss impacts and alternatives in the level of detail appropriate to the scope and level of planning for the non-project proposal.

The State Environmental Policy Act identifies 16 elements of the natural and man-made environment that may be affected by governmental actions. The City has conducted a Scoping Process to narrow the focus of the EIS to significant environmental issues and eliminate insignificant impacts from detailed study. Based on the input received during the Scoping Process and evaluation of the environmental issues related to this proposal by the City and its consultants, the following issues have been identified for consideration in the EIS:

- Earth
- Water
- Plants and Animals
- Land Use, Community Growth and Economy
- Transportation
- Historic and Cultural Preservation
- Public Services and Utilities

The exact nature of commercial, industrial and residential developments that may take place within this area cannot be defined precisely until project-specific applications are submitted for individual developments. Therefore, the EIS will consider potential impacts that could result from the full range of potential uses of the area described. This will provide the City and the public with an impartial evaluation of the potential environmental

impacts that could result from development within the expanded UGA. It will also provide for a comparative evaluation of the impacts of reasonable alternatives to the proposal, including mitigation measures that would avoid or reduce impacts to the environment.

Many mitigation measures are required by federal, state, and local laws and regulations. These, and other potential mitigation measures that could reduce the probable environmental impacts of development, are discussed in this Section.

## **4.1 EARTH**

### **Existing Conditions**

#### **Geology and Topography**

La Center lies within the Portland Basin physiographic province. The area is situated near the junction of two major geologic units. These include sedimentary rocks of the Upper Tertiary (Pliocene-Miocene) and Volcanic rocks of the Lower Tertiary (Oligocene-Paleocene). Starting in the Miocene and continuing through the Pleistocene, the basin was filled by sediments of the ancestral Columbia River. This was later followed by a period of volcanism associated with faulting and structural deformation and further depression of the Portland Basin. Poorly sorted sand, clay and gravel were deposited in the basin as the Missoula floods burst out of the Columbia River gorge 12,700 to 15,300 years ago. (Washington Department of Natural Resources, 2002).

The land surface has been shaped by these geologic events, and by later erosion, soil formation, and similar processes. The topography within the proposed UGA Expansion area includes flat to gently rolling hills on terraces near the La Center Junction of I-5, with areas of steeper slopes along La Center Road, the East Fork of the Lewis River, and in numerous minor drainageways that cut through the terraces. This area is characterized by generally low topographic relief. Most of the area consists of 10 percent slopes or less, but several portions of the area have slopes in excess of 40 percent. Elevation ranges from approximately 10 to 320 feet above Mean Sea Level.

Surface geology is characterized by recent alluvial deposits in the Lewis River floodplain, with Pleistocene alluvium in the terraces and uplands. Elements of the Troutdale Formation are exposed in some eroded stream drainages.

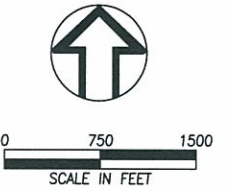
#### **Geological Hazards**

In their protection of Critical Areas, Clark County and the City of La Center include Geologically Hazardous Areas -- areas that because of their susceptibility to erosion, landslide, earthquakes or other geological events are not suitable for the siting of commercial, residential, or industrial development consistent with public health or safety concerns (Clark County Code Chapter 13.60 and La Center Municipal Code Chapter 14.20). Clark County has mapped areas that have earthquake potential and steep slopes with a susceptibility to landslides and erosion.

Areas that pose geological constraints to development due to geological conditions such as steep landslide hazard and erosion hazard are shown in Figure 4.1-1.

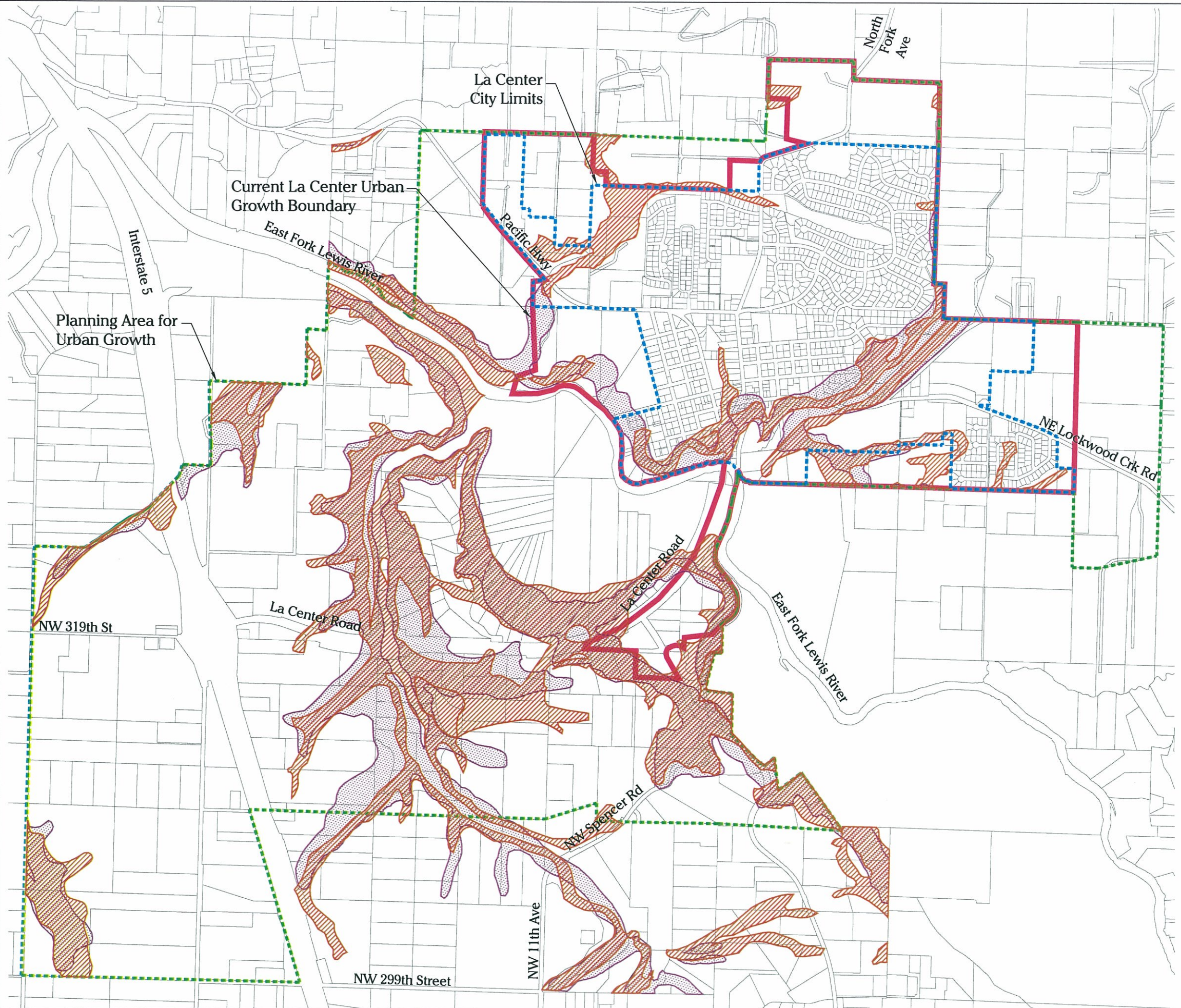
Figure 4.1-1  
Geological Constraints

City of La Center  
Comprehensive Plan  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement



Legend

- City Limits -----
- Current Urban Growth Boundary —————
- Planning Area for Urban Growth -----
- Erosion Hazard Areas (Slopes over 25%) ▨▨▨▨
- Landslide Hazard Areas (Areas subject to landslide due to topographic, geologic, and/or hydrologic conditions) ▨▨▨▨



Landslide hazard areas are defined in the La Center Municipal Code (LCMC) 14.20.030.D(3) as “areas potentially subject to risk of mass movement due to a combination of geologic, topographic, and hydrologic factors.” This could include factors such as bedrock, soil slope, slope aspect, structure, hydrology or other factors. Clark County’s Geographic Information System database indicates that the proposed UGA expansion area includes some areas of historical unstable slopes north of La Center Road as it curves in its approach to the City from I-5. Some other areas in steep drainages are shown as potentially unstable slopes.

Seismic hazard areas are defined in LCMC 14.20.030.D(4) as “areas subject to severe risk of damage as a result of earthquake induced ground shaking, slope failure, settlement, or soil liquefaction.” There is the possibility of damage from earthquakes that might occur in Clark County. This potential is addressed in the EIS for the County’s recent Comprehensive Plan Amendments (Clark County, 2003). The unconsolidated sediments in the floodplain of the East Fork of the Lewis River are the only area in the vicinity that is characterized by the unconsolidated deposits that present the greatest risk from seismic shaking of the earth.

Erosion hazard areas are defined in LCMC 14.20.030.D(1) as “those areas containing soils...may experience severe to very severe erosion.” Natural erosion occurs within stream drainages and from cut-banks, resulting in sediment and gravel entering stream courses. Erosion hazards are present when the combination of soil types, slopes and precipitation create the likelihood of severe erosion occurring. In general, the soils in this area (see description of soils in following paragraphs) are described as having only a slight erosion hazard. However, in conjunction with steep slopes, the potential for erosion can increase. Severe erosion hazard areas are shown in the La Center Comprehensive Plan. They include areas of steep slopes in the valleys of the East Fork of the Lewis River, McCormick Creek and other drainages within the proposed UGA expansion area.

Volcanic Hazards -- Future volcanic activity at Mount St. Helens or Mount Rainier could potentially affect many areas of Clark County. The last major eruption of Mount St. Helens in 1980 caused regional flooding, and spread ash over much of the region.

## **Soils**

Soil conditions are important in identifying potential limitations on development (such as building foundations and septic systems) in an area, and predicting erosion and sedimentation resulting from natural causes and man-made disturbances to the land. Extensive soils information is presented in a soil survey of Clark County (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service -- now Natural Resources Conservation Service -- 1972). This broad scale of soils mapping is useful for identifying large areas that may be generally suitable or unsuitable for certain land uses.

The soils in the La Center Area are mostly silt loams and silty clay loams of the Hillsboro –Gee-Odne soil association. This association is described as “deep, dominantly nearly level to sloping, well-drained to poorly drained, medium-textured soils of the terraces” (Ibid., page 3). The Hillsboro soils are well-drained, nearly level to very steep soils that are more than 60 inches deep. Gee soils are deep, moderately well-drained, nearly level to very steep soils. Odne soils occur in drainageways within areas of Gee soils. These soils are deep, poorly drained and nearly level to concave. The 1972 soil report



noted that hay, grain and crops are the major crops in this association, and identified dairying as the major farm enterprise at that time.

Sauvie soils are found in the floodplain of the East Fork of the Lewis River. They are described as “deep, nearly level to gently sloping, somewhat poorly drained to somewhat excessively drained, moderately fine textured to moderately coarse textured soils of the floodplains” (Ibid., page 3). The 1972 soil report indicated that the protected bottom lands along the East Fork of the Lewis River are important for hay, grain and improved pasture; however, much of this bottomland is frequently flooded and support only native pasture, trees and brush.

Most of the soils in Clark County have been classified by Clark County as having moderate to severe restrictions that limit the placement of foundations for structures. This limitation is primarily a result of slopes. All of the soils in the area of the proposed UGA expansion are described by the County as having moderate to severe limitations for structures. They also have moderate to severe limitations for the suitability of septic systems. This is based largely on soil drainage characteristics, including risk of groundwater contamination in areas that readily percolate septic system effluent and storm water runoff.

Most of the upland soils in the area are described as prime forest soils. In the river bottom and along drainage slopes, the soils are described as fair to poor for forest. Some scattered areas to the south of La Center Road are identified as prime agricultural soils Class I and II. The remainder of the UGA expansion area is fairly evenly divided among the classifications of prime agricultural soils Class III, good agricultural soils, fair agricultural soils, and poor agricultural soils.

### **Impacts of the Alternatives**

Modification of soils and topography would be increased under all three Alternatives. New construction of structures, roads, and utility lines will involve land clearing, excavation, fill, grading, alteration of drainage characteristics, localized erosion and placement of impervious surfaces. Potential impacts of these activities include alteration of topography, loss of topsoil, increased erosion potential, creation of unstable side slopes, alteration of subsurface and surface drainage, ponding of water, impacts on groundwater, removal of vegetation, damaging root systems, compaction of subsurface soils, and reduction of water infiltration. These impacts may be localized at the site of an individual development, or result from cumulative actions within the area.

No new geologic hazards would be created by implementation of any of the Alternatives.

### **Alternative 1 – No Action**

Under the No Action Alternative, the Planning Area would continue to develop under primarily rural uses, with limited commercial activity near the I-5 interchange. Modification of topography and soils by construction activities would be limited. Land clearing for agricultural uses would continue, with the potential for wind and water erosion of soils. Some existing undeveloped land and agricultural uses will be converted to large lot residential development. Recreational uses, ditch construction and maintenance, and road runoff will all contribute to erosion and possible sedimentation in local drainages.

Impervious surfaces would remain limited, and most precipitation would be absorbed by the soils and ultimately recharge groundwater resources. Development and regulatory requirements for land modifications would remain with Clark County.

Increased use of septic systems under rural development conditions would increase the risk of groundwater contamination from percolation of septic system effluent.

### **Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative**

Modification of soils by construction activities would be substantially increased under this alternative. Some structures would be removed, and grading and filling activities would be required in order to construct new commercial and light industrial facilities, parking lots, roads, utility lines, and increased density of residential buildings. Changes to topography would be minor in the upland terraces where the slopes are gentle. Areas of steep slopes would not be considered buildable under LCMC 14.20.20.E(3). Construction on intermediate slopes would require special precautions to assure slope stability. In cases where the developer could provide satisfactory documentation to the City, construction could be allowed that would create greater changes to topography on a local scale.

Of the total 1,220 acres that would be added to the UGA under this alternative, approximately 287 acres will be covered by some form of impervious surface (such as roads, roofs, driveways, parking lots and playgrounds).

Most of the erosion hazard areas around La Center are found in steep drainages of the East Fork of the Lewis River and its tributaries. These areas will not be subject to increased development under the UGA Expansion Alternative. Because of the moderate susceptibility of the soils to erosion and the gentle slopes in the area that is likely to be developed, soil erosion and sedimentation is expected to be minimal. In this Alternative, there would be an additional 494 acres of net buildable land added to the current UGA. This includes 30 net buildable acres of commercially zoned land, 166 net buildable acres of new light industrial property, and 298 net buildable acres of new residential land.

Most of the expanded UGA area would eventually be connected with the public sewer system. Therefore, impacts from failing or substandard septic systems would be reduced.

### **Alternative 3 – City of La Center Preferred Alternative**

Impacts to the earth would be similar to those described above for Alternative 2. The only difference would be in the area affected by future development.

Of the 2,033 acres that would be added to the UGA under this alternative, approximately 434 acres will be covered by some form of impervious surface (such as roads, roofs, driveways, parking lots and playgrounds).

In this Alternative, there would be an additional 746 acres of net buildable land added to the current UGA. This includes 30 net buildable acres of commercially zoned land, 289 net buildable acres of new light industrial property, and 428 net buildable acres of new residential land.

### **Mitigation Measures**

Both Clark County and the City of La Center have developed policies that identify geologically hazardous areas and ensure that development within these areas will be either avoided or conducted in a manner that will minimize risk to life and property. They have both enacted measures to protect specific critical areas such as wetlands, and to limit development in areas of steep slopes and other potential geological hazards. These ordinances are required by state law to be updated periodically as best available practices become widely accepted. Development buffers and other controls or mitigation measures will be enforced for any new development within the area under either Alternative.

La Center does not allow development on slopes over 25 percent. Development on slopes between 15 and 25 percent may require the applicant to provide substantial evidence that the slope is geologically stable if there is evidence that similarly situated slopes have demonstrated substantial instability in the past. Development near geologically hazardous areas must have a 75-foot buffer.

Development on lands classified as erosion hazards, landslide hazard, or seismic hazard is prohibited unless the applicant provides a report, prepared and signed by a licensed engineer specializing in geotechnical engineering. The report must provide construction methodologies, based upon best available science, and quality assurances that the site can be developed without significant risk to public safety.

Development Regulations also govern all land clearing activity, require site planning, limit construction access, control potential erosion, require drainage plans and mandate site restoration. The City's Development Standards for critical areas prohibit soil excavation, grading, removal of native vegetation species, draining, and placement of structures and new construction unless specifically authorized under the critical areas ordinance (LCMC Chapter 14.20). City approval of a mitigation plan is a prerequisite for approval of any development activities on critical areas.

Erosion impacts under all alternatives will be mitigated by requiring the use of best management practices (BMP's) for storm water and erosion control. These include measures such as: limiting the area of soil disturbance; retaining vegetation where possible; using silt fences or similar features to retain eroded material on site; using erosion control matting, mulching or plastic covering on exposed soils as needed; graveling construction entrances; and revegetating exposed slopes as soon as work is completed.

All development shall comply with the International Building Code Requirements for Seismic Risk Zone 3B. Site-specific field studies or special reports could be required for the location of critical facilities within seismic risk areas.

Clark County reviews all septic systems prior to permitting, to ensure that they will function appropriately and to minimize the risk of surface or groundwater contamination.

## 4.2 WATER AND WETLANDS

### Existing Conditions

The City of La Center is located along the East Fork of the Lewis River, which flows through the southern portion of the existing UGA. The river is the major surface water feature in or near the UGA. It flows east to west and merges with the North Fork of the Lewis River to form the Lewis River, which discharges into the Columbia River. Associated with the river is the La Center Bottoms, which is a large wetland/floodplain area that is situated along the southern shore of the river in the vicinity of the Planning Area for UGA Expansion.

A reconnaissance level assessment was conducted within the Planning Area to determine existing surface water conditions (streams/wetlands/frequently flooded areas). The assessment consisted of reviewing resource background information including two-foot interval topographic maps, Clark County Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping information, aerial photos, Natural Resource Conservation Service Clark County Soil Survey Maps (U.S. Department of Agriculture 1972), National Wetland Inventory (NWI) Maps, and prior wetland delineation information. Additional data were collected within the accessible areas of the Planning Area for UGA Expansion by conducting a visual assessment, using the above listed resource materials as well as observations of vegetation, topography and the presence of surface water.

The locations of streams and wetlands within the area are shown in Figure 4.2-1.

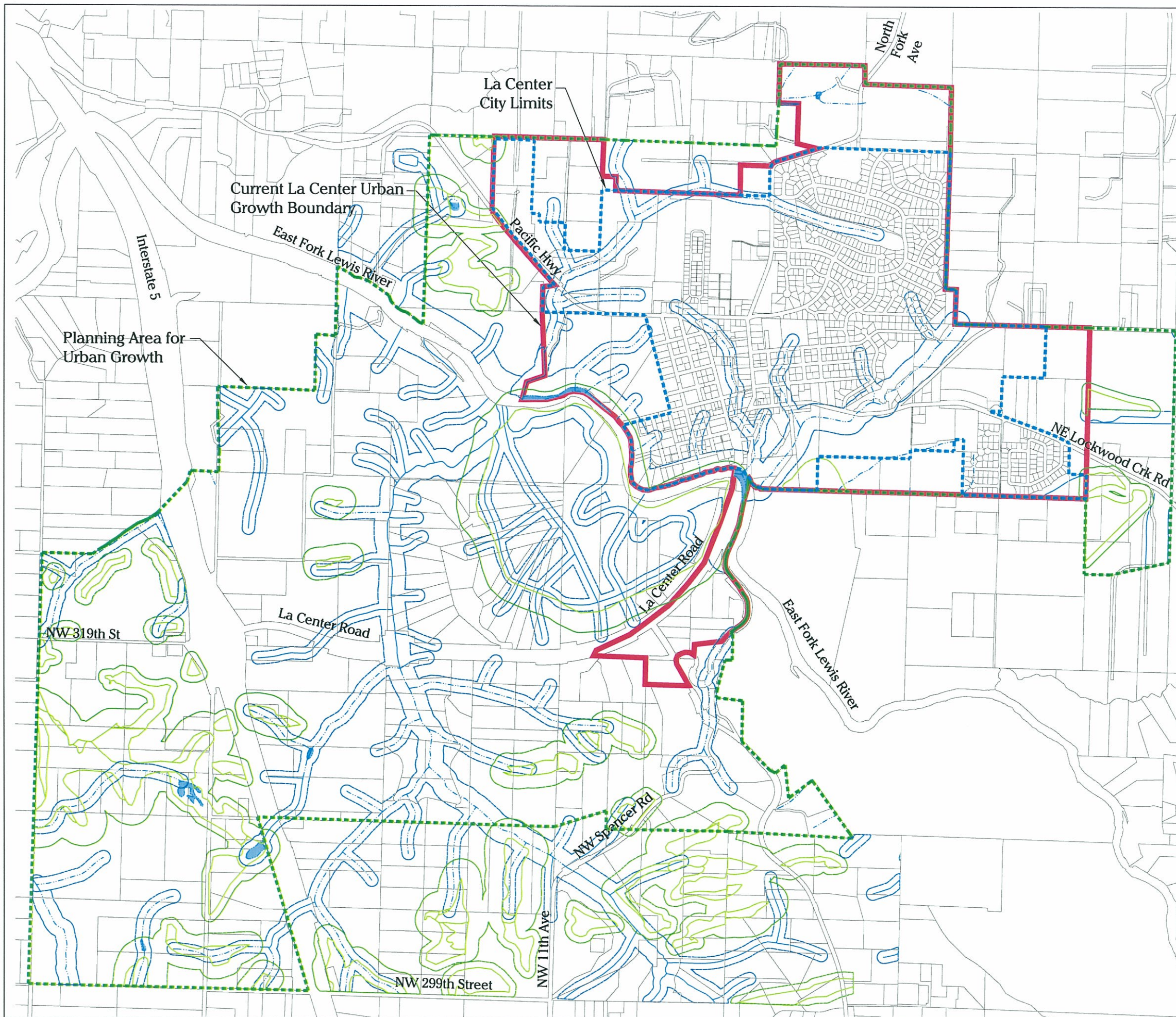
Streams/Riparian Habitat Streams mapped by GIS and located during the field studies are classified according to the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) methodology (WAC-222-16-030) for stream typing. WDNR categorizes streams into one of five stream types based on size, seasonality, flow, and fish bearing status. The City recognizes that WDNR has an interim water typing system that became effective July 1, 2005 (WAC 222-16-131). The interim water typing system uses physical characteristics to establish stream typing. The LCMC (14.20.030(B)(ii)) references WAC 222-16-030 as the City's classification system for streams. The City will update the water typing system to the existing DNR adopted water typing system with the next update of their critical lands ordinance.

A conversion table for the two water typing systems is given below:

<b>Permanent Water Typing (WAC 222-16-030)</b>	<b>Interim Water Typing (WAC 222-16-031)</b>
Type "S"	Type 1 Water
Type "F"	Type 2 & 3 Water
Type "Np"	Type 4 Water
Type "Ns"	Type 5 Water

The City of La Center does not believe that there is substantial difference between the two water typing systems other than nomenclature. Riparian buffers are assigned to each stream type as outlined in Table 14.20.035(A) of the LCMC. Stream locations, types and required buffers are shown in Appendix 1, Figure 1. Any differences resulting

Figure 4.2-1  
 La Center Area Streams and Wetlands  
 City of La Center  
 Comprehensive Plan  
 Draft Environmental Impact Statement



**Legend**

- City Limits — — — — —
- Current Urban Growth Boundary — — — — —
- Planning Area for Urban Growth — — — — —
- Streams — — — — —
- Stream Buffers — — — — —
- Lakes •
- Wetlands — — — — —
- Wetland Buffers — — — — —

from the use of one system or the other would not be significant enough to change the conclusions regarding the impacts of the three alternatives.

All streams in the Planning Area are within the East Fork of the Lewis River watershed, except Allen Canyon Creek (Alternative 3), which is in its own watershed. Both the Lewis River and Allen Canyon Creek watersheds are part of the Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 27. Riparian buffers are assigned to each stream type as outlined in Table 14.20.035(A) of the LCMC. Stream locations, types and required buffers are shown in Appendix 1, Figure 1. Streams identified in the vicinity of the Planning Area are described below. The alternatives form a "nested set" -- the existing City and UGA are included in all of the alternatives; Alternative 2 includes small additional areas surrounding the City on the north side of the East Fork of the Lewis River, and; Alternative 3 includes all of Alternatives 1 and 2, plus additional lands south of the River.

#### ***Alternative 1 – No Action***

The East Fork of the Lewis River is the primary stream and riparian habitat system within the existing UGA. It is a Type 1 stream according to WDNR stream definitions, based on seasonality (perennial), flow and the presence of anadromous and resident fish. This stream is 43 miles long from its origination point in Skamania County to its confluence with the Columbia. Most of the stream in the La Center area is surrounded by urban and rural development. This river is protected by a 300-foot riparian buffer zone. The East Fork flows for 6,679 linear feet along the southern boundary of the existing UGA.

Breeze Creek, a Type 3 stream, flows through the east-central portion of the existing UGA. This stream meanders through 4,274 linear feet within the existing UGA, and is protected by a 200-foot riparian buffer. Two unnamed Type 4 streams and four Type 5 streams cross 5,702 linear feet and 5,631 linear feet, respectively, of the existing UGA. Type 4 and Type 5 streams are protected by 105-foot and 95-foot riparian buffers, respectively. According to the Clark County GIS mapping, there are 17 unclassified streams within the existing UGA that were not classified during the reconnaissance assessment of the Planning Area due to lack of access. These streams traverse 5,304 linear feet within the area, and are more than likely Type 5 streams subject to a 95-foot riparian buffer. The total riparian buffer area within the City and its existing UGA for all stream Types is approximately 192 acres.

#### ***Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative***

Alternative 2 includes all of the streams and riparian buffer areas contained in Alternative 1. The East Fork of the Lewis River flows through an additional 1,855 linear feet of the area included in this alternative. McCormick Creek (3,964 linear feet) is located in the southwest corner of Alternative 2. It is a Type 3 stream (fish bearing), with a 200-foot riparian buffer. No portions of this stream occur in Alternative 1. Within the area for Alternative 2 that is not included in Alternative 1, there are six Type 4 streams (11,973 linear feet), 24 Type 5 Streams (26,685 linear feet) and six unclassified streams (6,889 linear feet). Riparian buffers range in width from 300 feet for Type 1 streams down to 95 feet for Type 5 streams. The total additional riparian buffer area within Alternative 2 (beyond that contained in Alternative 1) is approximately 239 acres for all stream Types.

#### ***Alternative 3 – City of La Center Preferred Alternative***

Alternative 3 includes all of the streams and riparian buffers areas contained in

Alternatives 1 and 2. Only a small portion of the East Fork of the Lewis River (1,500 linear feet) located in the northwest corner of this proposed alternative is outside of Alternative 2. Portions of McCormick Creek meander between the areas included in Alternatives 2 and 3. The portion of this creek included in Alternative 3 is 4,236 linear feet. Allen Canyon Creek, a Type 3 stream with 150-foot riparian buffer, also occurs in the southwest corner of Alternative 3. The portion of this stream that occurs in this alternative is approximately 1,777 linear feet. There are also four Type 4 streams (5,556 linear feet), five Type 5 streams (4,666 linear feet) and 19 streams (10,799 linear feet) mapped by Clark County GIS that were not classified due to lack of access. The total riparian buffer area for all streams within Alternative 3 is approximately 274 acres.

Two Urban Reserve areas are also associated with Alternative 3. McCormick Creek includes 4,548 linear feet of stream channel within the Urban Reserve. There are also three Type 4 streams (4,896 linear feet), 13 Type 5 streams (13,717 linear feet) and six streams (3,598 linear feet) mapped by Clark County GIS that have not been classified, and are assumed to be Type 5.

There is approximately 106,658 linear feet of streams outside of the existing UGA. Of this area, 51,366 linear feet occur within the area of Alternative 2 and 28,758 additional linear feet of streams are located within Alternative 3, excluding the Urban Reserve area (Table 4.2.1). In addition, 239 acres and 274 acres of riparian buffer are located within Alternative 2, respectively, not including the Urban Reserve area.

Table 4.2-1 provides a summary of streams and riparian areas in the alternatives.

**Table 4.2-1 Summary of Streams and Riparian Areas**

Stream Type	Type 1 (linear feet)	Type 2 (linear feet)	Type 3 (linear feet)	Type 4 (linear feet)	Type 5* (linear feet)	Total	Riparian Buffer Area (Acres)
Alternative 1	6,679	0	4,274	5,702	20,936	37,591	192
Alternative 2	8,534	0	8,238	17,675	54,510	88,957	431
Alternative 3	10,034	0	14,251	23,231	69,975	117,491	705
Alternative 3 with Urban Reserve	10,034	0	18,799	28,127	87,289	144,249	845

\* Includes Unclassified

## Wetlands

Wetlands occur throughout the City, its existing UGA, and the Planning Area for UGA Expansion. The City of La Center recognizes wetlands as important natural resources that can provide significant environmental functions including flood control, summer stream flow maintenance, ground water recharge, and significant fish and wildlife habitat. Many wetland areas also provide passive recreation opportunities for viewing wildlife. Wetlands are classified into four categories based on functions and values and the presence of threatened or endangered (T&E) animal and plant species as outlined in 14.20.030(F)(6) of the LCMC. Wetlands are protected by buffers based on wetland

category as outlined in Table 14.20.035(B) of the LCMC. All wetlands within the City, existing UGA and Planning Area are within the East Fork of the Lewis River watershed, except the wetlands associated with Allen Canyon Creek in the southwest corner of Alternative 3. These wetlands are in the Allen Canyon Creek watershed. Wetland categories and buffers are shown in Appendix 2, Figure 2. A description of the existing wetland conditions in each of the three alternatives follows below. Wetland and buffer area calculations are summarized in Table 4.2-2.

