

June 2, 2025

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

FOR THE PUBLIC RECORD AND THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Re: Rural affordable land for rural housing is suffering.

Dear Councilors and Community Development,

Clark County Citizens United, Inc. believes it is crystal clear. Rural affordable land for housing is suffering. Small private farms, ranches and rural home sites help wildlife habitat, help people grow their own food and keep a few cattle, horses or chickens. There are benefits to living a rural lifestyle that are easily understood. How is it the importance of rural affordable parcels that are needed to meet the demands for rural housing, are being overlooked? We're looking at entire communities of people that want rural living, but are being ignored.

. While many do not want to see fragmentation of rural land, many other people aspire to live on a few acres beyond any city limits. People want the freedoms offered by rural lifestyles, including rearing their children with space to ride horses, raising 4-H projects, or the amenities offered by merely living in a familiar culture and maintaining close family ties. There has been a large influx of people moving into Clark County that need housing. Yet, the burden for providing the land for that housing is very limited in availability.

Even more critical, is the amount of rural land consumed by wetlands and habitat of some sort. Where do the families go that want to raise their own beef, keep horses, chickens and build a greenhouse? There are planners that decry rural housing for fragmenting the rural landscape and causing "sprawl". However, it is equally important to recognize those that want to live rural lifestyles, be close to nature, connect with their land, and remain close to the rural culture and community they were raised in. Fragment the landscape - - - fragment and displace families? The culture and communities keep the rural families tied to the land.

Go ahead and label rural housing as "sprawl". It may just as easily be labeled as horse owners corralling their horses or roping cattle, allowing steers to pasture and grow, allowing children to compete and show their livestock at the Clark County Fair or wonder off and explore the wonders of nature on the family farm that surrounds them. Some may see rural sprawl. Others see flower beds, orchards, vegetable gardens over septic systems and livestock in fenced pastures. Is it sprawl or folks living and thriving in a culture of their choosing? These small farms, rural home sites serve as anchors that connect people to their culture and families.

Sincerely,

Susan Rasmussen, President

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