Feb. 13 Planning Commission hearing

Agenda item no. 50.1

File no. CP-13-032

Written testimony received at the hearing

Kevin Keating
2520 Meadow Creek
Medford OR 97504

City of Medford Planning Dept
Attn: John Adam, AICP
200 South Ivy St.
Medford OR 97501

In re: GLUP Amendment; file CP13-032 Parcel 1SA 930

Dear Mr. Adam,

I am completely opposed to the zoning changes proposed. I am in general opposed to the idea that we should increase density on the East side. It does not make sense when we have a glut of vacant property close to transportation and other services

The amount of infrastructure necessary to support higher density would be cost-prohibitive and wasteful.

The Carpenter Plan would be better but still, I oppose all central planning on the East Side.

Thank you and regards,

Kevin Keating

Attn : John Adam, AICP February 11, 2014

This letter is in regards to the proposed zoning changes next to Brookdale meadows in which I a strongly opposed to as a homeowner of Brookdale Meadows.

I recently purchased a home at 2470 Greendridge Dr after looking at dozens of homes and finally settling in on this one as my home. I chose it for many features including and not limited to its location, the great views of up towards Foothills and hillcrest, its quietness and most of all the neighbourhood had no through streets. It was Cut off and only traffic is those living there and visiting there.

I believe if the rezoning happens as planned , and although no mention has been made of, I am greatly concerned with the thought of Greendridge being opened up as a through road to the new development which would create a huge unacceptable increase in traffic not only for peace but safety as well as road conditions wearing. I am strongly opposed to this happening and I am also very concerned with a substantial loss in property value and economic impact to my area and thus causing me to go from being in a good position in my investment to being underwater when my property values and overall interest in our community drops .

I have seen the counter proposal, its more acceptable IF Greenridge remains closed and brookdale meadows remains a closed neighborhood and locating any entrances or through streets to come from Mcandrews or Foothills and not through Brookdale Meadows. I sincerely hope the planning commission takes our concerns very seriously and I ask what you would feel or how you would react if your current neighborhood was suddenly subject to a major rezoning near it and causing you to lose your value and lose what you worked so hard for and time I spent looking for the right location to call home. I implore you to put yourselves in our shoes and consider the counter proposal and continuing to keep Brookdale Meadows a closed Community. I also believe putting an entirely non-conforming very different style of community so close will create a further loss of property values and we'd lose out views and peacefulness as well..

Thank you for your time and consideration in this Manner.

Sincerely,

Richard Zeegers

2470 Greenridge Dr.

Medford, Or 97504

541-200-9228

CITY OF MEDFORD
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

This is to notify you that the City of Medford has proposed a land use regulation that may affect the permissible uses of your property and other properties.

On January 23, 2014 and February 13, 2014, the City of Medford will hold a public hearing regarding the adoption of an Ordinance (number to be determined at a later date). The City has determined that adoption of this ordinance may affect the permissible uses of your property, and other properties in the affected zones, and may change the value of your property.

(above language in accordance with Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 227.186)

Date of Notice: December 20, 2013

File No.: CP 13-032
Contact: John Adam

RECEIVED
FEB 13 2014
Planning Dept.
Presented at meeting

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS
PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, January 23, 2014	**Thursday, February 13, 2014**
Medford City Council Chambers **City Hall, 411 West 8th Street, Third Floor**	**Medford City Council Chambers** **City Hall, 411 West 8th Street, Third Floor**
5:30 PM	**5:30 PM**
Please Note: Owners with property located **North** of Jackson Street are encouraged to attend the January 23rd meeting.	*Please Note:* Owners with property located **South** of Jackson Street are encouraged to attend the February 13th meeting.

Notice is hereby given that the City of Medford will hold public hearings for the following:

- A legislative General Land Use Plan Map Amendment to reclassify 856 vacant or redevelopable acres (Internal Study Areas)(ISAs) within the City's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) for the purpose of increasing the efficiency of land within the current boundary.

Notification: You are receiving this notice because you are identified as the owner of property within the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) map amendment proposal.

Proposed Change: Your mailing label on the envelope indicates the current and proposed GLUP designations for your property as well as the study area number.

I am not interested in changing my Property Zoneing. 961-945 Lozier Ln.
Shirley O. Chambers

ASK
SUE KUPILLAS
ALLIED SOLUTIONS, LLC

presented at meeting

Medford Planning Commission

c/o John Adam, Long Range Planning

City of Medford Planning Department

200 South Ivy Street, Lausmann Annex

Medford, OR 97501

RE: UGB Amendment Project CP13-032/ ISA 930

Dear Commissioners;

My name is Sue Kupillas and I have lived at 749 Pierce Road for twelve years. While I have an understanding that the City of Medford needs to plan for a 20 year horizon, I believe that the proposed areas for inclusion are excessive. According to the Housing Element adopted in 2010, the City established a need for 465 UR, 39 UM, and 49 UH. The proposal, as I read it would increase and cause a surplus of UM and UH and increase the deficit of UR land substantially.

On Pierce Road, we understand the need to increase UR availability, and I think most of us won't object to small areas of UR. But in our neighborhood, where the land is being farmed yet is proposed for UH and UM and commercial, we strongly object. There is no need to supply a surplus of UH and UM on land that is used as agriculture land, just because it has no development now. I understand the land owners have expressed that they will continue to farm the land, so the City will not realistically meet density goals.

There are many abandoned lots, houses, and undeveloped areas that would be far more suitable for UH and UM and the infrastructure is already in the areas to support that use within the City.

The City needs to prioritize lands that want inclusion, Study Areas where no objection is being registered and spread others throughout the City, to avoid completely changing the character and devaluing property incompatible with UH and UM zoning designations.

I would like to get future notices of proposed rezoning in my neighborhood of 749 Pierce Road. I didn't get a notice for the first hearing.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Kupillas

Sue Kupillas

541.245.0770
FAX: 541.245.0880
email: ASK@opusnet.com

1744 E McAndrews, Suite H
Medford, Oregon 97504

RECEIVED presented meeting
FEB 13 2014
PLANNING DEPT.

1/10/2014

Petition to the Planning Department Regarding Rezoning Proposed for ISA 930 CP 13-032

Introduction: A Notice of Public Hearing was sent to all property owners within 200 feet of the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) Map amendment proposal. The rezoning of Internal Study Area (ISA) number 930 of 93 acres would result in a 13 acre Commercial zone at the corner of Hillcrest and Pierce Roads, a five acre Commercial zone at the corner of Hillcrest and Foothill Roads and Urban Residential - Medium Density in the remaining 75 acres of property.

Concerns: The zoning in the neighborhood is currently SFR-4 but many of the homes are on much larger lots. An addition of 75 acres of Urban Residential - Medium Density would add 1,125 dwellings to this area of East Medford. This will vastly increase traffic on these streets, and is not compatible with long - standing existing development. The density will also affect the water, sewer and utility capacity and radically alter the wet lands.

Action: We, the undersigned, request the Planning Commission omit ISA 930 from the rezoning. We request that independent studies be conducted assessing the impact of increased housing density on the neighboring communities and environment, including traffic, utilities, water, sewage, storm runoff and wetlands mitigation.

	Print Name	Address (Medford, OR 97504)	Signature
1.	Carolyn Crews	3448 Greystone Ct	[illegible]
2.	Robert Crews	3448 Greystone Ct.	[illegible]
3.	John Lawton	6058 HILLCREST RD	[illegible]
Claudia - 4.	Claudia Lawton	6058 Hillcrest Rd	Claudia J Lawton
5.	[illegible]	4402 Hillcrest Rd	[illegible]
6.	M Reeves	4402 Hillcrest Rd	M Reeves
7.	Monica Clinton	6116 John Wayne Dr	[illegible]
8.	[illegible]	702 S Modoc	[illegible]
✓ 9.	Bob Robertson	640 Hillcrest	[illegible]
✓ 10.	Joyce Robertson	640 Hillcrest Rd Medford, Or 97504	[illegible]

Bob + Joyce Robertson
779-3829

RECEIVED presented at meeting
FEB 13 2014 1/15/2014
PLANNING DEPT.

Petition to the Planning Department Regarding Rezoning Proposed for ISA 930 CP 13-032

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Action: We, the undersigned, request the Planning Commission omit ISA 930 from the rezoning.

	Print Name	Address (Medford, OR 97504)	Signature
have emailed	1. Ellen Naumes	198 Littrell Dr	E Naumes
	2. Michael McKeelson	2217 Ridge Way	Michael McKeelson
	3.		
	4.		
	5.		
	6.		
	7.		
	8.		
	9.		
	10.		

