



## County growth plan remains divisive topic

Quiring proposes delay, won't support update as written

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The Clark County Planning Commission's debate Thursday over the county's 20-year-growth plan hinted at continued division over how best to provide for the

area's population growth in the coming decades.

Thursday's meeting was the last step before the Clark County council is slated to approve the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update at its June 21 meeting, bringing a three-year process marred by controversy to a close. That means the county will squeak its final draft through to the state Commerce Department just

nine days shy of its June 30 deadline.

Planning Commissioner Eileen Quiring, who is also running as a Republican for the Clark County council seat currently held by retiring Republican Tom Mielke, set the tone for Thursday's debate early in the meeting.

Quiring, citing some community opposition to chapters of the plan, said she would not be supporting

the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update as written.

"I think we should actually go back and start again even though it would make this plan late," she said. "I understand that I'm not going to be very popular with my commission members here with this stance."

In particular, Quiring questioned why chapters addressing home design,

environmental issues and healthy living belong in the Comprehensive Plan at all, echoing recent complaints by Republican Councilor Tom Mielke about the amount of material in the plan.

"I've said this before. This is all part of the actual plan that I disagree with wholeheartedly," Quiring said during a discussion of housing policies. "I don't think it be-

longs in our comprehensive plan."

Quiring's idea to delay the plan, however, got little steam from her fellow commissioners. John Blom, who is running as a Republican against Republican Councilor David Madore, said he feared Clark County may be faced with "potentially trying to rewrite one plan while

GROWTH, Page C3

### Growth

From Page C1

defending another" if it immediately recommended the county revisit the entire plan.

Commissioner Ron Barca agreed.

"This is a very political discussion," Barca said. "It's easy to recognize deficits in any plan, but I don't think it's really our place to tell the board what we believe the appropriate action should be taken."

Notably, the Planning Commission for a third time rejected zoning that would allow for smaller agriculture, rural and forest lots in unincorporated Clark County. The commission has twice rejected components of proposed alternatives, including Madore's controversial and now defunct Alternative 4, that allowed for smaller lots. The council, however, voted to include compo-

nents of Alternative 2 that allowed for smaller lots, though not to the degree of Madore's Alternative 4.

But the commission echoed concerns it had about smaller lots earlier this year. Commissioner Richard Bender said it would be "wishful thinking" to assume the county would have funding to support additional lots. The county is projecting a \$158.1 million shortfall in funding transportation projects over the next 20 years.

Barca said allowing smaller lots in unincorporated Clark County would violate a county planning assumption that 90 percent of the growth will happen in urban areas, and 10 percent will happen in rural areas. Adding more rural lots would skew that split toward rural.

"I think we're putting ourselves in a position that says we're not really adequately addressing what we have already adopted as our own planning assumptions," Barca said.



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