
2015 URBAN GROWTH MANAGEMENT DECISION:

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE METRO COUNCIL
FROM METRO'S CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

JULY 2015



I am pleased to present my recommendations to the Metro Council for the 2015 urban growth management decision. These recommendations build on the foundation of the Portland metropolitan region's long-range plan, the 2040 Growth Concept, which underlies the remarkable successes our region has achieved in creating livable and prosperous communities. However, the very success of our local and regional growth management efforts has created new challenges that demand a fresh approach.

In July 2014, Metro released the draft Urban Growth Report, which assesses the capacity of the region’s urban growth boundary (UGB) to accommodate housing and jobs for the next 20 years. Since then, the debate over this urban growth management decision has been characterized by three prevailing factors. Taken together, these factors suggest that the future will not look like the past. Each specific issue that has arisen during this debate – from the development capacity of Damascus to the amount of forecast multifamily housing – has been shaped by these larger factors that frame my recommendations:

Economic Changes

Our region has emerged from the Great Recession and is experiencing significant employment and population growth. However, the recession and the rebound are different from any in the past. In employment, our local economy is creating strong growth in both upper-income and lower-income jobs, while middle-income jobs – those that form the backbone of our economic prosperity – are declining as a share of total employment. In housing, the region is experiencing an



unprecedented level of multifamily housing construction both within the central city of the region and in regional and town centers throughout the region. Additionally, in some parts of the region, housing prices and rents are rising much faster than inflation, creating concerns for both affordability and livability as neighbors respond to the impacts of redevelopment.

These two factors taken together – the loss of middle-income jobs and changes in the housing market – are identified by the draft Urban Growth Report and are happening in cities around the country. The public, stakeholders and regional elected leaders have expressed concern about the future our region faces if these two trends continue. I recommend that the Council view these trends as a call to action. The Metro Council already has initiatives around housing and economic development, and your leadership is essential for ensuring that they are successful.

Legal and Political Factors

In 2011, the Metro Council and Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties jointly designated urban and rural reserve areas, which identify the areas that may or may not be urbanized for the next 50 years. That decision has been subject to litigation and to legislation. In 2014, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 4078, which modified and then enacted the reserves for Washington County. However, the same bill directed the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) to address the issues identified by the Oregon Court of Appeals for some of the areas in Clackamas and Multnomah counties. Earlier this year, LCDC remanded these portions of the 2011 decision to Metro and the two counties for further work.

This remand means that the urban reserve areas in Clackamas and Multnomah counties are not legally acknowledged for expansion of the UGB. Making this unique circumstance even more complicated, one of the key jurisdictions completing concept planning – a requirement of the Metro Code for including land in the UGB – is in an area of Clackamas County adjacent to the City of Wilsonville that has been designated as an urban reserve.

In addition to urban and rural reserves, the unsettled status of the City of Damascus has also been debated in the context of the draft Urban Growth Report. A joint meeting between the Damascus City Council and the Metro Council has shaped this recommendation.

Regional Policies

In 2010 the Metro Council and regional leaders agreed on six desired outcomes for our communities and region, with the purpose of focusing our decisions and actions on things that really matter in our everyday lives.

- People live, work and play in vibrant communities where their everyday needs are easily accessible.
- Current and future residents benefit from the region’s sustained economic competitiveness and prosperity.
- People have safe and reliable transportation choices that enhance their quality of life.
- The region is a leader in minimizing contributions to global warming.
- Current and future generations enjoy clean air, clean water and healthy ecosystems.
- The benefits and burdens of growth and change are distributed equitably.

The draft Urban Growth Report, taken together with other major regional policy agreements such as the Climate Smart Strategy, the Regional Transportation Plan update, the Active Transportation Plan and the Regional Conservation Strategy (adopted by the Intertwine Alliance), reveals that the region is making progress toward achieving those six desired regional

Who has a role in managing growth?

The private sector redevelops and renews existing areas and builds new communities according to the plans developed by cities and counties. The private sector also starts and grows businesses that create jobs.

