

FRIENDS OF



CLARK COUNTY

# SMART GROWTH

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

[www.clarkfriends.org](http://www.clarkfriends.org)

(360) 695-5570

July 2006

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Lora Caine

Summer! What a glorious time to enjoy our great northwest. There is so much that we can enjoy not offered in many other parts of the country. That's why Friends of Clark County advocates for smart growth planning in our community—for the long run, to keep our remarkable area vital for generations to come.

Last September's AARP bulletin interviewed Gordon Campbell, the premier of British Columbia, Canada and a former mayor of the other Vancouver, about his advocacy for livable communities. His definition of livability is appropriate for our community:

"It's a healthy place to live. It has clean water and clean air. It protects its natural assets while imposing human settlement on that natural environment. It's a place where you live, work and learn and where you have cultural activity and commercial activity. There is interaction and engagement of people on the streets and in the parks. People feel safe there. And it has complete family neighborhoods. My complete family is my mom, my kids, my wife and I. A complete family neighborhood contains a continuum of support and housing options for all of us."

Clark County can keep the qualities of a livable, diverse and healthy community only if careful, thoughtful planning takes place. We will keep it that way only if we all get involved. I keep repeating myself, but that is how we can get it done. Our policy makers welcome good solutions. We need to be a united voice advocating smart growth planning. Write your letters and attend the meetings and hearings to express your wishes. That's how we can be heard.

*Enjoy your summer!*

## FRIENDS of CLARK COUNTY

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## MISSION STATEMENT

Friends of Clark County is a nonprofit, membership-based organization creating, educating and empowering advocates for Smart Growth.

Our mission is to conserve and protect Southwest Washington's quality of life.

## FoCC MEMBERSHIP

Please join/renew your membership using the order form in this newsletter. We need your support to help cover the costs of our meetings, newsletters, public forums, research and to continue our vital work protecting your quality of life in Clark County.

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**GROWTH IN CLARK COUNTY**

By Steve Stuart

It has been almost two years since I left the Friends of Clark County Board of Directors to join the Board of County Commissioners. As many of you know, it's been a busy two years.

Since being appointed to serve out the term of our friend and "environmental legislator of the year" Senator Craig Pridemore, I've experienced a whirlwind of difficult issues and amazing opportunities to give a little back to the county that I grew up in.

It is surely no surprise that I spend the bulk of my time as a County Commissioner dealing with growth issues. Luckily for me, I love those issues, and have spent the better part of my adult life learning about and working on them.

As a Commissioner, my growth work can be split up by the scope of the Board's actions: short-term, mid-term, and long-term.

**Short-term**, the Board has been addressing the Urban Holding overlay placed on land brought into the Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB) in 2004. The 2004 language required that the county assures urban levels of service before growth occurs.

Though some (including myself) questioned the legality of how those requirements were drafted, I personally believe the goals are imperative. Thus, the Board, with help from school districts, service providers, and many others, worked for the past year to find a key to unlock the door for development that pays its way.

Last month, the Board adopted a resolution that starts us along that path in Orchards, releasing land from urban holding once agreements are signed that guarantee developers pay for the roads and schools their customers will need. It is only a first step on a long path, but it is definitely a start.

**Mid-term** growth planning is happening through revisions to the 20-year growth plan. For this effort my focus has been, and continues to be, finding ways to assure an affordable, functional, and creative plan to preserve the quality of life that we enjoy in Clark County.

## GROWTH IN CLARK COUNTY

(continued from page 2)

For more specifics about how I hope to achieve that, please look to the Board's "Guiding Principles and Values for Growth" at [www.clark.wa.gov](http://www.clark.wa.gov).

Also, I hope to see many of you during the public process from now until the growth plan's adoption.

The next opportunity for you to get involved will be during the Draft EIS comment period, which begins when the document is released on July 7 and continues for 45 days.

A full schedule of open houses and hearings from now until final adoption in November will be available on our website by the time the Draft EIS is released. *(Friends will host a public forum on the Draft EIS and preferred alternative on Wednesday, August 2. Details in the column to the right. The Editor.)*

**Long term.** Thinking beyond the 20-year GMA planning timeframe, I'm working on several different fronts to build a longer-term vision for what we want to be in Clark County.