RECEIVED Presented at meeting

FEB 13 2014 1/10/2014

PLANNING DEPT.

Petition to the Planning Department Regarding Rezoning Proposed for ISA 930 CP 13-032

Introduction: A Notice of Public Hearing was sent to all property owners within 200 feet of the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) Map amendment proposal. The rezoning of Internal Study Area (ISA) number 930 of 93 acres would result in a 13 acre Commercial zone at the corner of Hillcrest and Pierce Roads, a five acre Commercial zone at the corner of Hillcrest and Foothill Roads and Urban Residential - Medium Density in the remaining 75 acres of property.

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	Print Name	Address (Medford, OR 97504)	Signature
Lavernail			
1.	Lynne Dittmer	2455 Spring St	Lynne Dittmer
2.	Ann Istel	1512 E Main	Ann Istel
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

presented at meeting

DATE: February 13, 2014

FROM: Chris Hill`1630 Spring St, 97504

TO: Planning Commission

RE: GLUP Amendment

The GLUP recommendation to increase multifamily construction sites is the latest attack on the middle class!

The properties recommended for multifamily are currently zoned single family. By reducing single family acreage, middle class Medford citizens will have few places to build a single family home. The rich will continue to build on the hills east of Medford. The financially challenged will be accommodated in the low income housing projects which will most likely occupy the new high density zoned building sites.

Owning a home is still an American dream for many middle class citizens. Medford has been largely a middle class community; but the American dream and a middle class citizenry will be a fond memory if the GLUB recommendations are approved.

Therefore, I'm asking you to carefully consider the long term ramifications of the Planning Department's recommendations.

Chris Hill

RECEIVED
FEB 13 2014
PLANNING DEPT.
presented at meeting

February 12, 2014

City of Medford, Oregon
Planning Commission

RE: ISA 670

Study Area 670 is proposed to be changed from single family to multifamily housing. This would destroy the established rural character of our neighborhood, and decrease our quality of life. If we, who purchased our single family homes in this neighborhood, had wanted density, we wouldn't have chosen to live here. We chose to have open space around. We enjoy living next to active agricultural areas—there are goats, sheep, pigs, and cattle, a blueberry farm, and a vegetable farm. Unfortunately, people who choose multifamily housing are bothered by these activities and make their dislikes known. Ultimately, rather than putting up with yet another problem, people engaged in these activities, move. It is well-known that high density housing and abutting agriculture don't mesh.

Single family housing is the most desired and sought after housing by families with children. Families who want or need yards do not move into multifamily housing,. They move to areas where there are yards and "commute" to shopping, work, etc.

In the Qualitative Analysis ISA 670 scored almost at the bottom, 17th, only 3 scored lower. According to the Qualitative Analysis this indicates that several factors are unfavorable. ISA 670 is bounded on the east by Lozier and on the south by Stewart. Both are very busy thoroughfares with lots of traffic. They do not have sidewalks or bike lanes, and the shoulders are very narrow. There is no mass transit. The closest grocery stores are a mile north. There are no parks, and both the elementary and the high school where children could play, etc. are at least a mile away. It lacks side streets. There is no employment. Medford's housing policy says that they shall designate areas of residential development that are conveniently located close to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit routes, and employment. ISA 670 isn't.

The parcels of land are small, most are not large enough for a multifamily residence and the parking that would be needed. For ISA 670 driving is the only practical means of getting anyplace. Adding all the vehicles that would be necessary for the residents in multifamily housing is not environmentally responsible. It would certainly go against Medford's transportation policy to put effort into increasing the percentage of dwellings within a quarter mile walking distance of transit, and it would not facilitate development or redevelopment that reduces motor vehicle dependency and promotes walking, biking, and transit. However, redevelopment and increasing density within the core urban area would.

One of the listed reasons for embarking on the UGB amendment policy is "It is especially important for higher-density housing to be closer in to benefits from reduced distances to transit, goods, and services. ISA 670 is not "closer in."

Dorothy Beesley
2530 Stewart

1000 friends of Oregon

133 SW Second Ave, Suite 201 • Portland, OR 97204 • (503) 497-1000 • fax (503) 223-0073 • www.friends.org
Southern Oregon Office • PO Box 2442 • Grants Pass, OR 97528 • (541) 474-1155 • fax (541) 474-9389
Willamette Valley Office • PO Box 51252 • Eugene, OR 97401 • (541) 520-3763 • fax (503) 223-0073

February 13, 2014

Michael Zarosinski, Chair
Medford Planning Commission
C/O Planning Department
City of Medford, Lausmann Annex
200 South Ivy Street
Medford, OR 97501

Subject: File No. CPA-13-032, ISA GLUP Amendment

Dear Chair Zarosinski, and members of the Planning Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments in response to the city of Medford's consideration of a General Land Use Plan (GLUP) amendment to reclassify approximately 800 vacant or redevelopable acres (Internal Study Areas, or ISAs) for the purpose of maximizing the current capacity of the land within Medford's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). 1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, charitable organization dedicated to working with Oregonians to enhance our quality of life by building livable urban and rural communities, protecting family farms and forests, and conserving natural and scenic areas. We have many members and supporters in Jackson County and the city of Medford.

This testimony is divided into two sections. The first includes some general observations regarding the ISA process. That is followed by specific recommendations based on our review of the staff report, the 2010 Housing Element, and relevant portions of the Regional Plan Element of the Medford Comprehensive Plan.

General Comments Regarding the ISA Concept and Proposal

As has been noted by Staff, the proposal before you *is not* that all 800 of the acres in the identified ISAs be reclassified. Instead, the ISA areas identified in the January 15, 2014 Staff report[1] represent a pool from which to select areas that can be redesignated to help facilitate a more fiscally responsible solution to the problem of accommodating future population growth in the city of Medford. As an extra benefit, when combined with the upcoming analysis of External Study Areas for potential expansion of the UGB, pressure to expand the city onto adjacent farmland can be alleviated while meeting the commitments and policy choices made in the recently completed Regional Plan. We recognize that, for many reasons, not all of the

[1] These areas are further described in the "Internal Study Area Guidebook" included by reference in the Staff report.

identified areas will be reclassified. However, as explained further below, we encourage the city to take advantage of this opportunity and redesignate as many of those areas that make sense in order to increase the options available to the city in the future. There are a variety of reasons why it is in the best interest of the city and its residents do be aggressive in this action.

More efficient use of land near existing infrastructure is better for the financial health of the city

Accommodating the majority of future growth in existing areas that already have roads, sewer and water lines, and other infrastructure will likely require some upgrades—although not in every case. Some of that infrastructure will have to be upgraded even without changing the uses in the ISAs.[2]

Accommodating all future population growth in areas outside of the existing UGB would require the extension of roads, sewers, water lines and other infrastructure into new areas, increasing the amount of infrastructure that must be operated and maintained in the future and requiring growing amounts of money from an already tight budget.

The reality is that the future will be a mix of both. However, in the long run, the city is better off investing to the extent possible in the efficient use of existing infrastructure rather than creating more. More than two-thirds of the cities in the state report that property tax revenue falls short of the cost of providing essential services—including operation and maintenance of existing infrastructure.[3] Cities including Medford are finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with increasing operations and maintenance costs. Because of the long-term cost implications, it makes fiscal sense to maximize the amount of growth to be accommodated in existing areas, even in the few ISA areas that may require infrastructure upgrades.[4]

This may be one of the last actions the city can take to help the RVTD transit system take some of the burden off of local and regional infrastructure

As noted in the letter submitted to the record by RVTD, concentrating housing and employment near existing transit routes will help RVTD to better plan and provide effective service. In addition, it is highly unlikely that RVTD will expand service into the future growth areas (Urban Reserves) identified through the RPS process for some time, if ever.[5] Most of the ISAs are on or near existing transit routes, and this may be the last meaningful opportunity for the city to increase the concentration of users near existing routes.

Housing that is affordable is not the same as "HUD Housing"

Goal 10 of the Statewide Planning Program requires that cities provide "the availability of adequate numbers of needed housing units at price ranges and rent levels which are commensurate with the financial capabilities of Oregon households and allow for flexibility of

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[2] See page 212 of the packet for the January 15, 2014 ISA hearing.
[3] League of Oregon Cities, "2013 State of the Cities Report," page 2.
[4] See also "More Extensive is More Expensive," 2013 literature review chronicling the benefits of directing new growth to areas within existing cities. www.friends.org/infrastructure.
[5] See letter from Paige Townsend, RVTD Senior Planner, December 2, 2013.

housing location, type and density." Housing that is affordable to residents of all income levels comes in all types, but housing that is affordable to those on the lower end of the income scale tends to be in medium and high density developments—*only a very small percentage of which* are subsidized "HUD" affordable housing developments. A distressingly large number of the comments at the January 15, 2014 hearing conflated the two. This distinction is important to keep in mind.