Local governments develop comprehensive plans to guide future land use and development to keep communities livable as the region grows. Cities and counties make investments in infrastructure and amenities to create great communities and support job growth.

Metro manages the Portland region's urban growth boundary and is responsible for providing a 20-year supply of land for future residential development and employment inside the boundary. Metro makes transportation and natural area investments to create great communities, support job growth and protect the environment that underlies our region’s livability.

The State of Oregon sets the rules for how the region makes growth management decisions and ensures that those decisions are consistent with state law.

outcomes. Additionally, the Urban Growth Report reveals that the plans adopted by cities and counties in the region are being implemented by private and public sector investment, thereby creating vibrant downtowns, strong job corridors, healthy and safe neighborhoods, parks and trails, and many other assets that make this region a great place to live and work. These investments are also protecting our resource lands, natural areas and environmental quality.

In other words, plans and policies adopted at the regional and local levels – from the 2040 Growth Concept to the city and county plans that implement it – have provided the foundation for investment, and that investment is enabling us to manage growth as we have planned. While there is clearly still work to be done – for example, in housing affordability, job creation, addressing disadvantaged communities and responding to traffic congestion – the Urban Growth Report illustrates that strong local plans followed by strong investment are helping the region grow while protecting its quality of life.

Taken together, these three factors suggest that the region’s future will reflect not merely a continuation of past trends, but rather significant changes in the trajectories of population growth, demographic change, workforce composition, and housing development. Accordingly, this recommendation also represents a departure from past urban growth management decisions and does not necessarily create a precedent for future decisions. Rather, it is grounded in the realities of the present and our current understanding of what will happen over the coming two decades, and represents my best understanding of how to meet the needs our region faces at this time.

BACKGROUND ON URBAN GROWTH MANAGEMENT PROCESS TO DATE

2014 URBAN GROWTH REPORT

The Urban Growth Report is our region’s periodic assessment of whether there is enough space for new housing and jobs inside the UGB, the mapped line that separates urban uses from rural uses such as farms and forests. The Council accepted a draft Urban Growth Report in December 2014 as a basis for further discussion of key policy questions.

The 2014 Urban Growth Report is the product of the most transparent growth management process Metro has led to date. External public and private sector experts provided guidance on our population and employment forecast, assumptions about how different types of jobs use space, the buildable land inventory and how much of that inventory may be viable over the next 20 years.

That careful analysis has shown that, when it comes to preparing for more housing and jobs, the region’s fundamental challenge is how we adequately invest in public facilities and services to support community goals.

2015 PROCESS DECISION

Should a UGB expansion be warranted, the region's intent is to utilize urban reserves for that expansion. Yet in January 2015, the state Land Conservation and Development Commission, in response to an Oregon Court of Appeals ruling, remanded parts of the region's urban and rural reserves in Clackamas and Multnomah counties. This remand has implications for the Council's urban growth management decision: it means that the Council does not have all of the region's reserves available for consideration if it did determine that there is a need for a UGB expansion.

It is expected that resolution of this remand will take at least one year. With that in mind, the Council, at its February 17, 2015 work session, directed staff to proceed with a revised urban growth management work program. The revised work program leads to a Metro Council process decision in fall 2015, choosing one of two options:

Option 1: conclude the urban growth management decision in 2015, prior to resolution of urban reserves.

Option 2: request an extension from the state for the urban growth management decision to wait for the resolution of urban reserves and to allow for additional discussion of housing needs.