**Figure 4.2-2 Summary of Wetlands and Buffer Areas  
(all in acres)**

Wetland Category	1	2	3	4	Total	Buffers
Alternative 1	8	4	0	0	12	46
Alternative 2	49	17	70	0	136	234
Alternative 3	221	26	81	0	328	478
Alternative 3 with Urban Reserve	239	40	116	0	395	627

***Alternative 1 – No Action***

Wetlands within the City and its existing UGA were not surveyed for this study. However, wetland categories and acreages have been calculated based on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service NWI maps and Clark County GIS mapping. According to these maps, there is one Category 1 wetland totaling eight acres within the existing UGA. In addition, there are four Category 2 wetlands that total approximately four acres. These wetlands are segments of wetlands that extend beyond the existing UGA. The total buffer area for all wetlands within the existing UGA is approximately 46 acres. No Category 3 or 4 wetlands were identified on either the NWI maps or Clark County GIS. These types of wetlands are known to occur within the existing UGA, based on wetland delineations that have been conducted for specific developments

***Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative***

Within the Alternative 2 expansion area, there are three Category 1 wetlands totaling approximately 41 acres. Category 1 wetlands are protected by a base buffer width of 300 feet. These wetlands are primarily located in the southwest corner of this area. Eight Category 2 wetlands comprising approximately 13 acres, and 23 Category 3 wetlands comprising approximately 70 acres, were identified within area of this alternative outside the existing UGA. Category 2 wetlands are protected by a 200-foot base buffer width, and Category 3 by a 100-foot base buffer. The total buffer area within Alternative 2 is approximately 188 acres. Wetlands and buffers combined account for approximately 312 acres of the expansion area under Alternative 2

***Alternative 3 – City of La Center Preferred Alternative***

Four Category 1 wetlands were identified within the area unique to Alternative 3, totaling approximately 172 acres. The majority of the Category 1 wetlands in this area include the La Center Bottoms. In addition, portions of the other wetlands in this alternative are an extension of the Category 1 wetlands identified in Alternative 2. Three Category 2



wetlands (9 acres) and four Category 3 wetlands (11 acres) are also located within this Alternative. The total buffer area associated with these 11 wetlands is 244 acres. Wetlands and associated buffers combined account for approximately 964 acres under Alternative 3.

Additional wetlands within the Urban Reserve area are shown in Appendix 2, Figure 2. Within this area, there are seven Category 1 wetlands totaling 18 acres, six Category 2 wetlands (14 acres) and 11 Category 3 wetlands (35 acres). The total buffer area for all of the wetlands in the designated Urban Reserve is 149 acres.

### **Floodplains**

The Planning Area for UGA expansion borders the East Fork of the Lewis River on the northwest side of the boundary. This side of the river has steeper slopes and is not defined as a floodplain due to a bend in the river within this section of the stream. The opposite side of the river is within the defined flood plain and is composed of a series of high quality wetlands. However, this area is not considered as part of the proposed expansion under Alternative 2 and would be within the UGA for Alternative 3.

### **Impacts of the Alternatives**

Surface water impacts would continue under all three alternatives due to the construction of roads, utility lines, land clearing, residential development, and increased impervious surface. Potential impacts caused by these activities include increased water temperatures, sedimentation, nitrification, loss of fish and wildlife habitat, and flooding.

#### ***Alternative 1 – No Action***

Under the current trends, it is assumed that land use activities will remain similar to those currently being implemented under existing zoning and critical area regulations. The proposed expansion area would continue to be regulated by Clark County. Clark County has a Wetland Protection Ordinance and Habitat Conservation Ordinance that would continue to be the regulatory documents used for potential development projects. Impacts to wetlands and streams would continue to occur from development, but most likely at a lower rate due to these areas being developed in less populated rural zoning versus more highly populated urban zoning. It is also anticipated that limited agricultural and residential uses will result in greater amounts of cleared areas and impervious surfaces within the area. Indirect impacts include the potential for failing private septic systems that contribute to degraded water quality when these systems release untreated effluent into nearby streams and wetlands.

#### ***Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative***

Increased urbanization of the area proposed for the expanded UGA has the potential to impact surface water resources. Commercial and residential development of new available land is likely to occur as a result of the UGA. These types of development often result in direct impacts to resources through the filling of wetlands, increased pollution in runoff, removal of vegetation, and introduction of non-native invasive species. Indirect impacts that may occur include changes in microclimate, ambient light levels, hydrologic regimes and ecosystem function. Impacts may occur from denser population and more strain on wetlands and streams due to added pollutants from waste management systems and increased impervious surfaces.

Impacts to streams and wetlands from access roads and other developments will be addressed when property owners apply for development permits. Streams and wetlands are required to be buffered, and all impacts require approved mitigation under critical area regulations. Because the streams in the area are confined to the drainage ravines that will remain natural after full build-out, significant direct impacts to streams are not expected. Potential direct impacts to streams and wetlands would most likely result from the extension of access roads into the UGA where they will transect tributaries and associated wetlands. Some wetland areas may be filled for public purposes, as long as the developer can demonstrate effective mitigation.

To the degree that wetlands could be protected by the development of an effective and coordinated storm water management system, such protection is more likely under Alternatives 2 and 3 than under the No Action Alternative.

***Alternative 3 – City of La Center Preferred Alternative***

Impacts under this alternative will be similar to those described above for Alternative 2. The larger area considered under this alternative includes more stream, riparian zone and wetlands areas. Thus, there is potential for increased impacts to these sensitive areas. Most of the streams and riparian areas that occur in this alternative are an extension of the systems that flow through the area included in Alternative 2. All proposed development projects will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine potential impacts and methods to avoid or mitigate those impacts. In addition, stream channels and wetlands are required to be buffered. As with Alternative 2, if the mitigation measures outlined below are implemented within this alternative, impacts to these sensitive areas can be minimized. To the degree that wetlands could be protected by the development of an effective and coordinated storm water management system, such protection is more likely under Alternatives 2 and 3 than under the No Action Alternative.

**Mitigation Measures**

Many mitigation measures are required under federal, state and local regulations. For example, any work within stream channels would require a Hydraulic Project Approval permit from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Endangered Species Act consultation to address potential impacts to listed fish species.

Both Clark County and the City of La Center have developed critical lands ordinances to avoid, minimize, or compensate for impacts to streams and wetlands and their associated buffers. Buffer widths based on stream and wetland quality have been implemented by both entities to protect these critical lands. Projects are reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine potential impacts. When projects propose impacts to wetlands or streams and/or their associated buffers, compensatory mitigation is required to replace or increase lost functions and acreage. Wetland mitigation ratios and buffer reductions allowed under the LCMC are presented in Tables 14.20.035(C) and 14.20.035(D), respectively. Additional regulatory permits may be required for impacts to wetlands and streams through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, or the Washington Department of Ecology.

Adoption of Best Management Practices during construction activities will also protect streams and wetlands from impacts caused by erosion, and subsequent sedimentation

December 19, 2006

of surface waters and wetlands. These include measures such as use of silt fences around land clearing activities, mulching and/or seeding exposed soils as soon as possible and constructing and maintaining approved storm water management facilities.

## 4.3 PLANTS AND ANIMALS

### Existing Conditions

The majority of the lands in the Planning Area for UGA Expansion are rural tracts that are used for agricultural purposes, primarily pasture or hay. This area is located in the Puget Trough physiographic and geologic province of Washington (Franklin & Dyrness 1988). Johnson and O'Neil (2001) have identified the wildlife habitat type within the existing La Center UGA and proposed UGA expansion as mixture of agriculture, pasture, urban and mixed environs interspersed with westside lowland conifer-hardwood forest.

LCMC 14.20.030(B) requires that sensitive fish and wildlife habitat be preserved or impacts mitigated. The habitats that are to be protected include riparian buffers, threatened and endangered (T&E) species, local habitat area, and priority habitat and species (PHS). The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regulate impacts to T&E species at the federal level. In addition, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has established Priority Habitats and Species that are regulated at the state level. The proposed UGA encompasses areas that have known populations of T&E and PHS species and habitats. These areas are shown in Figure 4.3-1.

Information obtained from a query of the WDFW statewide database results in PHS maps and data are used to complete this assessment. A query was also made to the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) database to obtain information about sensitive plants that may occur or have habitat within the Planning Area. This section describes species and habitats that occur within the potential UGA expansion area, and the potential impacts that may occur to them.

### **Vegetation**

The area is characterized by gently sloping hills and terraces developed for agriculture with remnant lowland mixed conifer/deciduous forest interspersed throughout. Wetland ecosystems are dispersed throughout the area and are typified by obligate wetland plant species. Streams dissect the hills throughout the area and contain riparian vegetation typical of western Washington lowlands. Residences are dispersed throughout the area and include ornamental and exotic plant species. In addition, many of the agricultural lands are overgrown by exotic species, especially Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor*) and annual grasses.

### **Threatened/Endangered and Priority Anadromous and Resident Fish**

NOAA has identified T&E listed species within the East Fork of the Lewis River watershed. The East Fork of the Lewis River and McCormick Creek both contain fish species with some kind of formal listing. Table 4.3-1 lists those species and their current federal and state status.

All of the listed fish species are known to occur within the East Fork of the Lewis River. Coho Salmon are known to occur in McCormick Creek.

Figure 4.3-1  
La Center Area Priority Habitats

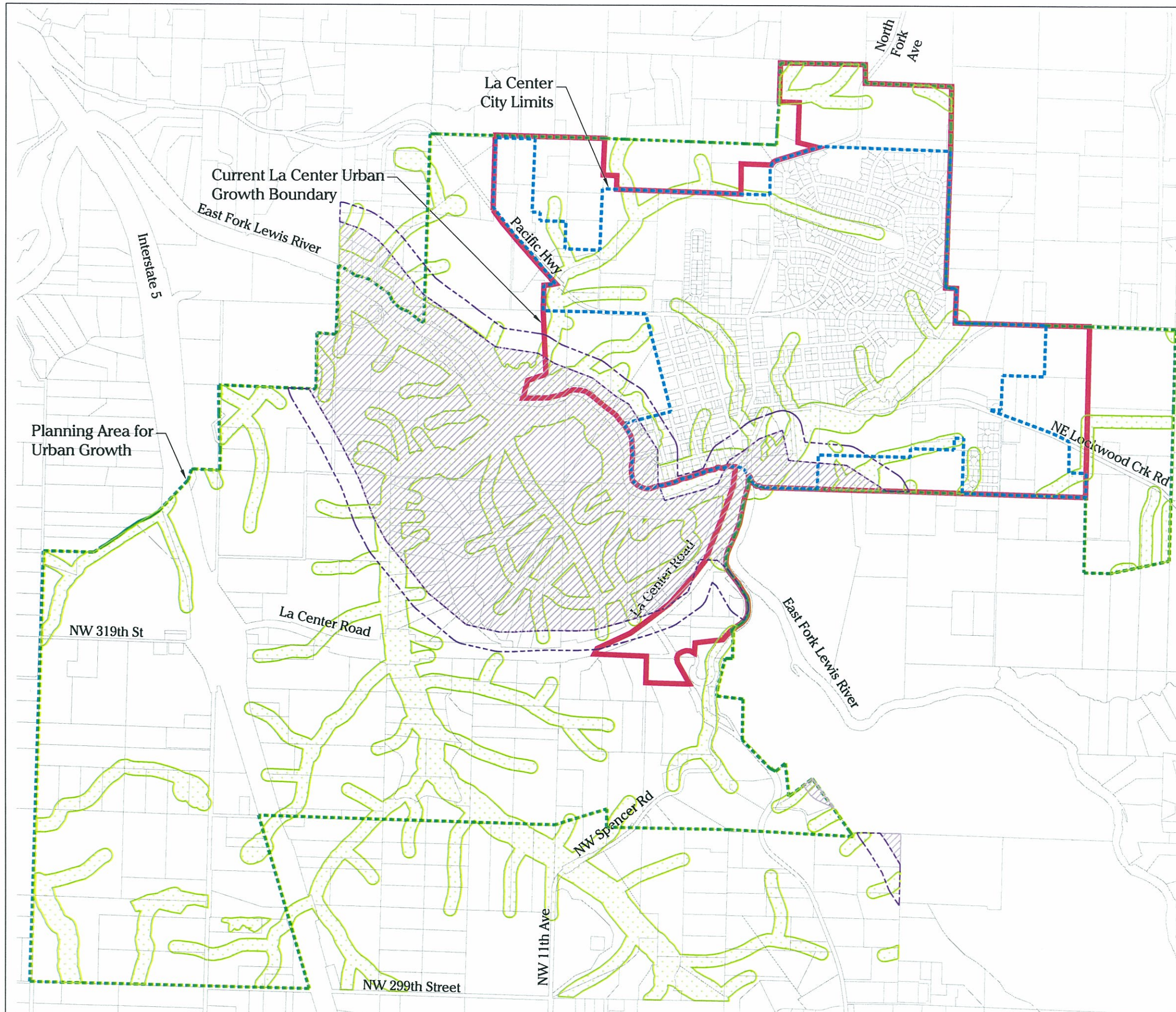
City of La Center  
Comprehensive Plan  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement



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SCALE IN FEET

Legend

- City Limits ---
- Current Urban Growth Boundary ---
- Planning Area for Urban Growth ---
- Priority Habitat Areas ---
- Sensitive Species Areas ---
- Sensitive Species Buffer ---



**Table 4.3-1 Listed Fish Species Potentially Effected By UGA Expansion**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Listing	State Listing
Fall Chinook Salmon	<i>Onchorynchus tshawytscha</i>	Threatened	Candidate-Priority Anadromous
Coho Salmon	<i>Onchorynchus kisutch</i>	Candidate	None- Priority Anadromous
Fall Chum Salmon	<i>Onchorynchus keta</i>	Threatened	Candidate-Priority Anadromous
Summer & Winter Steelhead	<i>Onchorynchus mykiss</i>	Threatened	Candidate-Priority Anadromous
Cutthroat Trout	<i>Onchorynchus clarki clarki</i>	None	Priority Resident
Reticulated Sculpin	<i>Cottus perplexus</i>	None	State Monitor

#### Threatened/Endangered and Priority Habitat and Species

Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) are known to be nesting and breeding in the vicinity of the proposed UGA. According to WDFW, four nesting sites have been identified within the existing UGA and the Planning Area for UGA Expansion. These nesting sites are located on the floodplain terraces adjacent to the East Fork of the Lewis River and adjacent to Brezee Creek. Two of the nest sites are within the existing UGA, and two are located within the area described under Alternative 3.

Priority Oregon white oak (*Quercus garryana*) habitat is mapped within the proposed UGA. The majority of this habitat has been mapped by WDFW along the southern edge of the existing UGA in the riparian areas adjacent to the East Fork of the Lewis River (see Appendix 2, Figure 3). The only other areas of this priority habitat mapped by WDFW occur in the southwest corner of the area for Alternative 3 (Appendix 2, Figure 3). The actual extent of this habitat type is unknown because only a small percentage of the area has been surveyed for this study. Oregon white oak savannah provides excellent habitat to cavity nesters, and is a mast producer that provides a food source to a diversity of wildlife. Priority oak habitat is mapped on 34 acres within the City and existing UGA, and nine acres in the southwest corner of the area for Alternative 3.

The La Center Bottoms area located south of the existing UGA has been mapped by WDFW as species habitat (Appendix 2, Figure 3) due to the large concentrations of waterfowl that use this area. The area is associated with the East Fork of the Lewis River and large wetland complex that occurs in this bottomland. This area is known to support large wintering concentrations of Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*), sandhill cranes (*Grus canadensis*), tundra swans (*Cygnus columbians*), white-fronted geese

(*Anser albifrons*), cavity nesting and dabbling ducks. This mapped species habitat encompasses 211 acres, excluding riparian zone habitat, within Alternative 3.

Wetland and riparian priority habitats associated with the streams that occur in the study area are mapped within the proposed expansion under Alternatives 2 and 3 (see discussion of wetlands in Section 4.2 of this EIS, and Figure 1 in Appendix 2). Riparian habitats are those areas associated with aquatic systems with flowing water that contain elements of both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems which mutually influence each other. Within these systems the vegetation, water tables, soils, microclimate, and wildlife species of terrestrial ecosystems are influenced by perennial and intermittent water. These habitat areas are important to a diversity of wildlife, fish and plant species. Some species are completely dependent upon these aquatic or semi-aquatic systems while others depend upon them for crucial lifecycle stages. Riparian habitats are mapped by WDFW for the East Fork of the Lewis River and Brezee Creek within all three alternatives. In addition, the riparian zone for McCormick Creek occurs within the area of Alternatives 2 and 3, and a small section of the riparian zone for Allen Canyon Creek occurs in the southwest corner of Alternative 3.

Tall bugbane (*Cimicifuga elata*) is the only sensitive plant species that has been identified by WDNR to occur in the vicinity of the northwest corner of the expansion area in Alternatives 2 and 3. This plant is listed as a state sensitive species and a species of concern by the USFWS. Based on the plants habitat requirements, it is highly unlikely that this plant occurs within the potential UGA expansion area.

## **Impacts of the Alternatives**

### **Alternative 1 – No Action**

Under the No Action Alternative, the area surrounding La Center and its existing UGA would continue to be regulated by Clark County. The County's Habitat Conservation Ordinance would be the regulatory document used for potential development projects. Impacts to fish and wildlife conservation habitat areas would continue to occur from development, but most likely at a lower rate due to these areas being developed in less populated rural zoning rather than more dense urban zoning. Impacts occurring presently in the area include disturbance of vegetation by construction activities and spread of non-native invasive species. This spread would be much slower than if the UGA expansion is implemented. Other impacts such as livestock wastewater run-off, uncontrolled livestock use within streams and riparian zones, potential pollution from failing septic systems, and uncontrolled runoff from existing impervious surfaces will continue to affect fish and wildlife and their habitats. Increased traffic and levels of activity will also affect air and water quality and habitat values.

### **Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative**

This analysis of impacts on plants and animals does not involve the review of a specific project or potential impacts. It serves to assess the potential impacts from projects that are likely to occur as a result of implementing this alternative.

Specific impacts to listed fish and wildlife species are likely to occur, but the extent will depend significantly on the details and location of the proposed activity. Residential, commercial and industrial development projects are all likely to occur within the

expanded UGA under Alternative 2, with resulting loss of vegetation. In addition to these developments, infrastructure such as road building, sewer system expansion and utility line construction could potentially impact sensitive species. In general, as an area becomes urbanized, it changes the character and functionality of the land, air, and water. These changes greatly impact local habitats. As these habitats are impacted, a corresponding shift in wildlife populations occurs. Frequently, urban types of wildlife like skunks (*Mephitis mephitis*) and raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) become prevalent along with non-native species like eastern gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*). Rivers, streams and ponds may become overrun with introduced species such as northern pike (*Esox lucius*), bass (*Micropterus spp.*) and crappie (*Pomoxis spp.*). Native plant communities give way to mostly Eurasian species like Himalayan blackberry and English ivy (*Hedera helix*). These are potential impacts that will occur as a result of urbanization within the new UGA boundary.

Other urbanization factors may cause impacts to fish and wildlife, as the habitats they depend on decrease or become less desirable. Increased noise from traffic and construction will affect species that are more sensitive, such as bald eagles. Increased impervious surfaces may cause stormwater to impact streams by allowing more silt into waterways, possibly affecting turbidity and temperature levels in the East Fork of the Lewis River and its tributaries. A reduction in vegetation will occur within the new UGA boundary, thereby decreasing shade, water retention and cover. Fragmentation of habitat will occur as new roads, businesses and residences replace open spaces. Air pollution will increase with time as more automobiles are being used by a larger population of people. New industrial development is also likely to increase air, noise and water pollution within the proposed expansion area.

### **Alternative 3 – City of La Center Preferred Alternative**

Impacts to listed fish and wildlife and priority habitats will be similar to Alternative 2 as described above. However, there is potential for increased impacts due to the expanded area of this alternative. The primary area of concern is the La Center Bottoms area, which is located in the central portion of this alternative. The bottoms area supports sensitive species and habitats listed by USFWS and WDFW. The proposed designation of this area as a Parks and Open Space area will protect it from inappropriate development. This area is currently controlled by federal, state and local jurisdictional regulations. Consultation with these agencies will be required for any development activities that could impact these resources. The mitigation measures outlined below will be useful in avoiding or minimizing impacts to these sensitive areas.

### **Mitigation Measures**

Both Clark County and the City of La Center have developed critical lands ordinances to protect fish and wildlife conservation areas and their associated buffers. Riparian buffer widths based on stream quality have been implemented to protect these critical lands. The La Center riparian buffers (LCMC Table 14.20.035(A)) are based on Best Available Science provided as recommendations by WDNR. Table 14.20.035(E) lists recommended buffers for local habitat, priority habitat, and species subject to the Endangered Species Act, respectively. Projects are reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine potential impacts. Projects that have the potential to impact federally listed T&E species will need to consult with either NOAA or USFWS. Projects that may impact state listed priority species and habitats will need to consult with WDFW. Following the



recommended sequencing of avoidance, minimization, and compensation mitigation will limit impacts to fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas. Compensatory mitigation to offset impacts may in some cases increase fish and wildlife habitat values through the restoration of highly degraded habitat areas.

Areas disturbed during construction activities must be revegetated promptly.

Other potential mitigation measures include:

- Identify, demarcate and avoid all priority habitats unless properly mitigated.
- Preserve and properly buffer forested wetlands.
- Survey all areas proposed for development for rare plants (pedestrian survey in the spring) prior to development.
- Establish corridors of native vegetation between high priority habitats.
- Install native shrub and tree plantings within wetland buffers in the project area that are unvegetated when site development starts.
- Remove all non-native shrubs/woody vines (Scotch broom, English ivy, evergreen blackberry, Himalayan blackberry) from wetland buffer.

## **4.4 LAND USE, COMMUNITY GROWTH AND ECONOMY**

### **Introduction**

The Proposed Action is to expand the City of La Center's UGA, and make accompanying changes in its Comprehensive Plan, Development Regulations, and Capital Facilities Plan. The purpose of this proposal is to create opportunities for new employment in the community, and help to improve the City's economic stability by diversifying the economic base. This section addresses the effects of the alternatives on land use, and the related impacts on community growth and the economy. These issues are closely intertwined, both in the formulation of the City's objective and in the impacts of the proposal.

### **Policy Framework**

Washington enacted the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A) in 1990. It requires state and local governments to manage growth by identifying and protecting critical areas and natural resource lands, designating urban growth areas, preparing comprehensive plans and implementing them through capital investments and development regulations. Both Clark County and the City of La Center have developed land use policies and programs to comply with the Growth Management Act (GMA).

Clark County adopted its first Comprehensive Plan on May 10, 1979. It has been updated and amended several times to address emerging state requirements and changing land use policies. The Plan was revised most recently in September 2004. The Plan addresses Clark County's 20-year Community Framework Plan that includes the Community Vision, and establishes Countywide Planning Policies to achieve that Vision. The Plan describes demographics and economics of the County, describes existing conditions and establishes specific goals, objectives and policies for: Land Use; Housing; Rural and Natural Resources; Environment; Transportation; Capital Facilities and Utilities; Parks, Recreation and Open Space; Historic, Archaeological and Cultural Preservation; Economic Development; Community Design; and Annexation. It also includes procedural guidelines.

As a part of its land use planning, Clark County has adopted County-wide Planning Policies to put its community vision into operation. These County-wide policies are identified within each of the planning elements in the Comprehensive Plan.

La Center adopted a Comprehensive Growth Management Plan for the City in 1994. The Plan was amended on December 22, 2004. The Plan includes goals, objectives and strategies for Land Use; Transportation; Housing; Capital Facilities and Utilities; Economic Development; Parks, Recreation and Open Space; Urban Growth and Annexation; Procedural Guidelines; and Environmental. The Plan and subsequent amendments were based on extensive public participation. La Center has also enacted Development Regulations that control development within the City and its UGA. Specific policies are identified for each element in the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Existing Conditions**

#### **Land Use and Development Patterns**

La Center began as a supply and communication center in the mid-1800's. The Lewis River was an important transportation corridor linking the outlying areas with the cities of

Vancouver and Portland. Early settlers came to the area on sternwheelers to settle the land and become business owners, farmers and loggers. La Center was near the upper limit of navigation of the river, and developed as an important center of commerce. With the development of the Old Pacific Highway, La Center continued in its role as part of a major transportation corridor.

Later transportation and development left La Center out of the mainstream of transportation and commerce. Many La Center residents enjoyed their seclusion for years. However, rapid growth of Clark County in the 1990's brought new pressures on the community in the form of increased school enrollment, increased traffic, and increasing home prices. Residential development has grown dramatically as La Center has been increasingly selected as home for many residents who commute to work in the major metropolitan areas. Residential development has increased mainly to the north and east of the downtown commercial center. In the 1990's, the City's economic base expanded with the siting of four card rooms in the City. The downtown area is a vibrant commercial center in the core of the city surrounding the card rooms. Growth of the City of La Center has been historically limited by geographic features such as the East Fork of the Lewis River.

Currently, La Center and its associated UGA include a mix of residential, commercial, rural, public, mixed uses, and undeveloped land, covering approximately 921 acres. Commercial activity is concentrated in and around the downtown core. Commercial services in La Center include retail and wholesale trades, professional businesses, restaurants, service outlets and repair facilities.

Current land use in the Planning Area for UGA Expansion is mostly rural and residential, with substantial areas of open land. There are some public uses, some areas of rural timbered land, and a limited amount of commercial and agricultural uses. The 2,033 acre area under consideration for UGA expansion is currently developed at levels below the rural density allowed under current zoning and regulations. Zoning in most of this area is divided between rural designations allowing one residence per five, 20 or 20 acres. The southeast quadrant of the I-5 interchanges is designated as Urban Industrial Reserve Overlay zone. The other three quadrants of the interchange have an Urban Reserve Overlay. Existing zoning of the City, the existing UGA and the Planning Area for UGA expansion is shown in Figure 4.4-1.

Community facilities in the area include the Post Office, a Fire Station, City Hall, three public schools, and a library.

The Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREDC) prepared a report to Clark County on the availability and needs for industrial lands in 2000 (Columbia River Economic Development Council, 2000). The report reviewed the available inventory of industrial lands, absorption and development trends, development constraints on the inventory and employment projections that impact future demand and absorption. It made recommendations on actions for the County's consideration to support continued industrial development and the economic vitality of the region.

The report noted that the inventory of designated prime industrial land is significantly deficient as compared to the inventory required to support projected industrial development and job creation needs over the next 20 years. It also noted that the prime

Figure 4.4-1  
 Current Zoning in La Center, UGA and  
 Planning Area for UGA Expansion

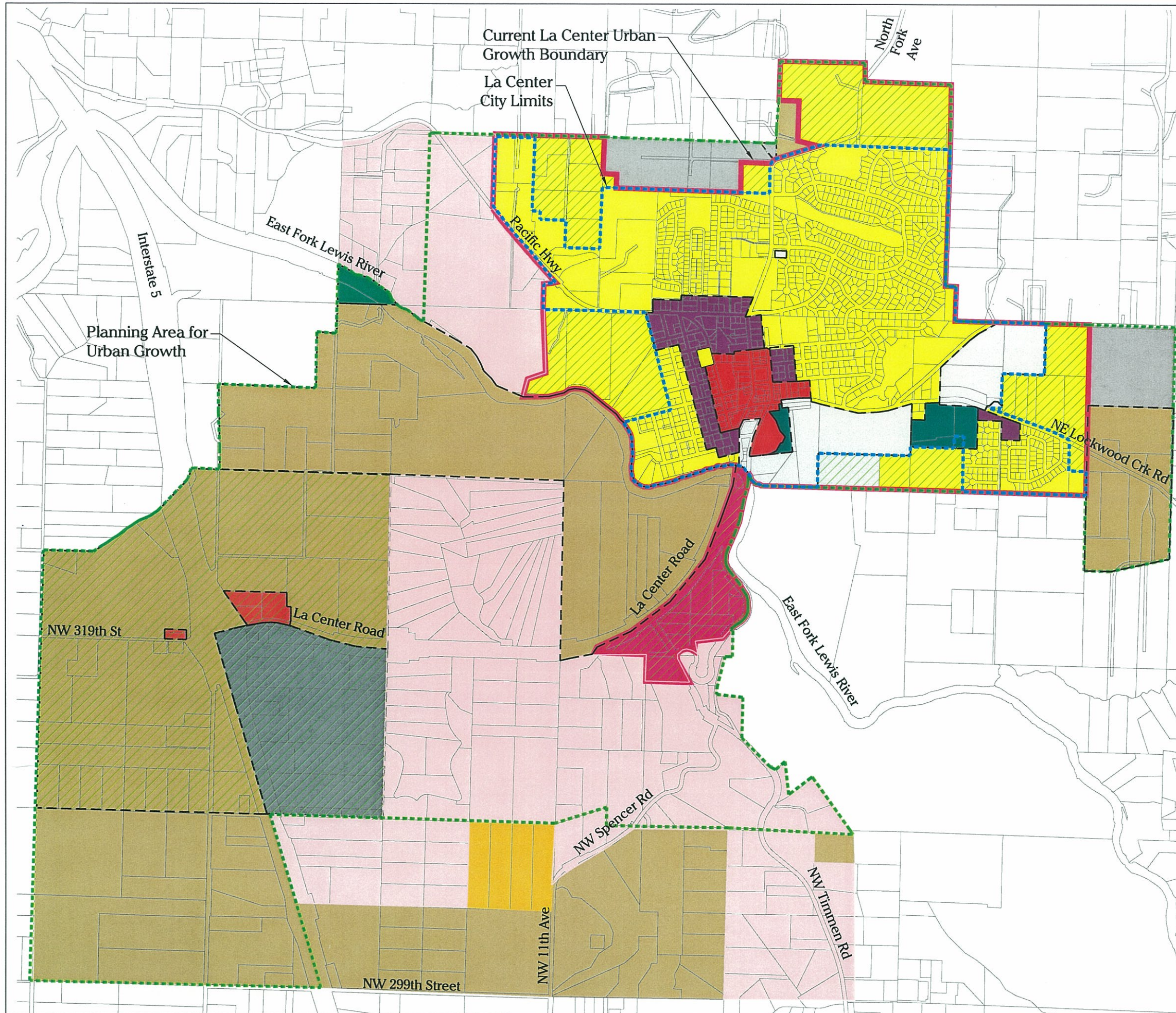
City of La Center  
 Comprehensive Plan  
 Draft Environmental Impact Statement



0 750 1500  
 SCALE IN FEET

**Legend**

- City Limits - - - - -
- Current Urban Growth Boundary —————
- Planning Area for Urban Growth - · - · -
- City Zoning:**
- Urban Residential - 4 dw/acre [Yellow box]
- Residential/Professional [Purple box]
- City Center (Commercial) [Red box]
- Public Facility [White box with border]
- Parks and Open Space [Dark Green box]
- County Zoning:**
- Rural -5 [Pink box]
- Rural-10 [Yellow box]
- Rural Comm. - inside Rur. Centers [Red box]
- Community Commercial [Magenta box]
- Parks/Wildlife Refuge [Dark Green box]
- Urban Reserve-10 [Grey box]
- Urban Reserve-20 [Dark Grey box]
- Agriculture-20 [Brown box]
- County Zoning Overlays:**
- Urban Holding [Hatched box]



industrial lands were not distributed uniformly in the region. They concluded that this disparity "will impact jurisdictions seeking to increase their tax base to support the provision of public services to their residents" (page 3).

