



## Press Talk: Land-use planning class is in session



[http://www.columbian.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/5169963-632691\\_10-08\\_lou\\_co.jpg](http://www.columbian.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/5169963-632691_10-08_lou_co.jpg)

Professor Brancaccio's Politics 101 class tackles Alternative 4.

By **Lou Brancaccio** (</author/lbrancaccio>), Columbian Editor

Published: February 13, 2016, 6:10 AM

Good morning, class. I'm professor Brancaccio. Welcome to Land-Use Planning 101.

This course happens to be particularly relevant now, because there is a big fight going on relative to how Clark County should be developed.



([http://www.columbian.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Lou\\_Brancaccio\\_portrait\\_04137.jpg](http://www.columbian.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Lou_Brancaccio_portrait_04137.jpg))

Lou Brancaccio is The Columbian's editor.

So, in addition to moving forward in obtaining your degree at Brancaccio University, after this class you will be better able to appreciate the land-use planning controversy that has befallen us.



...

Class, let me set the stage for the importance of land use planning.

Too many simply take for granted the water running to our homes or the fire department's services.

You shouldn't. These services are there primarily because of solid land-use planning.

Before I open it up for a robust discussion, let me give you some perspective on the history of land-use planning

Modern land-use planning really began in Chicago with the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. The premise was pretty simple: make living as enjoyable as possible. A key to that

enjoyment was livable spaces

Most important in those livable spaces was a clean, safe, healthy environment.

Before the World's Exposition, little attention was paid to the infrastructure of a city. Homes and businesses were built. But how those buildings received clean water and disposed of their waste was a crapshoot.

So it was really a product of land-use planning that created livable cities.

OK, thoughts?

Steven? *"Thank you, professor. If we fast-forward 123 years from the World's Exposition, what have we learned?"*

Excellent point. And actually a key point. Does anyone know? Danni?"

*"One of the lessons learned is, not only is it important to provide key services, but buildings must be put up in a way that those services can get to them."*

Thanks much. What exactly is Danni getting at? Noodles?

*"I believe the point here is, it's one thing to say a house should have sewer and water service, but it's another thing to actually deliver it."*

Well, what makes that difficult? Fernando?

*"You simply don't snap your fingers and get waste treatment service. Lines have to be dug and put in, then those lines have to be serviced. And you need a waste treatment plant nearby."*

Correct. Now we're getting somewhere. What makes getting those services easier? Hannah?

*"As a real estate friend once told me, 'Location, location, location.'"*

Exactly! And what does Hannah mean by location? Jimmy?

*"Sounds to me like in order to deliver infrastructure services to homes and business at a reasonable cost, they have to be concentrated in areas like cities and nearby suburbs."*

Jimmy! Ring the bell! That's it! OK, so let's bring this discussion home What's going on here locally? Jake?

*"Well, from what I'm reading, Councilor David Madore — against the advice of his own professional planning department — is trying to open up more building outside of these cities and suburbs I'm guessing he thinks he knows more than his professional planners"*

Easy, Jake No need to go down that road Fernando?

*"But professor, is Madore simply trying to give some rights to folks who have land out in the middle of no place who are trying to sell off some of it to make money?"*

Remi?

*"Professor, I may have been born on a Tuesday, but I wasn't born last Tuesday There is more going on here other than Madore trying to help 'his' people"*

Interesting Like what, Remi?

*"Essentially, this is a rural versus urban fight As noted here in class, professor, smart land-use planning says building should be concentrated in urban areas in order to provide better infrastructure Madore dreamed up Alternative 4 to allow more building outside of urban areas"*

But why, Remi?

*"Madore is the prototypical political bad actor Urban voters figured out long ago Madore was nothing more than just a guy doing stupid stuff So he realizes his only hope to survive politically is to shore up his rural voting base That's what Alternative 4 does."*

Jimmy, ring that dang bell again! Remi's onto something

So how does this all end up? Danni?

