

FRIENDS OF



CLARK COUNTY

# SMART GROWTH

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

(360) 695-5570

October 2006

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Lora Caine

A public official once "challenged" me about where I stand on growth. The challenge was an automatic assumption that I like little parcels. It was a surprise to hear I was considered as having that viewpoint.

But it got me to thinking: what do I like; what do I stand for?

I tell people that Friends of Clark County advocates for Smart Growth planning and that we want to conserve and protect southwest Washington's quality of life.

So what does that mean? Perhaps balance and choices?

In planning for a large community like Clark County, we must consider the needs and desires of the whole. Good paying jobs, quality schools and well-balanced land use zoning are especially important to many people in our county.

But growth is in the eye of the beholder. The extreme viewpoints on the growth-planning spectrum are "shut the gate and keep out the rest" and "throw out any planning and regulations—let me do what I want".

Neither idea is viable. There are no state and local laws to stop growth and everybody likes to know what to expect for themselves, what gets developed "next door" and how fast it will happen.

So that means we need a good plan to handle growth.

Should the whole county be little parcels stuffed side by side? Not in my opinion. But should the choice be available as a way to provide affordable housing? Yes.

That's where the balance comes in. By balancing a variety of land uses and sizes including amenities like parks, libraries and alternative ways to get around we can plan for generations to come. Getting informed and involved can help keep our quality of life great!

## FRIENDS of CLARK COUNTY

### CONTACT US:

P.O. Box 61711  
Vancouver, WA 98666  
V/F 360.695.5570  
[info@clarkfriends.org](mailto:info@clarkfriends.org)  
[www.clarkfriends.org](http://www.clarkfriends.org)

## 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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**PROPERTY RIGHTS**

By Bridget Schwarz

Initiative 933 has spurred a debate about balancing private property rights with those of neighbors and communities.

It's hard to exaggerate the results if I-933 passes.

Both proponents and opponents offer anecdotal war stories to make their case compelling. But only property rights for *everyone* will enable us to continue to preserve the quality of life we enjoy in Clark County.

We concede that some laws and permit processes may be burdensome. But how often does that significantly reduce a property's speculative value? How often is development altogether precluded?

A fundamental American value is the right to own land. That right comes with the responsibility to respect your *neighbor's* property rights too.

The right to a healthy environment is another fundamental American value. That comes with a responsibility to respect the environment we all share.

Passage of I-933 will have predictable results;

- Individuals and communities will be harmed by incompatible land uses;
- Environmental safeguards will not be enforceable;
- How and when your neighborhood will develop can not be determined;
- The cost of resolving land use disputes will cost taxpayers billions of dollars.

*(Several studies have recently been completed estimating the cost of I-933 if it is approved by the voters in November.*

*About 8 billion dollars (or \$1300 per person) is the latest figure. Investigate at this web site:*

*<http://159.54.227.3/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060927/NEWS01/609270363>*

Where legitimate burdens exist, we need remedies to ensure fairness for all affected parties.

I-933 goes too far!

## PROPERTY WRONGS

By Bridget Schwarz

There are no laws adequate to protect neighbors and communities if I-933 passes. Here are a few examples that we find troubling:

I have a parcel that is underwater for months at a time that I want to build houses on. If that floods my neighbor's back yard, so what?

I own 20 acres that I want to convert from forest to housing. If that destroys wildlife habitat, so what?

I want ball fields for my kids to play on. If the cheapest available land is a farm out in the country, so what?

I kill household pests for a living. If the toxic chemicals I store on my property to fumigate your home cause problems, so what?

I love Dairy Queen! If I want to open a DQ franchise on the front acre of my rural property, so what?

I have 10 acres on a slope to log. If the runoff chokes the stream at the bottom of the hill, so what?

I want to mine gravel on the river that flows through my property. If that degrades the river, so what?

I run a home-based business out in the country. If I want to expand it to a 24 X 7 operation, so what?

I hate Wal Mart! If I tell the world by putting up a highway billboard size sign in my front yard, so what?

Many of these 'so what' scenarios are excerpted from "Neighbor's Property Rights", compiled by the Washington Environmental Council.

WEC reminds us that we all live downstream... or next door.)

*Another way to learn more about I-933 is to find out who groups, like Friends of Clark County, are opposed to it.*

Visit this website:  
<http://noon933.org/about/endorsers.php>.

## COMMUNITY FORUM

### INITIATIVE 933

Monday, October 23, 2006  
7:00 to 9:00 PM  
6<sup>th</sup> floor hearing room  
Clark County  
Public Service Center  
1300 Franklin

Supporters label the opponents of I-933 "property rights foes".

Opponents label the supporters of I-933 "property rights foes".

*What's going on here?*

Lora Caine, President of Friends of Clark County, will moderate a panel of supporters and opponents of the "Property Fairness" initiative and field questions from the audience.

