

O'Donnell, Mary Beth



CP16#0530

From: Tilton, Rebecca
Sent: Wednesday, February 25, 2015 3:24 PM
To: Orjiako, Oliver; O'Donnell, Mary Beth; Silliman, Peter
Subject: Comments re: Comp Plan Update
Attachments: Carol Levanen comments_02-24-15.pdf; Susan Rasmussen Comments_02-24-15.pdf

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Hello,

Please see the attached written testimony submitted yesterday (2/24) from Carol Levanen and Susan Rasmussen.

Thanks,
Rebecca

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cc- BOCC; Silliman
Orjialo; O'Donnell for the record

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Rural Character in Clark County

Saturday, February 7, 2015 6:07 AM

One can easily get a glimpse of rural character by merely driving around Clark County observing the landscapes. Rural character is created by the way in which we use the land, the relationship to natural and man-built features, and the aspects of rural culture that impact the landscape. The rural character of Clark County is the primary reason that many residents decide to make their homes here and establish their families here. ..generation upon generation. Defining this unique character is the very first step in composing any Alternative growth plan concerning the rural areas. Alternative 4 will address this important issue.

Clark County's rural areas consists of many differing features, landscapes, and land uses. Our rural land uses consist of both dispersed and clustered residential developments, small to very small farms, old family homesteads that have been parceled over the years, wooded lots, and small and moderate scale commercial and a few industrial uses that serve the rural residents and support their communities. Rural landscapes encompass the full range of many natural features, forested areas, grassy pastures, croplands, green meadows, ridges and valleys, streams, wetlands, ponds, and other environmentally sensitive areas. The State of Washington code ;RCW 36.70A.030 (15), defines the character in this manner:

"Rural Character refers to the patterns of land use and development established by a county in the rural element of its comprehensive plan."

- a. Open space, natural landscape, and vegetation predominate over the built environment
- b. The rural areas are much less developed than the urban areas. This allows for the natural landscape to predominate over the built environment
- c. Fosters traditional rural lifestyles, rural-based economies, and opportunities to both live and work in rural areas.

A range of employment opportunities should exist in the rural areas. The most significant should be based from the rural industrial land banks. These land banks would provide the much-needed land for industries that in turn provide good, family-wage jobs for the many families living in urban and rural areas. These rural employment centers are becoming increasingly more important. These rural commercial and industrial zones as well as Limited Areas of More Intense Rural Development, are vital to sustaining the economies of the rural areas and supporting the fragile economy of the region.

The rural economy, rural character, and rural culture was diminished, practically brought to a standstill with the 1994 comprehensive plan. The large lot, 20, 40, 80 acre parcels; diminished land market activity, and values with the massive downzoning. The adoption of the '94 plan was created without any thought to the existing rural character.

Extending the analysis out to 100 years, one can see the many land parcelizations that have existed over generations. The present plan is not an inclusive one. It was clearly meant to stop all growth, including jobs, in the rural areas. This plan has fallen way short of accurately defining our rural character, accomodating any growth, and acknowledging the ability for more people to enjoy a rural lifestyle. A holistic approach must be undertaken if we are to accomplish this. Just as we have to plan to accomodate multi-family houseing, we also should acknowledge the other side of the housing spectrum for those that want a rural lifestyle...a

diversity in choices. The '94 comp. plan neglects this aspect...the rural lands have been neglected for 20 years.

James J. Gorman
for CCER, Inc.