

Long Range

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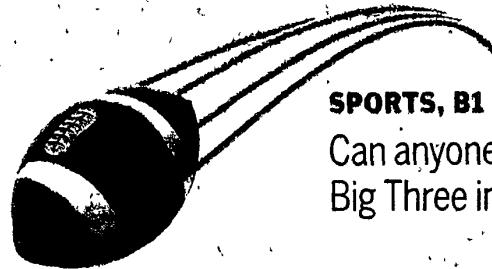
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CLARK COUNTY, C1

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SPORTS, B1

Can anyone unseat the Big Three in the 4A GSHL?

Planners reject smaller lot sizes

County board sees 'unconscionable' strain on resources

By KAITLIN GILLESPIE
Columbian staff writer

Zoning proposals that would reduce the minimum lot size of resource lands and rural property in unincorporated Clark County failed to earn the support of the Clark County Planning Commission on Thursday.

In its deliberation of the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan, the planning commission rejected all proposals that could reduce the lot size of rural, agriculture and forest land.

The strain on rural infrastructure to allow reduced lot sizes would be "unconscionable," Commissioner Bill Wright said.

The commission also recommended that the Clark County council consider options that would allow property owners who have owned their land prior to the 1994 comprehensive plan to divide their property on a case-by-case basis.

The commission will also recommend expanding Battle Ground's urban growth boundary by 80 acres for jobs; and La Center's urban growth boundary by 17 acres for a new school.

Thursday's decisions forward a hybrid of the four proposed alternatives to the Clark County council.

Alternative 1 would make no zoning changes. Alternative 2 would clean up errors in county maps and reduce the allowed parcel

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size of agriculture, forest and rural lots. Alternative 3 would expand the urban growth boundaries of

Battle Ground, La Center, Ridgefield and Washougal. Alternative 4 would reduce the allowed parcel size of agriculture, forest and rural lots further than allowed in Alternative 2.

Though proponents of Alternative 4 said it would restore rights to rural land-

owners, opponents have said it could be in violation of the state Growth Management Act

'Troublesome'

Deputy prosecuting attorney Chris Cook said changing minimum lot

sizes under Alternative could be "troublesome" court.

"It sounds like you don't think Alternatives 2 and 4 can be defended before a court," planning commission Chairman Steve Morasch said to Cook. "I see some potential in

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sues," Cook said, clarifying that she would defend both if she had to before a judge.

The planning commission's recommendations, though, they may point to what the county ultimately adopts, are not binding. The final decision rests with the Clark County council, to

pick a preferred alternative. The council is tentatively scheduled to vote on a preferred alternative on Oct. 20.

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