One of the first things I did after my appointment was to form a steering committee to begin a 50-year visioning process (modeled after Battle Ground's work). Because of the time our staff was spending on revising the 20-year growth update, I agreed to postpone the longer term visioning work until after 2006.

However, in the meantime I've begun working on two key components of a long-term vision – future corridors for transportation and natural areas.

To figure out what transportation corridors will be necessary to serve our community 50 years from now, I worked with Port Commissioner Arch Miller, Battle Ground Mayor John Idsinga, and others to begin a Transportation Corridors Visioning Study staffed and supported by the Regional Transportation Council.

The study will project our current growth trends 50 years out, then figure out what transportation corridors will be necessary to serve that growth.

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## COMMUNITY FORUM: COUNTY 20 YEAR GROWTH PLAN

By the time you read this, your friends at Friends of Clark County expect to be analyzing the long-awaited draft of the county 20 year growth plan.

We will be scrutinizing a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), a Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) and a preferred alternative map with Urban Growth Boundaries and zoning (land use) designations.

Do you want to hear what the experts think of the proposal?

We do too!

So we'll hold a community forum on Wednesday, August 2, 2006 from 7 – 9 pm in the 6th floor hearing room at the Clark County Public Service Center (1300 Franklin).

Senator Craig Pridemore and Planning Commission member Ron Barca will lead a panel of experts on growth impacts on our environment, public services, and economy.

Since the 2004 update:

- Two new county commissioners have joined the Board;
- Battle Ground, Ridgefield and La Center have vastly increased their requests for urban expansion;
- Developers have offered to negotiate impact fees for schools and roads to open up Urban Holding lands for immediate development;

This results should be very interesting! See you there!

## ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING

Ready for the summer's best barbecue? Outside of guaranteeing great weather, that's a claim we can live up to!

That's because FoCC member Marge Meyer has offered us their private park for an old-fashioned family picnic. (And there's a huge rain shelter if Mother Nature does not cooperate.)

You can play softball, volleyball, horse shoes, or wade in the slough. *(I've got first dibs on the hammock! The Editor)*

We'll serve all the picnic classics. BBQ experts are ready to grill hamburgers and hot dogs that you can dress up with all the fixings. Help yourself to picnic salads and snacks.

Bring your own beverage only if lemonade, bottled water, or a root beer float won't quench your thirst.

With close parental supervision, well behaved kids and pets are welcome.

For now, mark your calendars for **Saturday, September 9** for this fun event. Invitations and directions will be in the mail in August.

## WETLANDS ORDINANCE UPDATE

By Sydney Reisbick

As required by law, a new Clark County Critical Area Ordinance for Wetlands has been adopted. There are significant changes.

First, the Wetlands Ordinance is now consistent with the WA Department of Ecology (DOE) guidelines. Mitigation plans follow the state's Community Trade and Economic Development (CTED) model ordinance.

Second, given the failure rate of many mitigation projects, the final mitigation plan includes monitoring for a period of years, with the longest period for created wetlands and forested wetlands. These are relatively good changes.

Third, to avoid land-taking litigation, the ordinance decreases buffers on non-riparian wetlands. It also contains several exceptions and exemptions from the overall rules.

The "Reasonable Use Exception" allows filling of wetlands in certain conditions and with county staff approval.

For example, an owner may convert from a mobile home to a residence or expand a residence. There is also an exception for land that is mostly wetlands and habitat.

These measures are an attempt to approach "no net loss" of housing units consistent with the overall zoning of the area.

Now a "cluster ordinance" may be used in R-5, R-10 and R-20 zones to locate buildable lots on the parts of the acreage that least affect the wetlands. For example, consider a 20-acre lot, of which 15 acres are wetlands. In an area zoned for 5-acre lots, the owner can cluster 4 houses on the five acres that are not wetlands.

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## WETLANDS ORDINANCE UPDATE

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Exemptions from non-riparian wetlands rules have been approved for agricultural activities, land disturbances of less than 5 cubic yards and small hydrologically isolated wetlands. ( Small is defined as 2500 sq feet for Category 3 and 4350 sq ft for Category 4 wetlands.)

