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Storey County Planning Commission  
Drawer "D"  
Virginia City NV 89440

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STOREY COUNTY  
PLANNING

Subject: Cordevista and future County growth

My wife and I have been residents of the County and Highland Ranches for ten years. We selected this location to relocate after a four-year search of the western USA. Our criteria were quality of life and to live where opportunities were unlimited in life and in business. In 1997, we left our (grown) children behind and relocated our residence and my consulting business. Although we have faced monumental challenges with defects in the home we purchased, we could not imagine living anywhere else. Our plan is to live here as long as our health and means allow.

We have a vested interest in the County. My wife worked at VC High School until budget cuts forced her to move to Lyon County Schools. I am the Volunteer Emergency Coordinator and am the newest member of the Local Emergency Planning Committee. I headed the school-bond rollover referendum a few years ago.

Although I am perceived as an advocate for growth, that is an unfair label. We would be appalled to look from our living room window, out over Long Valley, and see neon lights and ribbons of traffic flowing. That is the worst-case scenario for any Highlands resident who moved here to enjoy the peace, serenity, beauty and privacy of our neighborhood. I am not an advocate for growth, but I am an advocate for determining our future when we cannot control outsiders falling in love with the same quality of life that drew most of us to locate here.

My business consulting practice and training initiatives have me in regular contact with The Tahoe Reno Industrial Center. It is currently, in square acres, the largest industrial complex in the world and, under the stewardship of Lance Gilman and Roger Norman, will almost certainly be the largest in square footage of occupied commercial buildings within the next decade or so. Anyone who doubts this need only visit the County Building Department and weigh the sets of building plans covering Dean Haymore's desk on any given day.

My business interest in TRI is to provide world-class training and consulting resources so that the State can realize more diversification in businesses. We hope to provide a support infrastructure to attract high technology and biomedical companies by providing research, consulting and training resources customized to their needs. Although a large percentage of workers at TRI are currently warehousing and trades people, it won't be long before we help attract many professionals and executives to the complex.

I also volunteer time to the Northern Nevada Development Authority and am part of the Northern NVision research project. Findings of that study also point to the future of the seven rural counties being based on diversified industries. Attending inter-county meetings has also exposed me to an uncomfortable tension created by Storey County's reputation for refusing to consider any growth initiatives, especially given the realities of TRI being in our County. If I am



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hearing our neighboring counties correctly, they are not at all happy with our unrealistic attitude of expecting them to be the bedroom communities for TRI when they will not share any of the tax revenues of TRI. This attitude is what awakens an alarm from my past and causes me to be an advocate of planning our future around reality, not around the Comstock Lode.

I lived in the Houston, Texas, area from 1964 to 1997. I watched a sleepy cow town grow from 250,000 population (about the current size of Northern Nevada) to the fifth largest city in the USA. I worked at the Mission Control Center at the Johnson Space Center, which is located in a (former) bedroom community called Clear Lake City (similar to the unincorporated areas of our County). The residents of Clear Lake wanted their community to keep its rural charm, its distance from the big city, its neighborhood identities and its independent western traditions, as Houston grew exponentially, a few miles up the freeway (I hope the metaphor is becoming clear). As in our area, there was no geographic boundary of growth, so the City sprawled in all directions of the compass. Clear Lake watched as Houston adopted an incredibly Gestapo-like annexation law and began annexing the new growth areas as quickly as they were built. Clear Lake residents resisted all efforts to incorporate their area, because it "would lose its charm." They lived in a dream world that said Houston would keep annexing to the north and west and ignore sleepy Clear Lake City to the south. That was true until the petrochemical industry just up the road from Clear Lake began its growth. One day the residents woke up to being the newest annexed portion of Houston as the Houston fire trucks and police cars rolled down NASA Road #1. For months, the residents' vehicles sported "Occupied Clear Lake City" bumper stickers and there were cries for legal action against Houston. All attempts to undo the annexation failed. I was in Clear Lake on business last month. There is hardly a square foot of undeveloped land around NASA. I passed medical centers, shopping centers and four-lane boulevards that were totally unfamiliar to me. I had a difficult time finding the house I sold in 1986. The urban sprawl was appalling and I was dumfounded that the freeway traffic was at a virtual standstill, in both directions, from about 4PM to 8PM in the Clear Lake area.

Back home safely on my 10 acre hilltop, I do not want to have us repeat history, yet many of my neighbors want to bury their heads in the sand, as did Clear Lake, and scream (from under the sand) "No growth in our County!" The fact is, we are such an attractive place to live and do business, barring any natural or manmade catastrophe, we are going to continue our exponential growth whether we like it or not. Some of my neighbors are figuratively laying down in protest to stop Cordevista and Painted Rock at any cost. Anyone with business acumen understands that these developers have done their homework and had a virtually bullet-proof strategic plan implemented before they bought the land. If their research was incomplete, they have an arsenal of attorneys skilled at mowing down rural entities such as Storey County or Clear Lake City. Master Plan or no plan, ordinances or no ordinances, there is nothing from stopping developers from dragging us into court until our coffers and wills are exhausted, and they get what they have planned.

My recommendations are based on the fact that growth is inevitable, but planned growth is the only avenue for us to protect our rural way of life. If I am reading the maps correctly, neither Cordevista nor Painted Rock will be visible from most of The Highlands. If that is true, then we should work with the developers and obtain contractual agreements with them to allow controlled growth and preserve our way of life. Some of these points of agreement might be:

- The Highlands (all three sections) as currently subdivided are exempt from any future subdivision. No attempts will be made to rezone the Highlands for any commercial or business services use.

- The developers will build a boulevard from 50 to VC, to the intersection of Cartwright & Lousetown, to their developments, to TRI and Lockwood at their expense. This would save countless dollars and hours of travel time for police, fire and school busses and finally connect the north and south ends of our County, giving us more than one evacuation route.
- The developers would build, at their expense; sanctuary's and parks around historical areas such as the Petraglyphs.
- Assuming the developers can prove that they have rights to the water necessary for their developments (that is, of course, a deal breaker), they must also contract to supply water for the Highlands in the event of drought or other natural disaster.
- They would have a master plan to build adequate schools for the projected growth and a phased plan for a new high school and sports complex along the North-South corridor.

These are just a few creative ideas, if included in legal and binding contracts today, can help us plan our own future, maintain our desired lifestyles and enjoy the wealth of desired growth. The alternative is not "no growth," but growth resulting from us losing control of our destiny in a court of law. If we do not embrace TRI as a valued neighbor and showcase of our County, I predict that Reno or Sparks will annex it and our tax base will once again be dependant on brothels and tourism. Is that what we all want? I've lived through that disastrous scenario. I don't want to do it again and have a chain of restaurants across the street from the mailboxes on Cartwright.

Some final points. I just had my home re-appraised to do a mortgage refinance. We are now listed as "suburban," not rural. Along with the world discovering that the Highlands is only 18 minutes from Reno, many who are moving into the area are bringing their "California lifestyles" with them and changing the values of the population base in our area. Those of us who cherish the rural life style will soon become history if no more growth happens than folks from out of the area buying every available lot in the Highlands and building on them. When Cordevista and Painted Rock are populated, the Highlands will be an insignificant population base in the County and we can assume the role of being an anachronism with a sign that says "Break Glass in the Event of Another Gold Rush."

Either we actively plan our future or become victims of it. The world is moving forward. There is no such thing as "the way things were," except at a museum in VC.

Respectfully;

