

Rebecca Messinger

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Sent: Tuesday, May 2, 2023 8:17 AM
To: GaryMedvigy@clark.wa.gov; Karen Bowerman; Michele.Belkot@clark.wa.gov; Glen Yung; Sue Marshall
Cc: Kathleen Otto; Rebecca Messinger; Oliver Orjiako; Tina Redline
Subject: Comments on Population Forecast

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Dear Chair Bowerman and fellow Clark County Council members-

I regret that I cannot be there is person for your May 2, 2023 hearing on the Comp Plan update and population forecast.

My comments have not so much to do with specific numbers as they do with the personal impact of urban growth boundaries that are too tight, and the impact of those tight boundaries on affordable housing.

I live inside the UGB and can tell you that vast numbers of us feel we are being squeezed together and that every inch of green space is being gobbled up with condos and apartments. And our trees are being cut and ground up to make room for housing "density." The Vancouver Urban Growth Boundary hasn't been moved since 2007, that's 16 years!

For almost thirty years now I've heard all the arguments about how we need to "preserve open spaces," but those are normally associated with advocacy to "protect" the rural lands. No one seems to care about some open spaces in the urban areas. But those of us who are inside of them certainly do! Just take a look at a county map that designates ugbs and you'll see just exactly how vast the lands and open spaces outside of them really are.

And tight urban growth boundaries certainly do not contribute to "affordable housing." They just drive up the price of urban lands. My own property assessments for 2023 were certainly noteworthy: my home increased 10% in value, my land increased 110%!! That's a remarkable

jump for a single year. But it certainly does reflect the Economics 101 principle of supply and demand. Then add the cost of regulatory compliance as described in the April 22 edition of The Columbian article "Affordable housing vs. climate: Code creates crises in Clark County" and we have obliterated our chances for "affordable housing."

Even worse - we foster homelessness!!

And so I ask: What's wrong with a back yard? Why do we pack people together so tightly that they can't have one? I would expect that each of you grew up with one and that probably most people in the hearing room did as well.

I am a great fan of back yards where children can have a swing or a sandbox, play in a little inflatable splashing pool or play Croquet. And families can have friends over for a backyard barbecue, or grow flowers or vegetables to can late in the summer. A back yard is the best of all possible parks. A single family residence on a 5,000 - 6,000 square foot or larger lot is not sprawl; but it is the size that allows families to have back yards.

So I would encourage you to choose a population forecast between the middle and high forecasts to give the urban folks some breathing room. And allow families to have back yards

As a reminder: RCW36.70A does not mandate you choose the middle forecast. The original crux of the GMA was for counties to make their own decisions. Agreed that later amendments to the statute have tried to narrow those choices , but they are still yours' to make. And as you do, please leave room for back yards!

Thank you for your consideration.

Betty Sue Morris