

**Schroader, Kathy**



**From:** Susan Saul <susan103saul@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 05, 2015 9:12 PM  
**To:** Cnty 2016 Comp Plan  
**Subject:** Comp Plan Comments

Community Planning  
Comp Plan Comments  
P.O. Box 9810  
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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the alternatives for the 2016 Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update. I have read the document online and, based on the available information and analysis, I support Alternative 1.

I do not think that Clark County should reduce the minimum lot size in the Agricultural zone from 20 acres to 10 acres or the minimum lot size and density in the Forest-40 zone from 40 acres to 20 acres. Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 do not protect the county's forests, agricultural industry or water resources.

We need to protect our working farm and forest lands through land use planning and policies that prevent waste and fragmentation, stop sprawl, and provide efficient transportation systems, affordable housing and local businesses. We need urban growth areas to save taxpayers and ratepayers money and protect our water resources and rural, agricultural and forest lands. Clark County does not have the water to support doubling the number of lots allowed in the forest and agricultural zones.

Reducing minimum lot sizes in alternatives 2, 3, and 4 would allow increased density of development leading to impacts on water resources through an increase in the number of new wells, reducing water supply, and increasing risks of contamination of aquifers, wetlands and streams from an increased number of septic systems. Changing hydrologic function through increased groundwater withdrawals and surface and stormwater runoff would impact wetlands and their buffers, in turn affecting our major watersheds. The East Fork Lewis River is a critical watershed for salmon and steelhead recovery and needs to be protected.

A 20-acre forest zone is too small to be economically feasible for forest management. It becomes too expensive to prepare, cut and replant a parcel smaller than 40 acres, so reducing the minimum lot size would effectively take current forest lands out of production. The county must also ensure that the use of adjacent lands does not interfere with working forest management and commodity production.

Reducing development in agricultural and forest lands also has significant environmental benefits, including protecting aquifers and fish and wildlife habitat, including streams and wetlands. Habitat fragmentation is among the most serious of threats to biological diversity, as determined by a consensus of conservation biologists. "Fragmentation" has been defined as the division of natural habitat into progressively smaller patches of smaller total area isolated from each other until the habitat is no longer able to sustain native plants and animals. Habitat fragmentation causes both immediate and time-delayed biodiversity loss. Fragmentation not only removes habitat but also isolates and fragments the lands and waters that fish and wildlife are trying to travel across. Isolation makes it harder for individuals to find mates, have enough nesting sites, and find enough food within a limited foraging area. Alternative 4 would potentially fragment 65,000 acres spread over the county.

Sprawling land development outside the urban growth areas would increase the need for expansion of public facilities, road improvements and additional transit routes. Alternative 4 would have significant impacts and the burden would fall on all residents in the county to pay for expanded fire and police protection, emergency medical services, public schools, parks and recreation, libraries, and solid waste, water, and power utilities. Property taxes and utility rates might be raised county-wide to support these expanded services.

Alternative 1 meets our county's needs for land for housing and jobs. We do not need to increase the number of lots in Clark County.

I urge the County Council to select Alternative 1 for the 2016 Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update.

Sincerely,

Susan Saul  
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