Providing housing that meets the need of residents of all income levels helps the local economy

The adopted Housing Element found that there is a huge deficit in homes in the area for families earning less than Meford's Median Family Income.[6] This finding echoes the conclusions of the Housing Needs Analysis done during the RPS process, which found a deficit of affordable housing throughout the region. The Staff report further notes that Medford currently has a shortage of land zoned medium density to accommodate the housing types that most commonly provide this affordability.[7]

Many of the ISA areas are near existing schools, and some are near existing shopping areas. A number of them are also near existing transit corridors. Placing housing that more people can afford in these locations makes it possible for more of the people that work in Medford to live, and shop, here.

Changing demographic trends indicate an increased demand for smaller, generally multi-family housing options

Contrary to the fears expressed in the last hearing, some medium to high density development is decidedly higher end, and trends indicate that there will be increasing demand for this type of housing option in the future. Indeed, numerous studies indicate that the majority of the "Generation Y" (born roughly 1980 to 2000) and an increasing number of now-retiring baby boomers—which together make up over 50 percent of the current US population—prefer smaller homes in neighborhoods that provide the option to not own, or at least not always have to drive, a car.[8] A 2011 study by the National Association of Realtors confirmed these findings, and a 2013 update indicates these trends are growing stronger.[9]

In addition to providing the opportunity for developing these housing types in the ISAs, the addition of new commercial areas in some of the ISAs will create destinations for people in the neighborhoods to walk to.

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[6] See page 216 of the packet for the January 15, 2014 ISA hearing.
[7] See page 216 of the packet for the January 15, 2014 ISA hearing
[8] For example, see Urban Lands Institute, "What's Next? Real Estate in the New Economy," published 2011.
[9] See National Association of Realtors, "2011 Community Preference Survey: What Americans are looking for when deciding where to live." See also National Association of Realtors, "National Community Preference Survey," 2013.

When done well, medium and high density residential development can increase neighborhood property values

The Staff report notes there are numerous studies that show that medium or high density housing does not inherently lower property values, and in some cases, if done well, can actually enhance values.[10] Indeed, neighborhoods that offered the option walkable destinations and proximity to transit tended to fare better in the recent recession than traditional, larger lot housing only type neighborhoods.[11]

The implementation of design standards, as well as market forces driven by the above-mentioned demographic changes, can enhance the value and livability of existing neighborhoods near the ISAs.[12]

The creation or redesignation of employment land in ISAs generally makes sense

Many communities throughout Oregon have succumbed to pressure to rezone industrial land for commercial uses, in the process creating deficits of industrial land. In Medford's case there is already a surplus of industrial land and a deficit of commercial employment land. The justifications given in the staff report for redesignating some of that land make sense in this context. The proposal to create some neighborhood-scale commercial lands in residential neighborhoods in conjunction with redesignating low-density to medium-density residential also makes sense both for enhancing the livability of neighborhoods and for creating more opportunities for employment closer to where people live.

Changing the GLUP designation of lands through the ISA project changes the locations of needed housing types, but does not change the overall number of acres needed to accommodate future needs

When viewed in context, and contrary to testimony given at the January 15, 2014 hearing, redesignating land currently allocated for low density residential development within the ISAs does not create or add to a deficit of land needed for low density development. Rather, it moves potential future medium and high density development into areas where the infrastructure already exists to handle that density, and moves some of the new lower density development to the outside edge of the city where it is more appropriate. The result is a one-for-one swap that does not decrease the overall number of acres needed for any category of housing, but does move some of it to locations that make more sense.

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[10] See page 215 of the packet for the January 15, 2014 ISA hearing.

[11] One of many studies reaching this conclusion was performed in the larger Washington, DC area by Christopher Leinberger, "DC: The WalkUP Wake-Up Call," Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis at the George Washington University School of Business, 2012.

[12] Another statement that was repeated several times at the January 15, 2014 hearing was that low-income housing would bring an increase in crime to existing neighborhoods. In fact, an increasing number of studies around the country are showing that this is not the case. For example, see "The Impact of Housing Vouchers on Crime in US Cities and Suburbs," Michael Lens, published in *Urban Studies*, July 2013.

Comments Arising From Review of the Staff Proposal, Including Adjustments That Need to be Made to Overall UGB Review Process

As indicated above, the ISA project that is the subject of this proceeding must be viewed in the context of the overall UGB review process. The following comments and concerns are offered in that context following our review of the staff report, along with the 2010 Housing Element from which some of the assumptions in the staff report were drawn, and the recently completed RPS Regional Plan. This review indicates that there are some modifications that need to be made to this proposal in order to meet regulatory requirements and commitments and policies of the city. In addition, we offer some suggestions that will better help the City meet the needs of both residents and the city treasury. These changes are discussed below.

The number of acres needed to accommodate housing is overstated and needs to be recalculated to bring it into compliance with commitments Medford made in adopting the RPS Regional Plan

The calculations for determining the number of acres necessary to accommodate future housing needs is based on a number of assumptions, including a population forecast, assumed household size, housing type mix, and assumed density when built out. With the exception of the population forecast, these assumptions are generally found in the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan. As an early step in the UGB review, Medford adopted a new Housing Element in 2010. DLCD did not acknowledge that document, stating that the submittal was incomplete because it was not accompanied by a proposal for how to accommodate the need that was indicated by the document.[13] Thus, this document is not yet final.

Tables 4 and 5 in the staff report[14] indicate that approximately 2,383 acres of land will be needed to accommodate the residential needs of the projected population growth over the next 20 years, and that all but 996 acres of that need can be accommodated within the existing UGB. According to Table 4, that calculation is based on the assumption that the unbuilt portions of the existing UGB, and the land added to the UGB, will develop at an average density of 6.3 dwelling units (du) per gross acre. That figure is derived from the 2010 Housing Element.

Subsequent to the adoption of the still unacknowledged Housing Element, Medford adopted the RPS Regional Plan. In that plan, Medford committed to a density of 6.6 du/gross acre for lands within the existing UGB and lands added to the UGB between 2010 and 2035.[15]

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[13] Letter to Jim Huber from Richard Whitman, Director, DLCD, January 5, 2011.
[14] See pages 210 and 211 of the packet for the January 15, 2014 ISA hearing.
[15] See Medford Comprehensive Plan, Regional Plan Element, Section 4.15, p. 52. The plan commitments Medford to a density of 6.6 du/gross acre for lands "within an urban reserve and land currently within an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) but outside of the existing City Limit." However, ORS 197.296 requires that the city demonstrate "needs cannot be reasonably be accommodated on land already inside an urban growth boundary," including that inside the current city limit, prior to expanding the UGB. Practice around the state has been that this demonstration is made by adopting "efficiency measures," including increasing the density of unbuilt portions of the existing city/UGB. The RPS commitments were made in part to meet this requirement for UGB lands outside of the existing city. In order to meet this requirement for the areas within the existing city without creating a point of potential weakness for the city's ultimate UGB expansion proposal, and in order to greatly simplify the calculations necessary

The assumed density needs to be adjusted to 6.6 du/gross acre to be consistent with the Regional Plan commitments, and the need recalculated. Recalculating based on this assumed density results in a reduction of the assumed need by approximately 100 acres overall.[16] The number of acres needed within each category of land (i.e., UR, UM, UH or CM) will need to be adjusted accordingly.

I have spoken with staff and they are aware of this issue.

Maximizing the number of acres redesignated through the ISA project increases the flexibility Medford has for meeting future needs

As noted above, the City has committed to building out both the existing and new UGB areas at an overall average density of 6.6 du/gross acre.[17] There are a number of reasons why it would benefit the city to redesignate lands in the ISAs in excess of the minimum necessary to meet that commitment within the existing UGB.

The commitment is not that the land be planned for a certain density, but that the land actually be *built out* to that density. Medford recently went through a painful process of discovering that land designated on the GLUP for high density development cannot always be rezoned and built at the assumed densities.[18] There are other reasons why lands may not eventually build out to planned densities, such as the existence of flood plains or wetlands which must be built around. Thus, it makes sense to create a slight surplus as a "cushion," to assure that assumed densities can be met within the existing UGB.

