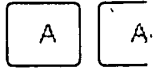


# In Our View: Find Middle on Land Use

By  
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After months of discussion, the writing and rewriting of plans, and more discussion, Clark County councilors are expected to vote Tuesday on the future of land-use planning in the region.



Considering four alternatives that have been put forth, the council will weigh rules for lot sizes and development to update Clark County's 20-year Comprehensive Growth Management Plan under the state's Growth Management Act. That is the expectation, but little throughout the process has gone according to expectations. Unhappy with three earlier proposals, councilor David Madore took it upon himself to develop Alternative 4, eschewing input from county staff. More recently, he has recommended changes to the population assumptions upon which the proposals have been constructed.

We agree with Madore's assertions that growth management is crucial and that due diligence is required, yet his methods run counter to the precepts of good government. Most disturbing has been a lack of transparency, an attribute to which Madore often provides lip service but rarely embraces in his work as a councilor. As John Blom, a member of the county Planning Commission, said: "Councilor Madore has not really shown his work. What's the effect of each one of these changes? How many lots does that dig up? We need to see him show his work on this "

Judging from his actions, Madore apparently does not feel beholden to anybody who might have expertise on a subject or might provide a dissenting opinion. His proposal would allow for the subdividing of rural, agriculture, and forest parcels into smaller plots than is allowed under the other proposals. For example, Alternative 1 would make no changes to county zoning and, under current population projections, would result in 7,073 new lots; Madore's Alternative 4 could create 12,401 lot

The plan might well make sense. But Madore's decision to ignore those who understand land-use planning and land-use laws creates doubt. He said current planning assumptions have not been properly "vetted," yet he voted with other councilors in approving those assumptions as recently as April.

Meanwhile, concern over the process has overshadowed important discussions about the future of the county. Madore's proposal has support from Clark County Citizens United, whose members argue that property owners should be able to subdivide their land to be developed or to be ceded to their children. We can empathize with them, but the fact remains: If you buy a farm, you have a farm — not 20 separate parcels.

Allowing for smaller plots could open the floodgates for the kind of sprawl the state's Growth Management Act is designed to prevent, creating environmentally irresponsible development and calling for taxpayer-funded infrastructure such as roads, schools, and water systems. It also could hamper future economic development, as Camas City Administrator Pete Capell explained earlier this year: "When you've got 1- or 2-acre parcels that have been built on, it's very difficult then to aggregate them and to be able to create the urban development that's going to be needed in the future."

Madore's plan would go too far in catering to rural land owners at the expense of other county residents. Some middle ground must be found between providing for subdivision and retaining the nature of Clark County. In the end, those are the most important issues that councilors must consider. But the process that got them to this point has been marked by poor governance.

**David Madore**

November 20 at 8 12pm Edited

The case for a new rural properties plan:

If it's not broke don't fix it. But if it is, don't make excused. Instead, get 'er done.

Our rural property zoning map is broken. Tuesday marks the day we can take a big step to fix it.

You are invited to join us for an important meeting at 10am at our Public Service Building to decide the future of every rural property in Clark County.

I welcome your response to these compelling reasons:

[http://clark.wa.gov/documents/ExhibitB\\_RuralComparison.pdf](http://clark.wa.gov/documents/ExhibitB_RuralComparison.pdf)

<b>Rural zone</b>	<b>Proportion defined as non-conforming</b>
<b>R Zoned Parcels</b>	<b>6 out of 10</b>
<b>AG Zoned Parcels</b>	<b>8 out of 10</b>
<b>FR Zoned Parcels</b>	<b>9 out of 10</b>



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