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Community weighs in on Alt 4, and most aren't happy

Posted on April 13, 2015 by Kaitlin Gillespie

Here's your last minute Public Service Announcement that you have until midnight Monday to submit comments online to Clark County on the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update.

Last week, we brought you the news of the Clark County Community Planning department launching Engage Clark County, where you can submit your comments on pending decisions. Engage Clark County, powered by Peak Democracy, will eventually be used for other subjects, but for now, the county is asking "What do you think about the four suggested land use and growth alternatives?"



Of 330 people that have visited the topic, 51 people have properly registered and commented—and the overwhelming majority are opposed to Alternative 4.

I counted 11 people who supported Alt 4, which would reduce the minimum number of acres a parcel can legally be. Councilor David Madore, who wrote Alt 4, has said it will recognize existing parcels and better reflect reality.

Another 35 opposed Alt 4, and five either wrote about something different, or at least appeared to. If anyone disagrees with my numbers here, please let me know.

That said, even if I misinterpreted what all five of those people are saying and actually every one of them is in favor of Alternative 4, there's a pretty clear majority here. Of course, we'll see if Madore thinks these are "compelling arguments" for why Alt 4 shouldn't be moved on to the environmental analysis.

Here are some samples of what people have to say about Alt 4, taken from the website. You can see all the comments, or submit your own, at peakdemocracy.com/2623.

For:

Marvin Case:

I have examined maps of the four suggested land use alternatives. I have talked briefly with two county staff members. I think Alternative 4 is the most honest and realistic of those offered. In my area (although the plan does not benefit me) the plan coincides with existing parcel sizes. It is logical, drawing lines between larger and smaller forest zones along coinciding or conforming parcels. Alternative 4 preserves rural character while recognizing existing conditions. Selfishly, I would like my parcels to be located in smaller zones. But failing that, Alternative 4 is an intellectually honest portrayal of growth objectives in the county.

Susan Rasmussen (Who, by the way, is the president of Clark County Citizens United, which fought for Alternative 4): Alternative 4 is needed. It is the only plan recognizing the obligation to address the long-standing issues of rural landowners.

- Alt.4 is the only plan employing an inclusive policy with the rural communities.
- The shift in policy is commendable. This recognizes the rural landowners as being significant stakeholders and gives merit to the issues in designing their futures
- Alt.4 is a step towards diversifying (sic) our rural economy and become less dependent on natural resources.
- Alt. 4 recognizes small-scale agriculture, family-owned woodlots, rural lifestyles.
- Counties across the state have moved towards friendlier rural growth provisions.
- Alt. 1 is exact status quo, Alt.2 nearly is
- The rural lands have been neglected over 20 yrs.
- Alt. 1 would freeze these lands for 40 yrs.
- Alt. 4 would align rural zoning to correspond with the patterns of historical development.
- Alt.4 is a step forward in correctly defining Clark County's Rural Character per GMA policy.

Against:

Loren Sickles:

I am in opposition to alternative 4 primarily on the basis of how this alternative was brought forward. The primary proponent has openly stated that no-one with knowledge of growth management, land-use or environmental laws was involved in the development of Alt 4. The formation of alternative 4 was done behind closed doors and without prior knowledge of the whole council or county staff. Alternative 4 should be, at the least, put on hold until the two new council members are installed, or scrapped altogether.

Given the time constraints of State law the prudent path forward is to continue discussions focused on alternatives 1-3 as they are the only ones which have been thoroughly vetted by knowledgeable people.

Angela Pond:

Alternative 3 gets my vote as the best option. Allow our smaller communities to develop and marginally expand their boundaries. Alternative 4 is a thinly veiled attempt to develop the north county with thousands more homes. That sounds good...but wait... the homeowners will be working in Portland and there is no way to get there now without sitting in traffic for an hour or more each way. No plans in our lifetime to change this. Keep the north county rural, beautiful and producing goods on family farms.

Terry Conner:

The citizens of Clark County did NOT ask for this.

Alt 4 is yet another half-cooked, special interest move, credited to the same rogue Councilour (sic) who continues to defy long standing protocol and logic. Alt 4 began as a direct violation of the HRC, having been directed by Madore to have his non-qualified protégé, Silliman whip up some maps, while he (Madore) tried his single hand at Planning. No experience, no intelligence, no vetting.

Then, the brass tacks of Alt 4 are simply and tragically BAD for rural farmers, suburban landowners, and the County community that depends on and supports local farming.

Just a few of the bad results would be water shortage, taxes to support development of the 8000 lots, detachment of rural well being, violating the GMA curfew, future legal costs, further morale decline to citizenry, further animous (sic) towards the BOCC from Clark County residents.



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3