Although there are a number of properties identified as secondary or tertiary properties, many of them have significant barriers to development. These include constraints such as infrastructure development and wetlands. The report also observed that industrially designated properties continue to be converted to non-industrial uses, thereby reducing the inventory and the ability to locate industrial uses.

The CREDC made several recommendations to the County based upon their findings. Their recommendations include the following (page 4):

1. The County must designate additional prime industrial lands within the County sufficient to accommodate projected industrial demand. The CREDC reiterates its 1994 recommendation that a minimum of 3,000 acres of prime industrial lands be designated.
2. When designating additional prime lands, the County should take into consideration the spatial distribution of designated lands to allow for the creation of a sufficient tax base to support public services within all jurisdictions within the County.

Clark County did add industrial lands to UGA's in the 2004 amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, but the acreage was much less than suggested by the CREDC.

La Center does not currently have any industrial lands within its UGA. An area in the southeast quadrant of the I-5 interchange has been designated as an urban industrial reserve. That area is within the area proposed for expansion of the City's UGA.

The Land Use Element of Clark County's Comprehensive Plan (Clark County, 2004) provides Goals and Policies for land use in urban growth areas, including:

County-wide Planning Policy 1.1.1 – Clark County, municipalities and special districts will work together to establish urban growth areas within which urban growth shall be encouraged and outside of which growth shall occur only if it is not urban in nature.... An urban growth area may include territory located outside of a city if such territory is characterized by urban growth or is adjacent to areas characterized by urban growth.

County-wide Planning Policy 1.1.2 – Urban growth shall be located primarily in areas already characterized by urban growth that have existing public facility and service capacities to adequately serve such development, and second in areas already characterized by urban growth that will be served by a combination of both existing public services and services that are provided by either public or private sources.

#### 20-Year Planning Policies

Goal: Adopt Urban Growth Area (UGA) boundaries to accommodate residential and employment increases projected within the boundaries over the next 20-years.

*Policy 1.2.1* – The UGA's shall be consistent with the following goals:

- reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development;
- provide for the efficient provision of public services;
- protect natural resource, environmentally sensitive and rural areas;
- encourage a clear distinction between urban and rural areas;
- support variety, choice and balance in living and working environments;
- promote a variety of residential densities; and
- include sufficient vacant and buildable land.

*Policy 1.2.2 (excerpt)* – The UGA's shall be consistent with the following criteria:

- Each UGA shall provide sufficient urban land use to accommodate future population/employment projections through the designated planning period.
- Lands included within UGA's shall either be already characterized by urban growth or adjacent to such lands.
- Lands within a UGA shall not contain areas designated for long-term agriculture or forestry use.
- UGA's shall provide a balance of industrial, commercial and residential land needs.
- Each UGA shall have the anticipated financial capability to provide infrastructure/services needed in the area over the planning period under adopted concurrency standards.

La Center's Comprehensive Plan also establishes Policies for Land Use. These include the following:

Land Use Policy 1.3.1 – Commercial development in La Center shall be encouraged as it provides some or all of the following benefits:

- a) Provides employment or economic opportunities for the people of La Center and surrounding areas.
- b) Provides goods or service for the people of La Center and surrounding areas.
- c) Provides tax revenue for the City of La Center.

Land Use Policy 1.4 – Development at the Interstate – 5 Junction

Policy 1.4.1 – The La Center Junction, the intersection of the La Center Road and Interstate – 5 (I-5), should become an employment area for the benefit of the citizens of La Center and north Clark County. **Annexation of the La Center junction is the primary land use objective of this policy.** (emphasis added)

Policy 1.4.3 (excerpt) – The La Center Junction Sub-Area Plan should include the following objectives:

- a) The plan should encompass lands on both sides of I-5 south to the Ridgefield Junction and north to the Lewis River.
- b) Employment activity at the La Center Junction should be dedicated to Business Park and/or Light Industrial use with limited commercial activity. Heavy industrial uses are disfavored.
- c) Preference should be given to developments which provide jobs, goods or services primarily for the local area.

d) Transportation, utility, or other improvements required for initial development at the junction should be paid for by public and private funds.

***Cowlitz Tribe Proposal***

One of the land use issues under consideration in the La Center area is a proposal by the Cowlitz Tribe. In conjunction with the Mohegan Tribe, the Cowlitz Tribe is proposing to develop a casino and resort west of I-5 near the La Center Junction. The location identified for this facility is within the area proposed by La Center for inclusion in its UGA. The Cowlitz Tribe has applied to have the casino/resort site designated as its initial reservation. In that event, the land may or may not become part of the UGA. Potential annexation to the City would be at the discretion of the Tribe. The outcome of the Cowlitz Tribe's proposal is not within the City's jurisdiction or ability to influence. However, if the casino/resort proposal is actually developed, or if another commercial opportunity is proposed by the Tribe on this property, the City or others could provide urban services to support those facilities. Implications of these alternatives are discussed in Section 4.7 – Public Services and Utilities.

The Tribe has submitted a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to the City regarding extension of the City's sewer service to the Tribal Trust Land and other matters of mutual interest. The City will continue to consider all options regarding these issues.

***Prior Industrial Uses***

Concerns were identified in the Scoping Process about prior industrial uses on two properties within the area proposed for expansion of the UGA. It was suggested that contamination from these past uses could present impediments to future developments of these properties.

The Circle C Landfill is located east of Paradise Park Road and south of La Center Road. The site began operation around 1977, placing wood waste in a ravine on the property. The County issued the initial special use permit in 1979. It allowed for the disposal of dirt, rock, and residual wood waste. Later permits evolved to include non-putrescible industrial waste and other materials. Contents include such things as tires, cement, asbestos-containing materials, construction and demolition waste, and wood waste. The landfill eventually grew to occupy approximately 8 acres of the 30-acre site.

Clark County sought to construct a sanitary landfill in the late 1980's, as recommended in the County's Solid Waste Management Plan. The Public Works Department selected the Circle C site as the preferred alternative. An EIS published by the County in 1987 reviewed the suitability of this property to be expanded and developed as a County landfill (Clark County Department of Public Works, 1987). Although the EIS did not identify any problems that would prohibit development of the site for a County landfill, the County did not proceed with this plan.

In 1989, the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) promulgated new rules for the design and operation of solid waste storage, handling and disposal facilities (Chapter 173-304 WAC, superseded in 2003 by WAC 173-350). By 1989, the owners of the Circle C Landfill decided to close the facility. The closure included an engineered cover, and requirements to monitor and maintain the facility in post-closure status for 20 years.

As a former landfill, the site was automatically included in the state's Hazardous Sites List. In September 1990, the site was given a ranking of 1 on the list, which uses a relative priority ranking from one (high priority relative to other sites statewide) to 5 (low relative priority). Testing showed that the site had metals and other compounds above state cleanup standards in the soil, surface water and groundwater.

Post-closure monitoring has not shown any violations of cleanup standards, and Ecology has recently removed the site from the Hazardous Sites List.

The Koch Tractor site is located west of I-5, on 309<sup>th</sup> Street. There have been several complaints about offsite contamination from this facility, presumably as a result of operations such as pressure washing of machine parts, and use and storage of oil and other industrial chemicals. Some of the site investigations and testing by Ecology identified the presence of toxic chemicals in a pond on the property, and the waterway from the oil/water separator to the pond. However, the testing did not support allegations that Koch Tractor was violating state water quality standards. Later agency visits did, however, identify several violations of the state's dangerous waste regulations and water quality standards. Ecology's website indicates that the site has been ranked 3 on the Hazardous Sites list (see above explanation discussion of Circle C site for an explanation of the ranking system), and is awaiting remedial action.

### **Community Growth**

Community Growth includes consideration of the population and housing conditions in La Center and the surrounding area. The designated land use patterns will strongly influence the economic situation of the area, which will in turn influence the population and resulting housing needs in the community.

Population and other demographic information is derived from information presented in the Final EIS prepared by Clark County for the Comprehensive Growth Plans in 2003 (Clark County, 2003), the Washington Office of Financial Management (2005), and the 2000 Census (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000). Clark County's population increased by 188 percent from 1970 to 2002. During the same time period, La Center increased from 300 to 2,017 residents – a change of 572 percent. La Center's growth rate during this period was only exceeded in Clark County cities by the City of Battle Ground. As of April 2005, the City's population is estimated to be 2,095. This is approximately 0.56 percent of the total County population. A small amount of additional population is located outside the City's UGA. No estimates are available for population in the area proposed for the expansion of the UGA. Much of this land is currently undeveloped. The remainder is populated at rural densities consistent with zoning of one residence per five acres or greater.

La Center's residents included 49.3 percent males and 50.7 percent females in 2000, a male:female ratio only slightly below the County and statewide ratios. The age distribution of the population in La Center shows a substantially higher proportion of the population age 14 and under than for the County or the state as a whole, and a substantially lower proportion of residents over 60 years of age. This is a significant statistic, and is characteristic of a relatively new and rapidly growing city. The City is also less diverse racially than the County or statewide average, with much smaller percentages of racial minorities represented. Selected demographic characteristics for Washington State, Clark County and La Center from the U.S. Census Bureau are



summarized in Table 4.4-1. These numbers are from 2000, and may not exactly reflect current conditions.

**Table 4.4-1 Clark County and La Center Demographic Characteristics in 2000**

Subject	Washington		Clark County		La Center	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Population	5,894,121	100.0	345,238	100.0	1,654	100.0
Male	2,934,300	49.8	171,330	49.6	815	49.3
Female	2,959,821	50.2	173,908	50.4	839	50.7
Under 20 years of age	1,683,019	28.6	108,037	31.3	609	36.8
20 to 59 years of age	3,337,879	56.6	192,779	55.8	928	56.1
60 years and over	873,223	14.8	44,422	12.9	117	7.1
Median Age (years)	35.3	n/a	34.2	n/a	31.3	n/a
White	4,821,823	81.8	306,648	88.8	1,528	92.4
All Other	1,072,298	18.2	38,590	11.2	126	7.6
In Labor Force (16 years and older)	3,027,734	66.5	174,500	68.0	844	73.4
Not in Labor Force (16 and older)	1,525,857	33.5	81,955	32.0	306	26.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000.

La Center's Comprehensive Plan establishes Policies for Residential Development. These include the following:

Land Use Policy 1.2.1 – La Center shall provide an adequate supply of land zoned for residential purposes in order to meet the residential needs of the City. Developments shall emphasize single-family and residential uses, but also allow for, and encourage multi-family development in certain areas.

Land Use Policy 1.2.2 – Residential development shall be encouraged to use opportunities provided through infill development and redevelopment of existing housing stock, in addition to new construction on larger undeveloped lands.

Land Use Policy 1.2.7 – Overall, the City shall attain a population density of four (4) dwelling units per net acre for new residential development.

Strong population growth in Clark County has spurred housing growth both within the UGA's and in the rural areas. The 2000 Census indicates that Clark County had

127,208 households in 2000, of which 71.5 percent were family households. The average household size was 2.69 persons. Seventy-one percent of the households were owner-occupied housing units, and 29 percent were renter-occupied units. Of the 134,030 total housing units, there was a vacancy rate of 2.0 percent for homeowner vacancy and 6.6 percent for rental vacancy.

For La Center, the 2000 Census reported 552 households, 84.4 percent of which were family households. The family households held a higher number of persons, with the average being 3.0. The 470 owner-occupied housing units comprised 85 percent of the occupied housing units. An additional 33 housing units were unoccupied, for a vacancy rate of 4.5 percent for homeowners, and a vacancy rate of 3.5 percent for rentals (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000). These figures indicate that La Center has a higher proportion of owner-occupied housing units than Clark County as a whole. It also has a higher vacancy rate for owner-occupied housing units, and a substantially lower vacancy rate for rental housing units. Housing statistics from the 2000 Census are summarized in Table 4.4-2.

**Table 4.4-2 Housing Statistics for Clark County and La Center**

	Clark County		La Center	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	134,030	100.0	585	100.0
Total Households	127,208	100.0	552	100.0
Family Households	90,958	71.5	466	84.4
Nonfamily Households	36,250	28.5	86	15.6
Average Household Size	2.69		3.0	
Owner-Occupied	85,550	67.3	470	85.1
Homeowner Vacancy Rate		2.0		4.5
Renter-Occupied	41,658	32.7	82	14.9
Rental Vacancy Rate		6.6		3.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000.

The Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM) has developed updated estimates of housing units in counties and cities since the 2000 Census. As of April 1, 2005, OFM estimated that there were a total of 156,219 housing units in Clark County and 736 housing units in La Center. La Center's housing stock consisted of 620 one-unit structures, 53 structures of two or more units, and 63 housing units described as manufactured homes, trailer homes or "special" housing units such as RV's, travel trailers and boats (Washington State Office of Financial Management 2005).

Detailed information is not available for the housing situation in the proposed UGA expansion Area. Most of the housing stock in this area consists of single-family homes. Many of these housing units are older than the average housing units within La Center, but several new homes have been constructed on five-acre lots.

## **Economy**

La Center has included an Economic Policy Element in its Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the Economic Goal is: "La Center shall provide for, encourage, and actively market to industrial and commercial businesses of various sizes in order to attract them to locate within La Center's Urban Growth Area." Included in this Element are the following Policies for Economic Development.

Policy 5.1.1 – La Center shall provide for orderly long-term commercial and industrial growth and an adequate supply of land suitable for compatible commercial and industrial development.

Policy 5.1.2 – La Center shall encourage long-term growth of businesses of all sizes, recognizing that all are important factors in promoting job growth....

Policy 5.1.6 – La Center shall establish benchmarks to measure economic development that has taken place within the City's Urban Growth Boundary.

- b) The City Economic development planning should include an acknowledgment of the strengths and weaknesses of the local economy, including such factors as land use, transportation, utilities, education, work force, housing, natural and cultural resources, competition and cooperation.
- c) The City shall consider developing a comprehensive economic development strategy to encompass all geographic areas and business sectors within the La Center sphere of influence, including the Interstate-5 interchange and the La Center Road/Timmen Road intersection.

Policy 5.1.7 – **The City's long-term goal is for the La Center Junction to provide an employment area, for the benefit of the citizens of La Center and north Clark County, at the intersection of the La Center Road and Interstate-5 (I-5), hereinafter called the La Center Junction.** (emphasis added)

La Center's employment base is dominated by three categories of occupations:

- Management, professional and related occupations;
- Sales and office occupations; and
- Service occupations.

The remainder of the workforce engaged in a wide variety of occupations. The occupations, industries and types of workers in La Center In 2000 are summarized in Table 4.4-3.

The median household income in La Center in the 2000 Census was \$55,333. This compares very favorably with the Clark County median household income of \$48,736, and the statewide median of \$45,776. However, the per capita income of \$21,224 is very similar to the County and state averages. The 2000 Census also identified 17 families and 76 individuals in poverty status. However, a recent survey by the City of La Center indicated that the poverty level might be greater than indicated by these figures. The survey found that as many as 53 percent of the residents in several areas of the City are below the Moderate Income Level established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (La Center, 2005). Economic factors are summarized in Table 4.4-4.

**Table 4.4-3 Occupations and Industries of La Center Workers (2000)**

<b>Occupations</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Management, professional and related occupations	276	34.6
Service occupations	122	15.3
Sales and office occupations	200	25.1
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	13	1.6
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	103	12.9
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	84	10.5

<b>Industries</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	24	3.0
Construction	74	9.3
Manufacturing	86	10.8
Wholesale trade	23	2.9
Retail trade	84	10.5
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	73	9.1
Information	30	3.8
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	59	7.4
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	78	9.8
Educational, health and social services	112	14.0
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	91	11.4
Other Services (except public administration)	34	4.3
Public administration	30	3.8

<b>Class of Worker</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Private wage and salary workers	637	79.8
Government workers	116	14.5
Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business	45	5.6
Unpaid family workers	0	0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000.

Based on 798 persons age 16 and over employed in labor force

**Table 4.4-4 Economic Comparison of State, County and La Center Citizens (2000)**

	Washington		Clark County		La Center	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Households	2,272,261	100.0	127,208	100.0	552	100.0
Median Household Income	\$45,776		\$48,736		\$55,333	
Per Capita Income	\$22,973		\$21,448		\$21,224	
Number of Families	1,509,395	100.0	91,461	100.0	477	100.0
Families in Poverty Status (1999)	110,663	7.3	6,291	6.9	17	3.6
Individuals in Poverty Status (1999)	612,370	10.6	31,027	9.1	76	4.7

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000.

Many workers in La Center commute to work, as there are relatively few opportunities to work within the area. The average travel time to work of 28.9 minutes is longer than the statewide average of 25.5 minutes and the Clark County average of 24.7 minutes.

The City of La Center operates on a budget adopted by the City Council for each fiscal year. The budget identifies projected revenues and expenditures for all of the City's activities. The Operating Revenues and Expenditures are broken out by General Fund, Public Works, Parks, Capital Projects, Vehicles and Equipment, Debt Service, Impact Fees and Employee Expenses. The total operating budget for 2006 is \$3,434,858. The City also maintains a Reserve Fund for Capital Projects and an Employee Reserve Fund. The 2006 budget also establishes a Sewer Fund, to be used for improvements to the sewer system.

The primary operating fund for the Operating Budget for the City of La Center is its General Fund. This is used to track the revenues and expenses associated with basic City services that are not required to be accounted for in other funds. The General Fund is used to pay for services such as police and City support services. These services are funded by general purpose tax revenues and other revenues that are unrestricted. The City Council, with input from the public, has the ability to distribute the funds in a way that best meets the needs of the community.

The 2006 Operating Budget includes \$2,684,670 in General Fund Revenues. Nearly half of the General Fund Revenues will be derived from gambling taxes paid by the four card rooms within the City Limits. Other taxes and license/permit revenues comprise most of the remaining projected revenues, with the balance coming from intergovernmental revenues, charges for services, fines/forfeits and other miscellaneous sources.

### **Impacts of the Alternatives**

The potential expansion of the UGA is based on La Center's economic development strategy of providing new land for commercial and light industrial development. This will create opportunities for new employment in the community, and help to improve the City's economic stability by diversifying the economic base. The size of the added UGA, and the proportion of commercial and light industrial uses allowed in it, will determine the potential for new jobs and economic development. The number of new jobs will also determine the pattern of population growth in La Center and surrounding areas, which will in turn affect the need for new housing to accommodate that population.

#### **Alternative 1 – No Action**

##### ***Land Use***

Under the current zoning and regulatory structure, the potential UGA expansion area will continue to be characterized by low-density agriculture and rural residential uses. These uses will become incrementally more densely developed over time, but remain at rural densities. Some industrial development may occur in the area identified as a County Industrial Reserve. Such development would remain out of the City UGA, and beyond the ability of the City to affect or regulate. The Cowlitz Tribe could proceed with plans to establish an initial reservation in this area, and develop a casino/resort or other facilities.

##### ***Community Growth***

La Center will maintain its current population growth target, which projects a gradual growth to a population of 3,500 by 2024.

Approximately 500 additional housing units will be needed to accommodate this projected growth. These housing units would be constructed in residential zoned lands within the City and its UGA. The buildable lands analysis suggests that the current and projected supply of residential property may not be adequate to support this level of demand. Not all of the residential property will be developed to its fullest potential. In reality, a market factor is always needed, to account for the operation of land markets and to ensure that urban land supply is not unduly restrained. It is used to reflect the fact that not all landowners will want or be able to develop their property to its potential, and to allow for a variety of options to meet individual citizens' economic capabilities and personal preferences. An infrastructure factor is also used to accommodate the need for roads, utilities and other infrastructure to serve the area.

The City can accommodate the 3,500 population designated by Clark County under current planning. However, in light of the current County projection for the north County area, the 3,500 population projection for La Center is unrealistically low, and the City could not accommodate the growth pressures that are certain to prevail over the planning period. Opportunities to enhance residential growth by clustering development and assuring an adequate and affordable housing supply, with a wide range of housing types and densities, will not be realized.

##### ***Economy***

Under the No Action alternative, it is likely that the economy of the La Center area will lag behind the rest of the County over time. Lack of suitable property and available zoning prevents industrial development in the City. Also, the topographic and geographic situation of the City significantly limits the potential to expand or attract new investment by business. Thus, La Center will not develop a significant number of new

jobs or tax base within the existing City limits and UGA. Many residents will commute to jobs in other parts of Clark County or further away.

Many of the County and City's land use goals and policies will not be met by maintaining the current trends for development of this area. In particular, the long-standing priority policy of expanding to the La Center Junction will not be implemented. This goal is expressed as a need to create an employment area for the benefit of the citizens of La Center and north Clark County. The goals of expanding and diversifying the commercial base, and encouraging industrial development, will not be satisfied in La Center.

The City will continue to be vulnerable to any changes in the economy, market or regulatory structure that diminish the value of the card room operations in the City. For example, the potential development of a tribal casino near the I-5 interchange could reduce patronage of the card rooms in the City, with a resulting loss of tax revenues to the City. There is always the possibility that the owners of the card rooms could decide to relocate their facilities to other locations for any number of business reasons. Also, card rooms are potential targets of state legislation or initiatives that could increase the costs of their operation or reduce the desirability of those locations to their patrons. Any of these factors could create a grave economic situation for La Center. The General Fund Revenues from the gambling taxes paid by these businesses support many functions and services of the City government. Any significant reduction in those revenues would require a substantial curtailment in those City services and functions.

#### **Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative, and Alternative 3 – City of La Center Preferred Alternative**

Adoption of the changes to the La Center Comprehensive Plan under either of the Action Alternatives for expansion of the UGA would not have direct effects on land use, community growth or the economy of La Center. However, it would change the policy and regulatory framework that guides growth and development in the expanded UGA area. Future development and infrastructure projects that would be enabled through these changes are likely to result in both direct and indirect impacts to land uses, with corresponding impacts on community growth, housing and economy. Impacts may be short term, such as effects related to construction activities, or long-term, resulting from changes in the way the land is developed.

As population increases and industrial and commercial employment grow, residential demand can be expected to increase, and housing choices should be more varied as population densities reach levels that could support varied housing types.

The impacts on Land Use, Community Growth and Economy under these Alternatives are very similar. Specific, quantitative differences are indicated in the following discussion. Unless otherwise noted, the statements regarding impacts are the same for Alternative 2 and Alternative 3.

An analysis of buildable lands and residential capacity was conducted for this EIS, to determine the amount of land that could be developed for different uses, and the population capacity of the area. It includes calculations for the City limits, the existing UGA, the current Urban Reserve, and the alternatives for the 2006 UGA expansion area. The analysis is summarized in Tables 4.4-5 and 4.4-6.

**Table 4.4-5 Buildable Lands for Alternative 2**

<b>RESIDENTIAL</b>	<b>Gross acres[1]</b>	<b>Infra-structure[2]</b>	<b>Environmental Constraints[3]</b>	<b>Never to convert[4]</b>	<b>Net Buildable [5]</b>
Corporate limits	445.5	123.4	66.8	44.6	210.7
Current UGA Single Family	296.2	82.0	44.4	29.6	140.1
Current UGA Multi-Family	23.9	6.6	3.6	2.4	11.3
Current Urban Reserve	73.6	20.4	11.0	7.4	34.8
2006 Expansion N of River at 4 units/acre	195.1	54.0	29.3	19.5	92.3
2006 Expansion S of River at 6 units/acre	340.2	94.2	68.0	34.0	143.9
2006 Expansion S of River at 12 units/acre	64.1	17.8	12.8	6.4	27.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1438.6</b>	<b>398.5</b>	<b>236.0</b>	<b>143.9</b>	<b>660.3</b>
<b>COMMERCIAL</b>					
<b>COMMERCIAL</b>	<b>Gross acres</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>Environmental Constraints</b>	<b>Never to convert</b>	<b>Net Buildable</b>
Corporate limits	43.6	12.1	6.5	4.4	20.6
Current UGA	8.0	2.2	1.2	0.8	3.8
Current Urban Reserve	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2006 Expansion	65.9	16.5	13.2	6.6	29.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>117.5</b>	<b>30.8</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>54.1</b>
<b>INDUSTRIAL</b>					
<b>INDUSTRIAL</b>	<b>Gross acres</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>Environmental Constraints</b>	<b>Never to convert</b>	<b>Net Buildable</b>
Corporate limits	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Current UGA	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Current Urban Reserve	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2006 Expansion	368.5	92.1	73.7	36.9	165.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>368.5</b>	<b>92.1</b>	<b>73.7</b>	<b>36.9</b>	<b>165.8</b>



**Table 4.4-5 Buildable Lands for Alternative 2 (Continued)**

<b>TOTAL ALL USES</b>	<b>Gross acres</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>Environmental Constraints</b>	<b>Never to convert</b>	<b>Net Buildable</b>
Corporate limits*	585.0	162.0	87.8	58.5	276.7
Current UGA **	336.1	93.1	50.4	33.6	159.0
Current Urban Reserve	73.6	20.4	11.0	7.4	34.8
2006 Expansion	1033.8	274.6	197.0	103.4	458.8
2006 Expansion Road R/W	112.9	112.9			
<b>Total</b>	<b>2141.4</b>	<b>663.0</b>	<b>346.2</b>	<b>202.9</b>	<b>929.3</b>

\* Includes 95.9 acres of public lands

\*\* Includes 8.0 acres of public lands

[1] Land in acres

[2] Infrastructure deduction = 27.7% for residential; 25% for commercial and industrial

[3] Environmental Constraints deduction = 15% north of river & 20% south of river

[4] Never-to-convert deduction = 10% for residential

[5] Net Buildable includes lands that are already developed

### **Land Use**

Rapid growth in Clark County in recent years has created development pressures beyond the major urban center in Vancouver. (See discussion of Community Growth, below). Cities to the north and east of Vancouver are receiving greater residential development as workers in the commercial centers seek less densely populated areas to live. The growing need for commercial and industrial development is also affecting these areas. La Center currently has limited opportunities for commercial development, and no lands zoned for industrial development. Thus, the City does not have a diversified economic base that provides the opportunity to accommodate industries and businesses that might want to locate in or near La Center.

Alternative 2 would add approximately 1,220 acres to the City's UGA, for a total UGA of approximately 2,141 acres. This includes 269 gross acres to be designated as urban residential area immediately north, east and west of the existing UGA, and 404 gross residential acres to the south and west of the southern extension of the UGA south of the river. The expanded UGA would include 66 gross acres of commercial lands to the existing 52 acres, and create 368 gross acres of industrial-zoned land. The City currently has no industrial land in the City Limits or UGA.

Alternative 3, the City of La Center Preferred Alternative, would add approximately 2,033 acres to the City's UGA, for a total UGA of approximately 2,954 acres. This addition includes 269 gross acres to be designated as urban residential area immediately north, east and west of the existing UGA, and 712 gross residential acres to the south and

**Table 4.4-6 Buildable Lands for Alternative 3**

<b>RESIDENTIAL</b>	<b>Gross acres[1]</b>	<b>Infra-structure[2]</b>	<b>Environmental Constraints[3]</b>	<b>Never to convert[4]</b>	<b>Net Buildable [5]</b>
Corporate limits	518.5	143.6	77.8	51.9	245.3
Current UGA Single Family	223.2	61.8	33.5	22.3	105.6
Current UGA Multi-Family	23.9	6.6	3.6	2.4	11.3
Current Urban Reserve	73.6	20.4	11.0	7.4	34.8
2006 Expansion N of River at 4 units/acre	128.4	35.6	19.3	12.8	60.7
2006 Expansion N of River at 12 units/acre	66.7	18.5	10.0	6.7	31.5
2006 Expansion S of River at Low Density	276.8	76.7	55.4	27.7	117.1
2006 Expansion S of River at 6 units/acre	340.2	94.2	68.0	34.0	143.9
2006 Expansion S of River at 12 units/acre	94.5	26.2	18.9	9.5	40.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1745.8</b>	<b>483.6</b>	<b>297.5</b>	<b>174.6</b>	<b>790.2</b>
<b>COMMERCIAL</b>					
<b>COMMERCIAL</b>	<b>Gross acres</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>Environmental Constraints</b>	<b>Never to convert</b>	<b>Net Buildable</b>
Corporate limits	43.6	12.1	6.5	4.4	20.6
Current UGA	8.0	2.2	1.2	0.8	3.8
Current Urban Reserve	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2006 Expansion	65.9	16.5	13.2	6.6	29.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>117.5</b>	<b>30.8</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>54.1</b>

**Table 4.4-6 Buildable Lands for Alternative 3 (Continued)**

<b>INDUSTRIAL</b>	<b>Gross acres</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>Environmental Constraints</b>	<b>Never to convert</b>	<b>Net Buildable</b>
Corporate limits	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Current UGA	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Current Urban Reserve	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2006 Expansion	641.2	160.3	128.2	64.1	288.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>641.2</b>	<b>160.3</b>	<b>128.2</b>	<b>64.1</b>	<b>288.5</b>
<b>TOTAL ALL USES</b>					
<b>TOTAL ALL USES</b>	<b>Gross acres</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>Environmental Constraints</b>	<b>Never to convert</b>	<b>Net Buildable</b>
Corporate limits*	658.0	182.3	98.7	65.8	311.2
Current UGA **	263.1	72.9	39.5	26.3	124.4
Current Urban Reserve	73.6	20.4	11.0	7.4	34.8
2006 Expansion	1613.7	427.9	313.0	161.4	711.4
2006 Expansion Natural resource ***	199.8	0.0	0.0	199.8	0.0
2006 Expansion Road R/W	145.6	145.6			0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2953.8</b>	<b>849.1</b>	<b>462.2</b>	<b>460.7</b>	<b>1181.8</b>

\* Includes 95.9 acres of public lands

\*\* Includes 8.0 acres of public lands

\*\*\* Includes 31 acres of river

[1] Land in acres

[2] Infrastructure deduction = 27.7% for residential; 25% for commercial and industrial

[3] Environmental Constraints deduction = 15% north of river & 20% south of river

[4] Never-to-convert deduction = 10% for residential

[5] Net Buildable includes lands that are already developed

west of the southern extension of the UGA south of the river. The expanded UGA would add 66 gross acres of commercial lands, bringing the total for the City and UGA to 118 acres. It would also create 641 gross acres of industrial-zoned land. Alternative 3 also includes 200 acres of land in the vicinity of the East Fork of the Lewis River. This land would be designated for parks and open space. It also includes 277 gross acres of land to the south of the parks and open space area, designated for low density residential uses.

Accounting for infrastructure, environmental constraints and other factors, approximately 490 acres of the expanded UGA under Alternative 2 are considered to be buildable for the various uses. For Alternative 3, approximately 746 acres are buildable. Ultimate development to the allowed uses and densities will constitute a substantial change in the land use of the area. The commercial and industrial uses will be located near the I-5 interchange. Increased density of residential uses will develop adjacent to the existing UGA, providing a transition between the urban densities and existing rural densities in surrounding areas.

