



Save Helvetia.org

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Protecting Helvetia's farmland, forestland and natural resources

July 16, 2014

Washington County Planning Commission
155 North First Ave
Suite 350, MS 14
Hillsboro, OR 97124

Attn: Stephen Shane, Planner

Re: Proposed Ordinance 785

Save Helvetia welcomes the opportunity to provide input on Washington County's proposed Ordinance No. 785. This ordinance is designed to implement the map and zone changes required by HB 4078.

After reviewing the proposed Ordinance, we have the following concerns:

1. UGB lines on maps are imprecise

The dotted lines on all the maps in the exhibits are so thick that it is impossible to tell where the UGB line is, specifically with regard to where the UGB/urban line is drawn on the roads surrounding the UGB. This is important because the language in HB 4078 provides that the roads on the south side of US-26 that surround the newly designated UGB area are *rural*, in order to protect the agricultural activity in those surrounding rural areas. Without precise lines, it is impossible to tell if those roads are indeed being denoted as rural, as HB 4078 requires. We recommend re-drawing the maps to show exactly where the UGB ends vis-a-vis the roads that surround the UGB, in the areas to the *south* of US-26 and to the *north* of US-26.

2. Exhibit 5, page 1 of 12 - unexplained jog in UGB along US-26

This map shows the UGB in thick lines over Groveland Drive on the north side of US-26, indicating that the UGB goes north of US-26, appearing to include Groveland Drive as urban and right up to the edge of the rural reserve farmland. Further west, it jogs south to show the UGB line on the south side of US-26. Per the language of HB 4078, the UGB should stop south of the highway that forms the boundary between rural reserve or undesignated and UGB. Save Helvetia's priority has always been to protect the farmland to the north of US-26. We are concerned that by expanding the UGB to the north of US-26 AND designating Groveland Road as an *urban* road, we are jeopardizing the newly

designated rural reserve farmland adjacent to Groveland Road. We recommend a review of the interpretation that the UGB includes US-26 AND Groveland Road to the north of US-26.

3. Exhibit 3, Pages 1 and 2 of 7 - UGB line not clear for Helvetia and West Union Roads

As in Item 2 above, the thick lines used to draw the UGB cover the entire road for West Union Road (page 1) and Helvetia Road (page 2). It is impossible to tell how far the UGB line really goes: just to the urban side, to the centerline or all the way to the rural side? We recommend re-drawing the map to precisely show the boundary of the UGB as it relates to West Union Road and Helvetia Road.

4. We need consistency in protecting farmland on both sides of US-26

As a result of HB 4078, we now have a situation where the farms on the south side of US-26 have MORE protection from urban effects than the farms on the north side of US-26. We recommend that the classification of Helvetia's two major roads, West Union Road and Helvetia Road, be revisited in light of the changes resulting from HB 4078. We encourage a resolution to the mixed classifications of roads bounded by rural reserves so that roads on both sides of US-26 are treated consistently.

- a) Helvetia Road is currently classified as "urban" for its entire width, all the way to the rural reserve farmland on its west side (according to staff). With the newly designated rural reserves (with some undesignated) land on the west side of Helvetia Road, we recommend that Helvetia Road be reclassified as "rural" - the same as the roads and creeks on the south side of US-26 are now.
- b) West Union Road is a similar situation. It is unclear from staff exactly what its classification is but it should also be "rural" to protect the rural reserve farmland on its north side.

5. Adverse effects on farming practices when the rural side of the road is "improved"

There are a number of problems that occur to agricultural activities when the rural side of the road is "improved" with urban infrastructure, such as sidewalks and streetlights. These can include conflicts between pedestrians walking on sidewalks when fields are being plowed (causing dust clouds), to crops ripening too soon under the streetlights. Attached are excerpts of testimony and photos submitted by Save Helvetia in 2010 about these adverse effects. Save Helvetia's primary mission is to protect farmland on the north side of US-26 - keeping away urban development on the rural side of farmland is an important goal to enabling the farms on the north side of US-26 to thrive.

We look forward to your response to our concerns. We hope that your goal is the same as ours: to protect farmland on the north side of US-26 to the same extent that it is now protected on the south side of US-26.

Respectfully submitted,

Cherry Amabisca
President, Save Helvetia

Robert Bailey
Secretary, Save Helvetia

Attachment:

Maps: Exhibit 3, Page 1 of 7
Exhibit 3, Page 2 of 7
Exhibit 5, Page 1 of 12

Excerpt from testimony: Adverse effects on farming practices - 2 pages
Photos from testimony : 2 pages