As described above, demographic trends, the need to provide housing for all income levels, and the need to meet the City's financial obligations are all indicators that the assumption from the Housing Element that only 35 percent of the housing build in the next 20 years will be multi-family is probably too low to meet future needs. The ISAs generally meet technical requirements for supporting these types of developments, either due to existing infrastructure, proximity to existing transit routes, or both. Public testimony given January 15, 2014, generally supported the concept that higher density developments should be located further inside the city as opposed to around the outsides. For this reason, it makes sense to take advantage of the current process to create additional areas that will allow for denser development in the future.

Probably the most compelling reason, though, is the flexibility to take advantage of a provision in the RPS Regional Plan that would allow some of the lands in the future UGB areas more

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to determine the need, we recommend that the assumed density of all unbuilt areas within the existing UGB, whether in the current city limit or not, be set at 6.6 du/gross acre. Any other figure could be viewed as arbitrary and needlessly subject the city to a challenge.

[16] Note that we believe that this number is still higher than can be justified, but that is based on the amount of public and semi-public land assumed to be needed, and not on the amount of land needed for residences. This issue is outside of the scope of this hearing, but it will be raised later in the appropriate venue.

[17] As noted above, the RPS commitment to this density applies to lands in the URAs as well as lands in the existing UGB but outside of the existing city limits. For the purposes of consistency and simplicity, we recommend that assumed density be applied across the board to all existing and future UGB lands.

[18] The Cherry Creek project resulted in only half the number of units originally proposed.

options for building out in the future. The Regional Plan includes a provision allowing for lower than committed densities in the URAs *provided* that an offsetting amount of density is transferred into the existing city limit.[19] In order for that to occur, the city must have lands that can be zoned to receive that density. By creating those areas now, the city will not have to go through another process of identifying potential areas to reclassify in the future. Designating those areas now increases future flexibility in taking advantage of this provision.

The staff proposed ISAs can be modified to meet some of the projected need while accommodating community concerns

The staff report, along with the review by Public Works,[20] indicate that the ISAs within the proposal are technically feasible, and that they make sense for locational and other factors. We recognize that there are community concerns and political reasons why not all of these areas will ultimately be modified through this process. However, while the universe of lands that are appropriate for consideration of resignation on a technical basis may be identified by the staff analysis, the designation those lands ultimately receive need not be limited to what staff has proposed. Indeed, there are ways that proposed uses on ISAs might be modified to address neighborhood or other concerns without completely eliminating ISAs and still meeting the needs of the city.

The staff report acknowledges this when it states that "there may be a need for design standards and transitioning methods between areas of significantly different densities."[21] One way to make this accommodation is to place medium density development between existing low density neighborhoods and proposed future high density zoning.

Public testimony offered at the January 15, 2014 hearing offers another example. At that hearing the owners of the land in ISA 930 offered an alternative to the uses proposed by staff that moved proposed density increases away from existing neighborhoods and slightly reduced the capacity of that ISA. Many neighbors testified that this change alleviated their concerns about this proposal. There may be other opportunities for similar changes that address neighborhood concerns while still increasing the capacity of the ISAs above current levels.

Conclusions and Recommendation

In conclusion:

- We support the concept of redesignating ISA lands as presented in the Staff report;
- The assumed density used to calculate total land needs for accommodating the projected population growth needs to be adjusted so it is consistent with commitments made in the Regional Plan; and

[19] See Medford Comprehensive Plan, Section 4.1.5, page 52.
[20] See Planning Commission packet for January 15, 2014 hearing, beginning at page 245.
[21] See Planning Commission packet for January 15, 2014 hearing, page 207.

- We encourage the city to take full advantage of this opportunity in order to improve the efficiency of the city and the existing transportation infrastructure, enhance the livability of existing and planned neighborhoods, and help to increase the flexibility for the city in determining how areas outside of the existing UGB will develop.

Please place these comments in the record and notify me at the Grants Pass address above of any decisions or future hearings or meetings on this subject.

Respectfully,

Greg Holmes
Southern Oregon Planning Advocate
1000 Friends of Oregon

CC: Josh LeBombard, DLCD

MORE EXTENSIVE IS MORE EXPENSIVE

How Sprawl Infrastructure Bankrupts Oregon Communities, and What We Can Do About It

1000 friends of Oregon

January 2013

Contents

About this report

This report is the result of several months of research to explore the impacts of sprawl-induced infrastructure spending, and to propose strategies that could better avoid such burdens in the future. Download a summary or the full report at ***www.friends.org/infrastructure***.

About 1000 Friends of Oregon

1000 Friends of Oregon is a statewide land use advocacy organization with offices in Bend, Eugene, Grants Pass, and Portland. Founded in 1975, our mission consists of working with Oregonians to enhance our quality of life by building livable urban and rural communities, protecting family farms and forests, and conserving natural areas.

For more information on 1000 Friends of Oregon, please visit ***www.friends.org***.

Credits

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Executive Summary

Oregon's physical infrastructure is an investment in the future of its residents and communities. Unfortunately, many Oregon communities are making the wrong bets. They're falling behind on maintenance, taking on debt, and raising taxes to pay for it all.

Much of this owes to the shape communities have taken. Some development patterns create much higher public costs than others. Land-extensive sprawl costs a lot more for infrastructure than more efficient development, especially when total lifecycle costs are included. Greater separation and longer distances in sprawling development require costlier roads, sewer and water lines, and more – in capital, operating, and maintenance costs. Services feel the squeeze, too, spreading thinner to serve fewer people.

But there is an alternative. Quality growth directs development into existing communities and creates walkable neighborhoods with mixed land uses and transportation options. At the same time, it saves communities millions. In these difficult fiscal times, quality growth is the best fiscal bet for Oregon's future.

Unfortunately, current Oregon law does not require cities to consider the full lifecycle costs of infrastructure when making growth choices. It's time to change this approach. **By considering the full costs of infrastructure, we can hold leaders accountable and help communities step back from sprawl's fiscal edge.**

Key Findings

- **The public invests heavily to support development with infrastructure**, such as roads, water lines, and sewer systems. The costs are usually highest when that development sprawls—when the majority of residential and employment development is low-density, land-consumptive, and auto-dependent, with large separations between different land uses.
- **Sprawl is a bad fiscal bet**. It costs more to supply with infrastructure than it generates in taxes, development charges, and user fees. It creates deficits that the community must make up with higher taxes or declining services elsewhere. Oregon cities are suffering under maintenance backlogs related to low-density growth.
- **In Oregon, land use planning helps to contain sprawl, but infrastructure costs are often inadequately considered**—especially the lifecycle costs of operation, maintenance, and replacement. This constrains the choices communities consider, and keeps many on the path to fiscal stress or even insolvency.
- **Cost-conservative quality growth creates substantial savings** for the public on infrastructure construction and future maintenance by avoiding the inefficiencies of sprawl. For example, roads cost 12 percent less for quality growth than for sprawl. Water and sewer systems cost 14 percent less.[1]
- **Policymakers and the public need better information about the life-cycle public costs of development infrastructure.** Only with such information can they create fiscally-responsible land use and transportation policy and avoid the "sprawl premium." We propose that Oregon cities consider the full fiscal impacts of growth choices through a tool known as Fiscal Impact Analysis.

MORE EXTENSIVE IS MORE EXPENSIVE

How Sprawl Infrastructure Bankrupts Oregon Communities, and What We Can Do About It

What is infrastructure? How is it funded?

Public infrastructure is the publicly owned and maintained "bones" of cities and towns, things like roads, bridges, and pipes for water and sewage. Infrastructure also includes systems and treatment facilities that distribute and manage water, sewage, and storm water, including the hookups that connect individual residences and businesses to larger municipal systems. Transportation infrastructure is usually the largest infrastructure expense. Sidewalks, local streets, larger regional roads, highways, freeways, and bridges are all transportation infrastructure. Although developers often pay for the initial construction of neighborhood infrastructure, usually these types of infrastructure are maintained and replaced at public expense.[2]

Funding the initial investment. The initial construction of public infrastructure can be funded in a variety of ways. In some cases, developers of larger residential or employment projects will pay for and build the on-site infrastructure up front—for example, the local roads and water and sewer lines. When the project is completed, those costs are embedded in the prices of properties, such as homes, within the development.

Infrastructure outside the development, such as collector roads connecting it to other parts of a city, is built using a municipality's capital construction budget, usually funded by revenue from sources including bond sales, fuel taxes, sales taxes, property taxes, and developer impact fees.[3] Sometimes large infrastructure projects are funded by grants from the state or federal governments.

