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New growth plan maps pulled from site

Add-ons to controversial Alternative 4 were put on website by mistake

By KAITLIN GILLESPIE
Columbian staff writer

Two new Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update maps were mistakenly made available to the public Thursday, prompting ire and confusion from county staff who say the maps should not have been made available in the first place.

Acting County Manager Mark McCauley said he instructed staff to post two additional maps for Alternative 4 to The Grid, the council's homepage for all documents and meeting records, sometime Thursday. The maps were removed from the website

Friday shortly after noon.

"Posting those maps was a mistake," McCauley said.

Alternative 4, written by Councilor David Madore with some help from mappers in the Geographic Information Systems department, would divide large rural, agriculture and forest lots into smaller lots.

Madore and supporters of the plan say it would take lots from legal nonconforming status to conforming status and give rural landowners more control over their property. Dissenters, meanwhile, say it would encourage sprawl in unincorporated areas, straining county resources.

According to Madore's Facebook page, the two new maps were created in response to community feedback at an open house at Ridgefield High School on Wednesday. The new maps,

Public meeting

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

■ **When:** 5:30 p.m. Wednesday.

■ **Where:** Hockinson High School, 16819 NE 159th St., Brush Prairie.

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

"The Alternative 4 proposal was enthusiastically embraced by the vast majority of citizens participating (Wednesday) evening," Madore posted. "Yet, they encouraged us to do better. The most common request was for larger (agriculture) and (forest) parcels to be made smaller if they were surrounded by predominantly smaller parcels."

Madore did not respond to a phone call from The Columbian, nor did he reply to a comment on his Facebook made by a Columbian reporter.

After the maps were removed, however, Madore updated the Facebook post, saying the Prosecuting Attorney's Office advised the council to remove the maps and not present them at next week's open house.

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sive Growth Management Plan update.

"We were not particularly pleased that new maps went up," Euler said. "The reason they were taken down is we would be presenting two sets of information at each open house."

Just because the new maps were removed, however, does not mean they're out of the picture. McCauley said the county will continue to respond to community feedback and may present a different draft of Alternative 4 prior to the council's April 14 public hearing on the growth plan update.

"What will happen is we'll have our Hockinson open house, we'll digest all the emails, all the comment forms and we'll see what the public presents," McCauley said. "We'll see if they have other ideas or suggestions that they would want to include or incorporate."

Euler, however, said Madore will have to "freeze the process" at some point, and he hopes it's not the day prior to next month's public hearing.

"Don't put something out at the last minute and expect people to be pleased with it or understand what it means," Euler said. "This stuff is complicated enough."

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"It would be best for both open houses to be exactly the same if we are to follow best recommended practices," Madore wrote. "I agree that even though we would like to accommodate citizen requests with speed and responsiveness, the formal process is best served by reserving refinements until after both open houses."

Chief Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Chris Horne did not return a request for comment Friday, but McCauley said he consulted with Horne after the maps were posted and was directed to remove them from The Grid.

County planning staff and the council have already been at odds over the development of Alternative 4. Community Planning Director Oliver Orjiako has pointed out on multiple occasions that planning staff did not develop Alternative 4. He has also expressed concern that the county may not make its April 30, 2016, deadline to submit the completed Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update to the state Department of Commerce.

Community planner Gordy Euler said presenting additional maps at this time violates the public process of presenting the Comprehen-