



ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL

A fast-moving target in growth plan

Posted on November 20, 2015 by Kaitlin Gillespie

Understanding a subject as dense as Clark County's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update is difficult. It's further complicated when information regarding the growth plan appears to change in the blink of an eye.

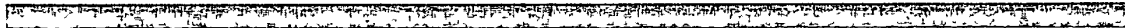
Take, for instance, Councilor David Madore's planning assumptions developed to, as he puts it, correct some facts about the number of lots created by Alternatives 1 and 4. Fun fact about that, however. There have actually been eight versions of these assumptions, county planning staff said last night.

Madore actually sent me an irritated email earlier this week when I conflated two versions of the planning assumptions after my coverage of an open house where only one of those versions was on display. I've since corrected that error.

But that very same version I incorrectly quoted, along with a slew of comments made on those assumptions by county planning staff and the prosecutor's office, remains on Clark County's planning website as an apparently relevant document. In fact, it was one of the supporting documents posted with Thursday's Planning Commission meeting agenda.

The red and blue comments are from planning staff, while the green is from the Prosecutor's Office. Remember, this is an older version of planning assumptions than what was presented at the open houses.

7	<p>The 15% Market Factor used for urban parcels to provide some margin for the law of supply and demand to satisfy the GMA affordable housing goal inside the UGB shall not apply outside the UGB.</p> <p>The market factor is an addition to the land needed in an urban growth area to accommodate 20-year growth projections, because of assumed fluctuating demand for that area. WAC 365-196-310(4)(b)(ii)(F). Market factor is a tool used to size the UGA and does not directly impact the number of lots under study. The market factor is not used to satisfy the affordable housing goals.</p>	<p>A deduction of up to 7.5% is appropriate to provide some margin for the law of supply and demand of rural parcels to help satisfy the GMA affordable housing goal</p> <p>The market factor is not used to satisfy the affordable housing goals. It is used to size an area, not to determine the number of lots in the area.</p> <p>Market factor, the use of which is authorized by the WAC, is an addition to the amount of land available for development, not a subtraction. It is extremely unlikely that all of the lots designated as available for development over a 20-year period will develop over 8 years, after which time</p>
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	<p>a new GMA update will be due, and can make any revisions that are then needed. Subtracting an arbitrary number of lots from the 20-year supply is not supportable in law or reason.</p>
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An screenshot of an example of one of Councilor David Madore's planning assumptions with county staff's comments.

But wait, there's more. If you comb through the FTP server I linked to earlier, you'll find there's even more attached to this item - an email from Madore to Planning Director Oliver Orjiako asking that he and planning staff not to make changes for anything presented at the Monday or Tuesday open houses, so as not to "confuse citizens with other versions or previous plans." As if that ship hadn't sailed weeks ago.

"As we related yesterday and as stated in our documentation supporting (the new planning assumptions,) we do not wish for staff to change anything or go back and find every possible cluster remainder lot," Madore wrote. "As written in the proposal, we are good with the maps, assumptions and numbers as proposed."

There also, in lighter blue, are comments from Madore himself rebutting those left by county staff. Rarely does the public get to see in writing what basically rose to the level of a debate between an elected official and staff, so it's a fascinating read if you're a nerd like I am.

And then The Gnd, that oft-touted bastion of government transparency, actually has a third version of the planning assumptions. I'll save you the commentary on that one. I think you get the point

My question is how is the public supposed to intelligently comment on any of this when it's all changing so rapidly and when there's conflicting information posted in various places on the county website?

That's a problem when you're talking about something like the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update. As Planning Commissioner John Blom put it to me in a recent interview, public process is as important, if not more so, than the results of the actual plan itself. It's no wonder so many people raised the issue of public process, and allegations of a lack of it, at Thursday's meeting.

All planning assumption changes were rejected by the planning commission, but that doesn't mean these are dead yet. The Clark County council will vote on all things growth plan Tuesday, and could vote to adopt Madore's assumptions. Councilor Tom Mielke has signaled his support for the amendments while Councilor Jeanne Stewart accused him of hijacking the process, so we'll see how next week goes.



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Comments

2 Comments

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David Clark

Even the planning commission admitted that the assumptions at the foundation of the current proposals are questionable, but they claimed to not have time to correct them! That's how government works: we know our work is based on false assumptions, but we will continue anyway!

Reply · Nov 21, 2015 3:58am Edited



Bridget McLeman

All prior testimony becomes moot if the latest assumptions and maps are adopted (if we even know which ARE the latest assumptions) given that people were commenting on a different version of the alternative. This is in violation of Resolution 2014-01-09 Public Participation Plan and 2014-01-10 Plan Population and Job Projections adopted by Council and signed, as Chair, by Tom Mielke, January 21, 2014 after significant public participation and adoption by the Planning Commission in 2013.

Reply 8 Nov 20, 2015 4:09pm

dark county comprehensive growth management plan update County staff David Madore oliver orjako

planning prosecuting attorney's office