In the revised work program, the Council stated its intent to engage in several policy discussions in the spring. The topics that were discussed by the Metro Council, MPAC and MTAC during the spring of 2015 included:

- The likelihood of residential development in urban centers such as those in Portland
- The likelihood of residential development in urban growth boundary expansion areas, including Damascus
- Planning within a range forecast for population and employment growth

COUNCIL DIRECTION AT THE JUNE 25, 2015 WORK SESSION

Based on the input received on the three topics listed above, the Council indicated a desire to conclude its urban growth management decision this year at its June 25, 2015 work session. The Council also indicated its intent to have staff complete a new Urban Growth Report in the next three years – sooner than required under the law – but only if urban and rural reserves have been acknowledged. Aside from indicating confidence in the analysis in the draft Urban Growth Report, the Council cited two practical reasons for this direction:

- Urban and rural reserves are not yet acknowledged. The region needs to finalize urban and rural reserves before devoting more time to discussing whether there is a need for a UGB expansion into urban reserves, which until reserves are finalized would be a strictly academic discussion.
- Asking for an extension from the state creates a situation where the data and analysis in the draft 2014 Urban Growth Report would become outdated.

SUMMARY OF CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on discussion of the Metro Council in the past year, I recommend seven actions, described in more detail in subsequent sections. These recommendations are also listed in the draft Ordinance. I recommend that the Metro Council:

2015 Urban Growth Management Decision

1. Decide not to expand the UGB. As discussed below, neither the population growth forecast nor the employment forecast of the draft Urban Growth Report warrant adding new land supply. As directed by the Council, I discuss options for choosing a point in the range forecast for population, considering the issues you identified at your June 25 work session.
2. Begin the next urban growth management cycle sooner than required by Oregon law, but not until urban and rural reserves have been acknowledged in all three counties in the region. Assuming urban and rural reserves are acknowledged in a timely fashion, I recommend we issue the next draft Urban Growth Report in the summer of 2017 with Council consideration of the report by the end of 2017 and a growth management decision by the end of 2018.
3. Work with Multnomah and Clackamas counties to complete our work on the remand of urban and rural reserves so that LCDC can legally acknowledge these reserves prior to the next urban growth management cycle.

Continue Metro's Leadership in Growth Management Policy

4. Explore evolving the urban growth management process to provide additional certainty to the region, counties, cities and stakeholders. This discussion should not take place until urban and rural reserves are acknowledged, but it should occur before Metro begins the next Urban Growth Report.

Address the Public Policy and Program Issues Raised by the Draft Urban Growth Report

5. Shift the region's episodic focus on housing, job growth and mobility to an ongoing effort.
6. Continue to implement the Council's strategic goals for middle and upper income job growth.
7. Continue to invest in implementing regional and local plans.

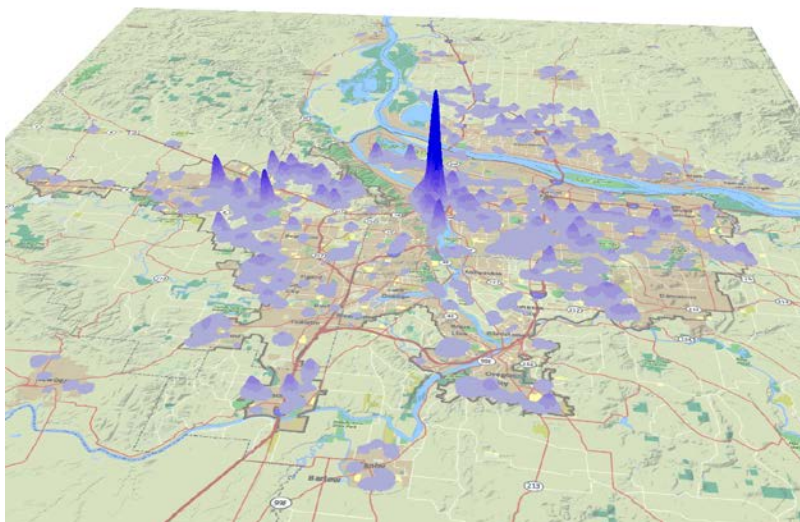
RECOMMENDATION ONE: DECIDE THAT NO URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY DECISION IS WARRANTED IN 2015

The draft 2014 Urban Growth Report found that adopted city and county plans give the region the ability to accommodate anticipated housing and job growth inside the existing UGB. After the last several months of discussion, the Council has indicated that they believe that is still a valid conclusion. The Council has expressed confidence in adopted county and city plans – the same plans that the region recently endorsed in Climate Smart Communities. To implement this direction, **I recommend that the Council conclude that there is currently no regional need to expand the UGB.** Following is a summary of my reasoning for my recommendation.