Most of the residential lands would be designated as Urban Holding under Alternatives 2 and 3 until they are annexed to the City. The purpose of the Urban Holding designation is to prevent these areas from being subdivided at intermediate levels of density, and to help assure that the needed residential lands have a reasonable likelihood of being converted to that use at an appropriate time.

The City of La Center Preferred Alternative would also establish a new residential zone in the highlands above the East Fork Lewis River and north of La Center Road. This zone is called a Natural Resource Area, with one dwelling per five acres. This zone recognizes the environmental features of this area, and the fact that this area is already fully built out.

A portion of the proposed UGA at the I-5 Interchange has already been identified by Clark County as Industrial Urban Reserve. Including this in both Alternatives 2 and 3 will change this area to commercial and multi-family housing. To compensate for this change, industrial lands have been added to the north and to the west side of I-5. This will significantly improve the balance of land uses provided for within the City and its UGA. The current lack of industrial land available to the City skews the proportion of other uses and does not provide all of the land uses needed for a healthy community.

La Center's industrial zone provides for industrial uses that are traditionally considered to be "light industrial" in nature. This zone is intended to provide for those less-intensive industrial uses which produce little noise, odor and pollution. It also provides for resource-based uses and service uses that are deemed compatible with light industrial uses.

Potential conflicts in land use are most likely to occur at the boundaries between different types of uses or densities of development. This includes the external boundaries of the UGA, and also boundaries within the UGA where landowners choose to retain existing homes or farms already established under rural densities.

These changes in land use are consistent with the general purpose and intent of the Comprehensive Plans of Clark County and the City of La Center. Both plans have goals to encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner. By concentrating commercial and industrial uses in one area, it is more efficient to provide essential public services such as water and sewer. The City's Capital Facilities Plan will be updated to describe the plans for providing and financing the needed improvements.

The proposed future zoning of the City of La Center and the expanded UGA under Alternative 3 is shown in Figure 4.4-2. Under Alternative 2, the zoning would be the

Figure 4.4-2  
Proposed Future Zoning in the  
City of La Center, UGA and Planning Area  
for UGA Expansion

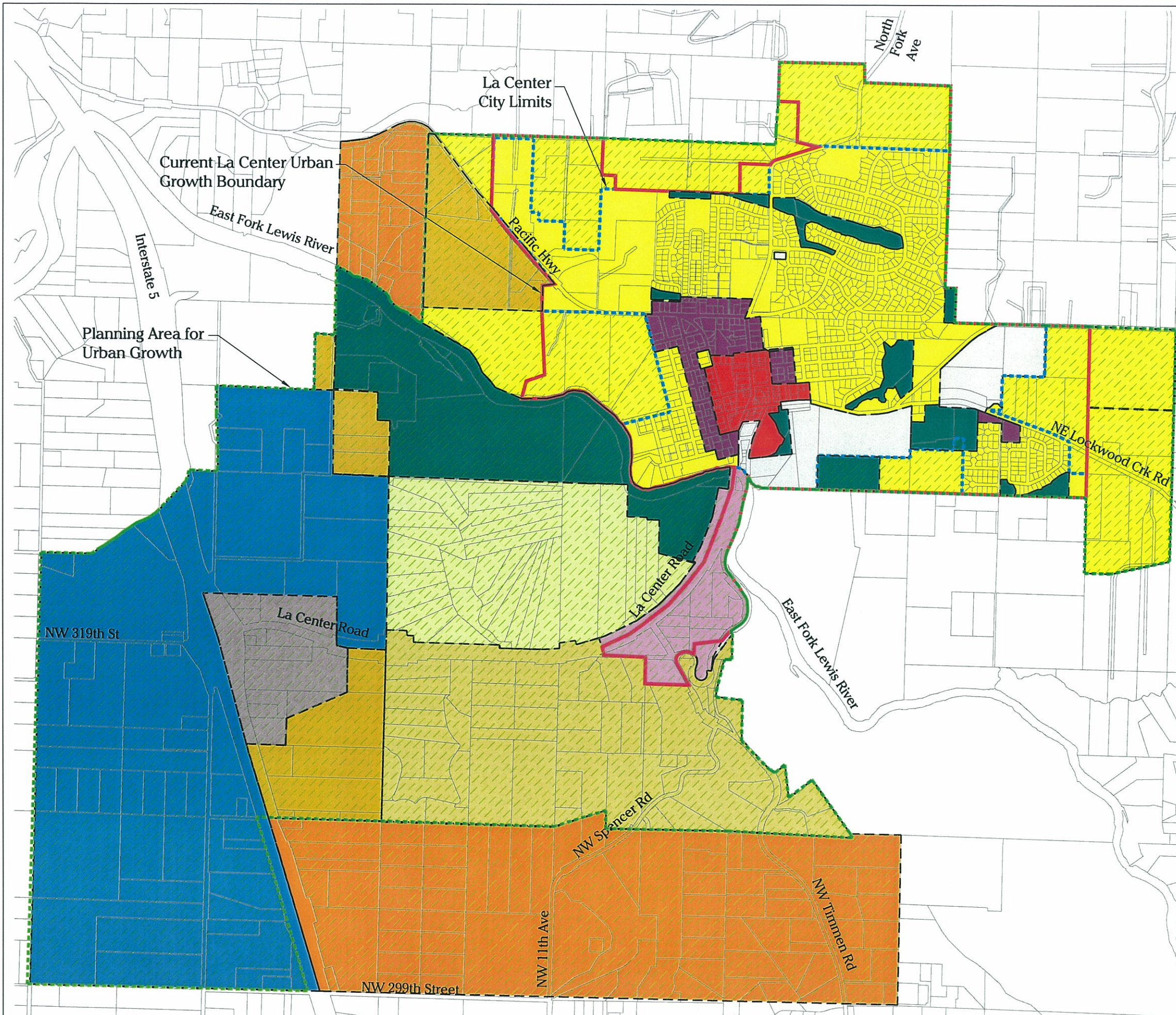
City of La Center  
Comprehensive Plan  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement



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SCALE IN FEET

**Legend**

- City Limits - - - - -
- Current Urban Growth Boundary —————
- Planning Area for Urban Growth - · - · -
- Natural Resource Area - 1 dw/5 acre - - - - -
- Urban Residential - 4 dw/acre ▨▨▨▨▨
- Urban Residential - 6 dw/acre ▨▨▨▨▨
- Urban Residential - 12 dw/acre ▨▨▨▨▨
- Residential/Professional ▨▨▨▨▨
- Mixed Use Residential/Commercial ▨▨▨▨▨
- City Center (Commercial) ▨▨▨▨▨
- Freeway Commercial ▨▨▨▨▨
- Public Facility - - - - -
- Parks and Open Space ▨▨▨▨▨
- Industrial ▨▨▨▨▨
- Urban Holding ▨▨▨▨▨
- Urban Reserve ▨▨▨▨▨



same as shown in this Figure for the areas that are included within the boundaries of the Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative, except for the triangular area south and west of Pacific Highway. This area would be zoned for low density residential use under Alternative 2, and high density residential use under Alternative 3. The increased density of this area under the City of La Center Preferred Alternative reflects the City's desire to maintain a more appropriate balance of single-family and multi-family housing. This change addresses the County's goal of 25 percent multi-family housing.

Alternatives 2 and 3 would both be consistent with the Clark County Planning Policies. They would also be consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan Land Use Policies. These alternatives would focus the most intensive land uses in the vicinity of I-5, which provides a natural focus for commercial and industrial development. Industrial development is encouraged in the Plan, as is a limited amount of supporting commercial use, as this area provides employment and other economic opportunities for the citizens, provides goods and services, and provides tax revenue for the City (Policy 1.3.1). The UGA Expansion alternatives very specifically implement the primary land use policy for development at the I-5 Junction (Policy 1.4). This policy is also reiterated in the Economic Development Policies (Policy 5.1.7) and Urban Growth and Annexation Policies (Policy 8.3.7). For over a decade, the City has envisioned that this area should become an employment area for the benefit of the citizens of La Center and north Clark County.

Maintaining the bottomlands area of the East Fork Lewis River as Parks and Open Space under Alternative 3 will protect and conserve this valuable natural area. It will also provide for additional recreation opportunities for trails and passive viewing.

#### Cowlitz Tribe Proposal

Adoption of either of the UGA Expansion alternatives by La Center will not have any direct effect on the Cowlitz Tribe's proposal to create reservation lands and develop a casino/resort in the area northeast of the I-5 interchange. If this land is converted to reservation land status, and if it becomes a commercial or industrial center, the City would be capable of providing appropriate services and infrastructure. The ultimate uses would create a commercial center in this area. These tribal lands will likely remain outside the UGA. It is possible that at some future time, the tribal lands could become entirely surrounded by an urban growth area.

#### Prior Industrial Uses

Both of the sites identified as prior industrial sites would be suitable for certain types of development. In fact, Washington State and the Federal Environmental Protection Agency have promoted redevelopment of prior industrial properties. Many of these types of properties have been redeveloped as parks, golf courses, and mixed use properties, as well as productive commercial and industrial sites. Any future development proposal must be compatible with the condition of the property, and comply with requirements of the Model Toxics Control Act (RCW 70.105D).

Prior industrial uses of the Circle C and Koch Tractor properties do not pose insurmountable difficulties in converting them to other productive industrial or commercial uses. The Circle C site is stabilized, and does not pose a threat to human health or the environment. Many former landfill sites have been successfully redeveloped for a variety of recreational, industrial and commercial uses. Any potential

limitations on appropriate use of the site would still allow the opportunity for many uses consistent with the proposed industrial zoning. Regulatory structures are in place to assure that future development will not pose a threat to the human health or environment.

Similarly, there are no significant limitations on the future uses of the Koch Tractor site. This site is similar to hundreds of industrial properties in Washington. Although there appears to be some contamination of the site, and possibly nearby areas off-site, these are well within the ability of the environmental industry to clean up to a usable condition.

### ***Community Growth***

The population capacity of the UGA was estimated by using a "persons per household" factor of 2.69. This is somewhat higher than the Clark County planning assumption of 2.59 persons per household. This higher factor is used for several reasons. It is the same number used by both Clark County and La Center in 2004. It also reflects the lack of multi-family housing in the City and the historic trends for La Center, according to U.S. Census data (La Center averaged 2.8 persons per household in 1990, and 3.00 in 2000). Thus, the slightly higher factor is considered to be a more reliable predictor of future population and housing characteristics in this location.

The population of La Center would increase to 8,642 under Alternative 2 and 9,827 under Alternative 3. This is an increase of over the current population projection for the existing UGA of 5,142 for Alternative 2, and 6,327 under Alternative 3. The actual increase is slightly lower than this amount, because some additional population is also present in the UGA expansion area, and population in this area would experience some growth under the No Action Proposal. Distribution of this population in different geographic areas of the City and UGA is shown in Figure 4.4-3.

The current population of La Center and its UGA is estimated to be approximately 2,095. This is about 0.56 percent of the total Clark County population. With the growth projected under the Alternative 2, the City population of approximately 8,600 will constitute about 1.48 percent of the total projected County population by 2024. The City population growth to approximately 9,800 projected under Alternative 2 would constitute about 1.68 percent of the County's population in 2024. This is consistent with the growth patterns the County has experienced over the last 20 years. As growth accelerated in the major urban centers of Vancouver and Portland, additional growth pressure was felt by smaller cities to the north and east of Vancouver. Many workers sought these areas for residential and recreational uses. Much of the commercial development has also shifted to outlying areas. The natural trend of growth is to continue north along the I-5 corridor. This transportation corridor is truly the "River of Commerce" for much of Western Washington.

The increased density of population, primarily in the portions of the Planning Area closest to the existing UGA, will be a significant change from the rural densities expected under the existing patterns of zoning and land use regulation. This increased population growth is the direct result of creating new employment and economic development opportunities in the commercial and industrial zones over the 20-year planning period.

The Proposed Action would result in increased density of housing in the residential areas added to the UGA. Approximately 3,111 dwelling units could be accommodated in

Figure 4.4-3  
Population Holding Capacity

City of La Center  
Comprehensive Plan  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement

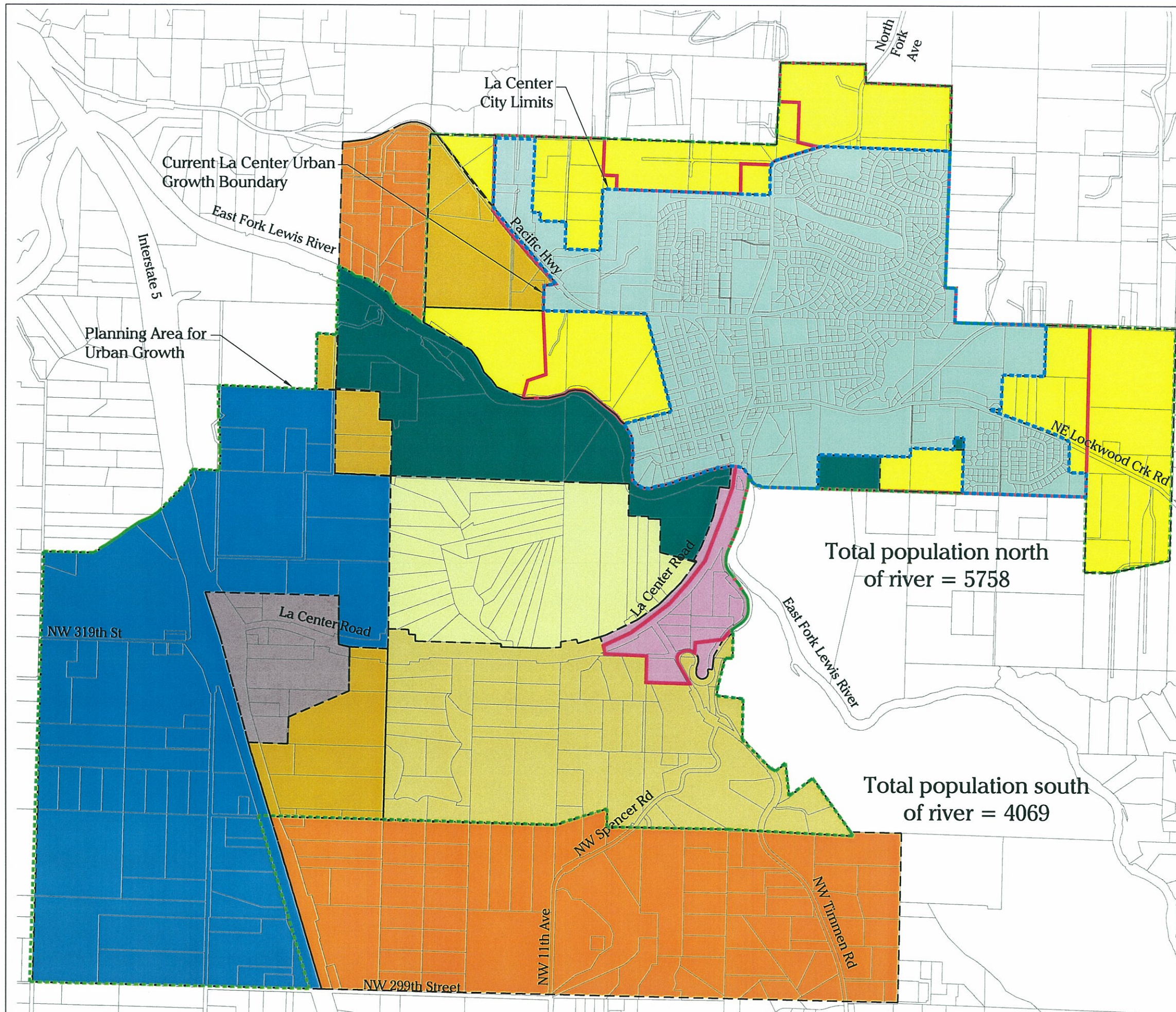


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SCALE IN FEET

Legend

- City Limits
- Current Urban Growth Boundary
- Planning Area for Urban Growth
- Natural Resource Area - 1 dw/5 acre
- Urban Residential - 4 dw/acre
- Urban Residential - 6 dw/acre
- Urban Residential - 12 dw/acre
- Mixed Use Residential/Commercial
- Freeway Commercial
- Parks and Open Space
- Industrial
- Urban Reserve

Total Population = 9827





the City and the expanded UGA by the year 2024 under Alternative 2, and 3,650 under Alternative 3. Increased density of residential development would allow more opportunities to meet the City's Housing Goal of providing a sufficient supply of land and allowances for a variety of housing types. It would also help to assure that various types of housing would be available in proximity to employment, transportation and services. This level of housing development is directly correlated with the needs of the projected population growth. For single-family residential areas north of the river, development would allow an average density of four dwelling units per acre, and 12 units per acre for multi-family housing. South of the river, single-family residential development would allow an average of six dwelling units per acre. These are substantially greater than the current allowed density of one dwelling unit per five to 20 acres in most of the area. This increased density is considered to be the overall minimum average density that new development should aspire to in an urban area. It would be applicable only to the areas not protected as critical areas or otherwise set aside as greenbelts, parks, trails, and public facilities.

Under requirements of the Growth Management Act and the Planning Assumptions established by Clark County, residential lands will develop at an average of 4.86 dwelling units per acre under Alternative 2, and 4.62 dwelling units per acre under Alternative 3. This exceeds the County requirement for a minimum of four dwelling units per acre overall. Fourteen percent of the total dwelling units are multi-family under Alternative 2, and 27 percent are multi-family under Alternative 3.

### ***Economy***

Expanding the UGA under either of the expansion alternatives will create opportunities for new employment in the community, and help to improve the City's economic stability by diversifying the economic base. It will also help to meet the County's needs to accommodate additional commercial, industrial and residential development.

There is a strong regional demand for industrial and commercial development. Unlike most other cities, La Center does not have any industrial lands. This is largely due to the lack of access to the Interstate 5 interchange, which is a valuable resource for attracting this type of business investment and development. These factors suggest that the development potential of the UGA expansion area is very high. The potential employment that could be generated from commercial and light industrial development depends on the specific businesses that choose to locate in the area, and the also calculated.

The goal of supporting high wage jobs in Clark County and La Center is dependent upon developing industrial lands and recruiting the types of industries that will create those jobs.

Clark County has established assumptions for employment in industrial and commercial developments. Industrial uses are expected to produce an average of 9 jobs per acre of available industrial land, and commercial uses are projected to produce an average of 20 jobs per acre of available commercial land. Recent experience in other parts of Southwest Washington suggest that these job production averages are high, and that fewer jobs may be generated per acre of these uses.

Applying the County assumptions to the buildable acreages of industrial and commercial

land would result in approximately 2,151 new jobs in the community (City limits and existing UGA) under Alternative 2, and 3,265 new jobs under Alternative 3. Clark County's goal is to create one new job for each 1.75 new residents. Alternative 2 would produce fewer jobs than this ratio would suggest, at approximately 1 new job for each 2.92 new residents. Alternative 3 would produce a higher ratio of 1 new job for each 2.42 new residents, which is closer to the County goal. This is much more than would be possible under the current zoning and regulatory structure. The current trends of development (Alternative 1) would result in a ratio of one job for every 6.7 residents.

Estimates of employment that would be created by full development of the Cowlitz Tribe's proposed casino/resort could add more than 1,500 additional jobs to this total. Detailed evaluation of the Tribe's proposal is beyond the scope of this EIS. A separate EIS is being prepared by the Tribe to address the potential impacts of that development.

Some of these jobs will be held by persons who currently live in the La Center area and others who will move into the area to work. These workers and their families will generate further economic activity for established area businesses, and new businesses will seek to locate in the area to meet the needs of the community. Additional economic benefits would accrue to local families and businesses during construction of the commercial and light industrial facilities, and of additional residential units.

According to the Washington Wage Report for 1990-2002 (Bailey, 2004), the median hourly wage for Washington workers in 2002 was \$16.95. Median wages ranged from \$7.75 per hour in limited-service eating places to \$39.99 per hour in software publishing. Manufacturing jobs tend to have higher wages, and are recognized as a target of many economic development efforts.

CREDC recently reported on the results of a survey of 18 new business clients that had chosen to relocate or expand in Clark County in 2004 (Columbia River Economic Development Council, 2005). These companies created 530 jobs, with an average wage of over \$33,000. Similar industries might also be expected to locate in the commercial or industrial zones of the expanded UGA.

Higher-wage industries are also likely to locate in this area. The Washington State Employment Security Department reported that the average annual wage for manufacturing workers in Washington in 2000 was \$47,079 (WA State Employment Security Department, 2003). According to the Wage Report, one in five of the statewide jobs that paid \$30.00 per hour or more in 2002 was in the manufacturing industry. Manufacturing, wholesale trade, and transportation and warehousing also ranked high among industries with "high-wage" and "better-than-average" jobs. The report noted that, within any given industry, those businesses that employ more people tend to have higher average wages. In general, the businesses that develop in Industrial and Commercial zones of the UGA would be expected to have wage structures higher than the current averages for the area.

Both of the UGA Expansion Alternatives would stimulate and improve the economic conditions in and around La Center, consistent with the City's Economic Development Goals and Policies. They would implement the long-term goal to provide an employment area for the benefit of the citizens of La Center and north Clark County, at the La Center Junction (Policy 5.1.7).

Changes in the types and densities of development allowed would also affect the assessed valuation of the properties, and the resulting tax revenues to the state and local taxing jurisdictions. Local governments would also see a significant increase in tax revenues from property taxes and retail sales tax. These increased tax revenues would particularly benefit the City of La Center. Gambling taxes from the four card rooms generate almost one-half of the City's General Fund revenues. Although this is a benefit to the City, it presents a precarious economic situation. The City is very vulnerable to any change that could result in the relocation of those businesses, or that reduced their revenues. By adding industrial lands, and increasing the acreage and location of commercial lands, the City will significantly diversify its economic base. This diversification is essential for the long-term stability and predictability, future planning efforts, and the efficient functioning of the City and its municipal services.

The greater industrial development afforded by the City's Preferred Alternative (Alternative 3) would provide substantially greater economic benefits to La Center than Alternative 2. This Alternative would significantly enhance the economic diversity and stability of the City's tax base and employment potential.

The effect of tax revenues will be addressed in more detail in Section 4.7 – Public Services and Utilities.

### **Mitigation Measures**

GMA planners commonly use zoning as a tool to force lands to become either rural or urban. Some consider this rural versus urban hard line to be a false dichotomy, in that it fails to recognize that land use is transitional. That is, activity on the land shifts over time from being truly rural in character to an increasingly more dense character as population and employment pressures rise.

In the 'rural' La Center area, Clark County generally limits lands divisions to 10-acre minimum lot size (in the Urban Holding Overlay) to avoid further parcelization prior to conversion to urban level densities. (One to five acre mini-estates are, in reality, neither urban nor rural in character or use.) When land comes into a UGA, it is presumed that within the 20-year planning horizon the land will fully convert from rural to urban use.

The City of La Center desires that the UGA expansion area becomes an urban area over time. However, in order to protect the character of the community and to create a sustainable, long-term economic and social base, the City proposes to use a mixed zoning strategy to allow the UGA to evolve from rural to urban character over the 20-year planning cycle. The Urban Holding Zoning overlay for the residential portions of the area is designed to provide an orderly transition. This will prevent further development at intermediate densities as the area grows and more residential development is needed. The City will realize four or more dwelling units per acre as the areas are annexed to the City and urban services can be provided.

The proposed expansion of the UGA itself is designed to mitigate the potential economic problems facing the City. The creation of jobs by the proposed action will help to improve the employment and household wages for the residents, and enhance and diversify the tax base of local jurisdictions.

## 4.5 HISTORIC AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION

### Existing Conditions

Cultural and historic resources include specific sites, buildings or neighborhoods that have archaeological, historical or architectural interest. Historical resources can be impacted by development, lack of maintenance, fire, or alterations to historic structures that compromise their historical significance.

Clark County has a rich history of use by indigenous people. The entire area was originally settled by Native Americans. The Lower Columbia River area generally, including the Lewis River drainage, comprises traditional territory of the Cowlitz and Chinook people. Early explorers passed through the area beginning in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The establishment of Fort Vancouver in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century supported the settlement of the area by European-Americans, and actually increased interaction from tribes within the northwest region as various tribal members located near the Fort and engaged in trade with the Fort settlement. La Center marked the upper end of navigation on the East Fork of the Lewis River. With this strategic location, La Center became an important center for supplies and communication. Old Pacific Highway 99 was built through La Center, continuing the importance of this area in the transportation system of the region.

Clark County uses an archaeological predictive model for assessing the likelihood of unearthing cultural resources. A substantial portion of the proposed UGA Expansion area has been identified as having moderate to high potential for archaeological and cultural resources. These areas are indicated in the current La Center Comprehensive Plan (La Center, 2004). In general, the areas with higher potential for such resources are concentrated along the banks of rivers, streams and sloughs. However, some resources have been identified on the broad river terraces above the floodplain.

Files were reviewed at the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation to identify recorded archaeological sites and historic properties. Very few archaeological or historic sites have been recorded within or in proximity to the proposed UGA expansion area. However, considering the historic land uses in the region and the topography and geography of the area, it is likely that some additional archaeological sites may be present in the area.

Two sites were identified in the Archaeological Site Survey records. Both are outside of the proposed UGA boundary. One archaeological site was identified over 1,000 feet from the proposed UGA boundary, on a terrace east of McCormick Creek. Testing indicated a shallow deposit, as is common in most of the Clark County sites. Numerous chips and artifacts including plant processing tools, bowls and projectile points were recovered in 1959 from test squares and the plowed surface. Further study in 1981 recovered one additional artifact.

The second archaeological site is located on a slope on the south edge of the existing city limits of La Center. It is described as a historic-period scatter. The site record indicates a scatter of brick and cement fragments, ceramics, butchered bone and metal fragments. It appears to be a result of building debris pushed over the edge of the terrace after two fires in the town of La Center in the early 1930's.

Clark County also sponsored a cultural resource survey of a potential county landfill on the Circle C Landfill site (CH2M Hill, 1987). The site is located in the southeast quadrant of the La Center Junction of I-5. The survey report described the historic use of the general area by Native American inhabitants, summarized other archaeological research in the vicinity of the site, and on-site investigations conducted for the potential county project. The report concluded that no significant prehistoric or historic sites were present.

There are a number of historic homes, commercial and public structures in Clark County. Nine historic structures or locations were identified in the Historic Property Survey records within or near La Center or the proposed UGA expansion area. None of them is included on the State or National Register of Historic Places.

The properties identified in the state records are at least 50 years old, and possess some unique or interesting architectural features. They include the La Center Grange and two commercial structures in the downtown area, the Mt. Zion Cemetery to the east of the City, and several private residences and commercial buildings in surrounding areas. Two historic sites are recorded within the UGA expansion area. The Summit Grove Chalet (also referred to as the Summit Grove Lodge) was built in 1926, and served as a service station and lodge supporting travelers on Old Highway 99. The Chalet is on the site of Headley's Camp, an early stopover on the road from Vancouver to La Center. The second recorded site is a barn located within the southwestern part of the UGA expansion area.

Several of these sites are included in Clark County's Inventory of Historic Sites. One – the Summit Grove Lodge – is listed on the Clark County Heritage Register.

### **Impacts of the Alternatives**

Chapter 27.53 RCW was enacted to protect archaeological sites and resources from unauthorized disturbance. The State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation maintains a record of archaeological and historic sites in Washington. It also provides advice and guidance on possible impacts and mitigation when these sites are located on property being developed. If archaeological resources are discovered during construction activities, the Department must be contacted for further direction.

#### **Alternative 1 – No Action**

No impacts on identified archaeological or historic sites are expected to occur under the existing development setting for the UGA Expansion Area. New construction allowed under current zoning could encounter additional sites, but it is not considered likely that valuable or significant resources would be discovered.

Some of the recognized historic properties are within the existing City Limits and UGA. These properties could be modified or destroyed at the owners' discretion. If the changes resulted in loss of the historic character of the property, it would remove the historic designation.

#### **Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative, and Alternative 3 – City of La Center Preferred Alternative**

No impacts on identified archaeological or historic sites are expected to occur under either development alternative. Potential impacts to archaeological sites must be

evaluated individually as specific developments are proposed. A greater density of new construction and resulting land disturbance would be allowed under the revised zoning for this area, and this would increase the likelihood of encountering additional sites. Of the total of 1,220 acres of additional land added under Alternative 2, only 901 acres would be subject to a higher level of development. The remaining 319 acres would be in buffers or other undeveloped areas that would not be disturbed. For Alternative 3, a total of 2,033 acres would be added; 1,340 would be subject to higher levels of development, and 693 acres would be in buffers or remain undeveloped. It is not considered likely that valuable or significant resources would be discovered in the areas subject to future development.

Two properties of historic significance have been identified in the expanded UGA. There may also be some additional properties that have historic or cultural value. These would be more likely to be disturbed under the new zoning for the area. Increased economic activity in the expanded UGA will also improve economic conditions in the City and surrounding areas. This could increase the likelihood that historic properties would be maintained and preserved.

#### **Mitigation Measures**

If artifacts or other indications of archaeological importance were discovered, the State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation would need to be notified, and appropriate mitigation measures taken. Such mitigation measures would depend on the nature and significance of the resource, the location on a given property, and the likely effects of development on the resource.

## 4.6 TRANSPORTATION

### Existing Conditions

#### **Planning Background**

La Center's Comprehensive Plan (La Center, 2004) describes the vision for transportation and transportation facilities within the City and its UGA. The purpose of the Transportation Goal of the Plan is to provide a multi-modal transportation system which safely, attractively and efficiently serves existing and proposed uses within the UGA. Eleven transportation policies are identified, including coordinating with other jurisdictions to ensure that La Center transportation facilities, services and policies function as part of a cohesive regional system. Other policies include adopting Levels of Service (LOS) standards for roads and intersections, requiring street improvements to be constructed concurrent with new development, and coordinating with C-Tran or other service providers to provide bus stops and park-and-ride facilities as needed. La Center also encourages the use of public transportation, car-pooling, and other strategies to reduce traffic congestion.

The City's Capital Facilities Plan (La Center, 2004a) also includes a Transportation Element. Consistent with regional plans and local needs, this plan develops an efficient, cost-effective and comprehensive transportation management strategy. It considers future land use patterns, existing and planned transportation systems and alternatives to vehicular transportation. It includes an inventory of roadways, provides LOS standards, identifies capital facilities projects, and establishes traffic impact fees. It also addresses transit and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

#### **Transportation Facilities**

The existing street system in the Planning Area for UGA expansion is described below. The roadways within the existing City limits and UGA are described in the La Center Urban Area Capital Facilities Plan (La Center, 2004a). Roadway functional classifications are from either the Urban Area Capital Facilities Plan or the Clark County Arterial Road Atlas (Clark County, 1998).