*"Well, if I were a betting woman, I'd bet the county council will deep-six Madore's crazy Alternative 4, handing him yet another setback"*

Jimmy? Final thoughts?

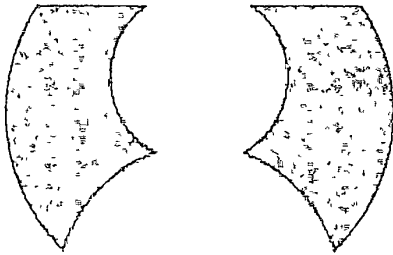
*"Oh, my!"*

Class dismissed

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**Lou Brancaccio (/author/lbrancaccio)**





**Columbian Editor**

☎ 360-735-4505

👤 @lounews (<https://twitter.com/lounews>)

✉ [Send an Email \(mailto:lou.brancaccio@columbian.com\)](mailto:lou.brancaccio@columbian.com)

14 Comments

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Add a comment . .



**Jeffrey Gibbons**

Any new home or project built should pay its own way through impact fees calculated on the full and true cost of that project on the infrastructure. We just voted (and approved) a \$120,000,000.00 bond in Camas made necessary due to the need for new schools and related facilities because of new growth we didn't have the funds to pay for Why do we continue to allow this? Put in place impact fees that allow for "pay as you build growth" and stop these types of "make up bonds".

The fact of the matter is that we will eventually effectively "build out" Clark County. It is really just a matter of how fast we allow that to happen. Trust me on this, if it doesn't pencil out to build with full impact fees today it will tomorrow. Perhaps the smart thing to do would be to stop creating infrastructure debt and start making sure that we can afford what we build

Reply 👍 4 Feb 13, 2016 1 10pm



**Don Charles Steinke** · Works at Retired High School Science Teacher

It took at least a million years for the population of homo erectus to reach 3 billion It took only 40 years to increase another 3 billion.


Most civil unrest is the result of over-population.  
Many wars are over natural resources.

There are 3000 new homes proposed in North Camas. Where will those people get their energy? All those homes should have enough solar panels to charge their electric cars and be off the grid

We need to stop incentivizing population growth. We incentivize population growth by providing

energy hookups and schools. Take the total cost of a new school and divide it by the number of students it will house and you get approximately \$30,000 per chair. There is approximately 1 student for each two houses.

The developer should pay \$15,000 per house as a school impact fee. We haven't done this when we wanted growth, but now we are simply rewarding land speculators.

Reply  5 Feb 13, 2016 12 28pm



**Kirk VanGelder** · Textbook Author at Jones & Bartlett Learning

Don . . . and your type told us that the planet couldn't feed that many. . . wrong predictions again.. just like what's happening with the global warming predictions.

Reply Feb 13, 2016 6 51pm



**Don Charles Steinke** · Works at Retired High School Science Teacher

Kirk VanGelder We are putting our life-support systems more at risk every day. We've overharvested our best ocean fish stocks and we killed the best oyster grounds on the planet.

According to NASA, even though we are in a solar minimum, the 10 warmest years since 1880 have occurred in the last 12 years. [http //climate.nasa.gov/evidence/](http://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/)

We need to work with Governor Inslee to transition away from fossil fuels. We can't do that if we build more fossil fuel infrastructure.

NASA says "There is no question that increased levels of greenhouse gases must cause the Earth to warm in response "

According to NASA, atmospheric levels of CO2 are much higher today than they have been for 650,000 years.

In Washington State, global warming has already cost us billions of dollars in drought, floods, crop losses, dead salmon, storms and forest fires.


Our snowpack is like a reservoir for our farmers in Eastern Washington. It doesn't do much good if the snow melts in May.

Reply Feb 13, 2016 9 31pm



**Lou Brancaccio** · Editor in Chief at The Columbian

Thanks all. The professor appreciates all the feedback.

Reply  1 Feb 13, 2016 11 22am




**John Burke** · Vancouver, Washington

Lou's "professorial" treatment of smart growth fails to account for alternative perspectives, such as this .

