

From: [Jeffrey Delapena](#)
To: [Rev. Michael Jones Jr.](#)
Cc: [Oliver Orjiako](#); [Jenna Kay](#); [Jose Alvarez](#); [Cnty 2025 Comp Plan](#)
Subject: RE: Request to Forward Letter to Clark County Planning Commissioners
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 2:12:55 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

Good day, Rev. Jones,

Thank you very much for providing this letter and the Vancouver NAACP's feedback related to Clark County's Comprehensive Plan update. This will be brought to the attention of the Planning Commission and added to the Public Record.

Staff will check into availability and reach back out to follow up regarding your request to meet with the Planning Commission.

Best regards,



Jeff Delapena
Program Assistant
COMMUNITY PLANNING

564.397.4558



From: Rev. Michael Jones Jr. <vicepresident@naacpvancouverwa.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 11:44 AM
To: Jeffrey Delapena <Jeffrey.Delapena@clark.wa.gov>
Cc: Sue Marshall <Sue.Marshall@clark.wa.gov>; Wil Fuentes <Wil.Fuentes@clark.wa.gov>; Glen Yung <Glen.Yung@clark.wa.gov>; Matt Little <Matt.Little@clark.wa.gov>; Michelle Belkot <Michelle.Belkot@clark.wa.gov>; Oliver Orjiako <Oliver.Orjiako@clark.wa.gov>; Kathleen Otto <Kathleen.Otto@clark.wa.gov>; Jenna Kay <Jenna.Kay@clark.wa.gov>; Jose Alvarez <Jose.Alvarez@clark.wa.gov>; Cnty 2025 Comp Plan <comp.plan@clark.wa.gov>; Rev. Michael Jones Jr. <vicepresident@naacpvancouverwa.org>
Subject: Request to Forward Letter to Clark County Planning Commissioners

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of Clark County. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Jeffrey,

I hope this message finds you well.

Please find attached a letter from the Vancouver NAACP regarding the Clark County Comprehensive Plan. I would greatly appreciate it if you could **forward this letter to the Clark County Planning Commissioners** so it can be considered as part of the public record. I also write to request a meeting in October with the Commission based on my letter written and attached.

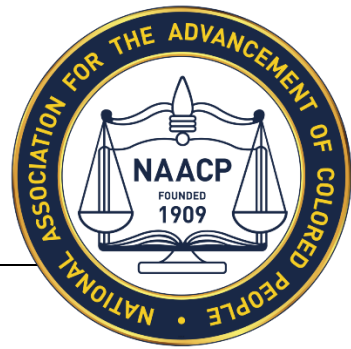
Thank you very much for your assistance, and please let me know if you need any additional information.

Rev. Michael Jones Jr., M.Div

Vice President, Vancouver NAACP Branch 1139-B

Chair, Legal Redress & Civil Rights Committee

vicepresident@naacpvancouverwa.org | www.naacpvancouverwa.org



NAACP Vancouver Branch
P.O. Box 1092 Vancouver, WA 98666

September 1, 2025

Clark County Planning Commission
Public Service Center
1300 Franklin St.
Vancouver, WA 98660

Re: Housing & Equity – The Essential Need to Name Race

Chair Johnson and Members of the Clark County Planning Commission,

As Vice President and Chair of the Legal Redress and Civil Rights Committee of the NAACP Vancouver Branch, I write with urgency and deep concern regarding recent conversations in this body. On July 10, during a work session, members of this Commission openly debated whether it was appropriate to reference race in proposed policies put forward by the County Climate Advisory Group (CAG) and the Environmental Justice Group (EJC). That portion of the meeting documented between the 30- and 40-minute mark raises troubling questions. It is deeply disheartening that, in 2025, elected officials would still hesitate to name race as a factor shaping equity and justice in Clark County. Such hesitation underscores how unfinished our work truly is.

To strike race from the language of policy is not an act of neutrality; it is an act of denial. The historical record is unequivocal: racial exclusion has been baked into the very systems of housing, land use, zoning, and lending across this country. Clark County, too, bears this imprint from restrictive covenants that once barred Black families from ownership to patterns of disinvestment and displacement that continue to shape where communities of color live today. Refusing to acknowledge race in public policy is to obscure the very forces that produced these disparities in the first place.

History teaches us that silence has never been a path to justice. When Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote from a Birmingham jail, he warned against the “appalling silence of the good people” those who chose comfort over confrontation. The same caution applies here. By avoiding explicit recognition of race, this Commission risks perpetuating the same inequities it has the power and the responsibility to dismantle. Neutral language may feel safe, but it leaves the roots of injustice untouched.

The conversation on July 10 also raises a pressing question: how is it possible that, after decades of civil rights struggle and progress, we still find ourselves debating whether race belongs in the language of equity? That we must ask this in 2025 should disturb every member of this body, and every resident of Clark County who values fairness and accountability. This is not merely a

matter of semantics it is about whether our leaders will face reality with honesty or sidestep it with avoidance.

Civil rights have never advanced without naming what is at stake. To talk about education while ignoring segregation, to talk about voting while ignoring disenfranchisement, or to talk about housing while ignoring redlining is to speak in half-truths. The legacy of discrimination demands clarity, not vagueness. To this end, we urge this Commission to lead with transparency, to acknowledge race plainly, and to embed that recognition into every framework that will shape housing, land use, and climate resilience in Clark County.

Let us be equally clear about what is lost if we fail: when policy does not name race, communities of color are left invisible, their lived realities dismissed as incidental. Such omissions do not erase inequity; they entrench it. Future generations will ask whether Clark County stood for truth or for evasion. This Commission has a choice.

The NAACP Vancouver Branch demands that race be named explicitly in County policy, especially in matters that directly affect community well-being and survival. Yet alongside this demand, we offer a vision: a county where acknowledging race is not seen as divisive but as necessary for building equity; where justice is pursued not reluctantly but boldly; where every resident can say with confidence that they are seen and valued. That is the Clark County we believe in, and that is the Clark County where this Commission has the power to shape.

We respectfully request a formal written response from this Commission and the opportunity to meet with you to discuss concrete next steps. We ask that this response and meeting be scheduled no later than the end of September 2025.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Michael Jones Jr., M.Div.
Vice President & Chair, Legal Redress and Civil Rights Committee
NAACP Vancouver Branch