Finally, wetlands buffers have been made more flexible (i.e. decreased in size) in these ways:

- Buffers may be reduced when long, narrow or lobed wetlands have buffers larger than the wetlands themselves.
- Staff may determine that a high quality part of a wetland is protected enough by a low-quality area that the overall buffer may be determined by the lower-quality area.
- Storm water treatment facilities that adequately buffer a wetland may not require further buffering.
- Golf courses and engineered fields were declared medium rather than high intensity uses. Thus they will have relatively smaller buffers than those requested by groups supporting bird and fish habitat.

These buffer reductions will be individually negotiated by the county with professional personnel.

We believe this will lead to an overall net loss in both wetland functions for the community as a whole and in land values for some property owners.

Next up is an update of the Clark County Critical Area Ordinance for Habitat. There we face an even greater challenge to preserve the habitat lands that add to our community's quality of life.

## I-933 Update

As of this writing, the deadline is fast approaching for submitting the signatures necessary to qualify this initiative for the November ballot.

It appears very likely. If I-933 supporters are successful, you will be hearing from Friends!

We will actively participate in the No on 933 coalition in Southwest Washington. We will prepare an extensive analysis of predictable impacts if voters approve this measure in November.

Stay tuned for more information via our website, future newsletters and possibly a community forum.

FYI: Our work in this issue is complicated by the misleading description of I-933 as a property rights initiative. That makes opponents "foes of property rights".

But passage of I-933 means land use zoning is no longer meaningful.

## I-937 Update

This is the renewable energy initiative. It would require larger electric utilities (more than 25,000 customers) to derive 15% of their energy from 'new renewable' sources (i.e. wind, solar, but not hydroelectric) by 2020.

These larger utilities would also be required to pay for programs that educate and encourage energy conservation.

Without any organized opposition (so far), the initiative appears to be headed for the statewide general election ballot this fall.

## JOHN MUIR PICNIC

Who will win the first annual Friend of Clark County award? Join us at the annual John Muir picnic to find out!

Friends and area environmental groups will gather for a picnic and BBQ on Sunday, August 20 at 3:00 at Leverich Park.

Contact Linda Wolfe (546.2015 orsavewolf@comcast.net) for details.

## PORT OF VANCOUVER TOUR

Mark your calendars for a tour on Wednesday, July 19 – 6:30 P.M

Location: Port of Vancouver Commissioners Meeting Room  
3103 NW Lower River Road  
Vancouver (directions below)

A program discussing the Economic Development & Conservation Plan and a Bus Tour of the port for interested parties. This is a great opportunity for you to view the development of new maritime and industrial lands, along with natural habitat creation in the Vancouver  
l o w l a n d s .

From 4th Plain or Mill Plain go west until they converge west of the railroad tracks. The street becomes Lower River Road. Continue west approx. .05 miles to the Port of Vancouver Administrative offices on the left. Plenty of parking available.

Questions: Contact Linda Wolfe at 3 6 0 . 5 4 6 - 2 0 1 5 o r savewolf@comcast.net for more information.

## WHERE DO WE GROW FROM HERE?

By Bridget Schwarz

Clark County's Long Range Planning (LRP) division is part of the Department of Community Development. They do exactly as their name implies.

Under the state's Growth Management Act (GMA) LRP is tasked with preparing the county's 20 year growth plan. The process includes following specific directives and assumptions given them by the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) and gathering a great deal of feedback from public outreach.

The 20 year plan includes an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Capital Facilities Plan (CFP). With input from the cities, Clark County establishes the Urban Growth Boundary.

The Board of County Commissioners plan to adopt a new 20 year county growth plan by year's end.

LRP also does long range transportation planning, create and update county ordinances, and other related services.

Long range land use planning has a significant impact on our future and our quality of life. In recognition of the increased need for planning, the Board of County Commissioners will establish a stand-alone Planning Department effective August 1, 2006.

The department will have a more focused approach to planning, zoning, and related efforts.

The Department of Community Development will continue to handle development review applications and manage all construction projects.

"The county's ongoing growth is greatly increasing the demand for services in both areas," said Commissioner Marc Boldt, the Board's chair. "Placing these functions in separate departments, while maintaining a close working relationship, will allow us to draw on the strengths of staff in both departments."

The Clark County Planning Department will be headed by Marty Snell, currently the Long Range Planning Division manager.

