

**David Madore**

September 26 at 12:02am · Edited ·

Rural Citizens to receive the same freedom as urban citizens:

For years, it seems that rural citizens have been receiving the short end of the stick as Clark County code has created urban winners and rural losers. Step by step, we are identifying and working to correct the double standard.

Private Property Rights were stripped from rural citizens in 1994 by massive down zoning that handicapped the economic wellbeing of rural citizens. Alternative 4 is in the works to restore those rights.

Another form of discrimination has been the prohibition against Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) only in the rural areas (outside of Urban Growth Boundaries). No explanations are found in the public record to justify the unequal application of county law between urban and rural private property rights.

ADUs are smaller, subordinate dwellings on a lot with an existing house. They are quite often used to allow elderly parents to live close to family with freedom and independence. Or the family can supplement their income while providing a higher quality of life alternative to a publicly subsidized tenement.

That freedom is available for urban citizens even though rural parcels can accommodate ADUs far better than the relatively tiny lots found in urban areas. Earlier this year, both the Building Industry Association (BIA) and the Commission on Aging asked us to allow ADUs in rural districts. See their Commission annual report here: [http://www.clark.wa.gov/.../docume.../2015\\_COA\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](http://www.clark.wa.gov/.../docume.../2015_COA_Annual_Report.pdf)

On Wednesday, thanks to much prep work by Peter Silliman, I submitted the proposal at Board Time for us to consider moving it forward at next week's Board Time. The proposal simply levels the playing field in one more area for urban and rural citizens. You can see a draft of the proposal on the Grid here: <http://clark.wa.gov/th.../documents/AccessoryDwellingUnits.pdf>

Freedom and inalienable private property rights belong to both urban and rural citizens alike. Agree?

### FROM THE CHAIR

This letter is on behalf of the members of the Commission on Aging for Clark County. We are honored to serve at the pleasure of the Board of County Councilors and excited to share our work.

Like other young groups, we are always evolving, discovering both what works and what doesn't. As members finish their terms of service and are replaced by new members, we continue to find ourselves blessed with fresh vision and skills.

For all of us, the desire is to carry on the work that began with the Aging Readiness Task Force a few years ago. A large, diverse group of local citizens put in countless hours determining the current state of affairs for aging in Clark County as well as what needed to be addressed in the future. As best we can, we are continuing to move ahead with that same objective.

Clark County is not only a great place to live, but also a great place to age. We have the best of all worlds: a beautiful, resource-rich environment, a moderate climate, the activity of a large metropolitan area and a community truly diverse in most all respects. With 90 percent of Americans over 65 desiring to "age-in-place," our situation could not be better.

For our county to be all it can be for citizens as they age, we currently are addressing three key areas. First, we are developing an awareness campaign to help people understand the joys and challenges of



aging in Clark County. Second, we have a special focus on housing. Issues include remodeling homes to make them livable as long as possible, shared living, developing accessory dwelling units and creating new neighborhoods using universal design, which aides both the older and younger generations. Third, we are launching a website designed to help anyone over 55 find the resources they most need in Clark County. These are truly on the cutting edge of things we want to see for our aging population.

We are pleased to partner with you, and thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Bill R. Ritchie  
Chair, Commission on Aging

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