***NW 319<sup>th</sup> Street:*** NW 319<sup>th</sup> Street is a two-lane rural minor collector west of Interstate 5. Since there is no posted speed limit along NW 319<sup>th</sup> Street, the statutory speed limit of 50 mph applies.

***NW 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue:*** NW 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue is a two-lane rural minor collector roadway. Since there is no posted speed limit along NW 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue, the statutory speed limit of 50 mph applies.

***NW 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue:*** NW 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue is a two-lane rural major collector roadway south of NW 319<sup>th</sup> Street. Since there is no posted speed limit along NW 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue, the statutory speed limit of 50 mph applies. North of NW Paradise Park Road, NW 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue is a local road.

***NW Paradise Park Road:*** NW Paradise Park Road is a two-lane local roadway with a 35 mph speed limit. NW Paradise Park Road terminates to the north at

Paradise Point State Park. To the south, NW Paradise Park Road connects to NW 299<sup>th</sup> Street.

**NW 324<sup>th</sup> Street:** NW 324<sup>th</sup> Street is a local roadway providing access to rural residential uses.

**NW 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue:** NW 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a local roadway providing access to rural residential uses.

**NW 329<sup>th</sup> Street:** NW 329<sup>th</sup> Street is a local roadway providing access to rural residential uses.

**NW 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue:** NW 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a local roadway providing access to rural residential uses.

**NW Spencer Road:** NW Spencer Road is a two-lane rural minor collector. Since there is no posted speed limit along NW 319<sup>th</sup> Street, the statutory speed limit of 50 mph applies.

**NW Timmen Road:** NW Timmen Road is a two-lane rural major collector. Since there is no posted speed limit along NW 319<sup>th</sup> Street, the statutory speed limit of 50 mph applies.

**NW La Center Road:** NW La Center Road is a two-to-three lane rural major collector roadway. It has a posted speed limit of 50 mph.

**NW Lockwood Road:** NW Lockwood Road is a two-lane rural major collector roadway. It has a posted speed limit of 50 mph.

**North Fork Avenue:** North Fork Avenue is a local roadway providing access to rural residential uses.

**Pacific Highway:** Pacific Highway is a two-lane rural major collector roadway. It has a posted speed limit of 50 mph outside of the La Center City limits.

All of the intersections within the proposed UGA expansion area are unsignalized. There are currently no signalized intersections within the Planning Area.

### **Level of Service Standard**

Three level of service (LOS) standards apply in the Planning Area based on the jurisdictional ownership of the particular roadway. The roadways within the study area are controlled by either the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Clark County, or the City of La Center. Both WSDOT and Clark County have an LOS standard of D or better. The City of La Center has an LOS standard of C or better for classified roads only. As the LOS drops below the LOS C standard, improvements such as signalization at unsignalized intersections may be necessary. However, if an unsignalized intersection does not meet signal warrants, the LOS standard is dropped to LOS D/E. In most cases, signal warrants will not be met until the LOS worsens to the LOS D/E range.



The LOS for an intersection is typically measured by methodologies outlined in the 2000 Highway Capacity Manual (HCM). According to the HCM, there are six LOS by which the operational performance of an intersection may be described. These range between LOS "A," which indicates a relatively free-flowing condition and LOS "F," which indicates operational breakdown. The LOS values are equated to a range of average delay (in seconds of time). For mid-block roadway sections, the LOS is calculated by the volume to capacity (v/c) ratio. The v/c ratio represents the actual volume of traffic traveling on a particular section of roadway divided by the volume capacity of that roadway section. Table 4.6-1 defines the v/c ratio ranges associated with each level of service. The existing traffic analysis presented in the next section is based on v/c ratio calculations of mid-block roadway sections.

**Table 4.6-1 Mid-Block Level of Service Criteria**

Level of Service	Volume/Capacity (V/C) Ratio
A	less than or equal to 0.30
B	less than or equal to 0.50
C	less than or equal to 0.75
D	less than or equal to 0.90
E	less than or equal to 1.00
F	greater than 1.00

### Existing Traffic Analysis

The existing year traffic analysis was based on the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council's (RTC) regional EMME/2 traffic forecast model. The existing base year of the regional model is the Year 2000 in the P.M. peak hour. The RTC Existing Year 2000 model was updated with 2004/2005 land use in the Planning Area to estimate the 2004/2005 traffic impacts in this area. Details of the peak hour traffic volumes and v/c plots from the RTC EMME/2 model for year 2004/2005 traffic are presented in a document titled "Supplemental Traffic Information for La Center UGA Expansion," by H. Lee & Associates (2006). This document is available for review at the City Public Works Department.

The most significant P.M. peak hour traffic volumes exist at the following roadway segments:

- NW La Center Road east of I-5 interchange – 613 eastbound trips
- NW La Center Road east of NW Paradise Park Road – 603 eastbound trips
- NW La Center Road north of NW Timmen Road – 674 northbound trips
- NW La Center Road at East Fork Lewis River Bridge – 674 northbound trips
- Pacific Highway south of 4<sup>th</sup> Street – 674 northbound trips
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street east of Pacific Highway – 570 eastbound trips

The corresponding v/c ratios are summarized below:

- NW La Center Road east of I-5 interchange – 0.61
- NW La Center Road east of NW Paradise Park Road – 0.60
- NW La Center Road north of NW Timmen Road – 0.67
- NW La Center Road at East Fork Lewis River Bridge – 0.67

- Pacific Highway south of 4<sup>th</sup> Street – 0.42
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street east of Pacific Highway – 0.71

All of the Year 2004/2005 v/c ratios are better than 0.75, which is equivalent to a LOS C or better.

An existing traffic issue for the City of La Center is that the NW La Center Road bridge over the East Fork of the Lewis River serves a significant amount of traffic generated outside the City. A large percentage of traffic using the NW La Center Road bridge is cut-through traffic. As growth occurs in the rural areas around La Center, this cut through problem will worsen. Clark County should work in conjunction with the City of La Center to find an appropriate solution to the cut through traffic through La Center.

### **Public Transit Service**

C-TRAN provides public transit service in Clark County. C-TRAN does not currently provide service to La Center.

The Lower Columbia Community Action Council (CAP), which is based in Longview, provides fixed route transit service to rural Clark, Cowlitz, and Lewis Counties. CAP also provides this service to La Center. Service is available on weekdays. CAP connects to the CUBS transit system in Longview and C-TRAN in Vancouver.

### **Non-Motorized Transportation**

There are no non-motorized transportation facilities outside the existing UGA and within the Planning Area. The transportation facilities within this area are generally rural in nature, and most of the roadways don't even have shoulders.

### **Planned Transportation Improvements**

The La Center Urban Area Capital Facilities Plan (La Center, 2004a) identifies the following transportation improvement projects:

- E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street – Highland to E. City Limits: widen E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street to include bike lanes and sidewalks.
- Pacific Highway at E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street: turn lane improvements and traffic signal.
- La Center Road at I-5 Interchange: traffic signals and turn lane improvements at ramps.
- E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street at Aspen: traffic signal.
- E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street Brezee Creek Crossing: replace culvert and provide bike lanes and sidewalks.
- Highland Road – High School to east City Limits: widen Highland to include standard lane widths and sidewalks.
- Highland Road at E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street: realign Highland at E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street to form a standard T-intersection and widen Highland Road to the high school to include sidewalks and bike lanes.

- La Center Road at Timmen Road: traffic signal.
- Westbound La Center Road at Timmen Road: construct left-turn lane.
- Timmen Road at La Center Road: construct separate left-turn and right-turn lanes.
- Eastbound La Center Road at Timmen Road: construct right-turn lane.
- I-5 Interchange: replace interchange with 4-lane structure. It is assumed that the I-5/La Center Road interchange improvements identified in the La Center Urban Area Capital Facilities Plan includes the relocation of the NW Paradise Park Road and NW 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue approaches to NW La Center Road away from the I-5/La Center Road interchange area. This relocation is necessary to have the new interchange operate correctly.
- New eastside collector roadway – NE 339<sup>th</sup> Street to E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street: construct new roadway with sidewalks.
- Brezee Creek Bicycle/Pedestrian Crossing: construct bicycle/pedestrian bridge across Brezee Creek approximately connecting the E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street area to the high school.
- NE 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue – NE 339<sup>th</sup> Street to NE Lockwood Creek Road: widen roadway to include standard lane widths and sidewalks.
- New northside collector roadway – Bolen Street area to North Fork Road: construct new roadway with sidewalks.

### **Impacts of Alternatives**

The RTC's EMME/2 traffic forecast model was used to analyze the traffic impacts of the three alternatives. It was necessary to refine the RTC EMME/2 model in the La Center UGA expansion area to develop a more accurate traffic forecast. The existing RTC model had very little detail in the La Center UGA and the Planning Area for UGA expansion. The following modifications were made to the RTC model to improve the future year forecast to define the impacts generated by the alternatives:

- The existing traffic analysis zones (TAZs) were disaggregated into more TAZs to improve how traffic loaded onto the roadway network. The existing RTC had the La Center UGA and the Planning Area divided into only eight TAZs. To refine the RTC model in the greater La Center area, the existing TAZs were disaggregated into a total of 34 TAZs.
- Based on the disaggregated TAZs, the land use was also disaggregated. Both the existing and future land uses within the RTC model was disaggregated into the new TAZ structure.

- The RTC land use was updated for the 2024 condition to reflect the City of La Center's population and employment projections with the proposed UGA expansion. The 2024 condition is consistent with Clark County's UGA expansion efforts county-wide.
- A correction to the existing network was made where Aspen Street extended from 4<sup>th</sup> Street to Pacific Highway. This section of roadway does not connect and therefore was changed in the RTC model to more accurately model actual traffic patterns.

Within the La Center UGA and Planning Area, the RTC model only assumed one future improvement in the 2024 roadway network. That improvement was the assumption that there will be a NW 299<sup>th</sup> Street overpass of Interstate 5.

Traffic impacts of the three alternatives were initially analyzed without assuming any unplanned and programmed changes to the roadway network. The only improvements assumed were the NW 299<sup>th</sup> Street overpass and the improvements identified in the La Center Urban Area Capital Facilities Plan (La Center, 2004a). This establishes the future baseline condition for each alternative. From these baseline conditions, deficiencies to the transportation system were defined and established as impacts created by each alternative. Mitigation that would alleviate the impacts defined was then developed for each alternative.

One of the major assumptions in the traffic impact analysis is that it does not consider the transportation impacts of the Cowlitz Tribe proposal to build a casino and resort west of I-5 near the junction with La Center Road (the La Center Junction). Should the Cowlitz Tribe project be realized, it could significantly affect the traffic forecasts for the alternatives in area of the La Center Junction and the NW La Center Road bridge over the East Fork of the Lewis River. It is likely that the La Center Junction would be negatively impacted due to a significant increase in traffic created by the Cowlitz Tribe development. The Cowlitz Tribe proposal should test whether the interchange improvement described in the La Center Urban Area Capital Facilities Plan will be adequate with their proposed traffic impact. It is uncertain how the Cowlitz Tribe proposal would affect the NW La Center Road bridge. If the Cowlitz Tribe development proposal takes business away from the existing card rooms in La Center, then the traffic across the bridge may decrease. However, if a significant amount of employees of the Cowlitz Tribe development locate within the existing La Center UGA, or if Clark County residents north, east, and west are attracted to the Cowlitz Tribe development, then the traffic across the NW La Center Road bridge could increase.

An existing traffic issue for the City of La Center is that the NW La Center Road bridge over the East Fork of the Lewis River serves a significant amount of traffic generated outside the City. A large percentage of traffic using the NW La Center Road bridge is cut-through traffic. As growth occurs in the rural areas around La Center, this cut-through traffic will increase. The cut-through traffic negatively impacts the quality of life for La Center residents, and creates congestion not related to La Center.

### **Alternative 1 – No Action**

Under Alternative 1 – No Action, the existing UGA boundary and City limits were assumed, and urban densities were limited to the existing City limits. The area within

the existing UGA boundary but outside the City limits was assumed to continue to be regulated by Clark County with rural densities. Table 4.6-2 summarizes the land use assumptions used to model the No Action Alternative.

**Table 4.6-2 Alternative 1 No Action Land Use Assumptions**

Area	Population	Total Housing Units	Employment
City Limits	2,575	957	800
Current UGA	1,501	558	75
Total	4,076	1,515	875

Details of the peak hour traffic volumes and v/c plots from the RTC EMME/2 model are presented in a document titled "Supplemental Traffic Information for La Center UGA Expansion," by H. Lee & Associates (2006). This document is available for review at the City Public Works Department.

The most significant P.M. peak hour traffic volumes are projected at the following roadway segments:

- NW La Center Road east of I-5 interchange – 642 eastbound trips
- NW La Center Road east of NW Paradise Park Road – 634 eastbound trips
- NW La Center Road north of NW Timmen Road – 1,453 northbound trips
- NW La Center Road at East Fork Lewis River Bridge – 1,453 northbound trips
- Pacific Highway south of 4<sup>th</sup> Street – 1,453 northbound trips
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street east of Pacific Highway – 1,169 eastbound trips
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street east of Aspen Avenue 865 eastbound trips
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street west of NE Highland Avenue – 885 eastbound trips
- NW Timmen Road south of NW La Center Road – 868 northbound trips
- NW Timmen Road north NW Spencer Road – 927 northbound trips
- NE 339<sup>th</sup> Street east of NW Highland Avenue – 542 eastbound trips

The corresponding v/c ratios are summarized below:

- NW La Center Road east of I-5 interchange – 0.32 eastbound
- NW La Center Road east of NW Paradise Park Road – 0.63 eastbound
- NW La Center Road north of NW Timmen Road – 1.45 northbound
- NW La Center Road at East Fork Lewis River Bridge – 1.45 northbound
- Pacific Highway south of 4<sup>th</sup> Street – 0.91 northbound
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street east of Pacific Highway – 1.46 eastbound
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street east of Aspen Avenue – 1.08 eastbound
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street west of NE Highland Avenue – 1.11 eastbound
- NW Timmen Road south of NW La Center Road – 1.09 northbound
- NW Timmen Road north NW Spencer Road – 1.16 northbound
- NE 339<sup>th</sup> Street east of NW Highland Avenue – 0.90 eastbound

The following areas are projected to have traffic congestion problems:

- NW La Center Road/Pacific Highway from NW Timmen Road to 4<sup>th</sup> Street – The 2024 No Action v/c ratio along this section of roadway is projected to be between 0.91 and 1.45 for the northbound direction. The v/c ratio for the section of NW La Center Road between NW Timmen Road and the end of the NW La Center Road bridge is equivalent to LOS F. The v/c ratio for the section of Pacific Highway between the NW La Center Road bridge and 4<sup>th</sup> Street is equivalent to LOS E.
- NW La Center Road bridge over the East Fork Lewis River – The bridge is projected to be over capacity in the 2024 No Action condition with a northbound v/c ratio of 1.45. This v/c ratio is equivalent to LOS F.
- E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street from Pacific Highway to NE Highland Street – This section of roadway is projected to operate with an eastbound v/c ratio between 1.08 and 1.46 in the 2024 No Action condition. These v/c ratios represent an aggregation of east/west traffic along both 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets between Pacific Highway and Aspen Avenue since the RTC model does not specifically include 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The 5<sup>th</sup> Street traffic is modeled onto 4<sup>th</sup> Street. In assuming that the 5<sup>th</sup> Street traffic will be approximately 30 percent of the traffic projected for 4<sup>th</sup> Street, the v/c ratio of 4<sup>th</sup> Street between Pacific Highway and Aspen Avenue would then be reduced to 1.16 in the eastbound direction. The section of E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street from Pacific Highway to Aspen Avenue is still projected to operate over a 1.00 v/c ratio with the adjustment to compensate for the model aggregation. All of these v/c ratios are equivalent to LOS F.
- NW Timmen Road between NW La Center Road and NW Spencer Road – The 2024 No Action v/c ratio along this section of roadway is projected to be between 1.09 and 1.16 for the northbound direction. These v/c ratios are equivalent to LOS F.
- NE 339<sup>th</sup> Street east of NW Highland Avenue – The 2024 No Action v/c ratio along this section of roadway is projected to be 0.90, which is the high end of LOS D.

### **Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative**

Under Alternative 2, the existing UGA boundary would be expanded by approximately 1,220 acres. The area within the UGA boundary for Alternative 2 was assumed to be built out with urban densities. Table 4.6-3 summarizes the land use assumptions of Alternative 2.

Details of the peak hour traffic volumes and v/c plots from the RTC EMME/2 model for Alternative 2 are presented in a document titled “Supplemental Traffic Information for La Center UGA Expansion,” by H. Lee & Associates (2006). This document is available for review at the City Public Works Department.

**Table 4.6-3 Alternative 2 Land Use Assumptions**

Area	Population	Total Housing Units	Employment
City Limits	2,575	819	800
Current UGA	1,501	696	75
Current UR	375	139	0
Sub-total	4,451	1,654	875
Proposed UGA	4,190	1,558	2,086
Grand Total	8,641	3,212	2,961

The most significant P.M. peak hour traffic volumes are projected at the following roadway segments:

- NW La Center Road east of I-5 interchange – 951 eastbound trips
- NW La Center Road east of NW Paradise Park Road – 914 eastbound trips
- NW La Center Road north of NW Timmen Road – 1,545 northbound trips
- NW La Center Road at East Fork Lewis River Bridge – 1,545 northbound trips
- Pacific Highway south of 4<sup>th</sup> Street – 1,545 northbound trips
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street east of Pacific Highway – 1,195 eastbound trips
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street east of Aspen Avenue – 926 eastbound trips
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street west of NE Highland Avenue – 938 eastbound trips
- NW Timmen Road south of NW La Center Road – 888 northbound trips
- NW Timmen Road north NW Spencer Road – 941 northbound trips
- NE 339<sup>th</sup> Street east of NW Highland Avenue – 551 eastbound trips
- Aspen Avenue north of 10<sup>th</sup> Street – 560 northbound trips
- 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue south of NW Spencer Road – 586 northbound trips

The corresponding v/c ratios are summarized below:

- NW La Center Road east of I-5 interchange – 0.48 eastbound
- NW La Center Road east of NW Paradise Park Road – 0.91 eastbound
- NW La Center Road north of NW Timmen Road – 1.54 northbound
- NW La Center Road at East Fork Lewis River Bridge – 1.54 northbound
- Pacific Highway south of 4<sup>th</sup> Street – 0.97 northbound
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street east of Pacific Highway – 1.49 eastbound
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street east of Aspen Avenue – 1.16 eastbound
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street west of NE Highland Avenue – 1.17 eastbound
- NW Timmen Road south of NW La Center Road – 1.11 northbound
- NW Timmen Road north NW Spencer Road – 1.18 northbound
- NE 339<sup>th</sup> Street east of NW Highland Avenue – 0.92 eastbound
- Aspen Avenue north of 10<sup>th</sup> Street – 0.70 northbound
- NW 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue south of NW Spencer Road – 0.98 northbound

The following areas are projected to have traffic congestion problems:

- NW La Center Road east of NW Paradise Park Road – The 2024 Alternative 2 v/c ratio along this section of roadway is projected to be 0.91 in the eastbound direction. This v/c ratio is barely equivalent to LOS E. The cut off between LOS D and LOS E is a v/c ratio of 0.90.
- NW La Center Road/Pacific Highway from NW Timmen Road to 4<sup>th</sup> Street – The 2024 Alternative 2 v/c ratio along this section of roadway is projected to be between 0.97 and 1.54 for the northbound direction. The v/c ratio for the section of NW La Center Road between NW Timmen Road and the end of the NW La Center Road bridge is equivalent to LOS F. The v/c ratio for the section of Pacific Highway between the NW La Center Road bridge and 4<sup>th</sup> Street is equivalent to LOS E.
- NW La Center Road bridge over the East Fork Lewis River – The bridge is projected to be over capacity in the 2024 Alternative 2 condition with a northbound v/c ratio of 1.54. This v/c ratio is equivalent to LOS F.
- E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street from Pacific Highway to NE Highland Street – This section of roadway is projected to operate with an eastbound v/c ratio between 1.16 and 1.49 in the 2024 Alternative 2 condition. These v/c ratios represent an aggregation of east/west traffic along both 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets between Pacific Highway and Aspen Avenue since the RTC model does not specifically include 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The 5<sup>th</sup> Street traffic is modeled onto 4<sup>th</sup> Street. In assuming that the 5<sup>th</sup> Street traffic will be approximately 30 percent of the traffic projected for 4<sup>th</sup> Street, the v/c ratio of 4<sup>th</sup> Street between Pacific Highway and Aspen Avenue would then be reduced to 1.19 in the eastbound direction. The section of E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street from Pacific Highway to Aspen Avenue is still projected to operate over a 1.00 v/c ratio with the adjustment to compensate for the model aggregation. All of these v/c ratios are equivalent to LOS F.
- NW Timmen Road between NW La Center Road and NW Spencer Road – The 2024 Alternative 2 v/c ratio along this section of roadway is projected to be between 1.11 and 1.18 for the northbound direction. These v/c ratios are equivalent to LOS F.
- NE 339<sup>th</sup> Street east of NW Highland Avenue – The 2024 Alternative 2 v/c ratio along this section of roadway is projected to be 0.92, which is barely equivalent to LOS E. The cut off between LOS D and LOS E is a v/c ratio of 0.90.
- NW 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue south of NW Spencer Road – The 2024 Alternative 2 v/c ratio along this section of roadway is projected to be 0.98, which is equivalent to LOS E.

### **Alternative 3 – La Center’s Preferred Alternative**

Under Alternative 3, the existing UGA boundary would be expanded by approximately 2,033 acres. The area within the UGA boundary of Alternative 3 was assumed to be



built out with urban densities. Table 4.6-4 summarizes the land use assumptions of Alternative 3.

**Table 4.6-4 Alternative 3 Land Use Assumptions**

Area	Population	Total Housing Units	Employment
City Limits	2,575	819	800
Current UGA	1,501	696	75
Current UR	375	139	0
Sub-total	4,451	1,654	875
Proposed UGA	5,376	1,999	3,190
Grand Total	9,827	3,653	4,065

Details of the peak hour traffic volumes and v/c plots from the RTC EMME/2 model for Alternative 3 are presented in a document titled "Supplemental Traffic Information for La Center UGA Expansion," by H. Lee & Associates (2006). This document is available for review at the City Public Works Department.

The most significant P.M. peak hour traffic volumes are projected at the following roadway segments:

- NW La Center Road east of I-5 interchange – 953 eastbound trips
- NW La Center Road east of NW Paradise Park Road – 886 eastbound trips
- NW La Center Road north of NW Timmen Road – 1,614 northbound trips
- NW La Center Road at East Fork Lewis River Bridge – 1,614 northbound trips
- Pacific Highway south of 4<sup>th</sup> Street – 1,614 northbound trips
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street east of Pacific Highway – 1,214 eastbound trips
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street east of Aspen Avenue – 909 eastbound trips
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street west of NE Highland Avenue – 926 eastbound trips
- NW Timmen Road south of NW La Center Road – 880 northbound trips
- NW Timmen Road north NW Spencer Road – 936 northbound trips
- NE 339<sup>th</sup> Street east of NW Highland Avenue – 548 eastbound trips
- Aspen Avenue north of 10<sup>th</sup> Street – 551 northbound trips
- 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue south of NW Spencer Road – 579 northbound trips

The corresponding v/c ratios are summarized below:

- NW La Center Road east of I-5 interchange – 0.48 eastbound
- NW La Center Road east of NW Paradise Park Road – 0.89 eastbound
- NW La Center Road north of NW Timmen Road – 1.61 northbound
- NW La Center Road at East Fork Lewis River Bridge – 1.61 northbound
- Pacific Highway south of 4<sup>th</sup> Street – 1.01 northbound
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street east of Pacific Highway – 1.52 eastbound
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street east of Aspen Avenue – 1.14 eastbound

- 4<sup>th</sup> Street west of NE Highland Avenue – 1.16 eastbound
- NW Timmen Road south of NW La Center Road – 1.10 northbound
- NW Timmen Road north NW Spencer Road – 1.17 northbound
- NE 339<sup>th</sup> Street east of NW Highland Avenue – 0.91 eastbound
- Aspen Avenue north of 10<sup>th</sup> Street – 0.69 northbound
- NW 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue south of NW Spencer Road – 0.96 northbound

The following areas are projected to have traffic congestion problems:

- NW La Center Road/Pacific Highway from NW Timmen Road to 4<sup>th</sup> Street – The 2024 Alternative 3 v/c ratio along this section of roadway is projected to be between 1.01 and 1.61 for the northbound direction. The v/c ratios for these sections of roadway are equivalent to LOS F.
- NW La Center Road bridge over the East Fork Lewis River – The bridge is projected to be over capacity in the 2024 Alternative 3 condition with a northbound v/c ratio of 1.61. This v/c ratio is equivalent to LOS F.
- E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street from Pacific Highway to NE Highland Street – This section of roadway is projected to operate with an eastbound v/c ratio between 1.14 and 1.52 in the 2024 Alternative 3 condition. These v/c ratios represent an aggregation of east/west traffic along both 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets between Pacific Highway and Aspen Avenue since the RTC model does not specifically include 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The 5<sup>th</sup> Street traffic is modeled onto 4<sup>th</sup> Street. In assuming that the 5<sup>th</sup> Street traffic will be approximately 30 percent of the traffic projected for 4<sup>th</sup> Street, the v/c ratio of 4<sup>th</sup> Street between Pacific Highway and Aspen Avenue would then be reduced to 1.22 in the eastbound direction. The section of E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street from Pacific Highway to Aspen Avenue is still projected to operate over a 1.00 v/c ratio with the adjustment to compensate for the model aggregation. All of these v/c ratios are equivalent to LOS F.
- NW Timmen Road between NW La Center Road and NW Spencer Road – The 2024 Alternative 3 v/c ratio along this section of roadway is projected to be between 1.10 and 1.17 for the northbound direction. These v/c ratios are equivalent to LOS F.
- NE 339<sup>th</sup> Street east of NW Highland Avenue – The 2024 Alternative 3 v/c ratio along this section of roadway is projected to be 0.91, which is barely equivalent to LOS E. The cut off between LOS D and LOS E is a v/c ratio of 0.90.
- NW 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue south of NW Spencer Road – The 2024 Alternative 3 v/c ratio along this section of roadway is projected to be 0.96, which is equivalent to LOS E.

## **Mitigation Measures**

### **Introduction**

The issues identified below are common to all three alternatives. Regardless of which alternative is selected, the measures below should be applied.

Based on the analysis of traffic impacts, there are many roadways that are projected to operate below the adopted LOS standard of the City of La Center. The adopted LOS standard is LOS C. The adopted LOS standard is a balance between the quality of transportation travel and cost. A higher standard demands more improvements, which in turn cost more to implement. As the City of La Center grows in both population and employment, it may be difficult to maintain a LOS C standard for traffic. Most urbanizing cities in Clark County already have a LOS D standard, and with some exception may accept LOS E. It is likely that the City of La Center will also need to modify its standards to LOS D/E. The 2024 alternatives analysis show that congestion levels in the City of La Center and its Planning Area for UGA expansion will be significant and that LOS C is not realistically achievable.

One significant difficulty in projecting future traffic conditions in La Center results from assumptions of rural growth in the RTC EMME/2 model. Model inputs for the 2024 alternatives analysis assume a significant amount of housing growth in the unincorporated Clark County areas surrounding the City of La Center to the north, east, and west. Clark County has a general policy that specifies that 90 percent of the growth in the County should occur within the UGAs and that the remaining 10 percent of the growth should occur in the unincorporated rural areas. This general planning policy is consistent with growth management principles adopted by the State of Washington. However, the RTC model does not implement this policy with the model land use inputs. Rather, the future growth is based on available land inventory. These rural areas contain significant acreage well beyond a realistic growth scenario through 2024. Any build-out or fractional build-out assumptions become extremely aggressive and are well beyond the Clark County growth policy. This aggressive assumption also inflates the predicted traffic impacts created by the unincorporated rural areas to levels that may be difficult to mitigate. Table 4.6-5 summarizes the growth assumptions of the traffic analysis zones (TAZ) immediately to the north, east, and west of La Center.

The growth rates shown in Table 4.6-5 range from 1.8 to 10.1 percent per year growth in the rural housing to the north, east, and west of La Center. In total, this growth is equal

**Table 4.6-5 Sample Rural Housing Growth Assumptions**

<b>TAZ</b>	<b>2004 Housing</b>	<b>2024 Housing</b>	<b>2004-2024 Increase in Housing</b>	<b>Annual Percent Growth</b>
600	114	783	669	10.1%
601	387	592	205	2.2%
602	234	516	282	4.0%
609	627	898	271	1.8%
610	148	415	267	5.3%
611	255	362	107	1.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,765</b>	<b>3,566</b>	<b>1,801</b>	<b>3.6%</b>

to 1,801 additional households. These numbers are very similar to the proposed growth in Alternatives 2 and 3. It is not realistic to assume that the rural area will grow in a similar magnitude as the urban area.

By assuming a high growth rate in the rural areas surrounding La Center, a significant transportation problem develops. This area is served by three bridges that will all operate near or over capacity by the year 2024. The first bridge is across the Lewis River in Woodland, Washington at the Clark County/Cowlitz County border. The second bridge is the NW La Center Road bridge across the East Fork of the Lewis River. The third bridge is at Day Break across the East Fort of the Lewis River. By reducing the future rural growth assumption to more realistic levels, the traffic impacts to these bridges may not be so severe. In the case of the NW La Center Road bridge over the East Fork of the Lewis River, Clark County's traffic impact is estimated between 45 and 53 percent of the total bridge traffic depending on the future UGA expansion alternative adopted. This may be reduced significantly by lowering the rural housing growth assumption. Regardless of the details of the model inputs, there will continue to be a significant amount of cut-through traffic from areas outside of La Center. Clark County should work in conjunction with the City of La Center to find an appropriate solution to the cut-through traffic through La Center.

The City of La Center could consider lowering its transportation LOS standard to LOS D/E, consistent with the rest of the Clark County region. This will help in creating a 20-year transportation plan that can actually be implemented. To estimate Clark County traffic impacts through La Center more realistically, the City of La Center and Clark County could look more carefully at the future rural housing growth assumptions in the RTC model. Otherwise, excessive transportation improvements may be planned in the rural areas that may not be necessary. Also, more strict county policies could be sought to encourage the most significant growth in the UGA areas and not the rural areas. This is consistent with the growth management policies adopted by the State of Washington. The remainder of this section identifies specific transportation improvements needed by Alternatives 2 and 3.

#### **Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative**

The only mitigation measures identified for the No Action Alternative are those measures described above.