Each funding source has limitations, sometimes significant. For instance, consider developer impact fees. New development causes increased demand on transportation and other infrastructure by the residents or employees associated with the new development. This can often cause impacts over a large area. Developers often pay fees to local governments, called System Development Charges (SDCs), to help mitigate this impact, which can affect a large area.

In Oregon, state statute strictly limits the types of infrastructure for which local governments may assess SDCs: roads, sewer, water, storm water, and parks. The statute allows SDCs "only for capital improvements,"[4] not for operations and maintenance, and establishes the methodology local governments must use to calculate any SDCs they charge.[5] The statute

Public and private infrastructure

This report focuses on public infrastructure, the publicly owned and paid-for elements that are essential in any city. There are other types of infrastructure that are privately owned and built largely by private corporations. These include some electric systems, gas, cable, telephone lines, and fiber-optic systems. Although the these systems aren't funded directly through tax bills, they follow a similar formula to public infrastructure: the more extensive the systems must be, the more expensive they are. Their costs are passed on to customers through higher rates, or through declining service quality, even for those that live nowhere near new developments.

does allows local governments to assess SDCs for "an equitable share"[6] of the cost of the infrastructure capacity that must be added to serve future users of the new development. It also states that SDCs can "obtain the [projected] cost"[7] of those required improvements.

But few, if any, local governments in Oregon charge SDCs for the full cost of required capacity increases. A recent Oregon study found inadequacies with current SDC practices:

> Some local jurisdictions within the [Portland] Metro area do not levy sufficient funds through SDCs to pay for the total cost of needed infrastructure development to serve growth. In addition, most cities and counties in the Metro area charge a uniform SDC for development within their jurisdiction regardless of whether the costs of servicing different developments vary due to factors such as location and density.[8]

SDCs fail to cover lifetime costs. But there is a bigger problem with relying on SDCs for infrastructure funding. Because Oregon SDCs are not permitted to fund the ongoing service costs of infrastructure, cities and counties must depend on other revenue sources to pay for basic operations and maintenance. These include fuel taxes, voter-approved bonds backed by property taxes, ratepayer payments, and even municipal general funds, which also pay for essential services like police and fire. Maintenance is especially difficult to fund, because it creates no new developer fee revenue or property tax revenue and is often ineligible for federal grants.

With small pots of money pulled in many directions, it is not surprising that expensive infrastructure repair and replacement projects are often cut or put off. In a recent survey, 38 percent of Oregon cities polled reported cutting road maintenance budgets in response to overall budget deficits.[9] Metro recently found that the Portland region faces $10 billion in infrastructure maintenance costs between now and 2035, with no source of funding identified to pay for it.[10] This is on top of up to $31 billion Metro estimates will be required for new infrastructure by 2035.

In this revenue-constrained context, policy makers and citizens need as much information as possible about how to contain infrastructure costs. The research is clear that urban form matters for the fiscal health of our communities. This is good news for Oregonians because Oregon has a unique set of land use tools that help us create fiscally prudent urban forms and wise infrastructure investments. But these tools and practices need to be updated to fully grasp the magnitude of

Supplying infrastructure for new neighborhoods is expensive. Although developers often cover much of the initial costs, long-term maintenance is a perpetual burden for taxpayers. Photo: Sam Beebe. Creative Commons.

the sprawl burden and to make cost-conservative development the easier choice.

Picturing sprawl and quality growth

Cost-conservative quality growth can create substantial savings for cities and counties on infrastructure construction and maintenance. To highlight the impacts of different development patterns on public finances, we will refer throughout this report to two general approaches to development: typical "sprawl" and "quality growth."

Sprawl has been a common form of urban and suburban expansion in the United States. Researchers identify sprawl by several characteristics[13]:

- Low or very low average housing density
- Development occurring in an "unlimited and non-contiguous (leapfrog) way outward"[14] from existing urban areas, leaving derelict patches of land between subdivisions.
- Segregated land uses, meaning that work, shopping, and homes are restricted to exclusively zoned areas and separated from each other.
- Consumption of "greenfield" land, typically productive agricultural land or open spaces free of existing infrastructure.
- No convenient transportation choices other than private automobiles.

Research reveals troubling consequences related to sprawl. In general, people living in sprawling areas take more car trips[15] for longer distances than those living in more efficient development patterns.[16] Sprawl has been connected to lower levels of traffic safety compared to denser areas[17] and its streets are often unsafe or inconvenient to access on foot, by transit, or on a bicycle. Those living or working in sprawling areas are more likely to suffer negative health impacts associated with inactivity.[18]

"Quality growth," in contrast, directs development towards existing communities and built areas. In a quality growth neighborhood, residents are close to many of the things they need, like grocery stores, schools, and parks. Sidewalks connect homes, businesses, and schools on streets that are safe and pleasant to walk. Where the population justifies it, communities have convenient and efficient transit connections to the larger region. A choice of viable transportation modes means fewer miles in the car for many residents. Meanwhile, local businesses have a local clientele and can save money by not having to provide as much automobile parking. These are communities that are pleasant for people and families of all ages, where housing options match residents' needs throughout their lives.

Dwindling funding sources

Like System Development Charges, most key funding sources for Oregon's infrastructure are limited or diminishing. The main revenue source for transportation infrastructure maintenance, the state gas tax, is facing a huge decline as vehicles become more fuel efficient and Oregonians reduce their driving.[11] Unlike most states, Oregon does not have sales tax revenue to use for infrastructure. Property tax revenues have been capped and constrained in Oregon by several ballot measures. Dwindling funding for maintenance means that road degradation isn't addressed right away. Studies show that waiting to repair a worn road can increase the cost to four to ten times the cost of an early intervention.[12]

The cost differences, quantified

The evidence has been clear for decades. Urban form matters for public finances, and quality growth is the cost-conservative option. Zoning for sprawl has significant implications for capital infrastructure budgets, the ongoing provision of public services, and the cost burden

of infrastructure maintenance and replacement.

In 1998, a review of research on the costs of sprawl found agreement among researchers that sprawl imposes higher infrastructure costs than higher density development.[19] For example, researchers found that building roads to serve sprawl development patterns costs 12 percent more than building roads to serve areas built at higher density and/or next to existing development.[20] Sewers and water systems cost between 7 and 14 percent more to serve sprawl.[21]

In sprawling areas, driving becomes the dominant mode of transportation. This wears roads down more quickly in addition to being less safe and less pleasant for people who aren't driving. Photo: 1000 Friends staff.

The cost premium for all infrastructure needed to serve sprawl is as much as 47 percent over quality growth—for the same amount of development (both residential and commercial).[22] Moreover, most of these studies looked at only the capital cost of building new infrastructure, and not the ongoing operations, maintenance, and replacement commitment—all of which is borne by taxpayers and ratepayers. Public services, such as police and fire protection, also cost more on average in sprawling areas.[23]

A major study called *The Costs of Sprawl—2000* estimated the extent of extra expense that would be incurred between 2000 and 2025 if the United States continued to grow predominantly through sprawl rather than better managed growth. The study found that roads would cost $146 billion more for sprawl over this time period, an extra 12 percent. Water and sewer would cost $16.7 billion more for sprawl, a 6.6 percent difference over managed growth. Public services were found to produce annual deficits under both scenarios, but those deficits were 10 percent larger for the sprawl growth scenario.[24]

Why does sprawl cost so much more to supply with infrastructure? There are several major reasons. First, development built on previously undeveloped or "greenfield" land usually requires the provision of *all* sewer, water, and road systems. Because there is more empty space between buildings in sprawl, it takes more feet or miles of road, sewer, and water line to connect everything. More distance means higher costs.

Distances are also longer for the school buses, fire engines, police cars, and snow plows that operate in sprawling areas. And because people must drive more in sprawling areas, local and regional roads suffer high levels of wear and tear from automobile use. Vehicles miles traveled (VMT), the per-capita measure of driving distance, has been estimated to be 17 percent lower on average in areas planned around the principles of quality growth rather than sprawl.[25] According to researchers, higher levels of VMT from sprawl are exacerbating a "crisis" in local road financing.[26]

A more efficient choice. Quality growth is cost-conservative because less extensive infrastructure is less expensive infrastructure. Less wasted space between buildings means shorter sewer lines, water lines, and roads. Nearby existing roads reduce the extent of new roads that must be built. Mixed land uses located near one another mean walking, bicycling, and transit use are viable options, replacing some car trips and reducing wear and congestion on roads.[27] Less new infrastructure means less maintenance cost in the future.

Sprawl often requires major infrastructure projects to help regional raods keep up, like this "modernization" project on US Highway 26 in Washington County. Photo: ODOT. Creative Commons.

