

From: [Rebecca Messinger](#)
To: [Sonja Wiser](#)
Subject: FW: County Council Hearing on Proposed Housing Code Amendments Set For March 5
Date: Tuesday, February 20, 2024 8:39:57 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

Good morning,

Susan has probably forwarded the below comments to you already, but just wanted to make sure.

Thanks!

Rebecca



Rebecca Messinger
Clerk to the Council
COUNTY MANAGER'S OFFICE

564-397-4305



From: Kathleen Otto <Kathleen.Otto@clark.wa.gov>
Sent: Sunday, February 18, 2024 9:09 PM
To: Rebecca Messinger <Rebecca.Messinger@clark.wa.gov>
Subject: Fw: County Council Hearing on Proposed Housing Code Amendments Set For March 5



Kathleen Otto
County Manager

564.397.2458



From: Carol Levanen <cnldental@yahoo.com>

Sent: Saturday, February 17, 2024 9:07 PM

To: Susan Ellinger <Susan.Ellinger@clark.wa.gov>; Susan Rasmussen <sprazz@outlook.com>; Clark County Citizens United Inc. <ccuinc@yahoo.com>; Gary Medvigy <Gary.Medvigy@clark.wa.gov>; Karen Bowerman <Karen.Bowerman@clark.wa.gov>; Michelle Belkot <Michelle.Belkot@clark.wa.gov>; Glen Yung <Glen.Yung@clark.wa.gov>; Sue Marshall <Sue.Marshall@clark.wa.gov>; Kathleen Otto <Kathleen.Otto@clark.wa.gov>

Subject: Re: County Council Hearing on Proposed Housing Code Amendments Set For March 5

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FOR THE PUBLIC RECORD AND THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
17, 2024

February

**Re: COUNTY COUNCIL HEARING ON PROPOSED HOUSING CODE
AMENDMENTS FOR UNINCORPORATED VANCOUVER URBAN
GROWTH AREA SET FOR MARCH 5**

Dear Susan and Councilors,

It is Clark County Citizens United, Inc.'s hope that all of this planning on behalf of the urban areas, does not take the place of the critical housing shortages and needs of the rural and resource areas. The county cannot encourage farms and forests, if they don't provide for affordable land to grow them on. They have completely different needs, that require completely different policies. The rural areas have been stagnant for thirty years, which is much too long. One of the effects of that stagnation is the massive increase in the cost of homes, both in the rural areas and in the urban areas. In addition, there is now a critical housing shortage for farmers, foresters, and those who want a rural life style, for themselves and their children.

In the past, for many decades, the rural to urban natural growth ratio had always been approximately 20/80. Those numbers reflected the market influences and choices that people made in housing, and was fairly stable. The rural ratio was important to the urban ratio, as it allowed for a buffer, if you will, for urban areas, which were able to support and manage the growth that they received through the years.

But with the GMA, all of that changed. After the massive 2004-2007 increase in the Vancouver urban growth boundary, the city discovered that it could not handle what was needed to accommodate the enormous growth that followed. That increase almost doubled the potential growth in that city. City streets were crumbling, sewers were

being stressed, and much of that old infrastructure needed retro-fitting, which costs more than new construction. In the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, Vancouver did not request any urban growth expansions.

Now, with the 2025 Plan update, and the much higher density intended for the cities, those cities are even more hard pressed to accommodate that potential growth with the necessary infrastructure. It appears that Vancouver does not think it necessary to expand the urban growth area, given the additional higher density that will be allowed in the urban areas. It's likely, the other cities feel the same way, as well. On the other hand, planners are missing the mark when it comes to planning for the rural and resource areas.

Regardless of some planners thinking, the urban areas need the rural areas, not the other way around. Most definitely, one does not want rural areas looking like urban areas, as the GMA intended. But there is much in the GMA that defines rural areas, which has been ignored by planning staff. In the past, urban ordinances were used in rural areas, giving the visual impression that urban was "sprawling" into rural areas. The rural people felt put upon when these ordinances were applied to them. They didn't want to look like a city. They were quite happy with gravel driveways, small private roads, and private homes tucked away from the county roads. All of this preserved the character of the rural areas, but planners would have none of that.

What the county has in place is not working, and no one can argue that. To "tighten the belt" on the rural people, with a rural to urban split of 5/95 is unfair and simply not wise. If the county wants to relieve the housing shortages and reduce the cost of homes, throughout the county, the rural number needs to be increased, more in align with what historical data has shown. But, when doing that, the county must be very cognizant of how the ordinances treat the rural area, compared to the urban area. To preserve the rural character, and yet provide for critical housing needs in the rural and resource areas, urban standards cannot be applied. The GMA gives distinct directives as to how planners are to provide for growth in rural and resource areas, and Clark County needs to follow that lead.

Sincerely,

Carol Levanen, Exec. Secretary

Clark County Citizens United, Inc.
P.O. Box 2188
Battle Ground, Washington 98604

On Friday, February 16, 2024 at 04:20:43 PM PST, Susan Ellinger <susan.ellinger@clark.wa.gov> wrote:

COUNTY COUNCIL HEARING ON PROPOSED HOUSING CODE AMENDMENTS FOR UNINCORPORATED VANCOUVER URBAN GROWTH AREA SET FOR MARCH 5

News Release from **Clark Co. WA Communications**
Posted on FlashAlert: February 16th, 2024 11:32 AM

Vancouver, Wash. – The Clark County Council will consider proposed housing code amendments at a public hearing at 10 a.m. on March 5.

The meeting will be held in a hybrid format. Anyone interested can join in person in the sixth-floor hearing room of the Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin St. or virtually via Webex. Additional meeting details will be posted on the project web page at <https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/housing-options-study-and-action-plan>.

The council held a public hearing on July 25, 2023, regarding proposed middle housing/single-family housing code amendments and related comprehensive plan text amendments. At the hearing, council requested staff and the project consultants to complete additional work on the code amendments with review and consideration by the Technical Housing Code Forum. Forum meetings were held Oct. 5 and Nov. 16, 2023.

The related proposed comprehensive plan text amendments were approved by the council at the July 25, 2023, hearing. The comprehensive plan text amendments were needed to insure consistency between the proposed code changes and the county's current 20-year comprehensive plan.

The proposed code changes, comprehensive plan text amendments and other project information can be found on the project webpage at www.clark.wa.gov/housingoptions.

County council approved the [Housing Options Study and Action Plan \(HOSAP\)](#) in May of 2022 and directed staff to begin working on implementing strategies in the plan. The purpose of the plan is to encourage development of housing that is affordable to a variety of household incomes through the removal of regulatory barriers and/or implementation of other initiatives within the unincorporated Vancouver Urban Growth Area. The neighborhoods in this area include Hazel Dell, Salmon Creek, Felida, Pleasant Highlands, Minnehaha and Orchards. These neighborhoods have urban services that could support diverse housing types, like duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, condominiums, and small-scale apartments, compared to the rural unincorporated areas of the county.

Contact Info:

Jose Alvarez, Community Planning, 564.397. 4898, jose.alvarez@clark.wa.gov
Susan Ellinger, Community Planning, 564.397.4516, susan.ellinger@clark.wa.gov

