

# County votes to comply on land-use plan

## Council largely in line with advisory recommendations

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The Clark County council voted at its Tuesday morning meeting to come into compliance with components of a state land-use board's decision regarding its comprehensive plan.

The council also disre-

garded two recommendations from staff that could open the county to challenges in the future.

The vote by the council was largely in line with recommendations the Clark County Planning Commission, a volunteer advisory board, signed off on in May. The council voted to change minimum lot sizes for agriculture from 10 to 20 acres and forest from 20 to 40. The council also voted to amend the county's comprehensive

plan to provide three rural zoning designations of 5, 10 and 20 acres. In addition to technical changes, the council also removed 17 parcels from Battle Ground's urban growth area and established a 700-acre maximum size for a proposed rural industrial land bank (which is required under state law).

The vote is the latest in the ongoing legal scuffle over the 2016 update to the county's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan, a docu-

ment required under state law that guides growth in the county. The update was passed a year ago and drew an appeal from local environmental group Friends of Clark County, which was joined by Seattle-based land-use group Futurewise. The organizations challenged the plan on grounds that it violated state law by facilitating sprawl and not adequately protecting farmland.

In March, the Growth Management Hearings

Board, a quasi-judicial state land-use panel, issued its decision finding that the county prevailed on 18 of 25 issues. The following month, the county council voted to appeal the board's determination that it erred in expanding its urban growth area, allowing Ridgefield and La Center to build on nearby farmland. It's also appealing the board's decision that the county improperly designated a rural industrial land bank on the Lagler

Dairy property along Northeast 117th Avenue in Brush Prairie.

During the hearings, Sydney Reisbick, who recently stepped aside as president of FOCC, thanked the council for taking steps to come into compliance with the decision.

"Compliance helps us grow in the most fiscally responsible way by preventing sprawl," she said.

However, the council

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didn't accept the recommendations from staff and the planning commission to reverse rural lots zoned for 10 acres by the comprehensive plan back to their original 20 acres. During the hearing, Deputy Prosecutor Chris Cook explained that the purpose of changing the designation back to 20 acres was to not have smaller lots by resource lands because they tend to be used for more residential purposes.

Councilor Julie Olson said that resource lands in the county are already adequately buffered.

"I don't understand how this zone really establishes that, given what's already there," she said.

The council also didn't accept the recommendation to eliminate "clustering," where lots of residential housing are placed in one portion of a parcel of land with the aim of preserving open space. While the lots are smaller than what would typically be allowed they don't affect overall density.

Although Cook expressed some misgivings about allowing clustering, saying it could open the county to future challenges, councilors expressed support for the idea, saying it would provide flexibility and preserve land. Chair Marc Boldt said he was willing to "risk it."

The county has until Sept. 19 to come into compliance with the growth board's decision.

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