



Clackamas County Supports Continued Discussion Regarding Local Land Needs in Metro Land Use Planning

On behalf of the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners, thank you for your work to find a solution to the issue of voter-approved annexation through SB 1573. We are very aware of the consequences of this issue on lands within the Metro urban growth boundary (UGB) and agree that a fix is needed to ensure an orderly transition of unincorporated lands to urban uses.

In addition to resolving this issue, Clackamas County looks forward to participating in a Metro-convened Task Force throughout 2016 looking at how to improve the region's urban growth management process. As part of this effort, we will continue to highlight Clackamas County's lack of a long-term employment land supply. Last year, a study by Johnson Economics and Mackenzie confirmed that Clackamas County needs an additional 1,100 acres of employment land, including a supply of large-lot industrial sites, to meet and service population growth in the region.

To help address this issue, and others, Metro needs the ability to analyze land need on a local, or sub-regional, level. As you may know, Metro manages the land supply for the Portland metro area – which contains 1.6 million people and 25 cities. Fifty miles separate Damascus, on the eastern edge of our region in Clackamas County, and Forest Grove on the western edge in Washington County. Each city has its own aspirations, needs, and development patterns. Different parts of the region may have imbalances between jobs and housing. Currently, however, Metro is prohibited from adding land to the urban growth boundary in one part of the region if there is land available in any other area. For example, Metro is unable to expand the urban growth boundary to meet a land need in Troutdale or Oregon City if there is available land in Forest Grove or Cornelius – no matter how compelling the need is at the local level. That is not how we build complete communities, and the region is too large and too congested to do otherwise.

Metro should be permitted to examine jobs and housing needs at a sub-regional level. Without this tool, regional land use decisions will continue to increase traffic on failing infrastructure, will continue to increase gaps in opportunities for communities within the UGB, and will continue to inflate home prices that restrict low-income buyers and renters from establishing themselves in the region. This does not fit with Metro's Climate Smart goals, it does not match their goals to see more affordable housing in the region, and it handicaps jurisdictions within the UGB from servicing their residents and attracting new business.

We look forward to returning to the Legislature in 2017 with solutions intended to address our region's land use challenges.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue. We look forward to continuing to work with you on these important matters.

Sincerely,

John Ludlow, Chair
Clackamas County Board of Commissioners

Please contact Chris Lyons at clyons@clackamas.us for more information.