[http://www.independent.org/.../policy\\_reports/detail.asp...](http://www.independent.org/.../policy_reports/detail.asp...)

Instead, everything in this column is simplistic, reductive, and moralistic. It is a "just so story" -- fit only for crudely ideological progressives, and intellectually insulting to anyone else.

Reply  3 Feb 13, 2016 10 50am



**Jeffrey Gibbons**


After reading your attachment I would suggest that the real problem is not plannin (or lack thereof) but density.

Reply · Feb 13, 2016 1 47pm



**Carolyn Crain** · Western Business College, Portland, OR

I recall a couple of years ago one commissioner stated that in the 90's there were no fees like today for developing land, he didn't think there should be. Today we see permits required to replace an existing appliance such as a toilet which is over the top in my opinion. I have seen the taxes abated for high density developers in the urban core passing the costs off onto the other property owners around the county putting a squeeze on the cash flow of others which might be used to increase our revenues if they had the money to spend at a store. It also might just prove to provide more local employment while at it I witness some improvements such as the upgrades in parks like Ester Short downtown but also see the degradation in the roads which are subjected to high traffic use with lower maintenance budgets all part of urban high density planning issues. The people who own property want and should have the rights to dictate what their own neighborhoods look like regardless of rural or urban. The fees have a place and infrastructure is the why in that equation. Property tax abatements should be reviewed as those funds are necessary to maintain infrastructure needed to support communities. Long range planning is important for the continued forecasting of the infrastructure requirements and the demands on the taxpayers for revenues in the budget In here somewhere is a balance why are we having so much difficulty achieving it?


Reply  2 Feb 13, 2016 10 47am



**Mike Schroetke** · Works at Vancouver, Washington City Government

Could you please direct me to the RCW that requires a permit to replace a toilet.

And you ask, "In here somewhere is a balance why are we having so much difficulty achieving it?" You know as well as I do the reason we are not acheiving the balance is because of the the two Right Wing Wack-a-doodles who have had the majority vote on the Clark County Council for the last 3 years.

Reply  1 Feb 13, 2016 2 52pm



**Carolyn Crain** · Western Business College, Portland, OR

Mike Schroetke County Codes not RCW's


Reply · Feb 13, 2016 2 54pm



**Mike Schroetke** · Works at Vancouver, Washington City Government

Carolyn Crain I apologize RCW's are Washinton State Codes I would still be interested in


seeing the Clark County Code that says you must have a permit to replace a toilet. I would look myself but you seem to be familiar with it which means you would know what title it can be found under.

Reply ·  1 Feb 13, 2016 3 11pm



**Neil Rylander**


Fee to replace a toilet? Come now! That's a laugh.

Reply ·  2 Feb 13, 2016 6 52pm



**Lynn Carman** Felida, Washington


Mike Schroetke, heck just put your toilet in your front yard!! It's okay as it's under the 1 5 cubic yard for trash and okay in Clark County to leave it out there.

Reply  1 Feb 13, 2016 8 20pm



**Stuart L. Riley** · Vancouver, Washington


Noodles?

Reply  3 Feb 13, 2016 10 07am



**Lou Brancaccio** Editor in Chief at The Columbian

Noodles knows who he is.

Reply ·  3 · Feb 13, 2016 10 52am



**Jeff Guard** · Clark College

DeNiro in "Once a Upon A Time In America".

Reply  1 Feb 13, 2016 4 46pm



**Thom Rasmussen** Salmon Creek, Washington

He's from the old Dick Tracy comics.


Reply Feb 14, 2016 1 54pm



**Dennis Henry** · Ashmun

Hey Perfesser, there is that sticky thing about capping non urban growth. Not trying to put a hit on your lesson plans or nuttin, but does the Alt 4 or the alt one better address the findings of the court? Which were in a nut shell that.... "Based on the foregoing, we conclude that the GMA does not require counties to use OFM's projections as a cap on non-urban growth. The Board exceeded its authority, and the trial court did not err by reversing the Board's ruling."

"Affirmed." er Hallelujah!


