

CLARK COUNTY STAFF REPORT

DEPARTMENT: Prosecuting Attorney for Community Planning

DATE: January 29, 2015

REQUESTED ACTION: Consideration of request by City of Ridgefield to urbanize approximately 102 acres of agricultural land north of its urban growth boundary. Staff recommends denial of the request.

BACKGROUND

The City of Ridgefield has requested that Clark County remove the agricultural resource designation from approximately 102 acres of actively farmed land north of Ridgefield's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), designate that land for residential, urban use, and include it within the city's Urban Growth Area (UGA).

The land consists of 18 tax lots, most of which are approximately 5-6 acres. Staff has not investigated whether these are legal lots of record. The properties can all be traced to a common owner, and only one of the 18 properties contains structures. The land is not characterized by urban growth; it lacks available sewer or a water system, an urban road system, urban schools or utilities, or commercial or industrial development. No urban development within the city limits immediately adjoins the land. On its other three sides, it is bounded by agricultural resource land. It has predominantly Class III soils, and has been commercially farmed at least as recently as last month, at which time it was used as pasture for cows. The property is assessed at its current use for farmland.

Answering the city's request is a relatively uncomplicated application of the Growth Management Act (GMA). In light of the GMA criteria that would govern a decision on this request, staff recommends denial of Ridgefield's request to urbanize the property.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Ridgefield proposal is intended to be part of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update process. In order to formulate alternatives for analysis and coordination among city and county jurisdictions, Clark County Community Planning requested that the cities inform the county of any requests to change urban growth areas by July 31, 2014. By letter dated July 10, 2014, Ridgefield Mayor Ron Onslow notified Community Planning that Ridgefield did not propose UGA expansions and wished to maintain current the current UGA and population levels. On October 22, 2014, after Community Planning had coordinated with all cities to allocate population growth and resulting urban growth areas, Ridgefield made this request to expand its urban growth area.

Under GMA, urban growth is to be located first in areas already characterized by urban growth and that have adequate existing public facility and service capacities to serve such development. RCW 36.70A.110(3). Second, urban growth is to occur in areas already characterized by urban growth that will be served adequately by a combination of both existing public facilities and services and any additional needed public facilities and services that are provided by either public or private sources. *Id.* The land north of Ridgefield does not meet either of these descriptions, because it is not characterized by urban growth. GMA's third priority for urbanization is land in the remaining portions of the urban growth areas. As noted, Ridgefield's UGA contains vacant, residentially zoned land. Under the statutory priorities, urban growth is most appropriately located within the existing UGA.

The least desirable choice under GMA is to expand the UGA to accommodate new land. WAC 365-196-310(2)(e) states that "the urban growth area may not exceed the areas necessary to accommodate the growth management planning projections, plus a reasonable land market supply factor, or market factor..." Ridgefield has adequate land within its urban growth boundary at this time to accommodate its residential needs, plus a market factor, over the planning period. Skipping undeveloped land within the UGA to take in new property would require a justification based on population growth that has not been predicted to occur. To include this property would exceed the urban land supply necessary for the city's residential growth, and could make the county vulnerable on appeal.

COUNCIL POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Community Planning has worked with each of the cities to allocate population growth, jobs, and required infrastructure in a logical manner that retains current urban growth boundaries without major changes. This request, which came late to the county, calls into question the ability to make coordinated decisions on the city-county allocations, could lead to increased costs for including this option in the SEPA process, and could open the county to appeal.

PREVIOUS REVIEWS AND ACTIONS

The Board held numerous public work sessions and hearings in the course of considering options for the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In addition to the Board's public process noted above, members of the community have commented at public hearings, met with board members and staff, and submitted written and graphic testimony, evidence, and argument for the record on the 2016 update. Community Planning has held open houses, and posted materials concerning the update on the county website, and has emailed notice to the parties who have requested it and are otherwise on its notice list.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The budgetary implications of denying Ridgefield's request are as follows:

YES	NO	
X		Action falls within existing budget capacity.
	X	Action falls within existing budget capacity but requires a change of purpose within existing appropriation
	X	Additional budget capacity is necessary and will be requested at the next supplemental. If YES, please complete the budget impact statement. If YES, this action will be referred to the county council with a recommendation from the county manager.

SUBMITTED BY: Christine Cook, Sr. Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, for Community Planning

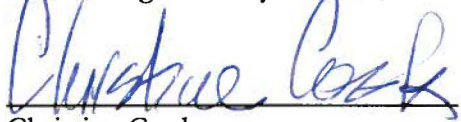
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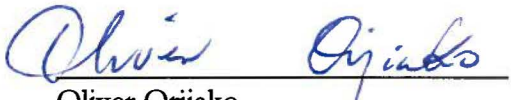
Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Civil Division



Christine Cook
Sr. Deputy Prosecuting Attorney



Chris Horne
Chief Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney



Oliver Orjiako
Director, Department of Community Planning

Attachments: If applicable

APPROVED: _____
CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON
BOARD OF COUNTY COUNCILORS

DATE: _____

SR# _____

COUNTY MANAGER ACTION\RECOMMENDATION

By: Mark McCauley
Date:
SR Number:

REQUESTED ACTION:

Copy the requested action from page 1 here

COUNTY MANAGER RECOMMENDATION:

Action	Conditions	Referral to council?
<i>Approval\denial</i>	<i>Enter conditions or requests here</i>	<i>Yes\No</i>
	This block will be completed by the manager's office	

Mark McCauley
Acting County Manager

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BUDGET IMPACT ATTACHMENT

Part 1: Narrative

Explain what creates a budget impact (additional staff, reduced revenue, change in policy, etc.). Present assumptions for revenue and expenditure estimates.

Part 2: Budget Impact

Expenditure:

Fund	Dept	Obj	Expense change Year 1	Expense change Year 1	Expense change Year 2	Expense change Year 3	Expense change Year 4	Expense change Year 5	Expense change Year 6	One time or continuing
Total										

Revenue

Fund	Dept	Obj	Revenue change Year 1	Revenue change Year 1	Revenue change Year 2	Revenue change Year 3	Revenue change Year 4	Revenue change Year 5	Expense change Year 6	One time or continuing
Total										

Part 3: FTE Profile Over Time

# FTE	Type	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6

Year 1 estimated start date for employees: