

County sends fourth zone alternative for evaluation

Council will consider map Madore proposed

By KAITLIN GILLESPIE
Columbian staff writer

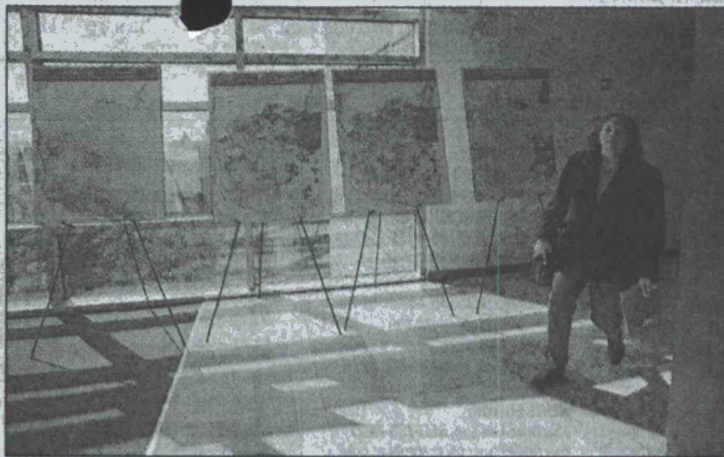
In what a rural land advocacy group is calling a "landmark decision," the Clark County council voted unanimously Tuesday to move a rural-focused alternative of the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update on to environmental analysis.

All four alternatives of the

plan update will be sent to Seattle-based ESA, an environment analysis group that has a contract with Clark County, for environmental review. The council also approved a \$41,267 increase of that \$100,000 contract to cover analysis of Alternative 4, the controversial proposal Councilor David Madore presented late last month.

"For the first time in our comp plan, someone has said these

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NATALIE BEHRING/The Columbian

Maps outlining potential future zoning in Clark County are displayed at Tuesday's county council meeting. The council voted Tuesday to move all four alternatives of the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update on to environmental analysis.

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Growth plan

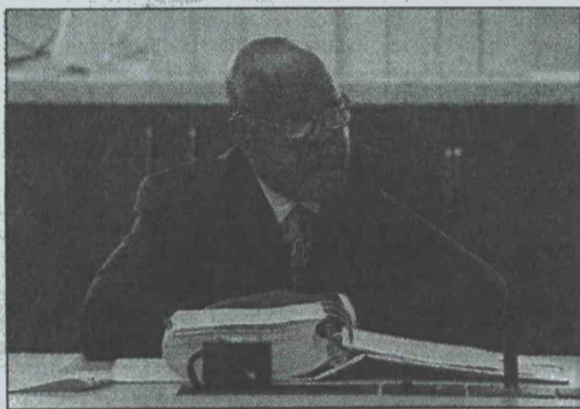
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rural citizens are significant enough to be key stakeholders in this process," said Susan Rasmussen, president of Clark County Citizens United, the organization that fought for Alternative 4.

This is not a done deal for any of the alternatives, however. The council will still have to approve a preferred alternative in several months, taking into account environmental impacts and public comment. The preferred alternative could include components of all four alternatives.

Alternative 4 would reduce the minimum sizes of lots in areas zoned as agricultural, forest and rural land, providing more freedom for landowners to subdivide their property. At a public hearing that lasted more than five hours Tuesday, more than two dozen people gave feedback on Alternative 4, with a little more than half criticizing the plan.

Opponents, including representatives of Clark County's small cities, land-use attorneys and farmers, said the alternative could create sprawl in suburban areas, have significant negative



NATALIE BEHRING/The Columbian

Community Planning Director Oliver Orjiako explains the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update and its four alternatives to the Clark County council and a crowded hearing room. After about five hours of public testimony, the council voted to move all four alternatives of the plan on to environmental analysis.

impacts on public utilities and services, and possibly violate the state Growth Management Act.

John Karpinski, a long-time Vancouver land-use attorney, recommended that the council adopt Alternative 1, which would make no changes to the county map. Karpinski said Alternative 4 would prevent cities from attracting industry, increase property taxes in rural areas and prevent farmers from adequately growing crops.

"I just think this is not the best way of doing things," Karpinski said.

Karpinski represented environmental groups dur-

ing challenges to the county's growth management plan when it was first introduced in 1994.

Rural landowners such as Stan Green, who manages a timber farm, supported Alternative 4. Green said that under current zoning laws, he would not be able to divide his land to give to his children once he retires.

"We won't be allowed to build homes and live on our own land," he said.

The council's decision restarts the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update process, which was stopped in January to allow for the creation of Alternative 4. Community Planning Director Oliver Orjiako said it will likely be several months before the contractor has completed its environmental analysis, which will then have to go on to public comment.

The county has until June 30, 2016, to have the plan approved by the state Department of Commerce, or else risks being held in violation of planning laws. That could delay state funding and grants to Clark County.



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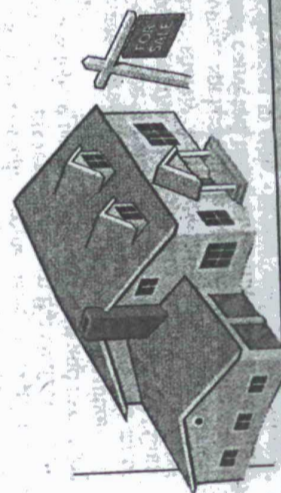
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