LIKELIHOOD OF DEVELOPMENT IN URBAN CENTERS, SUCH AS THOSE IN PORTLAND

This spring, the Metro Council and MPAC both devoted several meetings to the topic of development in urban centers. The resurgence we have witnessed in downtowns such as those in Portland is happening all over the country. Right now, there is a great deal of residential construction happening in these locations. There will be ups and downs with economic cycles, but a number of factors lead me to conclude that when growth cycles do occur, most of the region's new residential construction will be in urban areas. Those reasons include demographic, infrastructure finance, policy and market factors. This outcome is strongly supported by the public's direction to Metro to protect farms and forests by focusing most new housing in existing downtowns and along transportation corridors.

MAP 1: PERMITS FOR NEW HOUSING (1998-2014)



- There is strong market demand for walkable locations such as those found in and near existing downtowns and transportation corridors. This is reflected in the price premiums that people are placing on these locations. Higher land values in these locations make it more likely that redevelopment and infill will occur.
- Demographic and economic factors favor apartments, condos and single-family attached housing.
 - Two-thirds of the region's new households will include one or two people¹
 - Smaller households means fewer wage-earners per household
 - An aging population means there will be more retiree-led households²
 - Partly because of low wages and high levels of student debt, the millennial generation is forming independent households at a slower rate than previous generations³
- State rules implementing the land use program in our region require that most of each city's growth capacity be for multifamily housing or attached single-family housing. Recent market demand for these types of housing has been strong in downtowns and along transportation corridors.

¹ Metro (2014). *Draft 2014 Urban Growth Report Appendix 4*, p. 14.

² Ibid.

³ Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, (2015). *The State of the Nation's Housing 2015*. Boston, MA. Retrieved June 26, 2015, from: <http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/jchs.harvard.edu/files/jchs-sonhr-2015-full.pdf>

- The federal funding that facilitated greenfield development in the post-World War II era is largely gone. This is one factor that has slowed the development of past urban growth boundary expansion areas, including expansion areas across the river in Clark County, Washington. This means that more growth will need to occur in our region’s urban locations.

Housing issues and opportunities

Metro is committed to tracking changes in residential preferences over time. The 2014 study showed strong preferences for single-family housing, but it also showed preferences for and walkable neighborhoods with amenities and services nearby. What is clear is that preferences are complex and sometimes difficult to reconcile. Metro and local jurisdictions will continue to have the challenge of balancing residential preferences with other priorities such as providing transportation options, preserving affordability, and making the most of scarce public funding for infrastructure.

There will be challenges in creating enough housing in many locations around the region, particularly for households with lower incomes. But, we have no evidence that simply adding more land to the UGB now would solve the region’s affordability challenges or address residential preferences. It is time for our region to move on from the land supply debate and consider actions that will:

- Improve wages
- Reduce transportation costs
- Provide a greater variety of housing choices that match people’s budgetary realities
- Make the most of land already inside the UGB

Metro’s Equitable Housing Initiative is aimed at making sure that the region’s communities remain affordable to all, but success will entail coordinated work by the public, for-profit and nonprofit sectors.

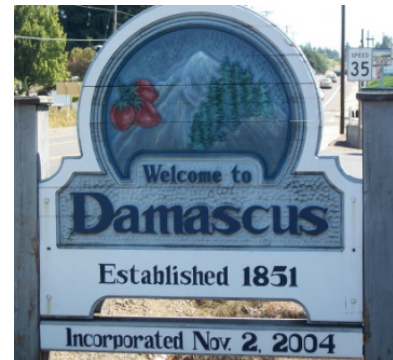
Metro’s Equitable Housing Initiative

Metro is committed to working with partners across the region to find opportunities for innovative approaches and policies that result in more people being able to find a home that meets their needs and income levels. The objectives identified to reach this goal include:

- Develop a shared understanding regarding best practices, needs and opportunities for collaboration.
- Develop and provide technical assistance to support local implementation of best practices to overcome barriers.
- Identify opportunities for partnerships to fill the financing gap for equitable housing development and preservation.
- Support equitable housing development and preservation through capacity building, technical assistance, policy development and funding partnerships.