Reply  3 Feb 13, 2016 9 46am Edited



**Betty Sue Morris** Vancouver, Washington

Dennis Henry - That court decision was appealed and the appellate decision was that while a county is not required to use the OFM numbers to set a cap on non-urban growth, they

were not prohibited from using it, either. That last part of the story from the original Poyfair decision never seems to get recognized, but it's the one that matters. The county chose to use the OFM numbers and that was not against the law or in violation of the appellate court decision.

Reply ·  7 Feb 13, 2016 9:56am Edited




**Dennis Henry Ashmun**

Betty Sue Morris You are correct in pointing that out. That quote, btw, is from the appellate court ruling What it all does come down to is defining rural character.

[http://wa.findacase.com/. .xq/fac 19990312\\_42416.wa htm/qx](http://wa.findacase.com/. .xq/fac 19990312_42416.wa htm/qx),

and at issue today is whether or not the planners are demonstrating understanding and giving sufficient leeway to rural land owners in setting those caps and acknowledging their rights.


Just because they can use the OFM numbers as a ceiling for rural development, does not mean they should.

Reply  1 Feb 13, 2016 10:11am



**Betty Sue Morris** Vancouver, Washington

Dennis Henry And I agree that the question about using the rural cap or not is totally a policy call. However, I have to say that while my sympathies have always been with the rural land owners who were downzoned in 1994, I have little concern about those who have purchased land in the rural area knowing full well what the zoning restrictions are They can't come back now and claim loss of private property rights They know what they were getting when they put down their money

Reply  4 Feb 13, 2016 1:41pm



**Kirk VanGelder** Textbook Author at Jones & Bartlett Learning

Betty Sue Morris - then your lack of concern for rural property owners will result in higher property prices preventing people from having the opportunity to live out here....we already have an affordability problem...your lack of concern just makes it worse...

Reply · Feb 13, 2016 6:56pm



**Betty Sue Morris** · Vancouver, Washington

Kirk VanGelder I disagree. The new homes built in the rural area are larger and more expensive than those built closer to services.

Reply Feb 14, 2016 8:04am



**Jeffrey Gibbons**

Betty Sue Morris To an extent I have to disagree with you If you look at homes of the same quality and square footage you may find that the homes closer in tend to have a higher price per square foot I think the distance to services is probably a large factor in this.

Reply · Feb 14, 2016 8:44pm



**Loren Lee**

What do the numbers say in District #3? I suspect the urban voter numbers exceed the rural voter numbers by at least a 3 to 1 ratio. There has to be more to Madore's motivation to jam in Alt 4 B...commitments and promises to moneyed developers and the 1 east side Financial wizard would be my bet.

Reply · 2 · Feb 13, 2016 9:04am

**Sam Atkinson** · Chambersburg Area Senior High School

First it's going to cost real \$\$ Millions to defend Quackery suits, more in delays for major projects, cost while Pacific Legal Foundation tosses lawsuits at the County

Then there is uncontrolled growth without infrastructure including the Bridges.

It seems Madoro and the CCGOP does not mind the cost or inconvenient meddling. So far all this has created nothing worthwhile but \$Billions of lost Bridges, time and lost wages and ZERO infrastructure or anything to show.

I take that back, they have shown a clear pattern of reckless voting, benefits to friends and developers and ideological shows at our expense....Billions of dollars, poof.

Reply · 3 · Feb 13, 2016 9:10am

**Kirk VanGelder** · Textbook Author at Jones & Bartlett Learning

Loren Lee - Why jump to ill motives? I guess we should do that about you as well...The county HS lost multiple times trying to do what staff want..

Madore agrees with the courts and wants to right the wrongs. .... I don't know where you live but when people from the city how they like to ride their bikes out here and that I shouldn't be able to change it at all, I want to know where they are when I am paying my \$12,000 in property taxes. .or cutting up large trees that blew down and damaged my home....or....etc. .etc...