Quality growth does require some infrastructure that sprawl often lacks. For example, many sprawling residential areas are built without sidewalks. Building roads with sidewalks in a quality growth, walkable neighborhood costs more than building roads with no sidewalks, but the cost is much lower than building and maintaining roads for sprawl. Additionally, building roads with sidewalks creates more jobs per public dollar spent than building roads without sidewalks,[28] and the higher densities of quality growth make transit more cost-effective.[29] Cost variability also depends on elements such as design, which influences how easy it is for people to choose to walk, ride a bike, or take transit for some trips.

Oregon can benefit from the quality growth infrastructure savings observed nationwide. According to Metro:

> National experts agree that providing infrastructure in urban settings and compact new development is generally less expensive per unit than in areas with more land-extensive development patterns. Case studies in five existing urban areas and twelve newly urbanizing areas in the [Portland metropolitan] region found that while public infrastructure capital costs vary depending on specific location and access to existing infrastructure, they generally reflect this national pattern.[30]

Overall, the research is clear: **more extensive infrastructure is more expensive infrastructure. Quality growth is the cost-conservative option.**

A better cost picture: scenario planning

Many communities and regions around the country are using new tools and computer models to fully analyze the impacts of infrastructure spending, and the results are convincing. These "scenario planning" efforts take population and employment growth projections for a community and compare how they can be accommodated through various policy

choices. These scenarios usually include one or more sprawl development scenarios and one or more quality growth scenarios.

By portraying how neighborhoods and communities could develop under different scenarios after several decades, the scenario planning models estimate the infrastructure costs associated with these different growth patterns. Numerous scenario plans have found costs to be substantially lower for land-conservative quality growth. On pages 10 through 13, we explore some of these scenario plans and their results.

Suburban arterials like Sunnyside Road in Clackamas County are generally built and maintained at taxpayer expense. And they don't come cheap. Photo: Brett VA. Creative Commons.

The quality growth scenarios modeled in these scenario plans are not extreme visions of Manhattan-style density, but visions of a range of employment and appropriate housing densities distributed carefully around the communities studied. These studies come from urban regions, rural counties, small towns, and suburban areas. But no matter their setting, the infrastructure savings reported are all substantial.

Moreover, there is generally strong public support for the quality growth scenarios. Most scenario planning includes a high degree of public participation, finding consensus about a community vision for the future. Participants generally prefer the quality growth scenarios to the "trend" scenarios resulting in more sprawl. In the Envision Central Texas process, for instance, 70 percent of survey participants said the two scenarios involving the least land consumption and highest levels of infill and redevelopment would "provide the best quality of life for Central Texas' future."[46] In Louisiana Speaks, a 2007 scenario planning process initiated in the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, 81 percent of survey respondents said future growth should be directed towards existing cities and towns, or said development plans should be modified to reduce sprawl in hurricane-sensitive areas.[47]

These scenario plans from communities of all types and sizes confirm the academic literature: **sprawl costs more for infrastructure, and quality growth is the cost-conservative option.** The magnitude of those savings, which in several scenario plans reached billions of dollars, is significant for the local and regional taxpayers that must pay for the growth decisions made by local leaders.

The report continues on Page 14.

Scenario Planning: Making the Choices Clear

A Sampling of Cost Comparisons in American Communities, 1997-2011

Scenario planning in a wide range of communities makes it clear: more extensive infrastructure is more expensive infrastructure. In these pages, we present a collection of recent studies from around the nation, in metropolitan regions as well as rural communities. Note that all dollar figures have been adjusted to 2012 dollars.

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

***Fiscal Impacts of Alternative Land Development Patterns in Michigan*, 1997**[31]

This study compared the infrastructure costs and ongoing fiscal impacts of "current" or trend development to "managed growth" for eighteen urban, suburban, and smaller communities in Southeast Michigan, with populations ranging from about 9,000 to 65,000. The researchers found that between 1995 and 2020, "managed growth" would save 12 percent of the capital cost of local roads, or $61 million; 15 percent of the capital cost of water infrastructure, or $26 million; and 18 percent of the capital cost of sewer infrastructure, or $22 million.

Center for Energy and Environment, Minnesotans for an Energy Efficient Economy, and 1000 Friends of Minnesota

***Two Roads Diverge: Analyzing Growth Scenarios for the Twin Cities Region*, 1999**[32]

This report compared a "sprawling" growth scenario based on then-current zoning and trends to a "smart growth" scenario in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area. It found that providing for and promoting quality growth could save 57 percent of the capital cost of local roads, sewers, and water infrastructure, a savings of about $4.1 billion, between 1995 and 2020. In addition, the researchers found that an additional public investment of $1.2 billion would be required for new regional road infrastructure under the sprawling scenario that would likely not be required under the "smart growth" scenario.

By investing in its downtown areas, the Minneapolis-St. Paul region has saved billions, and become a national beacon for livability. Photo: Flickr.com/mrlaugh. Creative Commons.

Envision Utah

***Quality Growth Strategy*, 2000**[33]

Envision Utah, a public/private partnership, developed a "quality growth strategy" for Utah's Greater Wasatch Region, including the Salt Lake City metropolitan area and numerous rural communities. The "quality growth strategy" would save about $6 billion in the provision of basic infrastructure between 1995 and 2020 when compared to the "baseline" scenario representing the continuation of then-current sprawl trends. Elements of the quality growth strategy have been adopted into numerous local and regional plans.[34]

Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, Charlottesville, Virginia

***Jefferson Area Eastern Planning Initiative*, 2000**

The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, a regional planning collaboration between governments in the Charlottesville area, studied the impacts of a "dispersed" growth pattern based on then-recent trends, and a "town centers" scenario based on quality growth, which would focus growth near Charlottesville to 2050. They found that road infrastructure would cost 50 percent less, a savings of $665 million, under the "town centers" scenario. These findings influenced comprehensive plan updates in the counties studied, and today Charlottesville's downtown (in the background of these pages) continues to thrive.[35]

Cumberland Region Tomorrow, 2000[36]

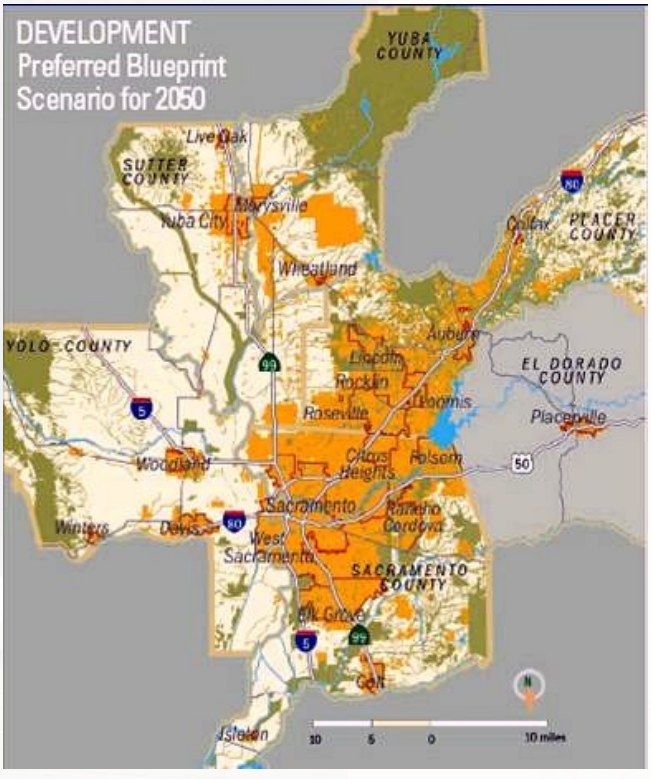
A private, non-profit organization sponsored this regional planning effort for Middle Tennessee, including greater Nashville and smaller population centers in ten counties. The study compared a trend "Base Case Scenario" to an "Alternative Case Scenario" of growth focused near previously developed areas for the 2000 to 2020 period. The "Alternative Case" would require infrastructure costing 52 percent less than that needed for the "Base Case," a savings of $4.7 billion. Cities in the region are still using principles of the Alternative Case Scenario to guide local planning decisions.[37]

Cumberland Region Tomorrow looked at the City of Nashville, but also rural counties and communities like Lebanon, in Wilson County. Photo: SeeMidTN.com. Creative Commons.

