

April 27, 2010

To the Core 4, Metro Council, and other interested parties:

What on earth is going on out here in Washington County? We have gone through months and months of Urban/Rural reserve process, trying hard to protect the remaining rural areas that we have despite Washington County's eagerness to turn the county into the next Los Angeles, and now that most of that is over, Washington County sneaks around having unpublicized meetings to add land back out of the agreed upon Rural reserve designation into Urban reserves.

Washington County representatives, this is unacceptable! this is ridiculous!

Please, Metro, Core-4, do something to keep this growth hungry county under control. Please, please, please, protect our rural areas. Please don't allow Wa. Co. to sneak even more Urban reserves into the area North of Hwy. 26!

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May 18, 2010

To the Core 4, Metro Council, and other interested parties:

I am profoundly concerned by the recent decision to approve changes to previously accepted Rural and Urban Reserves plan. That plan was arrived at through an extensive process including a huge amount of input from citizens. To change it disrespects and defies the very people you are sworn to serve.

I will try to be brief, as I know you have many things to consider. But a plan for the next 50 years has an importance way beyond the "urgent" minutiae of the day.

The 212 acre changes to allow the "road improvements" in areas designated rural reserves will automatically and inevitably bring urban development into designated rural reserves. Increasing development is the primary reason for extending transportation infrastructure - witness the light rail and trolley extensions. These are appropriate things to do in urban areas. NOT appropriate for roads in Rural Reserves. Do not allow these changes to go forward.

I am very seriously concerned about the proposed changes for the Peterkort property.

It is completely unacceptable to negotiate with private owners. This property meets all the criteria of a rural reserve, was so designated, and it is a slap in the face of all legal and sensible persons. There is no justifiable regional or community benefit to be gained by allowing the Peterkort property to become an urban enclave in the middle of a rural area. The idea of exchanging the right of way for non-destructive services for a urban island is completely contrary to the well reasoned principles of a rural reserve. This right of way can be offered without the change in designation.

It is also completely inappropriate to even contemplate placing an urban community in the habitat of some of the last of our larger wild animals such as elk and bear. Splintering, fragmenting and leapfrogging are some of the most important things to AVOID, not to encourage.

The proposed change of the Peterkort property from rural to urban reserves is an extremely bad idea and will degrade forever the Rural Reserves around it and provide no benefit to the general wellbeing of the citizens of Washington County.

I urge you in the strongest possible terms to disallow the change of any of the Peterkort property from Rural to Urban reserves.

Please, let's keep our Metro area as one known for a high quality of life, one not defined by increasing the acreage of asphalt and spotty subdivisions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Most sincerely,

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May 21, 2010

To the Core 4, Metro Council, and other interested parties:

Please listen to what so many of us are saying - protecting valuable farmland is of utmost importance. This is our heritage and if it is taken away, it will be gone forever. Do you really want your legacy to be that you were a part of cementing over the land? You might argue a greater purpose (building, development, jobs, etc) but I beg to differ. There is no greater legacy than being known for standing up for what the people want, for the land and for the wildlife that live there.

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May 21, 2010

To the Core 4, Metro Council, and other interested parties:

As a long-time owner, since 1965, of precious rural forested land, I address you all as a concerned citizen and advocate for the preservation of Foundation Land. I appreciate the service you chose to render as citizens attempting to make wise decisions for the future. I urge you to withstand the many newly erupted pressures to build on rapidly diminishing farmlands. Frankly, it makes me, an 82 year old, often heart-sore to observe the sometimes unnecessary development encroachments all along US 26, as well as those adjacent to many farm fields and needed rural roadways. An Oregonian since 1954, I well remember Oregonians united in swearing we would not be "Californicated!" Sadly, we are well on the way to that deplorable rape of the good lands if you give in to such ruses as appears in the newly arisen Peterkort matter.

What is needed is BALANCE. My fellow Rural Reserves advocates have sometimes been comforted with viable land decisions seemingly being made by one official body or another, only to be confronted later with what appears to be behind the scenes maneuvers designed to undo what has been hard-won through our own research and public testimony. I have been appalled by some of the undemocratic behaviors of our own elected county officials. My taxes, as those of my fellow Rural Reserve advocates, have gone to pay the salaries of those who do not always show an equity and understanding of the arguments of we protectors of the land and its ecological future. Please, resist greedy pressures whenever possible. I thank you for your service.

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May 21, 2010

To the Core 4, Metro Council, and other interested parties:

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on the Metro and Tri-County Urban and Rural Reserves process.

