

# DLCD LEGISLATIVE CONCEPT HB 2253

## Population Forecasting for Urban Growth Management

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### Current Status and Problem

Oregon law requires counties to prepare and update coordinated population forecasts for cities within the county. Only half of Oregon counties have been able to keep up with this ongoing requirement of state law - making it difficult for cities to plan for their future. Population forecasts have been subject to frequent legal challenges, requiring even more resources from counties and slowing the overall process of planning for future growth.

DLCD, in concert with the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) and the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC), and other stakeholders, convened a forum and reached a consensus on a solution to these problems, proposed as House Bill 2253.

### The Solution

HB 2253 would replace the current system with a new, simplified way to forecast population growth, one that will greatly reduce costs for local governments and assure that cities and counties are using the best available population forecast data for their land use planning.

HB 2253 places the responsibility for preparing population forecasts with the Population Research Center (PRC) at Portland State University. Under this proposal, the PRC will issue a forecast for each city and county every four years.

To assure that local governments have input into the population forecast, the PRC will confer with affected cities and counties, and provide an opportunity for them to

challenge the forecast administratively.

Once the forecast is adopted, however, that final forecast will not be appealable as a land use decision. With the forecast being updated every four years, if parties believe the forecast is wrong, the frequent updating will assure that adjustments are made to reflect actual experience.

The population forecast is a critical foundation of the land use planning system. Under other proposed legislation (HB 2254), the forecast is the basis for most communities to determine how they will grow in the future, and for determining the demand for new land and development capacity.

The PRC already has broad expertise in this area – it has historically performed population forecasting for communities in Oregon when contracted to do so. PRC has been closely involved in the design of this legislation, along with the broad stakeholder group, in order to design an efficient system for issuing forecasts on a continuing basis to all cities in the state.

There will be a fiscal impact of this legislation. However, this cost is offset by funds historically spent by both the state (DLCD planning grant funds) and by local governments, expenditures that would no longer be required if this legislation is enacted. The work group expects that the overall state and local expenditure on population forecasting will be reduced under this proposal.