Envision Central Texas, 2003[38]

The non-profit Envision Central Texas conducted a detailed scenario planing process for the City of Austin and its surrounding region, including many rural areas. Through extensive public involvement, the study developed several scenarios for 20 to 40 years of growth. Scenario D, which involved "the greatest amount of mixed-use development and redevelopment" and concentrated "the greatest amount of development in existing towns and cities," was projected to save 73 percent of the cost of infrastructure over the more sprawling trend scenario, a total of about $10.1 billion in savings. In surveys, area residents expressed a strong preference for the quality growth scenarios over the more sprawling scenarios. Envision Central Texas is working directly with planning organizations in the area to update plans as part of a $3.7 million federal Sustainable Communities Partnership grant.[39]

The Austin region could save $10.1 billion through concentrating development in existing centers—and it's a more popular choice. Photo: Stu Seeger. Creative Commons.



SACOG's Preferred Blueprint saves taxpayers $8 billion over 50 years through better growth management—the price of several Columbia River Crossings. Map by SACOG.

Sacramento Area Council of Governments *Blueprint,* 2004[40]

The regional government in the Sacramento area compared a "Preferred Alternative" pattern of quality growth to a sprawling "Base Case" (see map, left). The infrastructure required for the "Preferred Alternative" would cost 21 percent, or $8 billion, less than that needed to support the "Base Case" over 50 years. As in Austin, the quality growth pattern also enjoyed far greater public support than a more sprawling scenario. Since the adoption of the "Preferred Alternative" in 2004, the regional government has provided technical support to its member governments in implementing the plan.[41]

Charlotte Fire Department, North Carolina

***Effect of Connectivity on Fire Station Service Area & Capital Facilities Planning*, 2008**[42]

A study analyzing the costs and efficiency of fire stations in the City of Charlotte found significantly cheaper per-capita life cycle costs for fire stations in better connected neighborhoods. A station in a low-density neighborhood was found to serve one-quarter of the households at four times the cost of a fire station in a more mixed-use neighborhood with higher connectivity.

The City of Charlotte explored the crucial role of street connectivity in helping the Fire Department save lives and save resources. Photo: Charlotte Fire Dept. Creative Commons.

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

***Connections*, 2009**[43]

This interstate planning agency, covering rural, suburban, and urban areas in the Philadelphia-Trenton region, compared a "trend" scenario to a "recentralization" scenario based on quality growth. Between 2005 and 2035, the "recentralization" scenario would cost 29 percent less for infrastructure than the "trend" scenario, a savings of $3.5 billion. The *Connections* plan was adopted by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission in 2009, and the Commission has been assisting member governments and tracking the progress of implementation region-wide.[44]

The Sonoran Institute's work helped show that more efficient development could save $53 million for Gallatin County, Montana—a huge sum for a rural county. Photo: Philip Downer. Creative Commons.

Sonoran Institute

***Gallatin County, Montana, Fiscal Impact Analysis*, 2009**[45]

The nonprofit Sonoran Institute compared growth scenarios in rural Gallatin County, home to Bozeman. In the analysis, growth between 2010 and 2012 directed towards a land-conservative "Alternative Scenario" would save 72 percent of the cost of road construction and maintenance over the "Business-as-Usual Scenario." That added up to $53 million, a huge sum for a rural county.

(Continued from Page 9)

Stopping the drain on taxpayers

Elected officials and other leaders often view any development as a way to increase the local tax base to pay for existing debts and generate new income. **But does sprawl provide enough revenue to communities to offset its extra costs? The answer is no.** Research clearly shows that it costs more to build and maintain infrastructure for sprawl than it generates in taxes, development charges, and user fees, and creates deficits for cities when compared to other development patterns.

Yet decision-makers often do not have the information they need to know the full impacts of their development choices. For a variety of reasons, many governments fail to conduct a "life-cycle" fiscal impact comparison among different development alternatives—one including capital costs, long-term operations and maintenance costs, and financing options and implications. This failure is now sinking many local governments around the nation deeper and deeper into debt, with no clear strategy to get out.

Sprawl's Ponzi tendencies. Incurring new debt to pay for old debt through new development has been compared to a "Ponzi scheme."[48] When infrastructure is first provided, a new opportunity for development is created and total property taxes go up. However, infrastructure has a limited life span, and regular maintenance and replacement create additional costs. For example, maintenance or replacement of an existing road has only a small positive impact on surrounding property values, and therefore does not pay for itself by creating new property tax revenue.

This is especially true in states such as Oregon, where strict limits have been imposed on property tax increases. To pay for maintenance and replacement of infrastructure built to support existing development, local leaders look to new growth. The new infrastructure built to serve new growth must then in turn be maintained along with all the old. Infrastructure building often puts taxpayers on the hook for infrastructure that can't last long enough to pay back their investment.[49] Sprawl exacerbates this "Ponzi Scheme" cycle, while quality growth provides a logical response by concentrating more value on less land, served by less extensive infrastructure.

Several tools have been developed to assist communities in gauging the long-term financial impact

The research is clear: more extensive sprawl means more expensive infrastructure, like this new overpass for the Beltline Highway at I-5 in Eugene. Photo: John Boren. Creative Commons.

that proposed development or future growth will create. In particular, Fiscal Impact Analyses can inform difficult community decisions about possible land use changes, including new residential subdivisions and employment areas, and loss of farm and forest land.

Fiscal Impact Analysis. A Fiscal Impact Analysis provides the most complete means to quantify the ongoing benefits and costs of new development and avoid the "Ponzi Scheme" of deficit-producing sprawl.

Aging freeways are but one major infrastructure problem Oregon taxpayers must face. Photo: ODOT. Creative Commons.

This method attempts to account for *all* costs that a specific new development or land use change will impose on public finances—including the capital and ongoing maintenance costs of new infrastructure, and the cost of public services such as police, fire, and school. It then compares these costs to revenues such as property taxes and sales taxes.[50] Hundreds of communities across the country have employed Fiscal Impact Analysis techniques when considering land use and development changes at the level of a single new development, possible future growth for part of a city or a whole city, or land use changes spread across an entire region.

Fiscal Impact Analyses clearly identify the negative fiscal impacts of sprawl. For example, the Columbus, Georgia, region found that infill and moderate to high density development would produce a net government surplus of about $21.5 million over the 20 year study period, while the "trend" suburban development pattern would produce a net deficit of $14.3 million, "primarily due to increased capital costs as development is focused in greenfield areas requiring more significant infrastructure investments, particularly roads and parks."[51]

A 2010 study in Champaign, Illinois, compared the costs of concentrating growth over 20 years within the city's existing service area to expanding the city beyond the existing area. While both scenarios produced deficits in the capital construction budget, the scenario for growth beyond the service area created a deficit of $101.8 million, twice as large as that created by growth within the existing service area.[52]

More land, more cost, less revenue

Sprawl generates less tax revenue per acre than quality growth. For example, a Walmart Super Center in Asheville, North Carolina, produces $6,500 in property taxes for each of its 34 acres, while a remodeled JC Penney store in downtown Asheville produces $634,000 per acre.[53] "A moderate high-rise, mixed-use development that was proposed in the downtown could have generated as much local property taxes as the 73-acre Asheville Mall plus the Asheville Walmart, plus the

new 60-acre big-box power center near the airport," said developer Joe Minicozzi, who headed the study.[54]

The difference in tax revenue exacerbates the fiscal challenge of sprawl's infrastructure cost premium. Minicozzi also compared a 357-unit multi-family housing development on 3.4 acres in downtown Sarasota, Florida, to a 30-acre single-family housing project. The downtown development produced enough tax revenue within three years to pay off the public investment in its infrastructure. In contrast, the suburban housing development would take 42 years to do the same.[55]

Put another way, that is 39 years of revenue that can be used on operations and maintenance, instead of 39 years spent paying off a deficit for infrastructure that may have to be replaced before it is even paid off.

Single-family and multi-family projects often differ in their basic infrastructure requirements. A study in Austin, Texas found that the public cost of providing schools, transportation, water, sewer, storm water, and parks to a new single-family housing unit was $36,625 after all developers' fees were taken into account. In contrast, the public cost of a new multi-family housing unit was $17,912.[56] That is a lot of money that can be used for other priorities. Similarly, in the Minneapolis-St. Paul region, a study found that "compact development produces more net revenue per acre (revenue minus costs) than spread-out development."[57]

Like all large investments, infrastructure provided to support development matters for public finance. When a local government chooses sprawl, it sets itself up for deficits from the ongoing cost of infrastructure maintenance and replacement. On the other hand, quality growth based on infill and using existing infrastructure capacity means taking advantage of prior investments and reducing future fiscal burdens. It may even generate more revenue to use on desperately needed projects elsewhere. It is clearly the better fiscal choice.