I am writing to you today to request that the candidate Urban Reserve areas north of Highway 26 be designates as RURAL RESERVES under OAR 660-027-0060(4).

With regard to the need for this designation, ensuring the long-term economic security of the region is my primary concern. This area is primarily Foundation agricultural land that currently provides the base for a healthy agricultural economy in Washington County.

As population growth continues in our region, the need for agricultural lands and their unique economic benefit will grow, not lessen. Agricultural lands are a finite resource and their loss to development and fragmentation can not be reversed.

Continuing to protect prime agricultural land that is close-in to urban markets is a key economic advantage that should not be ignored. Agriculture is a global marketplace. Our ability to produce vegetables, fruits, meat and milk for our markets locally - as well as produce a commodity for markets outside the region - is a critical competitive advantage for our region as a whole.

Any projected population growth can and should be accommodated with more efficient use of urban and industrial areas within the existing Urban Growth Boundary. Beyond preserving a unique economic commodity, this focus lessens the cost of public infrastructure and services.

Cost containment for public works and services must drive our decision making or existing deficiencies in public services will expand needlessly. Potential short term economic gains resulting from cheap housing starts should not fuel public policy decision making.

Land use management and decision-making must take the long view. Through efficient land-use management already employed in the region, the capacity to meet the region's housing and commercial needs far into the future already exists. Conversion of precious economic assets to support short term financial gain is anathema to the concept of comprehensive planning.

In light of this, I respectfully request that all of the candidate Urban Reserve areas north of Highway 26 are within three miles of the existing UGB and are Foundation agricultural lands. , I request that Washington and Multnomah Counties designate these areas as RURAL RESERVES under OAR 660-027-0060(4).

I thank you for your time.

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May 22, 2010

To the Core 4, Metro Council, and other interested parties:

Dear Metro Council members and Commissioners,
I am writing to you all out of concern for the preservation of our farmland and urban planning goals. I am pretty resigned to the idea that the West Hills and the Bethany area are a lost cause, I am still firmly against the idea of designating the standing parcels and adjacent 758 acres as urban reserves or undesignated reserves. I do not see any pressing need to do anything to the Highway 26 interchange there at Helvatia, nor do I see the need for more large parcels for electronic companies.
While economic growth is important it needs to be carefully planned and balanced with livability and sustainability. I request that you use creativity and good judgement to further develop the already designated urban land and preserve the irreplaceable and sacred farmland in the Tualitin Valley. In this you will preserve Oregon's legacy as a pioneer in beautiful and livable urban development.

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May 24, 2010

To the Core 4, Metro Council, and other interested parties:

I don't have endless hours to write letters, so will just quickly share my views on a few of the current topics in Washington County.

1) Road Right-of-ways - Good planning would have avoided this issue from the start. I've always advocated for using natural features (or freeways) as boundaries between urban and rural areas. Pushing urban and rural areas right up against one another often creates unnecessary friction. I'm not alone and that is why so many residents in Washington County fought to keep urban development south of Hwy 26 and preserve rural lands to the north of Hwy 26. With the reserves process coming to a close and with the boundaries now defined we must figure out how to best construct the boundary (a road in many cases) to minimize the friction. Roadway improvements in rural areas create problems for farmers (more traffic, higher speeds, trying to run a tractor along a sidewalk, etc). Rural roads are insufficient for an urbanized area. The best way to address this dilemma is with a compromise. Leave the rural side of the road rural and make improvements on the urban side, as required. I see no reason to convert entire rural roads into urban reserves.

2) Peterkort property - I can't believe that after all of the reserves meetings and public input, Washington County Commissioners approved this change from rural to urban reserves. It is a sneaky way for a greedy developer to make another buck. This proposed change should absolutely be rejected!

3) Standing parcels - Here we go again. There is no reason to change the designation of this land to Urban Reserves. If the Helvetia interchange needs to be improved, then the government has the right of "Eminent Domain". As you well know, whatever land is needed for the improvements will be taken from the owner at fair market value, regardless of the urban/rural designation. This property currently meets the criteria for rural designation and should stay that way.

4) Undesignated Reserves at NW West Union (758 acres) - We need to realize that encroachment of urban development into our most prized farmland is a really big issue. Once it is gone, it's gone! There are plenty of areas where housing developments and factories make sense, but not north of Hwy 26. These acres should be protected for future generations. It is our duty. I hope you truly think about this before allowing any land in the Helvetia area to be urbanized.

I could go on and on about these topics, but my time to write these letters is as limited as your time to read them. I hope that my views and those of other citizens most affected by these decisions are seriously considered when you make these decisions.

Best Regards,

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