- Eric de Place, Senior Research Associate, Sightline Institute
- Steve Madsen, Building Industry Association
- April Putney, SW Washington campaign coordinator, NO on 933
- Bill Zimmerman, I-933 sponsor, Clark County Farm Bureau

## **ANNUAL FALL FUND RAISER**

Of course, it's a gourmet dinner! We'll have lots of great silent auction items too.

Invites will be in the mail soon. See you there!

Friday, November 17, 2006

Cocktails starting at 6:00  
Gourmet dinner at 6:30  
Our program starts at 7:00

## **DISCUSSION MEETING**

The agenda for monthly FoCC board meetings is always crowded.

Due to lack of time, every month an important topic for discussion gets held over for the next meeting. We found a solution!

Now we get together to have a monthly discussion meeting (and a great dinner), and you're invited!

Wednesday, October 25, 2006  
6:30—8:00 PM  
SUN ROOM  
at the Salmon Creek BurgerVille

You'll be able to sample their new menu and join a lively discussion. We'll have one or two issues to discuss, but we'll leave time to talk about your concerns too.

Join us!

## **WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT I-933?**

By Val Alexander

There are many volunteers calling voters to ask if they know about I-933 and what it will mean to them.

They found that a great many people have no idea what it is all about. That is probably the hope of the promoters of this issue when they called it the "Property Fairness Initiative." The word "fairness" has to be positive and right. Sadly, this initiative is anything but.

As a member of Friends of Clark County, you probably know about I-993 already, but I will describe it just in case you haven't become acquainted with it.

In Washington, the state Farm Bureau sponsored the initiative. Several county Farm Bureaus also have endorsed it, including the Clark County Farm Bureau.

It is similar to Oregon's Measure 37, voted in in 2004.

Measure 37 states that if the government limits the landowners ability to use his land it must pay him for the loss or waive regulations. The property owner has to have owned the land for a certain number of years and has to develop it himself.

Many citizens did not understand that measure and were surprised when landowners began to file claims. More than 2800 to date, these claims cover 80,000 acres and \$3.8 billion dollars.

In Washington, Initiative 933 has no ownership limitations. It is to "protect the use and value of private property against increasing government restrictions."

I-933 specifies that any land use laws adopted since January 1, 1996 are subject to compensation to the landowner if those laws restrict his use of the property or devalue it. This includes any zoning changes or new zoning regulations. Several regions in WA would b subject to this limitation.

For the complete text of the initiative see: [www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/initiatives/text/I933.pdf](http://www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/initiatives/text/I933.pdf).

*We urge you to discuss I-933 with your family, friends and neighbors to ensure that they truly know what it*

## COUNTY 2006 COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN

By Bridget Schwarz

*What follows is the Executive Summary from the FoCC response to the Clark County Draft EIS for the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan. The complete text is on our website ([www.clarkfriends.org](http://www.clarkfriends.org)).*

*Please consult the comp plan meeting schedule on this page and plan to attend the public hearings and testify. Our community's quality of life is under siege.*

Some have commented that reading the Draft EIS makes them sleepy. We read it and then can't fall asleep!

Three alternatives are under consideration to accommodate population growth in Clark County, which is expected to increase from approximately 391,500 in 2005 to 584,300 in 2024.

Regarding growth, our Board of County Commissioners have their foot on the accelerator pedal. Meanwhile, our citizens have their foot on the brake.

Bluntly put, our scrutiny of the Draft EIS prompts more questions than answers. *The first and most important question is, why the rush?*

Second, here are a few of our questions.. From the planning perspective, why is it that:

- there is no mix of housing density (large, medium and small lots);
- both I-5 and I-205 will be operating at or near failing;
- another 11,000 acres – over the 2004 expansion – will be converted from rural to urban land use;
- the cost of improving roads that will carry our new residents to their new homes weren't studied.

Next, how will we pay for needed capital facilities and public services:

- county wide, we need at least 22 elementary, 9 middle and 3 high schools plus 81 portables;
- county wide, we need a new jail within 6 years and an additional 535 sworn officers
- county wide, we need \$576-609 million for transportation improvements on major corridors.

*Continued on the next page*

## COMP PLAN MEETING SCHEDULE

As of October 9, 2006 this is the schedule of meetings and public hearings leading to adoption of the Clark County 2006 Comprehensive Growth Management Plan.

The outcome of an October 10, 2006 Board work session on a preferred alternative may change this schedule.

Except as noted, all hearings will be held at 6:30 in the 6th floor conference room at the Clark County Public Service Center (1300 Franklin).

November 17, 2006; Targeted Final EIS publication date.

November 28 & 29, 2006 at 6:30; Joint Board of County Commissioners / Planning Commission public hearings.

November 30, 2005 at 6:30; Planning Commission deliberations in the Vancouver City Council chambers (210 East 13th Street).

December 6, 2006 at 6:30; Planning Commission deliberations, if needed

December 19 & 20, 2006 at 6:30; Board of County Commissioners deliberations.

Changes Adopted: No earlier than December 18 and not later than December 29, 2006.