Car-oriented big box shopping centers, like this one in North Carolina, provide far less tax revenue per acre than stores in more walkable places. Photo: Zen Sutherland. Creative Commons.

Oregon's infrastructure challenge

The tools provided by Oregon's unique statewide land use planning program position it relatively well to take advantage of quality growth infrastructure savings. Land use planning has already helped contain sprawl and steer more development towards existing communities, emphasizing quality growth: walkable neighborhoods, housing choice, and proximity to the places we need to get to most often, like workplaces, shopping, schools, and parks. Therefore, Oregon has avoided some of the fiscal burdens associated with sprawl and housing predominantly on large lots.

Still, many Oregon communities have built significant infrastructure for low density development and now face costly maintenance and replacement bills. The infrastructure challenge in Oregon is pressing. Across the state, water infrastructure requires $5.2 billion in repair and replacement over the next twenty years.[58] Twenty-four percent of Oregon's bridges are structurally or functionally deficient.[59] Over 1,000 of Oregon's school buildings are at high or very high risk of collapse in an earthquake.[60]

In the Portland region, Metro estimates a total infrastructure investment of $27-41 billion is necessary to meet population and employment needs to the year 2035.[61] This includes $10 billion in repairs and replacement, required regardless of whether the Portland region grows, for which no funding sources have been identified.[62] Many other Oregon cities face similar funding holes. If it cannot address this situation, Oregon could face dire consequences.

Robbing Peter, but Paul demands more: a threat to essential services. A challenging fiscal situation affecting all Oregon communities complicates this infrastructure backlog. Driven in part by infrastructure costs, city budget obligations in Oregon are increasing much faster than their revenue sources.[63] Property tax limitations and declining gas tax revenues make it increasingly hard for cities to meet their obligations to provide services for growing populations and a recovering economic base.[64]

In a recent survey of Oregon cities, 69 percent expected property taxes to continue falling short of the cost of providing essential services.[65] Altogether, Oregon cities need $187 million more in annual revenue to continue to maintain and construct roads at the level needed for current development patterns. This shortfall is creating a bloated backlog of needed capital improvement projects.[66]

The response has been troubling. Some cities look at developing new land at their edges, apparently in the hope that more expansion can

Replacing Oregon's aging bridges—a quarter of which face major deficiencies, like this one in Tillamook County—will be costly for taxpayers. Photo: ODOT. Creative Commons.

raise revenues to support existing debts for worn out or failing infrastructure. The sprawling development that typically occurs in these far-flung expansion areas creates additional negative fiscal impacts, worsening the problem the cities set out to solve in the first place.

Many other Oregon cities are using reserves or taking on debt to pay for basic public safety services—police and fire—that the general fund can no longer cover because it is increasingly dedicated to infrastructure. Salem's public safety spending equaled 114 percent of its property tax revenue in fiscal year 2009-10. Gresham spent 169 percent of the amount of property tax revenue on public safety in 2009-10, and Bandon spent an incredible 592 percent.[67]

No one likes potholes. But fixing them will cost Oregon cities billions of dollars—money they can only gather by raising taxes. Photo: Ed Bronson. Creative Commons.

These fiscal realities leave cities with very difficult choices in terms of cutting expenses, and these cuts often impact the maintenance and repair of existing infrastructure. Thirty-eight percent of Oregon cities polled reported cutting road maintenance budgets in response to overall budget deficits. Twenty-five percent of cities reported cutting spending on all infrastructure.[68] "Structurally, cities are unable to meet current and future demands for the services that are necessary to support service levels, road and public facility maintenance and population growth," said League of Oregon Cities executive director Mike MacCauley, in a press release reacting to a report by ECONorthwest, "Cities are being slowly strangled."[69]

Raising taxes to fill the hole. Lack of adequate revenue for road maintenance has led numerous cities and counties to turn to voters for more infrastructure funding. From 2010 through summer 2012, nineteen local ballot measures in Oregon asked local residents to approve property tax increases or vehicle fuel tax increases to fund road maintenance and new road construction. In just two years, these measures have come from city and county governments in eight counties, including five of the seven most populous counties in the state. About one-third of those ballot measures failed.

These measures sought to fix potholes, as well as fill fiscal holes left by growth that could not pay its way. For example, a 2011 measure in Bend sought $30 million in bonds backed by new property taxes to pay for road capacity enhancements around the city. Writing in support, the Bend City Council cited that "Bend has experienced significant growth in the past ten years," without explaining why that growth and development had failed to create enough revenue to fund necessary

transportation system enhancements.[70] Also in 2011, voters in Washington County were asked to approve a new property tax to pay for roads to serve greenfield residential development with some sprawl characteristics in the North Bethany area. The roads would allow development to proceed in the area, which had been stalled since its 2002 addition to the Urban Growth Boundary. Writing in support, an advocacy group noted that "it is a fact that the area WILL be developed over the next several years," without explaining why the development required taxpayer subsidies to supply basic infrastructure.[71]

Something must change. These fiscal circumstances suggest that Oregon cities cannot continue to build transportation and other infrastructure as they have in the past. Communities need to talk about infrastructure costs when they talk about growth and urban growth boundary expansions. Unfortunately, there is currently no statewide requirement to perform Fiscal Impact Analysis or similar tools for new developments or urban growth boundary expansions. As a result, elected officials and residents do not have adequate information to make truly informed decisions.

Oregon's land use system requires cities to determine whether the current urban growth boundary has sufficient land or other capacity to accommodate growth. If it has insufficient capacity, the city will consider a boundary expansion.

When comparing alternatives for urban growth boundary expansions, Oregon law does require cities to consider the cost of providing urban infrastructure to different potential expansion areas. But the expansion process fails to ask the tough questions about infrastructure costs.

No cost comparison is currently required between accommodating growth in areas *outside* the urban growth boundary and accommodating that same growth on land *within* the boundary. Land inside an urban growth boundary might require some infrastructure investment before it can accommodate new growth – for example, to assemble parcels, upgrade sewer pipes, clean-up a brownfield, or improve an interchange. But these costs will often pale in comparison to the expense of providing the full suite of new infrastructure to a greenfield site. When long-term maintenance costs are included, the fiscal advantage is even clearer.

Right now, these questions are rarely asked by cities, and are certainly not required to be asked. And that means residents are also unable to fully participate in important decisions that will have a major impact on

Oregon faces its own fiscal cliff—in decades of crumbling infrastructure combined with a thirst for sprawl that will only exacerbate this situation. It's time to step back from the edge. We can begin by fully accounting for the cost of infrastructure. Photo: Jennifer Winn. Used with permission.

their communities and pocketbooks.

This is a system set up for higher costs, and it is clear who will pay the bills. Local governments and the state will have to go back to taxpayers time and time again to ask for bonds, rate increases, and new taxes just to keep the system working as it is—let alone add new capacity.

Back from the edge: Oregon's strategy for accountability

We have another option. Oregon can begin to make more informed investments in infrastructure, saving Oregonians money and realizing a healthier fiscal future for our cities and counties.

It can be done by keeping in mind a simple observation about building infrastructure for typical sprawling development: **more extensive infrastructure is more expensive infrastructure**. The best way to save money on long-term infrastructure costs is to embrace cost-conservative quality growth.

On a regional or state level, the savings from cost-conservative development could add up to billions of dollars, saving the public from the unmanageable burden of maintenance and replacement of more extensive sprawling infrastructure.

Choosing to support quality growth and minimize our infrastructure expenses will not entirely solve Oregon communities' fiscal problems. But not doing so will only make them worse.

Fully accounting for these potential savings will help us have better informed conversations about the future of Oregon's infrastructure, communities, and quality of life.

To make sound investments, Oregon communities need to consider complete information about the long-term public infrastructure costs of proposed development. **We propose that all Oregon communities should use Fiscal Impact Analyses as part of the process of urban growth boundary evaluation and other growth decisions.**

Long-term fiscal impacts of greenfield development should be clearly compared to the fiscal impacts of accommodating growth through redevelopment and used to inform the choices leaders make about growth.

Oregonians have a right to expect full transparency in their local governments' choices about growth and the impacts these will have on their taxes and utility bills. The choices we make about growth today will dictate Oregonians' tax burdens for decades to come. It is time to stop trumpeting short-term fiscal injections from growth while concealing sprawl's slow drain.

Through full transparency, long-range vision, and some basic arithmetic, we can save communities millions and create a truly sustainable infrastructure system.

There are two directions we can take. Oregon can stay on the road to ever-higher taxes for infrastructure, or we can choose to consider the full costs of growth. We think the choice is clear. Photo: Flickr user oysh9. Creative Commons.

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