



Clark County adopts 20-year growth plan

Madore tries - and fails - to restore Alternative 4 to land-use program



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After a marathon meeting Tuesday, the Clark County council ended three years of work by adopting its 20-year growth plan update.



The final plan, which the council considered in a seven-hour hearing, includes smaller lot sizes in rural Clark County, expands the urban growth areas of some of the county's cities and raises some school impact fees.

The lengthy process came without surprises, but nonetheless felt like Republican Councilor David Madore's last stand for Alternative 4. Madore first proposed that controversial zoning alternative, which would have allowed for even smaller lots across rural Clark County, about a year ago, but the Clark County council rejected the plan at a meeting earlier this year.

"What this plan does is it unnecessarily imposes burdensome restrictions on the citizens," Madore said of the final growth plan update. "It adds extra regulation, extra red tape, it strips citizens of the private property rights they thought they had."

Madore's only ally on the council, Republican Tom Mielke, said the comprehensive plan imposes too many restrictions on development.

"Clark County seems to have the chains on it," Mielke said. "We seem to be lacking in moving forward, providing jobs and creating affordable housing."

As the council considered items that would reduce parcel sizes for agriculture, forest and rural properties, Madore cycled through the same series of questions and suggestions. Each time, he asked if other counties allow for smaller lots, followed by a motion to allow the county to offer smaller lots.

Madore's continued line of questioning frustrated Republican Councilor Julie Olson, who at one point called his continued pestering as though he'd never seen the material before "offensive."

Making last appeal

The most vocal supporters of Alternative 4, Susan Rasmussen and Carol Levanen, also made their last appeal to allow for smaller lot sizes in rural Clark County. The leaders of Clark County Citizens United, an organization representing some rural property owners, have been testifying to the Clark County council at nearly all of the council's meetings for more than a year.

Levanen, executive secretary of the organization, echoed her frequent talking points, saying Clark County planning staff "erroneously" used a "biased, unauthorized formula" to inflate the impact that Alternative 4 would have had on rural areas.

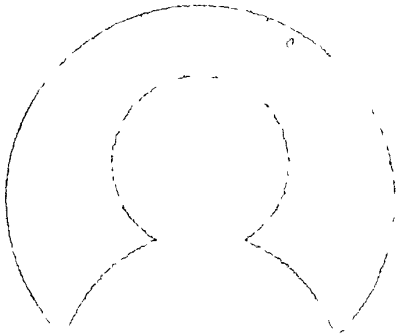
"History is repeating itself as Clark County plans for the future," Levanen said.

Regardless, Madore's effort to restore parts of Alternative 4 to the comprehensive plan failed. The council voted 3-2 to reject each of his amendments, and rejected a motion Madore made to restore Alternative 4 in its entirety to the plan.

Olson pledged to revisit rural zoning issues, suggesting convening a rural lands task force, researching options for transfer of development rights or giving greater flexibility to property owners who have been in Clark County prior to the 1994 adoption of the state Growth Management Act.

"This isn't going to be the end of conversations as it relates to rural landowners," Olson said.

The Clark County Council will adopt an ordinance ratifying its decisions at June 28's hearing in advance of sending the plan to the state Department of Commerce. The plan could, however, be legally challenged.



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5 Comments

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Bob Burda · Brush Prairie, Washington

If anyone thinks Clark county is dragging its feet on development try driving thru Orchards. The sheer number of cars and trucks has completely overwhelmed 4th plain and 117th ave. Bumper to

bumper all the way to Brush Prairie The obvious alternatives like 112th (new exit) is also at or past capacity during rush hours Madore lives in an alternative world because what I see is our infrastructure is way past capacity already! All I ever read about Madore and his constant whining about rural landowners rights and the war on cars I guess it's back to the original assumption to following the money because it's not about planning!

Reply 2 mins



Kirk VanGelder Textbook Author at Jones & Bartlett Learning

So much for Marc Boldt and Julie Olsen being conservatives like we were promised Marc especially should be ashamed for not standing up for rural property owners, being that he was a rural land owner Oh that's right, his uncle got an exemption for his farm to be broken into small lots . but the rest of us can pound sand. .. And the liberals wonder why property is so expensive in this county 3 words, land use planning Pathetic well Clark County, get ready to lose in court again!!!!