#### **Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative**

Additional growth resulting from implementation of this alternative would create a need for additional traffic improvements in addition to those already identified in the La Center Urban Area Capital Facilities Plan. The mitigation measures identified for Alternative 2 were based on an assumption that the City of La Center would revise its LOS standard to LOS D/E.

The mitigation measures for Alternative 2 were tested by the refined RTC EMME/2 model. Details of traffic volumes and v/c plots for these mitigation measures are included in the Supplemental Traffic Information (H. Lee & Associates, 2006).

The LOS E condition along Pacific Highway from 4<sup>th</sup> Street to NW La Center Road

bridge may be mitigated by implementing strict access management techniques. These measures would help preserve future capacity of the roadway. The other consideration for mitigation would be for the City of La Center to lower the LOS standard along this section of roadway to LOS E.

The LOS E condition at the following roadway segments may be mitigated to LOS D or better by improving the roadway cross sections to urban standards:

- NE 339<sup>th</sup> Street from NW Highland Avenue to NE 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue
- NW 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue from NW Spencer Road to NW 299<sup>th</sup> Street

The improvement of these roadways to urban standards will likely occur as those areas develop. Developments with roadway frontages along these sections would likely be required to improve the roadway to urban standards.

The LOS F condition along NW Timmen Road between NW La Center Road and NW Spencer Road may be mitigated with a combination of additional turn lanes at major access points and access management measures. These mitigation measures would likely occur as a condition of development.

The LOS F condition along 4<sup>th</sup> Street between Pacific Highway and NE Highland Avenue is a direct result cut-through traffic generated by rural residential uses surrounding La Center. This condition may be mitigated somewhat by adding a continuous left-turn lane along the entire section of roadway. The continuous left-turn lane would reduce congestion by creating a refuge area for left-turning vehicles so they do not block the through movements. An additional 10 to 20 percent capacity would likely be added with the implementation of the continuous left-turn lane. The major issue with installing a continuous left-turn lane along 4<sup>th</sup> Street is that the on-street parking would be eliminated. The other potential mitigation measure would be to work with Clark County to discourage aggressive growth in the rural areas surrounding La Center to minimize the cut-through traffic.

There are two sections of NW La Center Road that are projected to operate at LOS E/F that will need to be mitigated. NW La Center Road is projected to operate at LOS F between NW Timmen Road and the La Center Road bridge, with a v/c ratio of 1.54. The NW La Center Road section east of NW Paradise Park Road is projected to operate at LOS E, with a v/c ratio of 0.91. Widening NW La Center Road, including the bridge across the East Fork of the Lewis River, to four lanes would mitigate the LOS E/F condition to LOS D or better.

Although the modeling shows that a section of NW La Center Road between NW Paradise Park Road and NW Timmen Road is projected to operate at LOS D, the entire section of NW La Center Road from NW Paradise Park Road through the bridge would need to be widened. Otherwise, a bottleneck would occur at the merge point from one to two lanes. Also, the transition from a four-lane to two-lane to four-lane section is a poor design choice due to the merges created in a short section of roadway.

The total cost for the NW La Center Road widening is estimated at approximately \$16.4 million. A substantial part of the widening cost is associated with the widening of the bridge over the East Fork of the Lewis River. The bridge widening cost is estimated as

approximately \$5.3 million, which is approximately one-third of the overall cost. Details of the cost estimates are included in the Supplemental Traffic Information report (H. Lee & Associates, 2006).

The NW La Center Road widening alternative was tested with the RTC EMME/2 model. This alternative would alleviate congestion along NW La Center Road, reducing the v/c ratio for the section between NW Timmen Road and the north end of the bridge from 1.54 to 0.78.

The one issue that the NW La Center Road widening project does not address effectively is cut-through traffic through La Center. By widening the NW La Center Road facility including the bridge, more non-La Center traffic is encouraged to cut through the community. This is especially true if the bridge over the Lewis River in Woodland and the Day Break bridge over the East Fork of the Lewis River are not widened. The additional future cut-through traffic would adversely affect the downtown La Center area by reducing its livability and vitality.

To widen NW La Center Road, significant earthwork and structural work would be needed to accommodate the necessary cuts and fills along the entire improvement length. Although the estimated \$16.4 million cost estimate includes all of this work, the likelihood of escalated construction costs is almost certain due to the complexity of the widening in regard to the topography of the area.

### **Alternative 3 – La Center’s Preferred Alternative**

The improvements identified below are those improvements needed in addition to those already identified in the La Center Urban Area Capital Facilities Plan. The mitigation measures identified for Alternative 3 were based on an assumption that the City of La Center would revise their LOS standard to LOS D/E.

The mitigation measures for Alternative 3 were tested by the refined RTC EMME/2 model. Details of traffic volumes and v/c plots for these mitigation measures are included in the Supplemental Traffic Information (H. Lee & Associates, 2006).

The LOS F condition along Pacific Highway from 4<sup>th</sup> Street to NW La Center Road bridge may be mitigated by implementing strict access management techniques. These measures would help preserve future capacity of the roadway. The other consideration for mitigation would be for the City of La Center to lower the LOS standard along this section of roadway to LOS E.

The LOS E condition at the following roadway segments may be mitigated to LOS D or better by improving the roadway cross sections to urban standards:

- NE 339<sup>th</sup> Street from NW Highland Avenue to NE 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue
- NW 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue from NW Spencer Road to NW 299<sup>th</sup> Street

The improvement of these roadways to urban standards will likely occur as those areas develop. Developments with roadway frontages along these sections would likely be required to improve the roadway to urban standards.

The LOS F condition along NW Timmen Road between NW La Center Road and NW Spencer Road may be mitigated with a combination of additional turn lanes at major access points and access management measures. These mitigation measures would likely occur as a condition of development.

The LOS F condition along 4<sup>th</sup> Street between Pacific Highway and NE Highland Avenue is a direct result cut-through traffic generated by rural residential uses surrounding La Center. This condition may be mitigated somewhat by adding a continuous left-turn lane along the entire section of roadway. The continuous left-turn lane would reduce congestion by creating a refuge area for left-turning vehicles, so they do not block the through movements. An additional 10 to 20 percent capacity would likely be added with the implementation of the continuous left-turn lane. The major issue with installing a continuous left-turn lane along 4<sup>th</sup> Street is that the on-street parking would be eliminated. The other potential mitigation measure would be to work with Clark County to discourage aggressive growth in the rural areas surrounding La Center to minimize the cut-through traffic.

There is one section of NW La Center Road from NW Timmen Road to the end of the East Fork of the Lewis River bridge that is projected to operate at LOS F that will need to be mitigated. The projected v/c ratio is 1.61. Two alternatives were tested to mitigate the LOS F condition along NW La Center Road. The first would be to widen NW La Center Road, including the bridge across the East Fork of the Lewis River, to four lanes between NW Timmen Road and the north end of the bridge. The second alternative would be to locate a second bridge to the west. The advantage of the second bridge alternative is that it would divert cut-through traffic away from the downtown La Center area and improve upon the livability and vitality of the downtown area. It would create a secondary access into La Center and take away pressure from NW La Center Road, and much of the new roadway approaching the new bridge would be constructed as a requirement for new development.

The NW La Center Road widening alternative was tested with the RTC EMME/2 model. This alternative would alleviate congestion along NW La Center Road, reducing the v/c ratio for the section between NW Timmen Road and the north end of the bridge from 1.61 to 0.81.

The cost estimate to widen NW La Center under Alternative 2 was adapted to Alternative 3. This estimate did not specifically break down the cost for the NW La Center Road section from NW Timmen Road to the south end of the bridge. This section is approximately one-third of the length of the project proposed under Alternative 2. Therefore, to estimate the improvement cost for Alternative 3, one-third of the total NW La Center Road cost was used. The estimate for the NW La Center Road widening is approximately \$3.7 million. In addition, the bridge widening was estimated at approximately \$5.3 million. The total cost to improve NW La Center Road from NW Timmen Road to the north end of the bridge is approximately \$9.0 million.

As discussed in Alternative 2, there are many uncertainties in widening NW La Center Road due to significant earthwork and structural work that may be needed to accommodate the necessary cuts and fills along the entire improvement length. Although the estimated cost estimate includes all of this work, the likelihood of escalated

construction costs is almost certain due to the complexity of the widening in regard to the topography of the area.

The second alternative to improve NW La Center Road is to construct a second bridge to the west along an alignment in the vicinity of NW 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue. This second bridge alternative was tested with the RTC EMME/2 model. It would be effective in alleviating congestion along NW La Center Road, reducing the v/c ratio for the section between NW Timmen Road and the north end of the bridge from 1.61 to 1.18. The second bridge would have an estimated v/c ratio of 0.89.

The reason that the v/c ratio for the NW La Center Road bridge in the two-bridge alternative is worse than the one-bridge alternative is that the two-bridge alternative attracts more trips than the one-bridge alternative. There are 391 more trips using the two bridges than the one bridge in the improvement alternatives, because of latent demand of the NW La Center Road bridge. When traffic is shifted away from the NW La Center Road bridge, the latent demand traffic shifts to it. The other reason that more traffic is generated on the bridges in this alternative is that the second bridge creates a more efficient route for traffic that previously used another route utilizing the Woodland and Day Break bridges over the Lewis River/East Fork of Lewis River. It is likely that the v/c ratios over the NW La Center Road bridge will be within the LOS D range as the Woodland and Day Break bridge capacities and the Clark County cut-through traffic is addressed by Clark County.

Assuming that the two-bridge improvement under Alternative 3 has similar total traffic volumes as the one-bridge alternative, reduced traffic volumes along Pacific Highway and 4<sup>th</sup> Street would likely be achieved. As previously stated, this reduction in downtown La Center traffic makes the two-bridge alternative much more attractive since it improves the livability and vitality of the downtown area. The two-bridge alternative also provides secondary access across the East Fork of the Lewis River, which improves emergency access into and out of La Center.

The total cost for the second bridge is estimated at \$15,950,000 (see H. Lee & Associates, 2006).

### **Funding**

Due to the significant cost of the two bridge improvement alternatives, the City of La Center will need to seek outside funding from the State of Washington and Clark County. Clark County's assistance in obtaining these resources from the State is integral to the funding of a bridge improvement in the proposed La Center UGA. Due to significant impacts from Clark County cut-through traffic, it would be reasonable for Clark County to participate in the funding of a bridge improvement in La Center. Also, the capacity constraints at the Woodland bridge over the Lewis River and the Day Break bridge over the East Fork of the Lewis River will further impact the NW La Center Road bridge.

It is anticipated that approximately 40 to 50 percent of the cost of the bridge improvement will be eligible for TIF funding. Any monies not collected by TIF funding and outside sources, such as the State of Washington and Clark County, would have to be funded by the City of La Center.

The remainder of mitigation measures identified above would be paid for or built by



developers. Many of the less significant traffic issues are directly related to developer impact. Improvements such as access management measures, turn lanes at access points, and frontage improvements would solve the impacts identified.

## 4.7 PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES

Changes in land use, employment and population will affect the demand for public services and utilities in the area of the proposed UGA Expansion. This section identifies the existing conditions, impacts and mitigation measures for fire and emergency services, police, schools, wastewater, water supply, stormwater, and parks. Impacts on these services are described qualitatively. The ability to meet increased demands is in part a function of the impact fees paid by new developments, and in part a function of increased tax revenues generated by development of new commercial and light industrial facilities and increased density of residential growth.

Under existing policies, municipal services will not be provided in the expanded UGA until the area is annexed to the City of La Center. As the demand for urban uses of the land appears, the area is expected to be annexed by the City. At that time, City services can be provided.

Property that is developed for commercial or industrial uses, or for urban density residential uses, is typically assessed at much higher valuations on a per-acre basis than similar property that is undeveloped or developed at rural residential densities. This reflects the added investment made in improvements to those properties, as well as the effect of market factors in establishing property values in more-developed areas.

The impacts of the alternatives on potential assessed valuation of property are summarized in Table 4.7-1. This provides a basis for evaluating the potential increases in tax revenues to pay for additional public services and utilities required by the increased population. The table shows the two UGA Expansion Alternatives as an increase over the No Action Alternative. Whatever development occurs under existing conditions is considered to be the baseline. Increased density of development under the Alternatives 2 and 3 are shown as an increase above this baseline. These estimates assume that only the "buildable" portion of the new lands contribute to increased valuation.

Values of fully developed urban residential property are commonly much more valuable than developed rural residential property. The potential increase in residential value from development of residential property at urban density was estimated by comparison with existing residential properties recently on the market in the La Center-Ridgefield area. As of August 19, 2005, there were 34 single-family residential properties listed on the website for the Northwest Multiple Listing Service (nwmls.com). Many factors affect the value of residential real estate, including location, size of parcel, size and condition of the residence, amount and type of undeveloped land, amenities and other factors. In order to gauge in very general terms the relative value of residential on urban-density lots and rural-density lots, the listings were divided into those on lots of 0.5 acre or less, and those on lots of 0.5 acre and larger (up to more than 20 acres in this sample). The smaller residential lots were considered to be more likely to represent the value of urban-density residential property, and the larger residential lots were considered to be more likely to represent the value of rural-density residential property.

Analysis of these listings showed an average value per acre of \$1,242,300 per acre for the smaller properties, and \$103,798 per acre for the larger properties. Thus, the value of the smaller residential properties was nearly twelve times as valuable per acre, on

average. The per-acre values ranged from \$398,000 to \$2,555,000 for the smaller properties, and from \$49,400 to \$266,600 for the larger properties. For purposes of

**Table 4.7-1 Assessed Valuation Increase in Potential UGA Expansion Area (All in 2006 Dollars)**

	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
Total Area	1,220 acres	2,033 acres
New Buildable Acres Residential *	298.1	310.9
Valuation Factor for Urban Density**	8	8
Added Value - Residential	\$216,595,287	\$225,895,587
New Buildable Acres Industrial and Commercial	195.4	318.1
Valuation Factor **	15	15
Added Value - Industrial and Commercial	\$283,949,809	\$462,254,013
<b>Total Value Added</b>	<b>\$500,545,095</b>	<b>\$688,149,601</b>
* Includes Urban Reserve Area		
** Valuation factor of 8 times for value of increased density of residential land; 6 times for value of commercial and industrial property		

this analysis, a mid-range factor of eight is used to estimate the added value resulting from higher density of residential development. The increase in valuation under this comparison would add over \$216,000,000 to the value of residential property in the UGA under Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative, and over \$225,000,000 under Alternative 3 – City of La Center Preferred Alternative. This is a very conservative comparison, because vacant land (with no dwelling or other substantial improvements) is less valuable than land that includes improvements. Much of the UGA expansion area is currently undeveloped, so the actual increase in valuation could be greater than shown by this example. Further, multi-family dwellings are likely to be valued at a significantly higher rate than single-family dwellings. Consideration of the multi-family zoning proposed under Alternatives 2 and 3 would increase the valuation factor even more than is reflected in Table 4.7-1.

Industrial and commercial property valuation is also substantially higher than rural residential property. Depending on the investments made by developers, the property values will increase by a large margin. Fully developed industrial and commercial property may be valued at well over \$1 million per acre. Developments that require more extensive equipment and facilities can exceed \$2,000,000 per acre. Assuming an average valuation of 15 times the value of rural residential property for commercial and

industrial developments in the added UGA, full development of the commercial and industrial land would add over \$283,000,000 to the assessed valuation of these properties under Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative, and over \$462,000,000 under Alternative 3 – City of La Center Preferred Alternative.

The total increase in the potential valuation of the added UGA area is estimated to be over \$500,000,000 at full build-out at the proposed densities and types of development under Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative, and over \$688,000,000 under Alternative 3 – City of La Center Preferred Alternative. That is the added value, beyond what the property would be worth under current uses. Considering the conservative (low) assumptions used in this estimate, the actual increase in valuation could be substantially greater. Even if the added value of new developments is lower than this average, the net increase in taxes to Clark County, the City of La Center and other local taxing jurisdictions will be very large.

## A. Fire and Emergency Services

### Existing Conditions

Fire and emergency services are provided within this area by Clark County Fire Protection District #12 (FD #12). The District serves an area of approximately 65 square miles, including the cities of La Center and Ridgefield. The total population served within this area is approximately 13,000 persons. The District also protects the major north-south rail line and Interstate 5.

The District provides various services to the citizens within its service area including:

- Responding on all fire related emergencies
- Providing Basic Life Support and Advanced Life Support services
- Providing a transport unit in partnership with AMR
- Responding to hazardous material emergencies with the ability to mitigate most emergencies and a contract with a regional hazardous materials team to handle extraordinary emergencies
- Providing technical rescue capabilities through a countywide team in which the District participates
- Active public education programs that target the elderly and young children
- Providing education aimed at the general population
- Working closely with the Clark County Fire Marshal to enforce the fire code
- Responding to many non-emergency type calls
- Offering home safety surveys, address identification, and smoke detector checks

The District operates from 5 stations, including one station in La Center and another located northeast of the City limits. At least two stations are always staffed with paid firefighters 24 hours a day; two are staffed with paid and volunteer firefighters, and one is staffed by volunteers and residents. Firefighters respond with two engines less than five years old, one newly refurbished engine, three older engines, a 75-foot aerial ladder truck, two brush rigs, a 17-foot fire rescue boat, and two water tenders.

In 2004, the District responded to 1,167 emergencies.

All operations of the District are funded primarily through property tax collections. The 2005 property value in the area served by the District is \$1.125 billion. The District collects \$1.94 per \$1,000.00 of assessed value (\$1.41 operating, \$0.22 capital facility levy, and \$0.31 EMS levy). Historically, the District has increased in value approximately 10 percent yearly due to appreciation and new construction.

### **Impacts from Alternatives**

#### **Alternative 2 – No Action**

The need for fire and emergency will increase in the proposed UGA expansion area as the population and traffic levels gradually increase over time under the existing zoning and regulatory structure. FD #12 will need to maintain its equipment and manpower capabilities under current levels of funding, which are expected to increase in proportion to the expected growth in the area. The normal growth in the area is not expected to create significant impacts on fire and emergency service capabilities. The District has a Capital Facilities Plan that identifies anticipated capital expenses including the construction of a new main station to be operational in 2006, a transport capable vehicle, 3 replacement fire engines, 3 replacement command vehicles and a replacement transport vehicle.

#### **Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative, and Alternative 3 – City of La Center Preferred Alternative**

The addition of industrial and commercial property in the proposed UGA expansion area could impact the demands on fire and emergency services. Response time should remain unchanged, as the area is already served by FD #12. No significant difference in facility, equipment or personnel requirements over the next 20 years are projected under either growth scenario as compared with the current growth patterns. This assessment is subject to the assumption that no special needs are created by specific developments within the area. However, there is a potential need for additional equipment and training to deal with hazardous materials that could be stored and/or used in the commercial and light industrial facilities. There could be a greater need for staff for fire inspections and for plan reviews.

Additional needs that may be created by the increased development in the area will be funded primarily by increased tax revenues. Table 4.7-2 summarizes the anticipated increase in tax revenues from this increased development. The tax revenues to FD #12 are projected to increase by nearly \$1 million at full build-out under Alternative 2, and over \$1.3 million under Alternative 2.

#### **Mitigation Measures**

All developers must comply with the building and fire code requirements in effect at the time they apply for building permits. These include standards to reduce potential fire damage from all kinds of buildings. The code requirements include measures such as adequate fire hydrants and water pressure and volume for fighting fires, automatic fire suppression and alarm systems, provision of adequate fire lanes, and identification of hazardous materials storage and handling procedures.

Other sources of income for potential needs of the District include protection contracts with other governmental agencies, investment revenue, sale of surplus items, timber tax

**Table 4.7-2 Increase in Tax Revenues for Fire District # 12**

	<b>Alternative 2</b>	<b>Alternative 3</b>
Assessed Valuation in 2024 *	\$51,224,313	\$77,443,688
Estimated Tax Revenue in 2006	\$99,375	\$150,241
Assessed Valuation in 2024 *	\$500,545,095	\$688,149,600
Estimated Tax Revenue in 2024 (in 2006 \$)	\$971,057	\$1,335,010
* Based on valuation multipliers of 8 for residential property, and 15 for commercial and industrial property. Levy Rate for FD #12 is \$ 1.94 per \$1000 of assessed valuation		

revenues, leasehold tax revenues, payment in lieu of taxes, and money from certain public education classes.

The District has the ability to increase the per thousand rate operating levy to \$1.50. It also has an EMS levy of \$.50 per \$1,000 available. The District may fund through excess levies. All of these measures require a vote of the taxpayers. The District may also use bond funding (the District is currently levying \$0.28 against this bond debt limit). Part of this funding is allowed without a vote of the taxpayers and part requires a vote of the taxpayers

## B. Police

### Existing Conditions

The City of La Center has its own police department. The Clark County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement support in the unincorporated area surrounding the City Limits, and provides back-up support within the City in emergency situations. The Washington State Patrol has concurrent jurisdiction on all state routes within the County, including Interstate 5.

La Center shares use of the main Clark County jail, and other regional corrections facilities including a leased office for the inter-jurisdictional Clark-Skamania Narcotics Task Force, District Court facilities in Battle Ground, the 911 Clark Regional Communication Agency, and the Child Abuse Intervention Agency.

The La Center Police Department provides police staffing based upon a standard of one officer for every 500 persons within their jurisdiction. Compared to other cities of a comparable size, this is a very high level of service. The City currently has six full-time police officers, four part-time police officers/support personnel, and six reservists. The Department operates an automobile fleet of four vehicles. The law enforcement budget for the City in 2006 is \$1,036,598. Revenue for police services is provided by the La Center General Fund, the Criminal Justice Fund, and occasional grants-in-aid.

Currently, police protection for the proposed UGA expansion area is supplied by the Clark County Sheriff's Department.

### **Impacts from Alternatives**

#### **Alternative 2 – No Action**

Growth in La Center will continue to use the City of La Center's police services. Tax revenues to the City will grow at a moderate rate, comparable to the rate of increased demand for police services. Therefore, no significant impacts are projected on City police services under the existing zoning and regulatory structure.

Population in La Center and the proposed UGA area would grow at a moderate rate, within existing growth projections. More intensive residential development, industrial and commercial development would occur at other areas in Clark County, with traffic and population-related demands on police services occurring in nearby communities. The specific locations of impacts could vary, but the overall impact on the County's police services would be comparable.

The City population would grow to 3,500 in 20 years, resulting in a need for a total of seven full-time police officers. Funding for these officers is expected to continue to be provided through the City's General Fund. Any changes that would impact the General Fund revenues, such as a reduction in revenues from gambling taxes, would affect the City's ability to maintain their current adopted level of service for police protection.

Development of a tribal casino/resort in the area could increase the need for police protection services in the vicinity of that development, and possibly in surrounding areas. However, the existing level of service for police protection is quite high. This provides a reasonable level of expectation that the City could accommodate such a need.

#### **Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative, and Alternative 3 – City of La Center Preferred Alternative**

Additional development within the expanded UGA would create additional demands for police services between the City of La Center and I-5. The County Sheriff's Department would continue to provide police protection in this area until such time as the area is annexed. Some increase in police services would also result from increased traffic in the area. These impacts are not expected to create significant demands on the resources of the Sheriff's Department. The property tax collections for the County General Fund would increase by approximately \$485,594 per year in this area with the development projected under Alternative 2, and \$978,683 per year under Alternative 3. These figures are based on 2006 rates of taxation and upon the estimated rate of development; the actual amounts collected could vary considerably. Clark County could apply a portion of these added revenues to provide any additional resources needed for the Sheriff's Office to address any needs identified.

Assuming that La Center annexes the expanded UGA, the City would provide police protection services. The increased valuation would bring an estimated \$564,254 in revenue to the City with the development projected under Alternative 2, and \$1,137,217 per year under Alternative 3. This is only the incremental amount expected beyond what

would result from projected growth in the City and the UGA area under the No Action Alternative. To maintain the current adopted level of service, a total of 17 to 19 officers would be needed after full development in 20 years. A portion of this revenue could be used to fund additional police protection as needed.

Development of a tribal casino/resort in the area could increase the need for police protection services in the vicinity of that development, and possibly in surrounding areas. However, the existing level of service for police protection is quite high. This provides a reasonable level of expectation that the City could accommodate such a need. Also, the Tribe could elect to provide additional law enforcement capabilities for the Reservation area.

### **Mitigation Measures**

There are no mitigation measures directly related to police services that are required to implement the Proposal. Potential mitigation measures could include the following:

- Clark County could provide funding for additional deputies, vehicles and training.
- Provide on-site security patrols within the commercial and light industrial facilities.
- Provide adequate security lighting and fencing as appropriate for the commercial and light industrial facilities.
- Install security monitoring systems in parking lots and buildings.
- Develop cooperative agreements with the Cowlitz Tribe to assure adequate police protection to meet any demands created by development and operation of the casino/resort.

## **C. Schools**

### **Existing Conditions**

The proposed UGA Expansion area is included within the service area of Educational Service District 112 – one of nine statutory regional service agencies in the state of Washington. Most of the area is within the boundaries of the Ridgefield School District 122. The La Center School District 101 serves a population of 7,939 in the area around the City, and a small area in the southeast corner of the expansion area.

The La Center Elementary School and the La Center Middle School are located on East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, in a school complex that also includes the La Center District offices and a bus barn. La Center High School is located on Highland Road. The District has established standards of service for each level, which reflect the ratio of students to teachers. The standard is 19:1 per classroom for grades K-3 (elementary), 20:1 for grades 4 and 5, 22:1 for grades 6-8 (middle school), and 22:1 for grades 9-12 (high school). The capacity of the schools is based on these ratios and utilization factors for each facility, but does not include capacity that is attributed to portable classrooms.

In addition to normal and innovative programs on the home campus, students in grades 11 and 12 have access to courses at the local community colleges, as well as vocational classes at the Clark County Vocational Skills Center. An Alternative Learning Program is available to students after school hours at La Center High School.



May 2005 enrollment in the La Center School District was 645 in K-5, with 25 teachers. Four portable classrooms were also in use. For the middle school, 335 students were enrolled, and 15 teachers were employed. The high school had 423 students and 23 teachers; the high school also had six classrooms in portable facilities.

The La Center School District is funded by state education funds, local taxes, impact fees, and special assessments for capital construction, supplemented by grants and donations. The total current levy rate for the District is \$4.29 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. Impact fees are currently assessed at the rate of \$4,587 for multi-family and \$4,442 for single-family residences. Over the next six years, the District projects that \$2,700,000 will be collected from impact fees.

In 2002, the District secured \$12,800,000 in bond funding for a variety of expansion and modernization projects at all three school buildings, the District offices and the bus barn. Most of the school building improvements have been completed.

Recent growth of the school-age population within the District has been faster than projected in recent years; and current enrollments already exceed the capacity of the permanent facilities. Including portable classrooms, projections the current enrollment is in the general range of existing capacity, using the District's adopted level of service standards.

The 2005 Capital Facilities Plan for the La Center School District includes a needs forecast for capital improvements. The cost estimate for these improvements is \$31,650,000. This includes \$22,420,000 in new or expanded schools that will add capacity for 775 students. To accommodate growth on a short-term and immediate basis, the District may purchase and utilize portable classrooms.

The Ridgefield School District serves a population of 11,322. Facilities include the South Ridge and Union Ridge Elementary Schools, View Ridge Middle School, and Ridgefield High School. District offices are located in a portable building adjacent to the High School on South Hillhurst Road in Ridgefield.

The 2005 Capital Facilities Plan for the District reported enrollment in elementary grades (K-6) of 966 as of October 2004, with 1137 students projected in 2011. Current capacity was reported to be 850 students. Middle school enrollment (grades 7-8) was 301, with projections of 430 in 2011. Current capacity is estimated to be 297 students. Ridgefield High School (grades 9-12) had an enrollment of 622 students as of October 2004. The District estimates the capacity of the facility to be 487. Enrollment at the High School is projected to increase to 786 by 2011.

These figures indicate that the District enrollment already exceeds the capacity of the facilities and staff under the adopted service standards. The District proposed a \$56 million bond package to provide for a new, 1200-student high school, modifications to the existing high school to convert to a middle school, and various safety and other improvements at South Ridge Elementary, Union Ridge Elementary and View Ridge Middle School. However, this bond proposal was rejected by the voters in 2005. The total current levy rate for the District is \$2.56 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.

### **Impacts from Alternatives**

Under any of the three Alternatives, the population of this area is projected to grow, resulting in additional students in the school system. In each Alternative, some of the growth is assumed to come from new industrial jobs in North Clark County. Some of those new jobs will come from persons who are not currently Clark County residents, but who move into the area with their families. The regional job growth, population growth, and student enrollment within the County are indistinguishable among the Alternatives. Given the analyses incorporated into the Clark County Comprehensive Plan, it is also reasonable to assume that the general area of potential industrial development is likely to result in some increase in student enrollment in the La Center and Ridgefield School Districts.

#### **Alternative 1 – No Action**

Under the current zoning and regulatory structure, population will continue to grow at a moderate rate in the City and its existing UGA. Population will also grow in the Planning Area for UGA expansion even if this area is not included in the UGA, reaching a level of several hundred to a thousand or more. This would bring new students into the school districts as the population grows. The La Center and Ridgefield School Districts will continue to be funded by state revenues, as supplemented by local tax revenues, impact fees and other sources. Additional tax revenues generated by development within the area will provide substantial additional revenues to the school districts. Property tax revenues will rise substantially as the assessed valuation of new developments is added to the tax base of the school districts. Any significant new capital or maintenance and operation needs could require separate levies, subject to local voter approval.

The commercial, light industrial and higher density residential developments would not be included in the tax base, so they would not be able to reduce the proportionate tax burden on other taxpayers in the school districts.

#### **Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative**

This Alternative will accelerate the population growth in the area proposed for expansion of the La Center UGA. Population in the area is expected to reach approximately 8,642 at the end of 20 years. This compares with the 3,500 population projected for La Center and its existing UGA, plus additional population in the expansion area. Implementation of this alternative will be expected to generate a future population approximately twice the size that would be expected under the No Action Alternative. This would also generate a substantial increase in enrollment in area schools.

The La Center and Ridgefield School Districts will continue to be funded by state revenues, as supplemented by local tax revenues, impact fees and other sources. Additional tax revenues generated by development within the area will provide substantial additional revenues to the school districts. Property tax revenues will rise substantially as the assessed valuation of new developments is added to the tax base of the school districts. Any significant new capital or maintenance and operation needs could require separate levies, subject to local voter approval. In such a case, the commercial and light industrial facilities would pay a substantial portion of those levies, thus reducing the burden on other taxpayers in the school districts.

The increase in tax revenues to the school districts that might be generated by development in the expanded UGA area is summarized in Table 4.7-3. This table

assumes that property valuation will increase as described in the introduction to Section 4.7. The increase in assessed valuation represents approximately 16 percent of the current valuation in the area served by the La Center School District, and 21 percent of the current valuation in the area served by the Ridgefield School District.