Reply · Feb 13, 2016 7:02pm

**Loren Lee**

Kirk VanGelder

[https://www.facebook.com/humorshots/photos/a\\_319144738119518\\_84544\\_318396048194\\_3871162655107101806/?type=3&theater](https://www.facebook.com/humorshots/photos/a_319144738119518_84544_318396048194_3871162655107101806/?type=3&theater)

Reply · Feb 13, 2016 9:52pm

**Terri Brooks** · Vancouver, Washington

Kirk VanGelder if you are paying that much in property taxes you must have a million dollar home! Peruse maps online at the county's GIS site and you will see how much your property has to be worth to pay anywhere near that you

Reply · Feb 14, 2016 9:09am

**Sam Atkinson** · Chambersburg Area Senior High School



The Lawyers Madore brought are aligned with the Bundy Armed Army Movement. Pacific Legal Foundation. Funded by the Koch brothers You can thank Madore and friends for selling out the Public to Corporate interests.

If you not shocked or paying attention ...you should be

Reply 4 · Feb 13, 2016 8 32am



**Michele Wollert**

Love the shout out to one of our newest Clark County residents. Anyone you know, Jim Mains?

Here's the good councilor's motivation in a nutshell, well-stated by student Remi (for those who love Cliff's Notes):

"Madore is the prototypical political bad actor. Urban voters figured out long ago Madore was nothing more than just a guy doing stupid stuff. So he realizes his only hope to survive politically is to shore up his rural voting base. That's what Alternative 4 does."

Reply 8 · Feb 13, 2016 8 25am Edited



**Kirk VanGelder** · Textbook Author at Jones & Bartlett Learning

Michelle....there you go repeating unsubstantiated claims again...does it make you feel good?

Reply · Feb 13, 2016 7.05pm



**Jack Burkman** · Council Member at Vancouver, Washington City Government

Michelle, I don't think the Alt 4 issue resonates with the voters in his new district. All but about a dozen voter precincts are inside Vancouver. Most of those dozen are in the urban growth area. So why would Alt 4 be a concern to them since it is focused on rural issues?

This made sense when Madore was running for Chair and needed lots of rural votes It doesn't help him get votes from his district now.

Reply Feb 13, 2016 10 24pm



**Alex Reinhold** · Research Leader at Pawsitive Places

The main lesson in the class seems to be to hate David Madore, I rather not go to the dark side thanks

Reply 1 Feb 13, 2016 8:08am



**Michele Wollert**

It's not hate. It's called making the implicit, explicit

Reply 7 Feb 13, 2016 8 30am



**Loren Lee**

Michele Wollert . . .Yes, that escapes many hooked by the emotional arguments and rhetoric.

Reply  2 Feb 13, 2016 9 02am



**Mike Schroetke** Works at Vancouver, Washington City Government

Alex Reinhold, when you follow the behavior of David Madore, what's not to hate?

Reply Feb 13, 2016 2 41pm



**Neil Rylander**


Mike Schroetke

Reply · Feb 13, 2016 6 59pm



**Neil Rylander**

It's not about hate. David Madore, son a a couple I have much love for, has created division in this county Dislike, OK, but agree hate is not appropriate.

Reply  2 Feb 13, 2016 7 02pm



**Kirk VanGelder** Textbook Author at Jones & Bartlett Learning

Loren Lee - hahaha! As if Lou's missive is nothing but an emotional argument and rhetoric! You must be really disappointed in Lou!!!

Reply · Feb 13, 2016 7 07pm



**Lynn Carman** · Felida, Washington

Lou, What planning of the past? GMA is a total joke here and why should the County cater to those that bought land and didn't do their research on what they were purchasing? What planning was done is a total mess as we see roadways fail due to the density that was deam upon us all with the first go around of GMA The developer have runned this community and the mess is put on the backs of the taxpayers as they try to fix the messes they created with poor planning. Sorry but you failed the readers with this

one Come on out to the real world where we all live with the problems of density. Clark County fails to keep it's citizens safe with the lack of many things. Stop catering to a handful of folks with

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