Reply 3 9 hrs



Thom Rasmussen Salmon Creek, Washington

You know, Kirk If you don't like the laws here you could always run for Council. Or maybe just move somewhere that has laws that you do approve of Maybe Nevada or Arizona or Belize.

Reply 3 43 mins



Bill Schmidt Washington State University

Mr. Madore continues to make baseless claims and lies, and his lapdog Mielke barks right along. Good job to the rest of the County Council for using common sense and actual information in making the best decision for the entire county

Reply 4 10 hrs



Kirk VanGelder Textbook Author at Jones & Bartlett Learning

I happen to own rural land .. so I am offended that YOU think YOU know what is best for me, my family, and my land If YOU want to control it, then buy it...Otherwise, you have no moral right to tell me what to do or not to do.

Reply 9 hrs



Kyle Greenwood

Kirk VanGelder what moral right do you have to tell anyone what to do? I mean, what an odd statement ..

Reply 7 9 hrs



Bill Schmidt Washington State University

Kirk VanGelder Typical response. I got mine, so screw everyone else You haven't always owned that land And sometime in the past the government allowed someone to make it the parcel it is They make decisions for all of us, not just snobs who don't care about their neighbor or others

Reply  3 2 hrs

Bruce Perkins

Kirk VanGelder What's best for YOU, YOUR FAMILY, YOUR LAND? What about THE COUNTY, SOCIETY, THE ENVIRONMENT, OUR INFRASTRUCTURE, YOUR NEIGHBORS?

It's easy to see why you're bothered by this You know what you think is in your best interest, and you don't give a rat's rear-end about anybody else Based on your thinking, just what would Clark County look like? No one property owner in this county stands alone and is separate from the rest, whether you like it or not

Reply  4 1 hr



John M. Kowalski Camas, Washington

Kirk VanGelder I've said it before, and I've said it again Owing real estate - even rural property - involves risk.


And some of that risk is that the use of that land is subject to the laws of the land

As is your case

As with any other asset, if you can't abide the level of risk associating with owning real estate, then you should consider selling it

But our laws aren't set up to be a welfare program for rural landowners

Oh, and yeah, none of us - including me- have any "moral right" to own land that was originally appropriated from indigenous peoples

Reply  2 43 mins Edited



John M. Kowalski Camas, Washington

Madore still doesn't realize that he's not representing all the people in his district Without considering the county ecosystem as a whole - and his district of course - he won't accomplish anything at all.

Reply  5 11 hrs



Kirk VanGelder · Textbook Author at Jones & Bartlett Learning

As a rural property owner I am offended by your thinking that you should have control over my property. .If you want to control my property, then step up and buy it Otherwise YOU are just another common thief that is using the system to steal from me

Reply 9 hrs



Kyle Greenwood

Kirk VanGelder when did you buy the land?

Reply  3 9 hrs



Fran Hammond · Vancouver, Washington

Kirk VanGelder As someone that grew up in rural Clark County, I would be offended if the land I loved (and chose for it's rural-ness) was suddenly surrounded by mini-mansions that could reach out and touch each other! Many people buy in rural areas because they are RURAL! Not subdivided!

Reply · 4 · 7 hrs



John M. Kowalski · Camas, Washington

Kirk VanGelder I know, you're such a wilting flower that you'd get the vapors just from thinking that David Madore has a fiduciary responsibility to his constituents.

But as I said elsewhere, owning real estate - even rural property - involves risk.

And some of that risk is that the use of that land is subject to the laws of the land.

As is your case.

As with any other asset, if you can't abide by the level of risk associating with owning real estate, then you should consider selling it.

But our laws aren't set up to be a welfare program for rural landowners. Your privileges to use land stop when there are environmental or infrastructure issues involved. Deal with it.

Oh, and yeah, none of us - including me- have any "moral right" to own land that was originally appropriated from indigenous peoples.

Reply · 1 hr · Edited

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