**Table 4.7-3 Increase in Tax Revenues for La Center and Ridgefield School Districts**

	Alternative 2		Alternative 3	
	La Center SD	Ridgefield SD	La Center SD	Ridgefield SD
Increase in Assessed Valuation by 2024 *	\$80,287,753	\$420,257,342	\$80,287,753	\$607,861,847
Estimated Increase in Tax Revenue in 2024 (in 2006 \$)	\$344,434	\$1,075,859	\$344,434	\$1,556,126

\* Based on valuation multipliers of 8 for residential property, and 15 for commercial and industrial property. See text for further explanation.

Additional growth resulting from development in the expanded UGA would increase the amount of impact fees collected in both the La Center and Ridgefield School Districts.

**Alternative 3 – City of La Center Preferred Alternative**

This Alternative will also accelerate the population growth in the area proposed for expansion of the La Center UGA. Population in the area is expected to reach approximately 9,827 at the end of 20 years. This compares with the 3,500 population projected for La Center and its existing UGA, plus additional population in the expansion area. Implementation of this alternative will be expected to generate a future population more than twice the size that would be expected under the No Action Alternative. This would also generate a substantial increase in enrollment in area schools.

The La Center and Ridgefield School Districts will continue to be funded by state revenues, as supplemented by local tax revenues, impact fees and other sources. Additional tax revenues generated by development within the area will provide substantial additional revenues to the school districts. Property tax revenues will rise substantially as the assessed valuation of new developments is added to the tax base of the school districts. Any significant new capital or maintenance and operation needs could require separate levies, subject to local voter approval. In such a case, the commercial and light industrial facilities would pay a substantial portion of those levies, thus reducing the burden on other taxpayers in the school districts.

The increase in tax revenues to the school districts that might be generated by development in the expanded UGA area is summarized in Table 4.7-3. This table assumes that property valuation will increase as described in the introduction to Section 4.7. The increase in assessed valuation represents approximately 16 percent of the

current valuation in the area served by the La Center School District, and 49 percent of the current valuation in the area served by the Ridgefield School District.

### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are identified. The existing tax and fee structure is designed to mitigate impacts on the school system from population growth from all sources. Should the need be indicated at a later time, the school district could consider increasing impact fees for new developments, or increases in the basic school levy rate. In addition, the La Center School District has requested a change in the District boundaries. This would more appropriately align the population with the tax base that supports that population.

## **D. Water Supply**

### **Existing Conditions**

Clark Public Utilities (CPU) provides public water service to La Center and the surrounding area. CPU measures water capacity in terms of Equivalent Residential Units (ERUs). The system currently provides 840 ERUs to homes, businesses and schools in the La Center area. The system is hydraulically connected to the CPU water network, which extends throughout much of the Clark County rural area. The source for the full system is approximately 32 production wells. The storage need for the La Center system is provided by two reservoirs in the northern portions of the City.

### **Impacts of the Alternatives**

#### **Alternative 1 – No Action**

Additional improvements to the public water system will be needed to accommodate the City's projected population growth for the year 2024. To the north of the City, a 1,000-gallon per minute booster station and a back-up generator station will be needed. CPU estimates the cost of these improvements to be \$90,000. It is expected that the costs would be paid by private developers.

The system development charge for one ERU is currently \$1,500. Improvements to the system that serve a specific area are typically financed through fees paid by the developers whose developments are requiring the improvements.

Annual piping replacements are also projected to be needed throughout the system on an ongoing basis. These replacements are estimated to cost approximately \$37,000 per year. This cost will be financed through utility rates paid by customers of the system.

#### **Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative, and Alternative 3 – City of La Center Preferred Alternative**

CPU has prepared a Draft Water Improvement Plan for the City of La Center 2006 UGA Expansion. The Plan is included as Appendix 3 to this EIS.

The plan provides for improvements to CPU's water system that will serve the City of La Center's expanded UGA over a 20-year planning horizon. Projects are needed for source of supply, distribution, storage, pumping and resource management.

**Source of Supply Improvements**

- Development of new sources in the area of the confluence of the East and North Fork of the Lewis River.
- Development of new sources in the Pioneer area.
- Development of new sources in the Vancouver Lake area.

**Storage and Booster Improvements**

- 1,000,000 gallon reservoir in La Center
- A 3,000,000-gallon regional reservoir (Meadow Glade) was recently constructed. It will support the storage needs of the UGA expansion area south of the East Fork Lewis River.
- Booster Pump Improvements

**Water Main Improvements**

- Repair and Rehabilitation of water mains
- Individual projects for fire flow have not been included since fire flow is being met within the current City limits.
- Projects to improve system hydraulics

The cost of these improvements is described on a year-by-year basis in the Appendix report. The costs are expected to be paid by system development charges paid by developers of individual projects, and by utility rates paid by customers.

**E. Sewage Collection and Treatment**

The City of La Center provides sanitary sewer collection and treatment service. The City recently purchased the sewage collection system and wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) from Clark Public Utilities. The wastewater treatment plant, located at the southern edge of the City, was recently upgraded to include sequencing batch reactors, grit removal, fine screens, belt filter press dewatering, and sludge drying facilities. Due to rapid growth, the treatment facilities are expected to run out of capacity within the next few years. The City has selected a consultant to expand the capacity of this system while maintaining the existing treatment plant site, and to incorporate existing basins, buildings, and structures as appropriate into the new expansion. The design and construction of these improvements is to be completed within the next two years.

**Existing Conditions**

**Sewage Collection System**

The collection system for the City was constructed in 1967 and rehabilitated in 1988 to reduce the amount of infiltration and inflow. The current collection system serves a population of approximately 2,100 residents, as well as: a small commercial area; a grade school, middle school, and high school; and several municipal and public service facilities. The gravity collection system is composed primarily of 8-inch concrete and PVC pipe, with a small amount of 6-inch and 4-inch PVC pipe. The collection system is shown in Figure 4.7-1.

The system also contains four lift stations. Lift Station No. 1 is located at the treatment











Figure 4.7-1  
La Center Existing and Proposed Sewer System

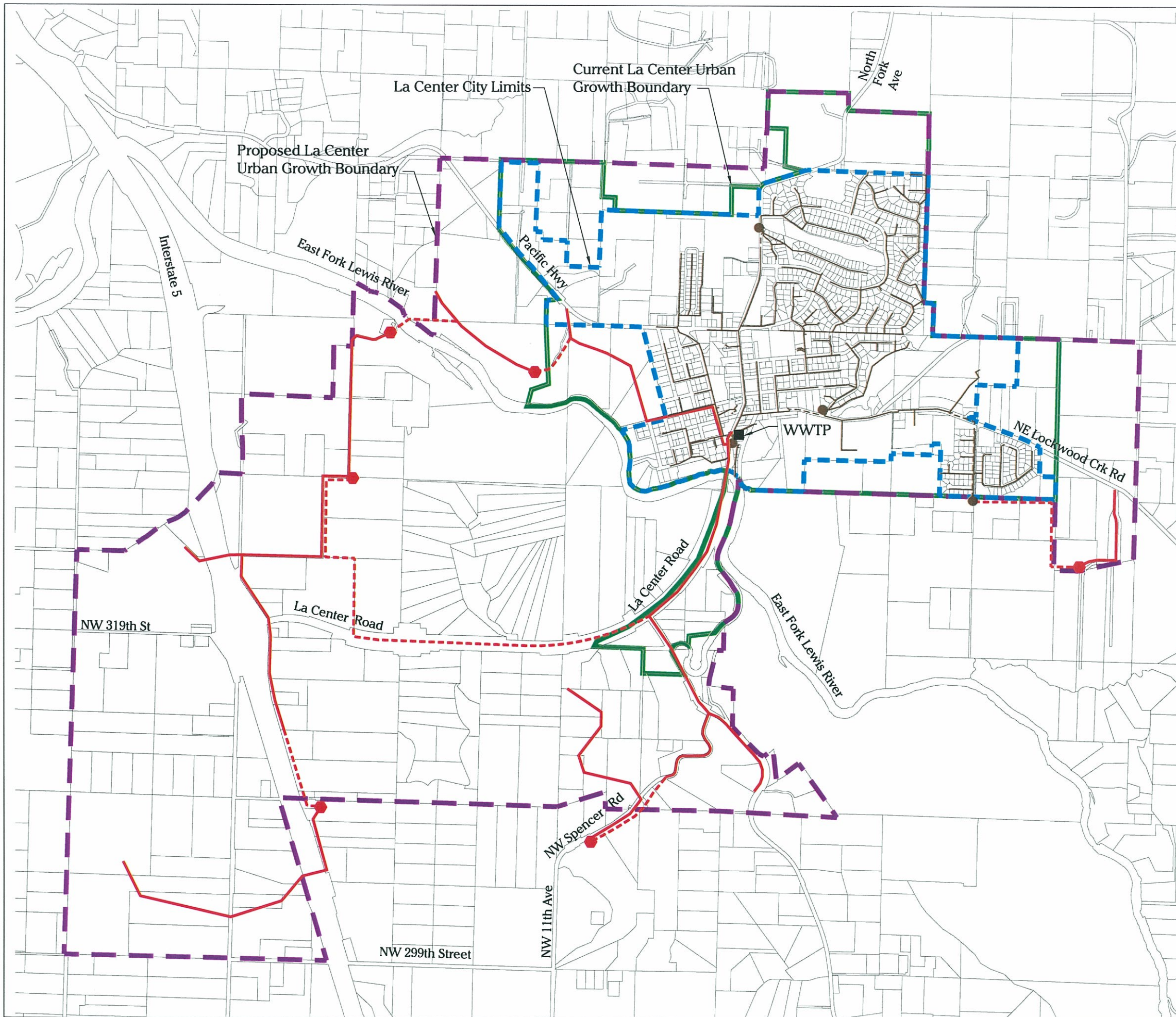
City of La Center  
Comprehensive Plan  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement



0 800 1600  
SCALE IN FEET

Legend

City Limits	
Current Urban Growth Boundary	
Proposed Urban Growth Boundary	
Existing Sanitary Sewer	
Existing Force Main	
Existing Pump Station	
Existing Wastewater Treatment Plant	
Proposed Sanitary Sewer	
Proposed Force Main	
Proposed Pump Station	



plant site just east of the Pacific Highway and north of the La Center Bridge. Lift Station No. 2 is located along East Fourth Street just west of Stonecreek Drive. Lift Station No. 3 is located on John Storm Avenue and serves a residential area south of NE Lockwood Creek Road. The fourth lift station is along North Fork Avenue near Heritage Loop.

On an average day, this collection system transports approximately 230,000 gallons of sewage to the WWTP.

### **Sewage Treatment System**

The treatment system uses an activated sludge process and provides secondary treatment. The treatment system is composed of influent screening and degritting, two Sequencing Batch Reactors (SBR's), filtration, disinfection, and final discharge to the East Fork of the Lewis River. The plant is designed to process 560,000 gallons of sewage per day (gpd) and 1 mgd instantaneous peak flow loadings of 841 pounds of biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) per day and 902 pounds per day of total suspended solids (TSS). At present, the plant has the capacity to handle an additional 120,000 gpd of hydraulic capacity on an average daily basis, an additional 370 lb/day of organic (BOD) treatment capacity, and an additional 551 lb/day of solids (TSS) treatment capacity. In February 2005, BOD loadings were 470 lb/day and TSS loadings were 350 lb/day.

The WWTP is located on the north bank of the East Fork of the Lewis River near the La Center Bridge. The plant is designed to be expanded by adding two additional SBR's in order to double its capacity. Biosolids produced during the treatment process are aerobically digested, dewatered, and dried. Dried biosolids are disposed through a reuse program and are made available to the public for unrestricted use as a soil amendment. Effluent is discharged to the river under a Washington State Department of Ecology National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.

### **Planning Background**

State law (WAC 173-240-050) requires all cities to have an adopted general sewer plan addressing all planned wastewater system upgrades or expansion, or an approved engineering report for each individual project proposed. The City of La Center adopted such a plan in 2001. In late 2004, the City of La Center commissioned a sewerage study to identify and evaluate long-range sewerage alternatives to serve an expanded UGA, and in particular to provide service to the I-5 Interchange at La Center Road. Three alternatives were identified:

- Expanding the existing wastewater treatment plant to its fullest capacity by adding two additional SBR's and then constructing a second treatment plant near the interchange.
- Modifying the existing wastewater treatment plant by retrofitting the SBR's to Membrane Bio-Reactors (MBR). MBR technology will significantly increase the plant's capacity while minimizing the need for new permitting requirements.
- Constructing a new wastewater treatment facility at the interchange utilizing MBR's, and phasing out the existing wastewater plant over time.

The evaluation of these alternatives showed that modifying the existing wastewater treatment plant with the MBR technology provided the best overall benefits, such as expanded capacity, at significantly less cost than the other two alternatives. This alternative was subsequently recommended to the City and the City Council has concurred.

In the short term, the WWTP would be modified by adding an MBR basin, operating the two SBR's, replacing the head works along with the outfall and increasing the sludge handling capabilities. Over the long term, the plant would be expanded to four MBR's with additional sludge handling modifications.

Discharge to the East Fork of the Lewis River is still anticipated, although alternative discharge options may be required in the future. These include wetland enhancement, agricultural reuse, park irrigation and groundwater recharge.

In order to serve the I-5 Interchange area, the collection system would be extended south of the river. A lift station would be required along La Center Road in the drainage just east of the interchange. A combination of gravity sewers and pumping stations would collect and convey sewage from Spencer Road, 299<sup>th</sup> Street, and the interchange to the lift station. Sewage would then be pumped east along La Center Road to a point where it would flow by gravity to the existing WWTP. The east La Center Road and north Timmen Road areas could be served by gravity. (See Figure 4.7-1.)

A potential alternative is to move the La Center Road lift station further north, pump across the river, and then flow to the wastewater treatment plant on the north side of the river. This would be a feasible option, and a potentially lower cost solution, if a new bridge were to be constructed in this area. This option could additionally be desirable due to proportionality (more connections to assist in paying for the infrastructure).

Urban growth expansion north of the river would involve the extension of existing sewer mains. An additional lift station may be necessary to convey sewage near the river along the western portion of the expanded UGA.

Two land development scenarios were evaluated at the I-5 Interchange. These included major areas of industrial development and limited commercial and multi-family residential development without a casino/resort complex, and a moderate amount of industrial development with limited commercial and multi-family residential development with a major casino/resort as proposed by the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. Although both scenarios involve industrial development, a major casino/resort complex is anticipated to produce higher quantities of sewage than typical industrial and commercial development.

With this planning history in mind, the City updated its General Sewer Plan in July 2006 (La Center, 2006). The plan describes the existing facilities and analyzes the projected flows, capacities and needs to serve the expanded UGA. This includes a description of improvements to the collection system and WWTP, an estimate of the costs of those facilities, and funding options for capital improvements.



## **Impacts of the Alternatives**

### **Alternative 1 – No Action**

Under the existing land use and regulatory patterns, the City and its existing UGA will increase to a population of approximately 3,500 by 2024. Some additional commercial uses would be developed in the area, but no industrial development would be allowed under existing zoning.

For this alternative, the existing collection system would be extended to serve the existing UGA. The capacity of the WWTP also would need to be expanded through implementation of the following improvements:

- **By 2008: Wastewater Treatment Plan Modifications**  
Construct two SBR basins, expand headworks with new screen and grit removal facilities, replace sludge thickener, expand disinfection (UV) and construct new outfall. (Population 6,400)
- **2016: Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion**  
Construct second heat dryer

Under this alternative, public sewer service is limited to urban areas, so no municipal sewer service would be provided within the proposed UGA expansion area. Residences outside the current UGA, would continue to rely on septic systems for local sewer needs. If the Cowlitz Tribe develops its proposed casino/resort, the Tribe would need to seek other alternatives for sewage collection and treatment.

The estimated cost for major sewerage facilities expansion for the No Action Alternative is \$6.5 million.

### **Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map Alternative and Alternative 3 – City of La Center Preferred Alternative**

Including additional lands in the City's UGA will increase the need for sewer service. New commercial, industrial and residential users will need to connect to the City's sewage system. Planning for both UGA expansion alternatives involves constructing additional collection pipes and pump stations, and increasing the capacity of the WWTP. The current planning reflected in the 2006 General Sewer Plan assumes that the Junction will develop primarily under the Industrial land use designation. If the Cowlitz Tribe were to develop its land under another land use scenario, the capacity requirements could be greater than reflected in the Plan. In that case, specific requirements would need to be identified, and appropriate measures taken to assure that any needed additional capacity would be met and funded.

The General Sewer Plan identifies proposed collection system improvements that will be needed by 2024 to meet the needs of the population and businesses in the City's service area (City Limits and within the UGA). Collection system improvements include approximately 6.8 miles of gravity sewer ranging from 8-inch to 30-inch diameter, up-sizing of three existing pump stations, construction of five new pump stations, and approximately 1.7 miles of force main ranging in size from 6-inch to 10-inch diameter.

Proposed treatment plant improvements include a phased expansion of the existing WWTP, which would involve conversion of the existing SBR process to an MBR process. It would include a new headworks facility, sludge treatment facilities, additional disinfection facilities, and a new outfall.

The City is currently negotiating a contract with a qualified engineering firm to expand the capacity of the WWTP while maintaining the existing treatment plant site and to incorporate existing basins, buildings, and structures as appropriate into the new expansion.

### ***Estimated Costs and Financing***

The total estimated cost for the collection system improvements is approximately \$242 million. The total estimated cost of the wastewater facilities improvements is approximately \$32 million. Funding issues regarding the City's sewerage facilities have historically been addressed in an independent rate study. Connection fees have been utilized to fund operation and maintenance costs. While this funding structure will likely continue, the City will also consider additional funding options. These include:

- **Local Improvement District** – an LID could be formed for the area to be served by wastewater collection system expansion. In this form of financing, a benefit area is established, and those parcels of property within that area share the cost of improvements constructed to serve the area. Revenue bonds finance the improvements, and property owners within the LID benefit area share in the cost of bond retirement.
- **Bonds** – New facilities such as expansion of the WWTP typically require a large initial expenditure. These improvements can be financed by a general obligation or revenue bond that is repaid during the life of the facility. Repayment is normally made from revenues derived from monthly service charges. Normally, all customers share in the bond repayment. If bond payments are made from monthly utility charges, the existing citizens effectively finance a proportionate share of the growth. If bond payments are made from future impact fees, then growth pays for itself. Where system development charges are used to retire the bond, these charges should be set sufficiently high to also pay for other system capacity upgrades that will be needed to restore the capacity lost as a result of that development.
- **Connection Charges** -- Revenues have historically been generated for utility system improvements through the collection of connection charges. As connections to the system are made, a connection fee is charged. Although some of the connection fee may be used to recover costs associated with making the service connection, most of the fee is used to finance capacity upgrades. The rationale behind these fees is that the existing system has a limited amount of excess capacity and that new demands upon the system should pay the cost of providing new capacity. In La Center, connection fees are classified as System Development Charges (SDCs). When charging SDCs, it is important that they be used exclusively for capacity expansions, as opposed to maintenance upgrades.
- **Revolving Loan Fund Program** – The State of Washington has a program whereby the City can obtain low interest loans to finance utility system

improvements. The loan could be paid back with a funding program similar to that used to retire bonds.

- **Developer Financing** -- Utility distribution, collection, or even treatment facility improvements could be developer financed. This method of financing for utility line extensions is often used in conjunction with system development charges, whereby the developer is reimbursed for expenditures from future SDCs.
- **State and Federal Funding Programs** -- There are a number of State and Federal funding programs available to finance sewerage facility expansions. The nature of these programs varies with the political climate. The recent trend has been for the availability of funds from these programs to decrease. Another recent trend has been for the funds to be limited to current needs and environmental improvement projects, rather than to finance expansions for future growth.

### **Mitigation Measures**

Sewer plans must be included in concurrency management programs under the GMA. New developments within the UGA must be served by connection to a public sewer system. La Center's Comprehensive Plan includes a policy (Policy 4.2.1) that requires that, in order to receive permit approvals, proposed developments shall demonstrate that adopted levels of service for sanitary sewer will be met prior to occupancy, or that improvements needed to ensure compliance are officially planned for within six years' time. Public sewers are not to be extended outside the UGA except in health emergencies.

Development of a coordinated regional treatment and collection system could provide benefits in terms of improving the efficiency of service delivery and reducing environmental impacts. In the near term (within the timeline for the proposed treatment plant capacity expansion), there are limited opportunities for regional treatment. Clark County, CPU, the City of Vancouver and the Clark Regional Sewer Service District are currently exploring options for regional management. Depending upon the outcome of these efforts, some elements of regional coordination and system improvements could be adopted.

## **F. Storm Water**

### **Existing Conditions**

Storm drainage in La Center is a combination of public and private systems located within eight storm water basins. The City owns and maintains the systems in the public rights-of-way, and in some easements that cross private property. Private systems are primarily comprised of retention/detention systems in newer developed since 1994.

The City of La Center has established requirements to protect against damage caused by inadequately controlled storm water runoff. The requirements are included in Chapter 14.10 of the La Center Municipal Code. All ground-breaking activities in excess of 500 square feet must follow the requirements of the City's latest erosion control guidelines. The requirements also apply to drainage projects and to development activities that create significant amounts of impervious surface – 2,000 square feet or more for residential land, 1,000 square feet or more for commercial or industrial properties, or

replacement of existing structures exceeding 5,000 square feet on commercial or industrial properties.

Under this program, applicants must submit a preliminary Storm Water Plan for all short plats and site plan reviews subject to SEPA review, subdivisions, conditional use permits, and planned unit developments. This plan must be reviewed and approved by the City. The final approved plan provides final engineering design and construction drawings for the storm water aspects of a proposed development activity or drainage project. All projects must provide treatment of storm water runoff through the use of Best Management Practices (BMP's). Other BMP's apply to source control, oil/water separators, and infiltration.

### **Impacts of the Alternatives**

Storm water runoff that is not adequately controlled can result in increased runoff volumes, and impact flow regimes in surface waters. This can lead to flooding and safety hazards, erosion, scouring and discharge of sediment into surface waters and wetlands. The purpose of the City's Storm Water and Erosion Control program is to prevent surface and ground water quality degradation, and prevent erosion and sedimentation of surface water bodies. It is also designed to prevent property damage from increased runoff rates and volumes, maintain existing ground water levels, instream flow and water supply volumes, and otherwise protect the health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants of the City.

#### **Alternative 1 – No Action**

Under the current trends of growth and development, storm water within the UGA expansion area will continue to be subject to storm water management requirements of Clark County. The County requires storm water management plans to be consistent with Best Management Practices for storm water management. Slopes in the buildable portions of the area are generally moderate; therefore, peak impacts of runoff on erosion and streamflows are limited.

#### **Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map, and Alternative 3 – City of La Center Preferred Alternative**

There will be a substantial increase in the amount of new impervious surface as the area is developed to higher allowed densities under either of the UGA expansion alternatives. An estimated 287 to 434 acres could be converted to impervious surfaces under increased development in the expanded UGA. However, these developments will be required to demonstrate proper storm water management and erosion control. Although the area includes lands with very steep slopes, the slopes in the areas that are likely to be developed are generally moderate; therefore, the peak impacts of runoff on erosion and streamflows are limited. By following the applicable regulations and standards, no significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

The Expansion of the UGA does not envision any specific changes in City programs for storm water management. Individual developments will be responsible for managing storm water in accordance with storm water management practices as identified in the City's Storm Water and Erosion Control program. The typical approach for managing storm water quality is to require new developments to retain storm water on site and treat it by passing it through a vegetated area or other means before releasing it to the

ground or surface waters. It is expected that storm water will be managed by collection and retention systems, and percolation into the ground and controlled discharge to the drainage system such that post-development runoff does not exceed pre-development runoff conditions.

The City will own and manage any storm water facilities located within public rights-of-way. Private developers must ensure satisfactory operation of storm water facilities by maintaining them for two years after completion of the project.

### **Mitigation Measures**

Regulations are in place to protect the environment from stormwater discharges associated with new developments. Surface runoff would be managed by stormwater management features that cleanse and meter the water to drainageways in accordance with La Center's Storm Water and Erosion Control requirements (LCMC 14.10). The stormwater management features will typically include grass-lined swales and retention ponds. In conjunction with required buffers, these measures will prevent sediments or other pollutants from entering wetlands or streams.

## **G. Parks and Recreation**

### **Existing Conditions**

The City of La Center manages four park sites that provide family recreational opportunities within the City:

- La Center Community Park – located near the commercial center of the City. This park includes a community center building, ball fields, tennis court, playground equipment, picnic area, and a pathway for walking or jogging.
- Sternwheeler Park – a community park located between 4<sup>th</sup> Street and the East Fork of the Lewis River, this park is a newly developed natural preservation area. Improvements include play equipment, multi-use trails, wetland preservation, public seating for concerts, and picnic areas.
- Heritage Park – a neighborhood park located in a residential neighborhood in the northern part of the City. This park is a greenbelt area offering a play area, restroom facilities, and walking opportunities.
- The Elmer Soehl Park – a neighborhood park northeast of the city center that offers respite to walkers and a playground for youngsters.

La Center has adopted standards for the level of service (LOS) the City should provide for parks and recreation facilities. The total LOS is 7.0 acres of parks per 1,000 people, allocated among community parks, neighborhood parks, and trails. It has already acquired and developed sufficient community park sites to meet its current LOS requirements for the current population in . However, the City needs to acquire and develop trail sites and neighborhood parks to meet the level of service requirements for the projected population in 2024.

There are numerous additional parks and recreational facilities within the general vicinity of La Center. These include the Paradise Point State Park, which encompasses 88 acres and 6,180 feet of shoreline of the East Fork of the Lewis River immediately east of I-5 and just north of the proposed UGA expansion area. Others regional facilities are

managed by the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Department, the Vancouver-Clark County Parks and Recreation Department, and the La Center School District. These facilities are summarized in the City's Capital Facilities Plan (La Center, 2004a).

The City's budget includes a special fund to provide services, maintenance and repair for the park grounds of the City. Revenues from rental of the Community Center and transfers from other funds are used for this fund. Total revenues for the Parks Fund are projected to be \$2,500, and total operating expenses are projected to be \$173,350. The City also uses park impact fees to partially fund park capital facilities, and may accept land dedications as a partial credit toward impact fees. For 2005, the City estimated revenues of \$70,000 from park impact fees.

The La Center Urban Area Comprehensive Plan includes an Element for Parks, Recreation and Open Space. The purpose of that element of the Plan is to ensure that park land is acquired, developed and maintained in an economically efficient way to meet the needs of its residents.

### **Impacts from Alternatives**

#### **Alternative 1 – No Action**

Population increases under the existing UGA will increase the need for park and recreation facilities to serve the citizens of the area. Impact fees from developers of new facilities in the City area will provide funding for acquisition and maintenance of parks. The City is likely to continue to supplement these park funds with additional general fund dollars as needed. Cost of maintenance and operation of parks will likely continue to be supplemented by other sources.

#### **Alternative 2 – Clark County 2005 Discussion Map, and Alternative 3 – La Center Preferred Alternative**

Greater population increases in an expanded UGA will increase and accelerate the need for park and recreation facilities to serve the citizens of the area. Approximately 63 additional acres of parks and trails would be required to meet the LOS by full development in 2024 under Alternative 2, and 70 additional acres would be required under Alternative 3. Impact fees from developers of new facilities in this area will provide funding for acquisition and maintenance of parks. The City is likely to continue to supplement these park funds with additional general fund dollars as needed. Cost of maintenance and operation of parks will likely continue to be supplemented by other sources. Substantial increase in tax revenues to the City will provide more resources for such needs.

### **Mitigation Measures**

The City could increase the impact fees for parks, transfer funds from other sources, or obtain grants or other sources of funding to fund the parks system at the desired LOS.

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

BMP	Best Management Practices
BOD	Biochemical Oxygen Demand
CAP	Lower Columbia Community Action Council
CPU	Clark Public Utilities
CREDC	Columbia River Economic Development Council
Ecology	Washington Department of Ecology
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EDU, ERU	Equivalent Dwelling Unit; Equivalent Residential Unit
FD #12	Clark County Fire Protection District #12
GIS	Geographic Information System
GMA	Washington State Growth Management Act
GPD	Gallons per day
HCM	Highway Capacity Manual
I-5	Interstate 5
LB /DAY	Pounds per day
LCMC	La Center Municipal Code
LOS	Level of Service
MBR	Membrane Bio-Reactor
MPH	Miles per hour
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
OM&R	Operation, Maintenance and Repair
PHS	Priority Habitat and Species
PVC	Polyvinyl Chloride
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
RTC	Southwest Regional Transportation Council
SBR	Sequencing Batch Reactor
SDC	System Development Charge
SEPA	Washington State Environmental Policy Act
T&E	Threatened and Endangered

TAZ	Traffic Analysis Zone
TSS	Total Suspended Solids
UGA	Urban Growth Area
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
V/C	Volume to Capacity Ratio
WAC	Washington Administrative Code
WDFW	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
WDNR	Washington Department of Natural Resources
WRIA	Water Resource Inventory Area
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation
WWTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Clark County Direction on Planning Assumptions**

# Direction on Planning Assumptions Through October 4, 2005

## Policy Call Assumptions

1. Population forecast – 584,310 (2% rate through 2024. Assume 2.2% for first six years of capital facilities plan).
2. Base year for plan – 2004. End year for plan - 2024
3. Urban/rural population split – 90:10 split.
4. Market factors – 0% factor for industrial lands, 0% factor for commercial lands and 10% factor for residential lands.
5. Job creation goals – 1: 1.75 new jobs to new population ratio (includes rural population). The following sources of jobs will be counted toward the 110,077 jobs target:
  - vacant and buildable lands added to existing urban growth areas as needed to meet the target;
  - vacant and buildable lands inside existing urban growth areas;
  - sites not within the vacant buildable lands inventory for which development approvals have been granted;
  - sites where transportation studies, planning studies, and development agreements indicate that the employment potential is larger than that assigned under the employment density assumptions;
  - public sector employment on tax exempt lands;
  - vacant rural industrial and commercial lands (largely in rural centers);
  - proposed rural industrial land bank at La Center junction;
  - rural home businesses
6. Redevelopment factor – 5%
7. Employment density factors - 20 employees per commercial acre; 9 employees per industrial acre; and 20 employees per business park acre.
8. Development on tax exempt properties factors – do not include tax exempt properties, except those owned by ports and housing authorities in the buildable lands inventory.

