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Metro Public Hearing
Proposed Urban Growth Boundary Expansion

Opposition to Proposed North Hillsboro Expansion Area

- I provided verbal and written testimony before you on October 6th. I asked questions about citizen involvement, adherence to the public meeting laws, and disclosure of possible conflict of interest. These questions went unanswered then and remain unanswered. Meanwhile, Metro has disbanded its citizen involvement advisory committee process, indicated only 6 months ago that they did not have to abide public meeting law regulations during the Reserves Process, and observed the lack of conflict of interest disclosures in Washington County. This creates, for me, a credibility problem for the current process.
- Metro is on the verge of rewarding development leapfrogging, rewarding the development of areas with low parcelization, and rewarding the development of lands with current and viable agriculture. This, before developing closer in and contiguous properties with higher parcelization and lands not in active agriculture. Instead, reward compact urban form, contiguous development, and minimize the cost of infrastructure.
- Metro is enabling local governments in foisting the costs of corporate “dating” onto taxpayers. Hillsboro and Washington County want to create the “package” of infrastructure and other amenities through which to lure corporations to the area. Then, there will likely be additional gifts negotiated to help retain these corporations. However, it just so happens that the package is a proposed gift from the taxpayers, not the development packagers.

- If Metro concentrates expansion in western Washington County, taxpayers there will be asked to shoulder much of the costs of infrastructure. The professed benefits of expansion are said to be for the **region**. While area taxpayers have to date supported past infrastructure expenses, there is no guarantee that this will continue. Political support for this process might be robust among the developers and the governments that stand to benefit from the potentially expanding revenues and tax base, but the political margin among voters for this is thin. Expecting too much largess from taxpayers or giving too much away in behalf of taxpayers might instead result in taxpayers turning away from supporting expensive infrastructure “packages”. Is there not volatility among taxpayers from both sides of the political spectrum?
- You also ask the western part of the region to shoulder an unequal burden in the taking of more agricultural lands than the rest of the region. The taking of foundation farm land, within a context of compelling need, should be shared across the region.
- Any urban growth boundary expansion must be compelling by need. This expansion proposal is not compelling.
- Any urban growth boundary expansion must be burden shared. This expansion proposal lacks regional burden sharing.
- Any urban growth boundary expansion expense must reasonably be shared with wealthy corporations. You are selling taxpayers short, enabling the creation of the “package”. I have always been of the mind that the gift is from the giver and that there is a close and intentional relationship between giver, gift, and recipient. You are creating a gift without the clear consent of the giver. You will give it to an entity without the consent of the giver. In so doing, you put your mission at risk. You risk creating giver fatigue among taxpayers.

Robert Bailey
Save Helvetia