

Madore planning proposal joins mix

Alternative 4 to be part of event on growth plan

By KAITLIN GILLESPIE
Columbian staff writer

Days after the fourth and final alternative to the county's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update was released, the public will have an opportunity to comment.

After two months of work, Alternative 4, written by Councilor David Madore, was posted for the first time on Clark County's website Friday evening. Planning staff did not contribute to the creation of Alternative 4.

The four alternatives will be presented to the public at an open house at 5:30 p.m. today at Ridgefield High School. According to a county notice, at least two members of the county council, as well as planning staff, will be available to answer questions.

County staff call Madore's hand in writing the alternative unusual. Some community members have gone a step further, questioning whether the development of Alternative 4 is legal under the county's home rule charter.

Alternative 4, which Madore has said is a response to the needs of rural landowners, would divide large rural, forest and agriculture lots into smaller parcels. The divisions, Madore said, will recognize existing parcels that have been in legal noncompliance since the adoption of the county's first Comprehensive Growth Management Plan in 1994.

"After 20 years, we finally have a chance to fix the inappropriate zoning in this county and make life better for rural landowners," Madore posted on his Facebook page.

Madore did not respond to multiple requests from The Columbian for comment.

County staff, including Acting County Manager Mark McCauley and Community Planning Director Oliver Orjiako, said it is

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not typical for a councilor to develop an alternative to the comprehensive growth plan. Waiting for Alternative 4 has slowed the finalization

of the growth plan update and prevented county staff from moving forward with environmental analysis of the plan, Orjiako said.

McCauley, however, said it was more efficient for Madore to develop the plan himself. Rather than presenting McCauley with his ideas and asking him to report to planning staff, Madore was able to create the map himself.

"It cut out the middle man and dramatically sped up the development of Alt 4," McCauley said.

There is some question, however, whether Madore overstepped his bounds as a member of Clark County's legislative board and into executive authority.

Friends of Clark County, an organization dedicated to promoting sustainable land use and growth, has condemned Alternative 4 and called into question why Madore developed it.

"Work sessions are traditionally for staff to give their expertise to the councilors, not for councilors to pres-

ent major new unannounced proposals," the group's statement reads, referencing a recent workshop during which Madore presented the goals of Alternative 4. "By doing so, Madore is usurping the process, putting councilors right back into staff duties despite the passage of a charter that intended to separate executive and legislative powers."

Charter advocate Chuck Green called Madore's actions "perilously close" to violating the county charter.

"(It's) not respecting the charter's true intent of separation of powers," Green said.

The home rule charter defines specific duties of the council versus the executive staff, which includes McCauley and all administrators. Councilors, according to the charter, may adopt comprehensive plans and land development codes by ordinance.

The county manager, meanwhile, can prepare and present comprehensive plans and development

codes to the planning commission, according to the charter. Council members are prohibited from issuing orders to anyone under the county manager's supervision.

McCauley, however, denied any potential charter violations.

Councilor Jeanne Stewart, meanwhile, said at the council's meeting Tuesday that she fears not enough work has been done to evaluate Alternative 4. She said she'd like to see further analysis and risk assessment done by planning staff to determine whether the plan is legally sound.

"I'm very worried that this is being distributed in the community like it is good to go, when that isn't the case at all," Stewart said.

She said she was frustrated that when she asked to see the alternative, she was instead directed to The Grid, Clark County's online portal for meeting agendas, minutes and documents.

"I need a narrative of what Alt 4 is attempting to accomplish," she said. "I need a set of maps, and analysis. Any material that exists on Alt 4, I do not want to go to The Grid. I need that presented to me in a package."

The Alternative 4 maps are available on www.clark.wa.gov/thegrid. There will be a second open house on the alternatives at 5:30 p.m. April 1 at Hockinson High School.

The county needs to submit the final plan, with board approval, to the state Commerce Department by April 30, 2016.

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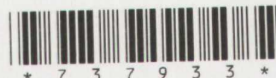
Public Meeting

■ **What:** Open house, where Clark County councilors and planning staff will provide an overview of the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update.

■ **When:** 5:30 p.m. today.

■ **Where:** Ridgefield High School, 2724 S. Hillhurst Road, Ridgefield.

■ **On the Web:** www.clark.wa.gov/thegrid



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