## Consultative Assumptions *(countywide planning policies)*

9. Housing density factors – 8 units per acre in the Vancouver urban growth area; 6 units per acre in the Battle Ground, Camas, Ridgefield and Washougal urban growth areas and 4 units per acre in the La Center urban growth area.
10. Detached/attached housing split factors – new housing shall be “no more than 75% of any one product type” (detached or attached housing units).
11. Persons per household factor – 2.59 persons per household.

## **Data-Driven Assumptions**

12. Infrastructure factors – 27.7% set aside for residential areas inside existing urban growth areas (set aside addresses both on and off-site infrastructure). In urban growth expansion areas, supplement the 27.7% figure by comparison between the acreage needed to meet school and park standards and current school and park land ownership. If a school or park land deficit exists, assure sufficient land set aside for these purposes in urban growth capacity calculations to meet standards.

25% infrastructure set aside for commercial, industrial and business park zones.

13. Vacant residential land never to convert factor - 10 % of the vacant residential inventory will not convert during the plan horizon.
14. Underutilized land – For residential land apply the following criteria to assess capacity to accommodate growth within the plan horizon:
  - 30% of the underutilized residential inventory will not convert during the plan horizon.
  - Apply a building value per acre calibrated to the lowest 10 percentile (\$256,000) to determine the properties that will accommodate future growth;
  - Acreage properties in subdivisions are to be excluded from the underutilized inventory if 50% of the building value per acre criteria is apparent (\$128,000).

For commercial land the following criteria shall apply:

- Apply a building value per acre of \$50,000.

For industrial land the following criteria shall apply:

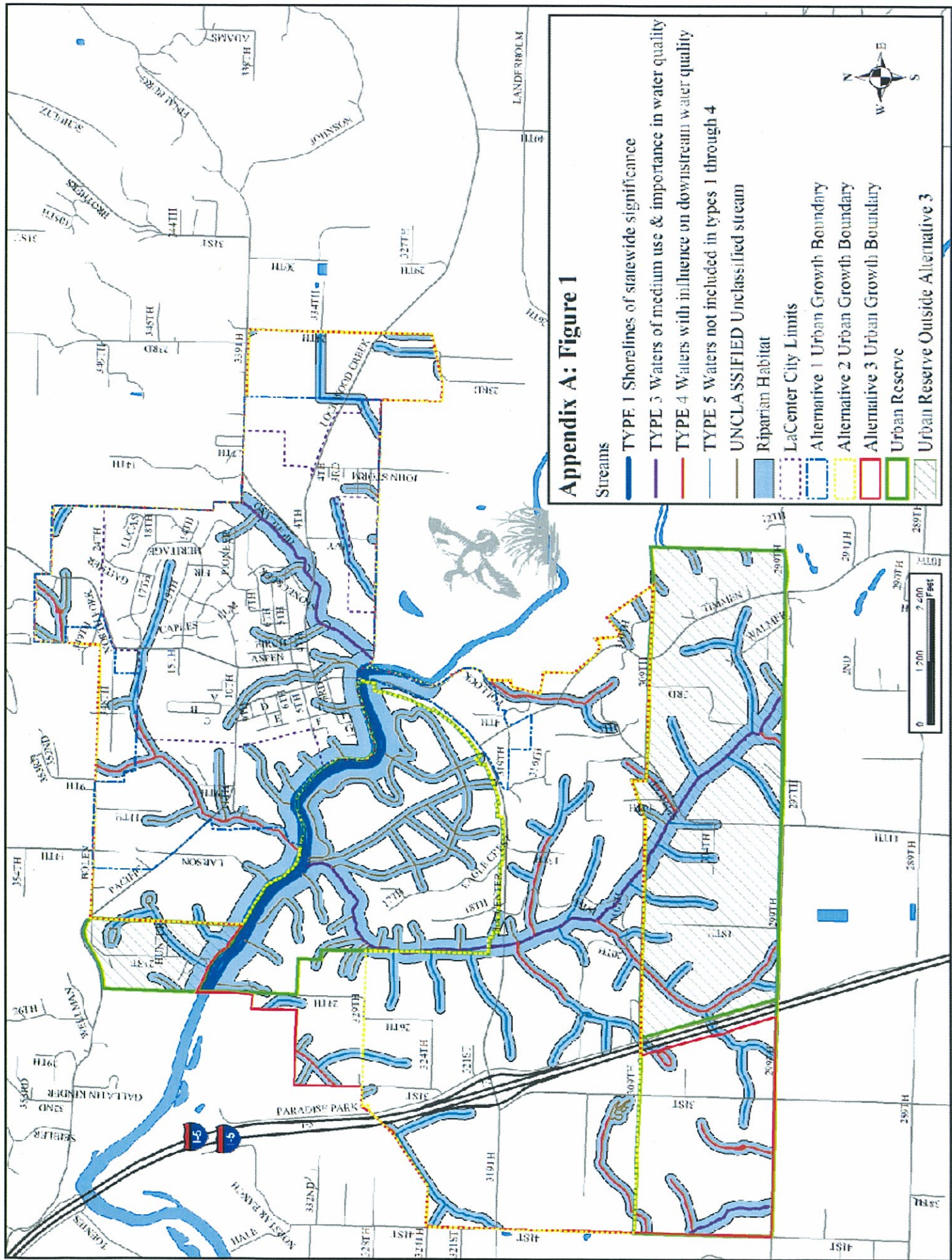
- abandon the primary, secondary and tertiary classification system. Redesign the model to more closely resemble the residential and commercial models.
- Apply a building value per acre of \$50, 000 to determine the properties that will accommodate future growth.

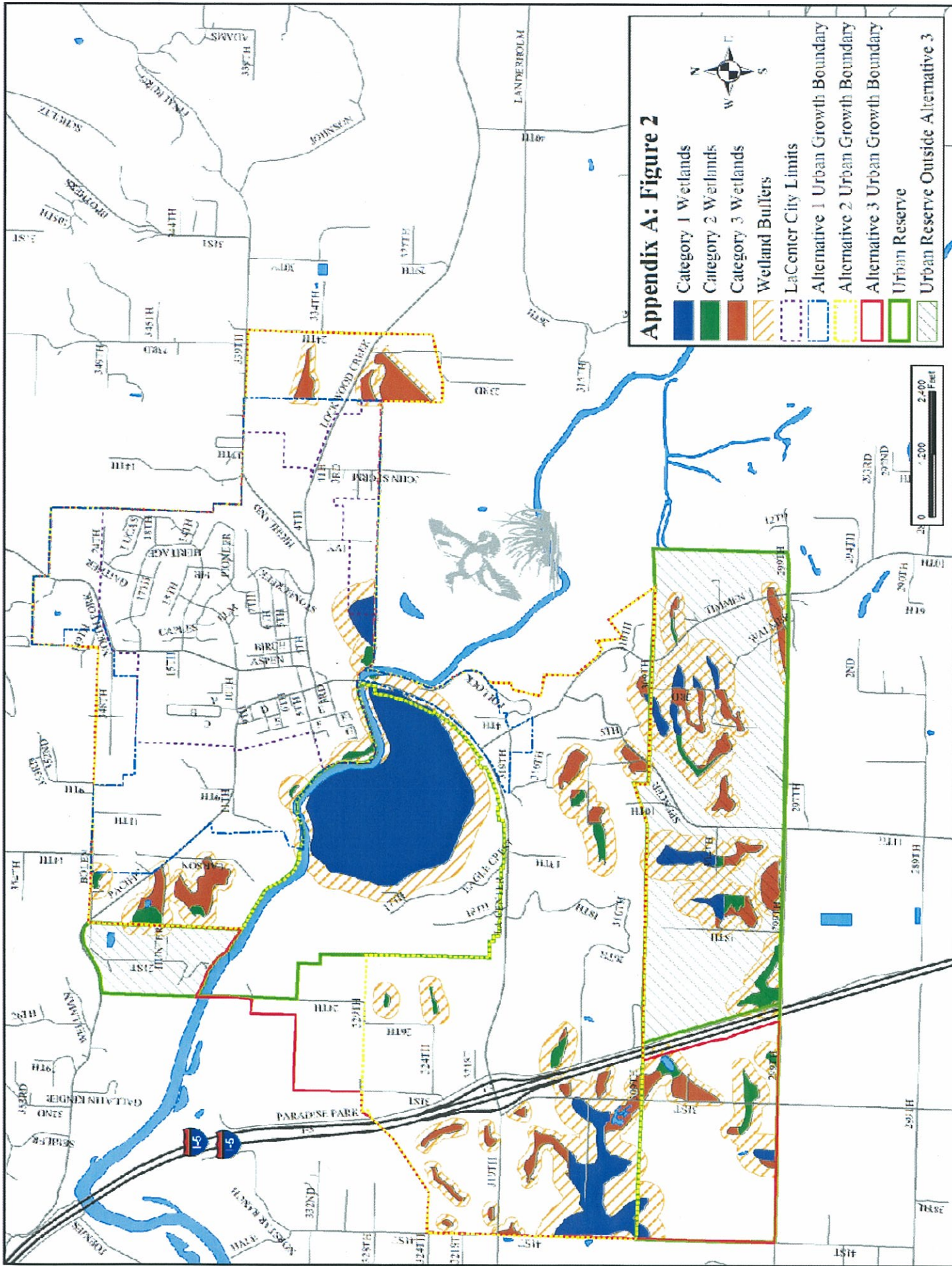
15. Development on critical lands factors – Exclude that portion of a parcel encumbered by critical areas from the buildable lands inventory. Include that portion of a parcel not encumbered by critical areas in the buildable lands inventory.
  - The 2004 critical areas map set should be used, augmented by updated critical area ordinances maps that cities have adopted.
  - The critical aquifer recharge areas map is not to be considered a constraint to development.
  - For industrial lands, abandon the primary, secondary and tertiary classification system. Redesign the model to more closely resemble the residential and commercial models.
  - Assume that 50% of land designated vacant critical will convert (based on development data between 1996 and 2004) for both residential and industrial models.

Assume that 80% of land designated vacant critical will convert (based on development data between 1996 and 2004) for the commercial model.

## **APPENDIX 2**


### **Detailed Information on Streams, Wetlands, Plants and Animals**













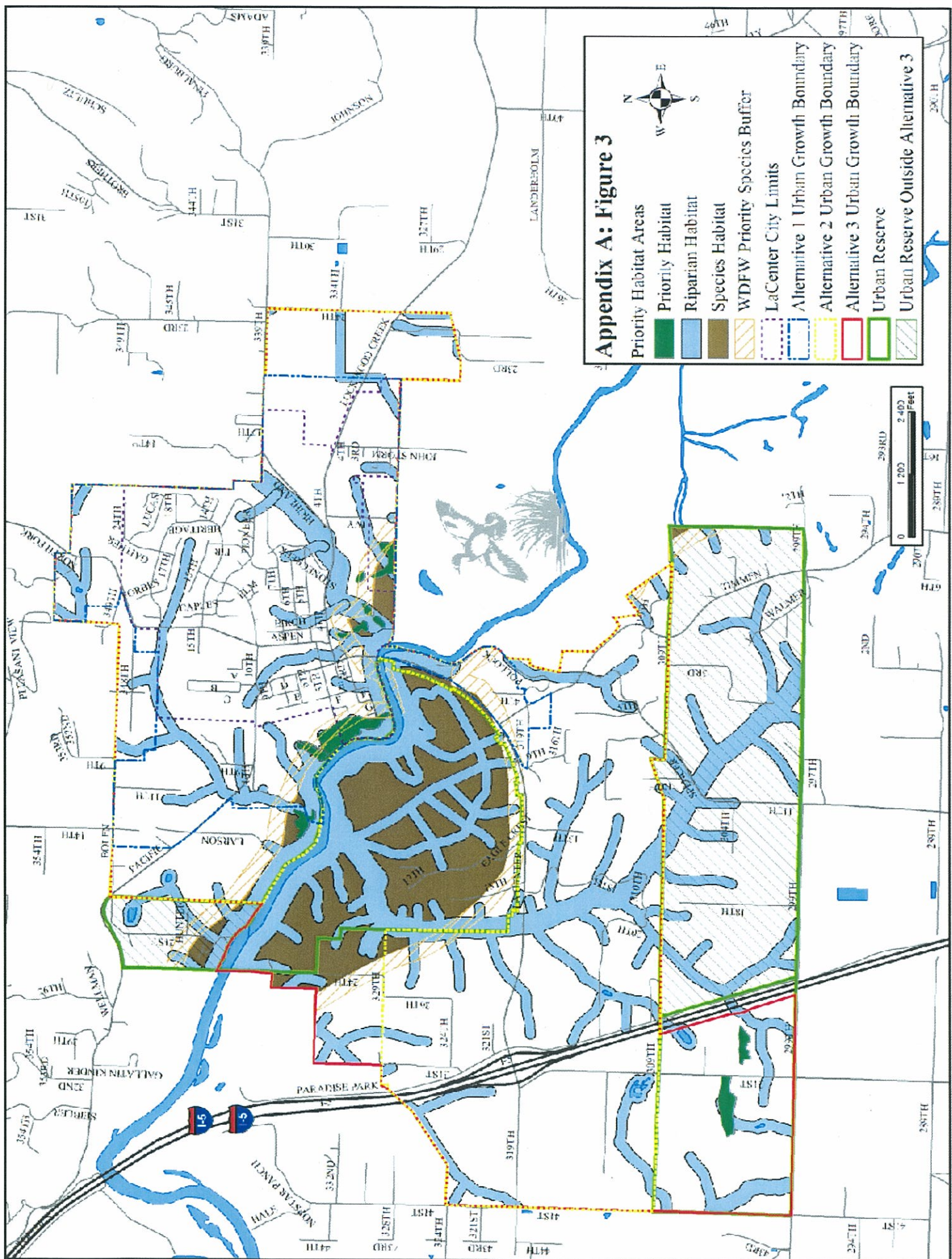




**Appendix A: Figure 3**



**Priority Habitat Areas**  
 Priority Habitat   
 Riparian Habitat   
 Species Habitat   
 WDFW Priority Species Buffer   
 LaCenter City Limits   
 Alternative 1 Urban Growth Boundary   
 Alternative 2 Urban Growth Boundary   
 Alternative 3 Urban Growth Boundary   
 Urban Reserve   
 Urban Reserve Outside Alternative 3 



**APPENDIX 3**

**Water Improvement Plan for the City of La Center  
2006 UGA Expansion**

By

Clark Public Utilities

# Water Improvement Plan for the City of La Center 2006 UGA Expansion

## Capital Improvement Plan

Recommended capital improvements for the Clark Public Utilities water system that will serve the expanded City of La Center 2006 UGA include improvements to the following:

- Source of supply and treatment facilities,
- Distribution storage facilities and booster pumping stations,
- Distribution piping and appurtenances.

Projects in the capital improvement plan were identified by each of the categories shown above. A summary of the 20-year capital improvement plan is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Clark Public Utilities Capital Improvement Plan Summary 2005 - 2024				
Year	Storage & Boosters	Mains	Source	Total
2005	\$0	\$30,000	\$0	\$30,000
2006	\$0	\$42,000	\$50,000	\$92,000
2007	\$90,000	\$35,000	\$240,000	\$365,000
2008	\$150,000	\$175,000	\$480,000	\$823,000
2009	\$575,000	\$175,000	\$450,000	\$1,218,000
2010	\$330,000	\$1,200,000	\$350,000	\$1,880,000
2011	\$400,000	\$175,000	\$350,000	\$925,000
2012	\$60,000	\$175,000	\$0	\$235,000
2013	\$90,000	\$175,000	\$0	\$265,000
2014	\$0	\$175,000	\$480,000	\$655,000
2015	\$160,000	\$175,000	\$0	\$335,000
2016	\$0	\$175,000	\$0	\$175,000
2017	\$0	\$175,000	\$0	\$175,000
2018	\$0	\$175,000	\$0	\$175,000
2019	\$0	\$175,000	\$0	\$175,000
2020	\$0	\$175,000	\$0	\$175,000
2021	\$0	\$175,000	\$480,000	\$655,000
2022	\$0	\$175,000	\$0	\$175,000
2023	\$0	\$175,000	\$0	\$175,000
2024	\$0	\$175,000	\$0	\$175,000

**Note: all costs in 2005 dollars**

## **Source of Supply**

Source of supply improvements include:

- Development of new sources in the area of the confluence of the East and North Fork of the Lewis River's.
- Development of new sources in the Pioneer area.
- Development of new sources in the Vancouver Lake area.

### ***Confluence of the East and North Fork of the Lewis River Wellfield***

Source of supply improvements include development of a well-field west of I-5 and north of the East Fork of the Lewis River. The well field is expected to have a total capacity of 5 MGD over the planning period. This well-field is anticipated to supply all the water needed to meet the projected peak day demands for the City of La Center. Preliminary testing of the water in the area indicates that it will require treatment for removal of organic contaminants, such as iron and manganese. The initial 1 MGD of capacity is expected to be completed by 2010, as shown in Table 2.

### ***Pioneer Source Development***

Additional source of supply development may take place in the pioneer area. Expected available capacity for source development in this area is limited to 1 to 2 MGD. This project is expected to be completed by 2007.

### ***Vancouver Lake Source Development***

A regional source of supply is proposed to be developed in the Vancouver Lake area. The capacity estimated for source development in this area is approximately 20 MGD. This project will allow Clark Public Utilities more flexibility to serve existing and future customers and will reduce the current supply from the Pioneer area into the hazel Dell area. This will free up additional supply for La Center and North Clark County that Clark Public Utilities serves.

## **Storage and Booster Improvements**

### ***La Center Reservoir***

A 1,000,000-gallon reservoir will be constructed next to the existing 420,000-gallon reservoir at the intersection of Aspen Avenue and E. Heritage Loop in 2008/2009. This will provide for better peak hour and fire flow demands in the lower La Center pressure zone.

Table 2 Proposed schedule for Source Development	
2006	■ Test well for future well field development at confluence of the East and North Fork of the Lewis River's
2007	■ Drill new well in Pioneer area
2008	■ Begin construction of the Lewis River well field treatment and pumping for 1 MGD
2014	■ Begin construction of second well at Lewis River well field for additional 1 MGD.
2021	■ Begin construction of third well at Lewis River well field for additional 1 MGD.

### ***Meadow Glade Reservoir***

A 3,000,000-gallon regional reservoir has been constructed that will support the City of La Center storage needs. This new reservoir provides better fire flows and peak hour demands to the area south of the East Fork of the Lewis River including the City of La Center's expanded UGA.

### ***Booster Pump Improvements***

Booster pump improvements will include new pumping stations and upgrades to increase capacity at existing pumping stations as well as several emergency generator installations. These improvements are aimed at increasing fire flow and peak hour pressure to existing pressure zones in the northeast and northwest of the City of La Center.

## **Water Main Improvements**

Water main improvements are made to repair and rehabilitate existing pipelines, provide fire-flow to needed areas, improve system hydraulics, and for growth in new areas where major streets will be constructed by the City of La Center. System Development Charges will be limited to covering the costs for replacement and rehabilitation of old deteriorating water mains. Water mains that will be built within major streets and developments are anticipated to be paid for and constructed by the developer of the properties that they serve.

### ***Fire-flow***

Individual projects have not been included since fire flow is being met within the current City limits. Main extensions will be sized to maintain current levels of service.

### ***System Hydraulics***

Projects to improve system hydraulics will be sized to support the expanded UGA of the City of La Center and constructed and paid for by the developers of the property that is requesting service.

## **Summary**

The capital improvement plan provides for improvements to Clark Public Utilities' water system that will serve the City of La Center's expanded UGA over a 20-year planning

horizon. Projects were designated for source of supply, transmission, storage, pumping and resource management for the 20-year planning period. Table 1 identifies a summary of costs for proposed projects by type for the 20 year time period. Individual projects have been identified in table 2 for proposed source of supply development. It is anticipated that new water main construction will be accomplished by means of developer connections to existing facilities and extension to and throughout the new additions to the City of La Center.

**APPENDIX 4**

**Comments on Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Responses to  
Comments**

## **Comments and Responses on Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

The City of La Center published a Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the possible amendment of its Comprehensive Plan and related land use and planning actions on May 1, 2006. The City accepted written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement through May 31, 2006.

Two comment letters and one electronic mail comment were received. The comments included factual questions, editorial suggestions, and opinions on specific issues.

The City of La Center has considered all comments submitted.

This Appendix includes copies of each comment submitted. Individual comments within a comment letter are indicated by a number in the right margin. Following these letters is a response to each specific comment identified.

### **List of Comments Received**

Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Letter from Rex Hapala, Forest Practices Coordinator, dated May 9, 2006

Stephen W. Horenstein, Letter on behalf of the Cowlitz Tribe, dated May 31, 2006

Clark County Community Development Department, Long Range Planning, E-Mail from Mike Mabrey dated May 31, 2006





May 9, 2006

RECEIVED

MAY 17 2006

LA CENTER  
PUBLIC WORKS

Jeffrey B. Sarvis, Public Work Director  
City of La Center  
419 East Cedar Avenue, Suite 201  
La Center, WA 98629

Dear Mr. Sarvis:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Amendment of La Center Urban Area Comprehensive Plan. It is our understanding that the City of La Center proposes to expand its Urban Growth Area Boundary to provide new lands to be zoned for commercial, industrial and urban residential uses. We have done a preliminary review of the DEIS and have the following initial comment.

In Section 4.2 Water and Wetlands (page 36), the DEIS mentions that streams were located and classified using Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 222-16-030. We just wanted you to be aware that until the Forest Practices Board adopts the fish habitat water type maps, the current interim water typing system (WAC 222-16-031) is in effect. The current interim water typing system uses physical characteristics to determine stream typing. Copies of water type maps can be obtained by going to [www.dnr.wa.gov/forestpractices/](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/forestpractices/).

If you have questions regarding this letter, please contact us at our Castle Rock office.

Sincerely,

Rex J. Hapala  
Forest Practices Coordinator

c: Steve Hartsell, Forest Practice Forester  
Kirk Willis, Forest Practices Columbia District Manager  
SEPA File  
r.f.

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RECEIVED

JUN 05 2006

LA CENTER  
PUBLIC WORKS

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Stephen W. Horenstein  
Admitted in Washington and Oregon  
steve.horenstein@millernash.com  
(360) 737-1470 direct line

May 31, 2006

**VIA FACSIMILE AND U.S. MAIL**

Mr. Jeffrey B. Sarvis  
SEPA Official / Public Works Director  
City of La Center  
419 East Cedar Ave, Suite 201  
La Center, Washington 98629

Subject: Comments on DEIS for La Center Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Dear Jeff:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the City's DEIS for its proposed expansion of its urban growth boundary. We submit these comments on behalf of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. Our comments focus on the City's provision of sewer and police services to the La Center junction.

First, it is not clear from the DEIS that the City has a financial plan to support the extension of this utility. For instance, Table 1-2 of the DEIS (Summary of Mitigation Measures) states merely that "System development charges and user rates will be set at levels to cover costs of service." The information we have seen from the City's consultant is that the rates required to finance a sewer extension to the junction cannot reasonably be borne by the regular ratepayers. We understand that the City is also preparing a capital facilities plan to support its proposed expansion of the urban growth area, and we look forward to reviewing that analysis.

In addition, to date the City has declined to negotiate with the Tribe for the mitigation of potential impacts caused by the Tribe's proposal. And, in any event, the City does not have jurisdiction to provide police services. As a result, it is the Tribe's expectation that law enforcement services will be provided by the Clark County Sheriff's Office and sewer services will be obtained elsewhere.

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Mr. Jeffrey B. Sarvis

- 2 -

May 31, 2006

Finally, because the City is unwilling to negotiate with the Tribe for sewer services, the Tribe does and will object to the City's urban growth boundary encircling the Tribe's land.

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Thank you for considering our comments.

Very truly yours,



Stephen W. Horenstein

**From:** Mabrey, Michael [mailto:Michael.Mabrey@clark.wa.gov]  
**Posted At:** Wednesday, May 31, 2006 4:20 PM  
**Posted To:** MOU  
**Conversation:** Draft EIS Transportation Comments  
**Subject:** Draft EIS Transportation Comments

The transportation analysis of both growth alternatives notes that a significant proportion of future traffic crossing the LaCenter bridge originates outside the city in rural Clark County north of the East Fork of the Lewis River. It is my understanding (based on a conversation with Hann Lee, the traffic analyst) that the transportation model used for the analysis was the same as the County's Alternative 2 model. For this model run, County staff reduced the actual rural household capacity to match the Board's assumption that only 10% of population growth would occur in the rural areas. The DEIS narrative (page 90) does not recognize this fact and claims that the County's rural growth assumptions are overly aggressive and unrealistic.

Both scenarios show failure on LaCenter Rd and at the bridge. The first proposed solution is to widen LaCenter Rd to four lanes from Timmen Rd. to the north end of the bridge. This solution doesn't solve the congestion problem through town however. The second alternative is a new bridge to the northwest in the vicinity of NW 21st Street. The DEIS states that the city would seek funding from the State and County to help with this new bridge, due to "significant impacts from Clark County cut-through traffic".

It should be noted that the County cannot help to improve LaCenter's streets, regardless of where the traffic comes from. That would be an illegal use of the County Road Fund. If the City is relying on County financing to meet city street CFP needs, then this plan is not in conformance with the County's plans. Although State law does allow county funding of bridges within city jurisdiction, the City should not rely on County financial help to improve the bridge in the absence of some specific commitment from the Board of County Commissioners.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Mike Mabrey  
Clark County  
Community Development Department  
Long Range Planning  
360.397.2375 ext. 4343

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## Response to Comment from Rex Hapala, Washington Department of Natural Resources

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### 1. Stream Classification

Streams mapped by GIS and located during the field studies are classified according to the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) methodology (WAC-222-16-030) for stream typing. WDNR categorizes streams into one of five stream types based on size, seasonality, flow, and fish bearing status. The City recognizes that WDNR has an interim water typing system that became effective July 1, 2005 (WAC 222-16-131). The interim water typing system uses physical characteristics to establish stream typing. The LCMC (14.20.030(B)(ii)) references WAC 222-16-030 as the City's classification system for streams. The City will update the water typing system to the existing DNR adopted water typing system with the next update of their critical lands ordinance. A conversion table for the two water typing systems is given below:

<b>Permanent Water Typing (WAC 222-16-030)</b>	<b>Interim Water Typing (WAC 222-16-031)</b>
Type "S"	Type 1 Water
Type "F"	Type 2 & 3 Water
Type "Np"	Type 4 Water
Type "Ns"	Type 5 Water

The City of La Center does not believe that there is substantial difference between the two water typing systems other than nomenclature. Riparian buffers are assigned to each stream type as outlined in Table 14.20.035(A) of the LCMC. Stream locations, types and required buffers are shown in Appendix 1, Figure 1. Any differences resulting from the use of one system or the other would not be significant enough to change the conclusions regarding the impacts of the three alternatives.

## Response to Comments from Stephen W. Horenstein, on Behalf of the Cowlitz Tribe

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### 1. Financial Plan for Sewer Utility

The City of La Center does have a financial plan to support the extension of its sewer utility to serve industrial, commercial and residential customers of the expanded UGA.

The tribal land comprises approximately 151 acres out of the total 707 gross acres of land proposed for industrial and commercial uses under Alternative 3 – the City of La Center Preferred Alternative. While the Tribe's proposed casino/resort project would be an important sewer system customer, the City's sewer system expansion plans are not dependent upon the Tribe's participation as a sewer customer. The City's sewer system expansion plans to serve the land around the La Center junction of I-5 would be viable if

other developable non-tribal lands in this area committed to City sewer service. Other developments could provide a sufficient customer base to finance the system extension needed to serve that portion of the expanded UGA.

Subsequent to Mr. Horenstein's letter, the City has participated in substantive discussions with representatives of many of the land owners near the La Center junction of I-5, including the Cowlitz Tribe, concerning the provision of sewer service to those lands. The City anticipates having signed letters of intent in the near future, committing to participate as customers in the City's planned sewer system expansion.

Further, if the tribal development did not use the City's sewer service, the City would not finance or construct as large a plant expansion as it would with the Tribe's participation. In either case, the City will be able to provide sewer service to customers in the expanded UGA, and finance the system extension through a combination of system development charges and user rates.

## **2. Negotiation with the Tribe for Impact Mitigation**

At an appropriate time in the planning for the tribal development, the City of La Center may agree to enter negotiations regarding appropriate mitigation of impacts from the casino/resort project. The comment that the City does not have the jurisdiction to provide police service on the tribal lands is noted. However, if development and operation of the tribal facility could create off-site requirements for additional police service, that could be an appropriate subject for mitigation discussions. It is a reasonable position for the Tribe to assume that law enforcement services will be provided by the Clark County Sheriff's office and sewer services will be obtained elsewhere, unless other arrangements are made.

## **3. Tribe Objects to the City's UGA Expansion**

The comment is noted. Also, see previous response regarding potential future discussions.

## **Response to Comments from Mike Mabrey, Clark County Community Development Department, Long Range Planning**

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### **1. Transportation Analysis Does Not Recognize Rural Growth Assumptions**

Regardless of whether the analysis conducted by Clark County incorporates the rural household capacity based on the Board of Commissioners' assumption that only 10 percent of population growth would occur in the rural areas, significant traffic impacts are still expected across the East Fork of the Lewis River bridge in La Center as well as the Day Break and Woodland bridges. It is the actual number of increased households in the rural portions of northern Clark County, rather than the percentage, that has a profound traffic impact affect. The 20-year traffic model forecast is clear in defining that impact. The model also determines the origin and destination of these trips that originate outside of La Center and are destined outside of La Center.

The DEIS narrative (page 90) recognizes the County Alternative 2 land use and resulting traffic impacts. Because these land use assumptions results in traffic exceeding capacity at three bridges (La Center Road, Day Break, and Woodland) in the 20-year forecast, La Center has concluded that the rural growth assumptions are overly aggressive and unrealistic – that is, they cannot be accommodated without unacceptable adverse impacts on traffic conditions. Such growth would require the County to mitigate the 20-year traffic impacts at all three bridges in order to contradict the conclusion stated in the DEIS that “the rural growth assumptions are overly aggressive.” Due to the excessive cost of such mitigation, a more prudent policy would be to limit growth in the rural areas to minimize the demand for infrastructure improvements. This approach is consistent with GMA regulations and prudent land use planning.

## **2. County Cannot Help to Improve City Streets**

It is premature to assign specific financial responsibilities for the La Center bridge improvements at this time. The impacts of Clark County’s growth policies in the La Center area should be taken into consideration when evaluating the appropriate roles for mitigating those impacts. There is a significant amount of growth assumed in rural Clark County that impacts La Center. While it may be true that Clark County cannot help La Center improve its own streets for existing traffic impacts, it is not entirely true for future traffic impacts. SEPA allows for any jurisdiction to collect appropriate mitigation for future development impacts from neighboring jurisdictions as long as those impacts are clearly defined.