



# County council OKs 9 Madore policies

### Stewart abstained from voting; resolutions are not legally binding

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In his last meeting as Clark County council chair, David Madore helped usher through nine policies written by the Republican councilor, although the policies are not legally binding.

Madore and Councilor Tom Mielke, also a Republican, voted to approve the slew of resolutions, covering a range of topics

such as public transportation, the future of bridges in the region and changes to the county's fee-waiver program for commercial developers.

Republican Councilor Jeanne Stewart, frequently the naysayer on the Clark County council, abstained from voting on any of the nine policies, advising her fellow councilors to wait until the new council is seated.

"What a new council might come in feeling is they're the cleanup crew is not the best, most productive way to start the new year with the full, five-member panel," Stewart said.

Council Chair-elect Marc Boldt, who ran with no party preference, hinted in an interview with The Columbian last week that he wanted to see all of Tuesday's actions "thrown out" once the new board is seated.

All of Tuesday's actions do little more than offer philosophies and recommendations to the next board.

When asked by Lee Jensen, a frequent commenter and critic of the Clark County council, whether the meeting was a "waste of time," Deputy Prosecutor Chris Horne said that under the county charter, resolutions are a way primarily for

the council to express its opinions on issues, rather than being legal mandates.

"Policies ... are statements of the board's goals and what they see as priorities and values," Horne said.

### Economic principles

The council approved a resolution to expand its fee-waiver program, which waives permit application and traffic impact fees for nonresidential projects, to cover businesses moving from one location to another. The resolution also removed a line requiring county staff to report to the board

on the program's success every six months, among other small changes.

The fee-waiver program, championed by Madore in 2013, has been among the council's most contested policies. While Madore maintains the program has resulted in thousands of jobs, a county audit of the program determined it is financially unsustainable, and that a year into the program only 115 jobs had been added to the county by businesses receiving the fee waiver.

The council also adopted a "free

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market principles" resolution, which says the county will support "principles that allow more freedom for lower residential densities and

more flexible property use options." The exact effects of the resolution beyond being a symbolic policy statement were not specified.

### Transportation

The council, following up on 2013 advisory votes, opposed any light rail or bus rapid transit projects un-

less they're first supported by a majority of voters in a countywide advisory vote.

Also following up on a 2013 vote, the council voted to support a third bridge in east Clark County connecting state Highway 14 at Southeast 192nd Avenue to Airport Way in Oregon. Madore promised in January 2014 that the new, toll-free bridge would be completed in less than five years, though there's no sign yet of buy-in from the Washington State Department of Transportation.

If all that sounds familiar, it's because the board adopted similar policies in January 2014 opposing both forms of mass transportation and supporting a third bridge.

But the county took the mission of additional crossings over the Columbia River a step further, approving resolutions that call for two task forces, one for a potential east-county bridge and one for a west-county bridge.

The county also adopted a transportation policy that states county residents have rejected a "war on cars," and goes on to claim that an "increasingly disproportionate share of transportation funds" are being spent on public transportation.

### County code

The county also adopted a policy that claims to "cut unnecessary red tape" by calling for county code to be less restrictive than state or federal code.

The Clark County council has no more meetings for the rest of the year, but the new councilors will be sworn in at 9 a.m. Dec. 29. The ceremony at the Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin St. in Vancouver, is open to the public.

To read the resolutions in full, visit [clark.wa.gov/thegrid](http://clark.wa.gov/thegrid).

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