

From: [Kathleen Otto](#)
To: [Rebecca Messinger](#)
Subject: FW: Rural Growth Assumptions for the 2025 Clark County Comprehensive Plan Update
Date: Wednesday, May 15, 2024 7:23:09 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)



Kathleen Otto
County Manager

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From: Clark County Citizens United, Inc. <cccuinc@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 4:21 PM
To: 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>; Oliver Orjiako <Oliver.Orjiako@clark.wa.gov>; wfivancouver@gmail.com
Subject: Re: Rural Growth Assumptions for the 2025 Clark County Comprehensive Plan Update

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Clark County Council
2024
P.O. Box 5000
Vancouver, Washington 98666

May 14,

FOR THE PUBLIC RECORD AND THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Re: Rural Growth Assumptions for the 2025 Clark County Comprehensive Plan Update

Dear Councilors,

Clark County Citizens United, Inc. can clearly see that Clark County is not planning for rural growth. Yet there is a mantra out there demanding the county must “save the farmland”. The question must be asked, what farmland? It is obvious that Clark County is not the miles of flat

Willamette Valley farmland, common to the lowlands. Most of the lowland farms of the past are under the city of Vancouver, Hazel Dell, Ridgefield, and other lowland cities. What is left are the hills and mountain areas of the county, where only small parcels are suitable for farming.

But the critical component of farming is the farmer. If you don't have a farmer, you don't have a farm. Very few people can afford to buy larger parcels of land in the county, and can barely afford to buy the small parcels, if they want to farm. The past downzoning has all but eliminated acreage for sale on the market. So what is really being "saved", with the large lot zoning? The answer is, land for high density housing, to accommodate Portland housing. That picture is pretty bleak, and certainly non-productive for the county. Apartments don't make tax revenue, and with the subsidized housing, they make much less. But they are hard on infrastructure and county services.

In 1994, the mantra was, save the land for high tech development. But we see, the development conditions in Clark County do not support such development. Wafertech (TMSC) expanded to Arizona. Other high tech businesses have closed their doors and gone elsewhere for the same reason. Every time a business considers this county, environmentalism and regulation, shuts them down. They don't want the legal battles, similar to what Granite Construction is going through. Clearly the business model in this county is not working. The Councilors must look at creating a long term robust economy, throughout the county, and that's not going to happen with thousands of subsidized apartments in the cities.

One of the most lucrative businesses in the county, is the Equestrian industry. California and Arizona can attest that activity is on the top of the list for business and tourism income. But Clark County has ignored this industry's needs completely, in the 2025 Plan update. TMSC yearly income in Clark County is approximately \$500 million. The 2019 Equestrian industry income was approximately \$1 million. (\$1,000,000.00.) In comparison, the agriculture industry income, taken from the 2022 USDA Census of Clark County, was only \$58,969.00. There is no comparison. The economic income potential of the Equestrian industry far outweighs the income potential for the agricultural industry in the county. (see copy and pasted 2022 USDA information below).

Market value of agricultural products sold	\$1,000	Total county income -
\$58,969		
Average per farm		
dollars.....		\$30,601
Crops, including nursery and greenhouse crops ...	\$1,000	
\$35,343		
Livestock, poultry, and their products	\$1,000	
\$23,626		

The Equestrian community does their survey every five years, and the new survey will be coming out soon. It is likely that one million dollars will increase substantially, while the agriculture income will continue to drop.

The Clark County Executive Horse Council puts out a publication/catalog called **the Equine**

Service Directory each year. The 2024 edition shows how extensive the equine community is, as it regards the county economy. This is a partial list of the businesses that serve the equestrian community.

**1. Animal Abuse Prevention/Recovery 2. Arena footings 3. Arenas/Show Facilities
4. Associations/Clubs/Youth Clubs 5. Clubs/Special Interest 6. Clubs/Breeds
7. Awards/Trophys/Banners 8. Bedding/Shavings 9. Blanket Cleaning/Repair
10. Boarding Facilities (39 facilities) 11. Trails 12. Carriages 13.
Catering/Restuarants 14. Childrens Camps/Parties 15. Chiropractic Doctors
16. Clipper/Blade Sharpening 17. Concrete 18. Equine Behavior Specialists 19. Equine
Holistic Health 20. Equine Professionals 21. Equine Transportation 22. Equine
Entertainment 23. Equine Team/Sports/Groups 24. Events 25. Farm/Pet Sitting
26. Feed/Farm/Equipment Stores 27. Feed Supplements/Natural
28. Fencing Contractors/Portable Fencing/Corrals 29. Gifts 30. Graphic Design
31. Grooming/Body Clipping 32. Hoofcare/Farriers (32) 33. Judges 34. Layover
Facilities
35. Massage Therapists 36. Mud/Pasture/Manure Management 37. Non-Profit
Organizations
38. Photographers/Equine 39. Riding Instructors/Trainers (46) 40. Rider Support
41. Saddle Fitting/Custom/Fitting/Repair 42. Stock Removal 43. Tack/Riding
Apparel 44. Therapeutic Riding 45. Toxic Plants/Weeds 46. Trailer Sales/Seervice
47. Veterinarians 48. Veterinaray Hospitals/Surgical 49. Website/Computer Services
In addition, the CCEHC supports Adopt-a-Horse, Ripleys Horse Aid and Whipple
Creek Restoration Committee.**

These 49+ Equine businesses bring into the Clark County economy, millions of dollars of revenue each year, in goods, services and taxes. None of this can be said of the small agriculture community that is currently doing business in the county. The average agriculture farm income is only about \$2,000 per year per farm. after expenses. Again, there is no comparison. All these 49+ Equine providers are an important part of Clark County's economy and without them, the county stands to lose substantially, in taxes and income. So why wouldn't the councilors want to enhance this industry, and not disable it?

With all the talk about homelessness and housing, the county is forgetting about just who allows these topics to be addressed. It is all dependent on tax dollars and a robust economy. The Comprehensive Plan needs to provide substantial aid to the Equestrian community, for which they must depend upon. To have tunnel vision as to what this county will look like, is folly.

No, the citizens don't want high density, no they don't want large lot zoning that creates high land and housing costs. They do want to preserve the culture within their neighborhoods and communities. The councilors are beholden to create a Comprehensive Plan that is tailored to the wants and needs of the taxpaying citizens, and so far, that is not happening. But it can, and must happen, if we are to create an economically sustainable, vibrant and livable community.

Sincerely,

Carol Levanen, Exec. Secretary

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