

Oregon's Brownfield to Housing Pilot Project

Oregon has a housing supply crisis. It is time for legislature to think creatively about tools to expand needed housing in communities, with a focus on incentivizing redevelopment of less desirable or blighted lands within urban growth boundaries.

LC 2506 seeks an investment from the legislature to support a large mixed-use, multi-family housing development by providing bonding to help clean up and fund environmental and geotechnical mitigation for a site that was once a major regional landfill. One such proposed development, called **Abernethy Green**, sits on the north side of Oregon City on the Rossman Landfill. The development has these unique features:

- Sits on 62 buildable acres within the urban growth boundary, adjacent to state Highway 213 and near I-205.
- Plans for 500+ multi-family housing units, of which up to half would be priced within the affordable threshold of 80% medium family income for Clackamas County (30% of \$74,000 annual income as of 2021).
- Retail that reflects the desires of the community, including grocery, banking, indoor, active entertainment, specialty shops, and diverse dining options.
- 3,000+ construction jobs expected, with around 1,000 full and part time jobs when fully operational.
- Dedicated ADA-compliant pathway to the End of Oregon Trail Imperative Center so visitors can have easy access to food and beverage options (does not exist today);
- Plazas, parks areas, pedestrian paths and a Central Square community gathering area.
- Family-oriented entertainment – discussion underway with Portland Winterhawks to include ice rinks for community; and, with Dark Horse Comics to house movie memorabilia museum and working sound stage (potential for major tourism draw).
- Murals and other artwork and interpretive plaques honoring the rich history of the area including the first city within the Oregon Territory and end of the Oregon Trail.
- Roads and public utility infrastructure improvements to area, paid for by \$26 million in estimated system development charges (SDCs).
- Historic trolley to run between Abernethy Green and the Grand Ronde tribe's Tumwata Village at the Blue Heron Mill site, to relieve congestion in downtown corridor and establish a link to north and south bookends.
- Shovel ready project – all land use permits secured with no appeals.
- Experienced local developer - Summit Development Group - which has done major housing projects including Block 3 in the Vancouver Waterfront and Baseline Apartments in Gresham.

From 1969 to 1983, this site housed the Rossman Landfill, which received 60% of the Portland Metro region's residential waste. For the past forty years, developers have considered the site for commercial and retail development, but the cost for Brownfield clean-up and environmental mitigation has always been a deterrent. The estimated shortfall to pencil out the project today is around \$40 million.

A Metro reports states there are 55 former landfills within Portland Metro Area, and including Marion, Yamhill and Columbia Counties. Others face similar challenges due to uncertainty of clean-up and mitigation costs.

A \$15 million investment through State bonding will help an eligible project such as Abernethy Green cover a portion of the Brownfield clean-up and environmental mitigation, including:

- Leachate prevention and long-term monitoring.
- Methane gas management and long-term monitoring.
- On-site stormwater management and treatment.
- Special building foundation and utility system pilings (unique to developing landfill sites).
- Environmental engineering.

Contacts: Senator-elect Mark Meek and Dan Jarman, danj@crosswaterstrategies.com

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The developer would **produce a report on how other local jurisdictions with development partners can turn former landfill sites into needed housing and mixed-use developments.** Please note LC draft references General Fund allocation, which needs to be changed.



Please support and co-sponsor LC 2506. The legislature should support unique mixed-use projects that significantly increase housing supply, especially within UGBs on lands considered less desirable in the past. This Abernethy Green pilot project is a creative tool to help turn Brownfield sites into needed housing, with jobs and economic development for Oregon.

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