

Save Helvetia

From: Cherry Amabisca
13260 NW Bishop Road
Hillsboro, OR 97124

Date: June 13, 2010

To: Chair Brian and Washington County Board of Commissioners

RE: Objections to Ordinance No. 733 - 212 acres of urban reserves for right-of way on the rural reserve sides of roads

Save Helvetia objects to urban reserves being placed in the right-of-way on the rural reserve side of 22 roads (212 acres) in Washington County per Ordinance No. 733.

Ordinance No. 733 fails to satisfy Urban Reserve Factor OAR 660-027-0050(8) Can be designed to avoid or minimize adverse effects on farm and forest practices, and adverse effects on important natural landscape features, on nearby land including land designated as rural reserves.

Metro Council heard testimony on May 20, 2010 from Mr. Bob Vanderzanden, a farmer on Jackson School Road and member of the Board of Directors of the Washington County Farm Bureau about the burden this places on farmers. With sidewalks are in place, farmers cannot spray up to the edge of the accompanying landscaping due to the risk of harming the landscaping. So, they must leave a strip of land between their fields and the sidewalk and/or landscaping. This fallow strip of land grows noxious weeds, which contaminates the seed crops of the adjacent fields. Seed contamination results in a lower purity of the crop, causing the farmer more expense in cleaning and/or lower compensation per ton. Attached are photos showing the loss of productive farmable land due to curbing and sidewalks and associated weed build-up next to the curbing.

In addition, when street lights are added to the rural, farming side of rural roads, these lights cause crops that are in the vicinity of the street lights (such as wheat) to ripen 10 to 14 days earlier than the rest of the crop. The wheat grows faster because of the extra warmth and light coming from the street lights. Trying to harvest a partial crop is not economically feasible and results in reduced income to the farmer.

Once sidewalks are installed on the rural side, then farmers are responsible for maintaining them and for any liabilities. Why is this additional burden being placed on farmers? (1)

(1) <http://washtech.co.washington.or.us/LDS/CDCdocs/502.pdf>

Ordinance No. 733 fails to satisfy Goal 3 - Agricultural Lands OAR 660-015-0000(3)

Urban growth should be separated from agricultural lands by buffer or transitional areas of open space. In the case where a strong natural buffer doesn't exist, such as a floodplain or creek or river, roads act as buffers between urban areas and agricultural lands. Crossing the road and placing "urban reserves" on the rural reserve side of the road provides NO buffer or edge to the farming activities on the rural reserve side of the road.

Ordinance No. 733 fails to satisfy Goal 2 - evaluation to alternative courses of action (OAR 660-015-0000(2))

In response to Councilor Hosticka's questions about the differences between rural roads and urban roads at the May 20, 2010 Metro Council hearing, Dick Benner referred him to Richard Whitman's memo. This memo apparently lists what developments can be made on rural roads and what developments can be made on urban roads. The comparison found in Director Whitman's memo may very well show that a sufficient amount of improvements can already be made under the existing law.

Washington County has already requested many plan amendments that will increase the types of improvements that can be made on rural lands and roads. DLCD appointed a workgroup to study the requested changes. It would be prudent to wait until the DLCD workgroup finished their recommendation before deciding on the 22 road changes that Washington County approved to be included in Ordinance No. 733.

There is no evidence in the findings that other ways were discussed to create bike lanes and dual pedestrian lanes on the urban side of the road, or other ways to avoid burdening farmers with infrastructure next to their fields.

Ordinance No. 733 fails to satisfy Goal 2 - adequate factual base (OAR 660-015-0000(2))

The findings do not show how much land is taken for each right-of-way, which would become urban reserves. According to Brent Curtis, Planning Manager at Washington County LUT Department, it varies according to the type of road, "It's situational". He suggested that we contact an engineer in the Washington County LUT Department to see if we could work with him to determine how much land each right-of-way might take. This is a time-consuming process and a burden on citizens to research. The burden should be on Washington County to prove that the land they are requesting on the rural side of the road meets the URBAN factors.

Respectfully,

Cherry Amabisca
13260 NW Bishop Road
Hillsboro, OR 97124

Adverse Effects on farming practices when the rural side of road right-of-way is “improved”
Objection to Ordinance No. 733 - Washington County



Sidewalks and street lights have been installed on the rural side of the road. Note the broad swath of noxious weeds 20-25 feet wide between the sidewalk/streetlight and the cultivated field.

Seeds from noxious weeds contaminate the nearby crop, reducing the crop purity and reducing the price per ton.

Cornelius-Shefflin Road
Washington County



Note the precise border the farmer has been able to achieve in crop placement when there are no sidewalks, curbs or streetlights. He has a definitive buffer to protect his crop and can achieve maximum cultivation.

NW Zion Church Road
and Gordon Road
Washington County

Adverse Effects on farming practices when the rural side of road right-of-way is “improved”
Objection to Ordinance No. 733 - Washington County



Curbing and street lights have been installed on the rural side of the road. Note the proliferation of noxious weeds, in this case, blackberry, that contaminate the adjacent fields.

Evergreen Road
Washington County



Note the clean buffer for this field of spring wheat - there are no noxious weeds to contaminate the crop and the farmer can spray up to the edge of his fields without worrying about pedestrians walking on sidewalks or about streetlights causing parts of his crop to ripen early.

NW Gordon Road
Washington County