FRIENDS of CLARK COUNTY

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www.clarkfriends.org



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Name (s) : \_\_\_\_\_  
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 City, State, Zip : \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone : \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail : \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE NOTE: E-mail is our most effective means of communication.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Individual - \$25
- \_\_\_\_\_ Supporting Donor - \$250
- \_\_\_\_\_ Supporter/Organization - \$50
- \_\_\_\_\_ Major Donor - \$1,000
- \_\_\_\_\_ Donor - \$100
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other - \$\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ YES!! *Send me a FREE Friends of Clark County baseball cap with a paid membership of \$100 or more.*

\_\_\_\_\_ NO?? *How about a free 6 month membership?*

Friends of Clark County is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization. Membership dues are tax deductible.

**NOW AVAILABLE ! "Friends of Clark County" custom embroidered on left chest**

Description	Color	Size	Quantity	Cost
Baseball cap	Khaki/green	n/a	_____	\$25.00
100% cotton ¼ zip sweat shirt	Gray	_____	_____	\$50.00
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100% cotton polo short sleeve shirt	Khaki	_____	_____	\$45.00
Fleece zip front vest (black, navy, gray)	specify	_____	_____	\$60.00

Sizes S, M, L, XL. Women's and larger sizes available in some styles. Call Bridget (573.5873) for availability.

*Complete this form and return it with your check payable to Friends of Clark County*



## GROWTH IN CLARK COUNTY

(continued from page 3)

When people see what that looks like, we can have a real conversation as a community about modes of travel and whether we need to rethink our growth trends.

We also need to identify and preserve key open space corridors between and within urban growth areas. To accomplish that, I've led the charge to create a Conservation Lands Program in the County.

The program will be unveiled in the next two months, but here's a sneak peek.

I've been working with Bill Dygert, George Simpson, the Columbia Land Trust, Vancouver/Clark Parks, and County staff.

We will create a program that will envision, identify, and acquire thousands of acres of critical natural corridors and nodes using existing revenue sources.

Stay tuned as the year progresses for more information on this ground-breaking initiative.

Though I spend a lot of time – and spent all of this article – on growth issues, there are many other issues to talk about.

I will do my best to stay in touch with you, through my town halls, office hours around the county, group meetings, and talking one-on-one.

I consider it my privilege to serve you, and want to continue asking how to do that best.

To reach me, please call 397-2232, or email me at [steve.stuart@clark.wa.gov](mailto:steve.stuart@clark.wa.gov).

*Steve Stuart was once the Executive Director of Friends of Clark County, then a member of our board.*

*We asked Steve to bring our members up to date on his growth planning efforts from his new perspective as a member of the Board of County Commissioners.*

*Thanks, Steve!*

## KOOB DOOG A \*

What has happened to Main Street USA? How did the big box and 'category killer' stores (i.e. pharmacies, books, lumber) take over?

Do lower prices really outweigh the drawbacks? (Are their prices really lower?)

**The Home Town Advantage by Stacy Mitchell is subtitled "How to Defend Your Main Street Against Chain Stores ... and Why It Matters".**

This book describes the impacts from the shopping choices all of us make.

Depending on the community, the different economic and social impacts from local versus absentee ownership of retailers can be devastating.

Depending on our community response, mega-retailers can drive our local economy down.

Read about the measures taken by other jurisdictions to address store size, traffic, environmental, economic and social impacts from big box retailers.

*F Y I :           G o   t o  
www.walmartwatchdogs.org to  
learn about the battle against  
up to 8 Wal Mart stores in Clark  
County.*

## FoCC THANKS OUR SUPPORTERS

Annual FoCC membership dues are \$25. We are so grateful to those members who have recently joined / renewed at one of our higher levels:

### SUPPORTER

Evelyn Dusenbery

### DONOR

George & Barbara Dechet

Baz Stevens

Karen Wood

Friends of Clark County is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation.

Membership dues and donations are tax deductible.

## FoCC WEBSITE

Our new webmaster is doing a fabulous job of keeping our site updated. You'll find:

- the latest updates to our meeting and events calendar;
  - background and action items for issues that impact you;
  - projects we are working on;
  - links to other organizations that share our quality of life goals;
  - opportunities to get involved with Friends of Clark County.
- Our URL is [www.clarkfriends.org](http://www.clarkfriends.org)

## MEET CATHY STEIGER

By Bridget Schwarz

Cathy Steiger is one of our newest board members. We know her (maybe you do too) because of her long involvement with neighborhood issues.