**Note: Schedule may be subject to change. To confirm, contact Marilee McCall  
Clark County Community Planning  
360.397.2280 X 4558—or—  
[Marilee.mccall@clark.wa.gov](mailto:Marilee.mccall@clark.wa.gov)**

## PLEDGE FOR A BETTER AMERICA

With 3 stores open, 1 under construction, 2 in the approval process and 2 more in the planning stages, Wal Mart is dramatically expanding their presence in our community. Wal Mart is:

- the second largest business in the US (and the world).
- the largest employer in the US (and the world).
- the largest retailer in the US (and the world).

To establish rock bottom prices, Wal Mart offers their associates minimal pay and benefits. To compete, other retailers must follow suit.

To meet low price points demanded by Wal Mart, their suppliers are frank about the need to move manufacturing operations off shore.

*Wal Mart is leading the race to the bottom in the US. Are dollar values more important than American values? Are we a nation of consumers or citizens?*

The campaign to change Wal Mart's business practices is a campaign to change America for the better. Together we have the power to change a \$300 billion corporation and make it reflect the best of American values.

Every local, state and federal candidate from southwest Washington has been asked to sign this pledge.

*I support in principle:*

- *Corporate responsibility;*
- *Affordable health care for all;*
- *Living wages;*
- *A just and fair workplace.*

Did your favorite candidate sign? We'll post the results on our web site ([www.clarkfriends.org](http://www.clarkfriends.org)).

## COUNTY 2006 GROWTH PLAN

*Continued from previous page*

PRINCIPLES & VALUES: What a great concept! We believe there are additional Principles & Values that should have been used as a guideline to develop the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan. We will provide that perspective through public comment opportunities.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE: The only certainty is that costs for road construction are rising rapidly. But even the transportation costs reported in the Draft EIS fall well below the actual funding needed to implement the growth plan.

First, these figures seriously underestimate the true cost of needed local road improvements. No estimate of the cost of upgrading neighborhood streets to carry all these new residents to their new homes was attempted.

Second, no ground truthing of the Arterial Atlas designation versus actual road conditions was done. As has been repeatedly illustrated, the actual conditions of many roads fall far below the Atlas standards.

But development projects are approved "by the book". As a result, many developments are subsequently approved based on the theoretically possible, not the real world. In such cases, traffic safety is sacrificed.

SCHOOL FUNDING: Several of the cities planning for enormous population growth can not pass measures to pay for current needs. How will future needs be paid for? Is the *quality* of our children's education even evaluated?

GROWTH PATTERNS: Clark County is part of a 4 county metropolitan area. Decades of statistics for new electrical hookups (provided by Clark Public Utilities and Portland State University) show that our community has absorbed more than twice our share of new housing.

Until we gain a balance on that front, Clark County will continue to grow as a bedroom community.

*Continued on next page*

## COUNTY 2006 GROWTH PLAN

*Continued from previous page*

For this comp plan update the BoCC had the opportunity to adopt a growth rate that encompasses our share of the growth. Instead, they chose a much higher number that dooms us to remain Portland's pressure relief valve for housing.

**EMPLOYMENT:** Calculation of the acres for jobs is based on inflated figures adopted by the BoCC. Use of the actual numbers of jobs per acre is readily available. Why weren't those statistics used?

*(We wonder how many of the jobs to be created under the proposed UGB expansion will be construction workers earning poverty wages to build McMansions that the influx of new residents can not afford?)*

**DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS:** Under county code, the consumption of available lands for homes and jobs does not meet the criteria for expanding the UGB. So to please developers wanting to expand the UGA we are spending years of staff time and millions of dollars to do an update of the 2004 Comprehensive Growth Management Plan. As is typical, the cheapest land (at the edge of the UGB) will develop first.

That provides enormous profits for developers.

But taxpayers have to pay for increased road, school, water and sewer capacity in areas distant from present facilities. That is called sprawl.

We can not afford the costs of our 2004 growth plan. How will we pay for an 11,000 acre expansion of the UGA?

**CONCLUSION:** Again, our review of the Draft EIS prompts more questions than answers. However, the one conclusion we find inescapable is that ONLY Alternative 1 provides adequate, affordable, sensible growth that will maintain Clark County's quality of life.

*We have posted Friends of Clark County's response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan on our website ([www.clarkfriends.org](http://www.clarkfriends.org)).*

## KOOB DOOG A \*

The cause is lost. Congress has recently passed a bill allowing Native American casinos outside of reservations.

However, the heavily researched, nonfiction book "Without Reservation" by Jeff Benedict remains relevant reading for several reasons.

First, it is fascinating. The story of the land acquisitions and acceptance of tribal status at various governmental levels is amazing.

The sources of money and management for the casino are interesting. Over and over, money and guilt rule government and legal work at many levels.

Yet, it was at the local level that the land grabs were finally stopped. And this is already saying too much. This story needs to unfold under your eyes.

\* OK, that's a good book spelled backwards.

## 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)

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**RUSTLE THE LEAF**

BY PONCE & WRIGHT



WE DON'T MIND, SO MUCH, THE STUFF YOU TAKE...



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