

Misguided Planning: Clark County comp plan would force people into high-density housing

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An open letter to Clark County Councilors:



The 2012 Growing Healthier Report is an attempt to cover up the true purpose of the document, which is a forced migration of the people into cities and high-density housing.

Who can argue having good health and taking care of the elderly? But the underlying purpose for all of this “concern” is a covert attempt at social manipulation of forcing people into government housing or housing the government wants people to live in, regardless of what they actually want.

The Growing Healthier Report states, “Areas in green are within a half mile of a farmers market produce stand, grocery store, or supermarket. Areas beyond this boundary are food deserts with no healthy food options.”

This excerpt from the Report begins the discussion as to why those living in rural areas are not healthy, because they cannot bike or walk to a grocery store for food. Volumes of testimony from landowners tell the county that this is not true. Clark County has no statistics of strength, stamina, medical records and longevity of the rural populace to support these assertions, let alone prove them.

The optimum way for people to be both mentally and physically healthy is to give them space to live. The best way to do that is on small acreages. In contrast, there are numerous scientific documents and data that show that people with mental illness, obesity, cancer, diabetes and heart conditions are primarily located in the urban areas. Crime is also predominant in areas of higher density.

Clark County’s own documents show this Report to be wrong. Scientific statistics also prove the Report to be wrong, so why would such a Growing Healthier Report be the basis for a Health Element in the Comprehensive Plan? The only answer one can derive from the Report, is control and manipulation of the people.

The Growth Management Act encourages growth to be placed in areas that provide more services, as a means to allow for more efficiency, but it did not intend for the county to dictate the very lives of the people.

It is striking and shocking that the county has spent many years creating this planning monster, with the help of high density planners and environmentalists. One can argue that the GMA is an environmental law, but the 14 Growth Management Act Goals say otherwise. The courts have defined the Act to be something much more reasonable than it was assumed in 1994.

For instance, there is no “bright line” five-acre lot size for rural and resource areas, prime soil is mandated for resource land, the needs of the resource industry are to be considered, buildable lands analysis is not to be used in rural areas, there is no cap on rural growth, and the list goes on and on.

The Legislature did not intend the GMA to be abusive. But what Clark County is proposing as necessary for the health of the people, comes very close to that. In the guise of health, all manner of regulation would be forced on citizens, without their knowledge and consent.

Given the statistics that prove the excerpt from the Report to be wrong, including statistics published by Clark County, why would a Report like this be even considered? Is it just to enhance the cities or prevent growth? Is it old school planners using college textbook concepts? Is it county staff realizing their power over the people? Is it a result of power hungry politicians? Perhaps it is a combination of all of these, and more. Clark County needs to take a very close look at where all of this misguided planning and regulations is leading. Economic growth is a product of property rights, and without property rights, economic growth will not occur.

Is the county simply going to increase taxes to such a degree that Clark County will be similar to San Francisco, where a small studio apartment costs upwards of \$2,000 to rent and a small home is financially out of reach for most people. This type of planning is tragically flawed.

The Health Element and the Ageing Readiness policies must be removed from the 2016 Comprehensive Plan before it becomes too costly for even the paper it is written on, and rebellion of the taxpayers becomes a reality.

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Executive Secretary

Clark County Citizens United, Inc.

Battle Ground