Cathy is a native Washingtonian. She is a mother of two grown children and wife of a retired U S Forester.

Schooled in Seattle, Cathy still has strong ties there. She has called Clark County her home for 18 years.

Cathy is aware of how disconnected our community feels from the politics and power of our own state.

As the contact for the Cedars Area Neighborhood Association, Cathy helped with the Cell Tower siting ordinance. She also works on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) review process for Lakeside's proposed Asphalt Paving plant permit. Cathy's research counters the applicant's no impact assertion.

Cathy's education about growth management issues started with an Urban Growth Area concern in 1995.

It continued as Battle Ground did its Comprehensive Plan. Her attention to parks planning and critical areas regulations has continued the education process for Cathy.

Countering the too powerful development community in Clark County is her impetus for joining the Friends of Clark County board.

Cathy believes that : "Subdividing of our artificially cheap land for more and more homes, without regard for complementary necessary services, amenities, or big picture cumulative effects is not what I want to call home.

"As individuals with collective power get rich while the community pays for the abandoned deficiencies is against my view of right."

By making herself even better informed and becoming active within Friends, Cathy will bring better land use planning to Clark County.

*Welcome to the board, Cathy!*

## MY OPINION

BY Sydney Reisbick

The Wetland code adopted by the Board of Clark County Commissioners (BoCC) has taken from both the community as a whole and from some individual land owners. It was an attempt to be fair to both.

As written, the ordinance will allow filling of small seasonal and isolated wetlands. That will lead to a net overall loss of storm water control, water return to the soil and water table and water quality. It will destroy habitat for upland birds and other animals.

This is true even with monitoring of mitigation projects for several years.

To address the "taking" of land to preserve wetlands, the BoCC is studying wetlands mitigation banking and a "Cumulative Effects Fund". Developers who fill small areas would pay into the fund. The County would buy or improve downstream areas that already hold water and have hydrological connections to riparian zones.

Putting those wetlands into County hands could increase costs to taxpayers, but it might also put it under more consistent management. Still, the overall effect is an overall loss of wetlands and habitat functions.

To protect the landowners, the county has established a goal of no net loss of land value. First, the ordinance exempts agricultural activities from non-riparian sections of the code. Second, it made some buffer rules flexible and created a limited cluster ordinance.

The cluster ordinance works toward no net loss of buildable sites on a parcel that is mostly wetlands and habitat. It allows clustering on the least sensitive parts of the parcel so the number of units allowable by code on the whole parcel is preserved.

These measures still leave some individual landowners with a loss of land value. Therefore, the adopted code balances the takings from community and landowners.

Whether one likes the balance depends on your point of view. It is not perfect, but it could be worse.

## ANNUAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

By Val Alexander

On May 31st the regular and advisory boards of Friends of Clark County met at Coyote Ridge Ranch for our annual dinner meeting.

We started with a delicious pot luck dinner provided by our board members.

Then President Lora Caine presented the past year's accomplishments and reviewed our goals for the next year.

The main topic for the evening was Initiative I-933, the "Property Fairness Initiative" sponsored by the State Farm Bureau.

Advisory Board member Judie Stanton presented an extensively researched paper on the potential effects of the initiative if approved by the voters in the November election.

Judie described the disastrous effects on government and the tax payers caused by the costs of studies that would be required, and how zoning and growth management protections would be dismantled.

*(Along with almost all local and statewide environmental groups, FoCC endorses the No on 933 campaign. If it makes the ballot we'll post Judie's analysis on our website.)*

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FRIENDS OF



CLARK COUNTY

## *SMART GROWTH*

*PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER*

### **IN THIS NEWSLETTER**

- Community forum on the draft county 20 year growth plan (August 2);
- Annual member meeting (September 9);
- Long Range Planning Department formed;
- Update on growth issues (Steve Stuart);
- Update on Wetlands Ordinance.

Please renew your membership with FRIENDS of CLARK COUNTY using the order form inside this newsletter.

We need your support to help cover expenses as we continue the vital work of protecting our quality of life in Clark County.

If you join at the Donor level (\$100) or above we'll give you a Friends of Clark County baseball cap FREE.

Thank you!