



METRO COUNCIL PRESIDENT TOM HUGHES

January 15, 2015

Stephen Bates
P.O. Box 339
Boring, OR 97009

Mr. Bates:

I wanted to respond to your letter and the signed petition forms that you delivered to Metro last week. First, let me say that I laud your citizen activism – involved citizens are an incredibly important part of Oregon's system of government. The Community Planning Organization (CPO) structure within Clackamas County, as well as our unique system of regional governance, are designed to ensure that we work together as plans and decisions are made on our behalf by elected representatives.

I believe that one of the reasons our region outpaces other metropolitan areas in the country is our decades-long tradition of working together to establish plans for the future – development and transportation plans, economic strategies, and goals for preserving clean air and water and protecting the environment. For example, the recent East Metro Connections project, which I chaired with Metro Councilor Shirley Craddick, resulted in a long-sought agreement among the cities in east Multnomah and Clackamas counties, ODOT, and Metro on a series of transportation and economic development investments that our region is now working to implement. Working together to plan for our shared future set the stage for making our communities a better place. For this reason alone, I view the suggestion that a portion of the rural Clackamas area called Boring be removed from the Metro service district as a poor idea that would disenfranchise existing Metro region voters. Residents of this area have been a part of Metro's electorate for more than three decades. Since the late 1970s, we have all participated in elections that created and later modified a home-rule charter for our region and have approved a series of property tax obligation bonds that now need to be repaid. In our system of representative government, we can't just walk away from those obligations, and I believe it is a bad idea to weaken participation and representation.

Moving to the specific issues that you raise in your cover letter, upon review of the assertions you make, I have to conclude that you misunderstand a number of key facts regarding local government in Oregon. Based on these misunderstandings, your suggestion that the Boring neighborhood be removed from Metro is a solution in search of a problem. The two primary arguments you have made are: (1) that the Metro service district boundary somehow divides the rural residential area of Boring and, (2) if residents in Boring want to incorporate as a city, that would somehow be

difficult due to the location of Metro's district boundary. I believe these assertions are incorrect for the following reasons:

1. A "Divided" Community: The location of the Metro district boundary has no impact on the choices that Boring CPO property owners have when it comes to development. The rural area of Clackamas County that is within the county-created Boring CPO is currently subject only to state and Clackamas County rules regarding development. This area is outside the Metro urban growth boundary (UGB) and is therefore solely governed by the rural elements of Clackamas County's comprehensive plan. Under state law, absent the establishment of a UGB and adoption of an urban (rather than rural) comprehensive plan for the area, nothing more than a rural development pattern can be realized.
2. Incorporation: When a city is created, under state law, it must adopt a single comprehensive plan. A hypothetical city in the Boring area would need to create a single plan for the whole city (not two, as you assert), regardless of where Metro's service district boundary, or any other district boundary, is situated.

Secondly, I feel pretty comfortable saying that the Boring CPO, as a whole territory, will not incorporate as a city in the foreseeable future, if ever. If the idea of creating a new city in the footprint of the Boring CPO was actually being discussed, then the metropolitan region would have a strong interest in examining whether to expand the Metro UGB to include this new city, as well as Sandy, within the metropolitan planning area as more growth in this area would affect neighboring cities. However, nothing like this discussion is occurring. In fact, the discussion has gone in exactly the opposite direction.

We recently concluded the urban and rural reserves process, a years-long and incredibly collaborative planning effort conducted with our region's counties, cities, and stakeholders, including neighboring areas. As a result, the Clackamas County Commission adopted rural reserves in the southern and eastern portions of the Boring CPO. Rural reserves are areas that are to be protected from urbanization for the next 50 years, meaning that this part of the Boring CPO cannot legally be urbanized for decades.

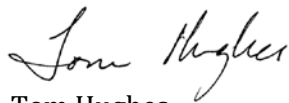
Metro also designated urban reserves that sit within the Boring CPO – areas that are targeted for possible UGB expansion and urban development in the decades to come. Urban reserves represent the areas the region concluded has the best chance at successfully developing in the decades to come. The urban reserves within the Boring CPO are all within the Metro service district and are directly adjacent to the existing Metro urban growth boundary. Therefore, the only area that could possibly incorporate as a city within the Boring CPO is the land that is within the Metro service district, within designated urban reserves, contiguous with the cities of Damascus and Gresham, and contiguous with the Metro UGB. If the residents of this area desire to create a city, the best way to see this new city successfully urbanized (and legally, probably the only way) would be to include it within Metro's UGB.

As a final note, you have raised the matter of Boring competing with neighboring areas to attract new residents and businesses. This point reflects your deepest misunderstanding about local government. The Boring CPO is not a city, nor a village or hamlet. As a rural residential area within Clackamas County, the Boring CPO cannot create a comprehensive plan for development. So while you are right that Boring cannot compete with these cities for people and jobs, it is because the area is zoned by Clackamas County for rural land uses and is not incorporated as a city, which has

nothing to do with the placement of Metro's district boundary. Cities provide their residents with elected representation, a tax base, a comprehensive plan and zoning designations (among many other things), which allow development at an urban level and which attract higher rates of people and jobs than areas outside of cities are able to attract. As a CPO, with no attributes of a city, the Boring area cannot provide those services or authorize the level of development that cities can and do provide.

Our region is more than the sum of our parts because we partner and we collaborate as we plan our future. No matter the city, county, or regional lines we draw, we cannot physically separate from each other and we are economically dependent upon one another. I believe the most productive way to move forward is to ascertain what the residents within designated urban reserves in the Boring CPO want their community to be like over the next couple decades and to work together to help realize those aspirations. The location of Metro's service district boundary is no barrier to the achievement of those aspirations. On the contrary, inclusion of the residents of the urban reserves in the Boring area within Metro provides them with a voice in the decision-making process. We have shown time and again that we are all better off when we work together to solve problems that cut across jurisdictional lines. I encourage you to join us in that effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Hughes".

Tom Hughes
Metro Council President