



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 97405 • (541) 520-3763 • fax (503) 223-0073

November 3, 2015

Metro President Tom Hughes
Metro Council
600 SE Grand Ave
Portland, OR 97232

Re: 2015 Urban Growth Boundary decision

Dear President Hughes and Metro Councilors:

1000 Friends of Oregon supports the recommendation of the Chief Operating Officer that the Metro Council not expand the regional urban growth boundary in 2015. As demonstrated in the COO's recommendation, there is no need for additional land in the UGB for any purpose.

A decision to not expand the UGB is a victory for the region's residents. It means that rather than continuing to pay for new roads and pipes to subsidize sprawling, expensive developments at the region's edge, taxpayers can see their money go towards repairing the roads we already have, providing safe sidewalks and bikeways, and investing in existing vacant and underused lands for new jobs. It means the region can reduce air pollution and come closer to meeting its climate goals, because residents will have choices in how to get around and not need to drive as much or as far. And driving less saves every resident thousands of dollars a year - money families can spend on housing. It means that rather than paying for sprawl, cities can focus on investing in strategies to preserve and provide affordable housing, and the region can invest in expanding transit.

A decision not to expand the UGB now, but instead to consider the UGB in 2018, is also a significant opportunity for Metro. Metro and the region's residents, cities, and counties will be able to combine into one time frame several significant projects, using an integrated set of tools to achieve multiple bottom lines in Metro's Climate Smart Communities, Active Transportation Plan, Regional Transportation Plan, Equity Housing Plan, and UGB decision.

Finally, it allows Metro the opportunity to integrate for the first time into its major land use and transportation decision-making a true fiscal impact analysis of the life cycle costs of the infrastructure investments required for different development patterns, and to integrate that analysis into its decisions. As many studies and experiences from urban areas of all sizes around the country, and here in Oregon, have shown, the historic failure of local governments to analyze and save for the long-term maintenance and operation cost of roads, pipes, fire stations, and more has resulted in deteriorating infrastructure, costly repair backlogs, and municipal fiscal crises. Today, the Metro area faces a shortfall of billions of dollars just to meet the capital costs of the infrastructure needed for the plans we already have on the books.

The flip side of that coin has been the failure to use the existing land supply and infrastructure more efficiently, including providing more density in the centers and corridors of our region where people clearly want to live and where the lack of sufficient housing is contributing to the lack of affordable housing.

We recommend that the Metro Council close out this UGB decision in 2015 with no expansion, but instead make a significant commitment to spend the next several years focused on ensuring every community in the region has more affordable housing for all, increased transit service, safe and accessible sidewalks and bikeways, and more economic opportunities where people already live.

Thank you for consideration of our comments.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Kyle McCurdy".

Mary Kyle McCurdy
Policy Director