*LIKELIHOOD OF DEVELOPMENT IN URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY EXPANSION AREAS,
INCLUDING DAMASCUS*

On May 12, 2015, the Metro Council held a joint work session with the Damascus City Council. At the joint work session, the Damascus City Council stated that they believe residents are likely to vote for city disincorporation next year. Recent state legislation (House Bills 3084, 3085 and 3086) will facilitate that outcome with a simple majority vote. City councilors also said that, as a consequence, the western area of current city limits is likely to develop as portions annex to Happy Valley and other areas develop in unincorporated Clackamas County. The eastern area is likely to see little residential construction consistent with existing rural residential and exclusive farm use zoning designations.



Metro staff has worked with representatives from Damascus, Happy Valley and Clackamas County to estimate what this means from a growth capacity perspective. A summary of that technical work is included in Appendix 1. Generally, parties agree upon the following model assumptions:

- Reduce the land area assumed to be buildable in the next 20 years.
- Increase the assumed residential density for the area that is deemed buildable to reflect Damascus' draft urban zoning.
- Reduce the amount of land assumed developable for industrial and commercial employment to reflect Damascus' draft urban zoning.
- Speed up the assumed availability of the westernmost portions of the area for development in the City of Happy Valley.

Metro staff used its economic land use model to test 20-year market responses to these updated assumptions. In summary, the new assumptions produce small regional differences compared to the draft Urban Growth Report's conclusions. Using market principles and policy assumptions above, the model indicates these changes lead to about 2,000 fewer households and 3,500 fewer jobs locating in the Metro UGB. The balance of the displaced growth gets scattered around inside the existing urban growth boundary with no notable concentrations. Expected effects on multifamily housing shares and distributions around the region are modest as are regional effects on housing affordability. Expected effects on employment land prices are also minor.

PLANNING WITHIN A RANGE FORECAST FOR POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

At the Council's direction, staff expressed the population and employment forecast as a range in the draft Urban Growth Report. This is intended to acknowledge uncertainty when looking 20 years into the future. However, the Council is ultimately required to choose a specific forecast point to complete its growth management and forecast coordination responsibilities. The Council will be asked to choose a point forecast as part of its urban growth management decision this fall. Based on that direction, staff will then complete a final Urban Growth Report and legal findings which the Council will need to adopt to complete its growth management decision. I recommend that the Council plan for the midpoint of the forecast range which is the most probable forecast.

Population growth

From a statistical standpoint, the midpoint of the forecast range has the highest probability. However, the Council has spent much of the last year hearing about the various challenges of producing housing in many locations, whether in downtowns or UGB expansion areas. Nevertheless, I believe that MPAC and Council discussions this spring generally led to the conclusion that regional population and household growth is likeliest to occur at about the midpoint of the forecast range since the factors that influence population growth are fairly stable and predictable (births, deaths and migration). In reaching my recommendation to plan for the midpoint of the range, I also considered factors that have been discussed this spring:

- There has been discussion of the potential for climate refugees, but there is a lack of data on whether this type of migration is already happening or when it may begin happening.
- Recent urban development activity is at historic levels. We can count on the fact that there will be ups and downs with economic cycles. Fundamentally, however, this activity is a sign that local and region plans and investments are working. I think it makes sense to show a vote of confidence in those plans and see little risk in doing so.
- Damascus appears likely to disincorporate in the next year and its western areas are likely to annex to Happy Valley. This appears to enhance the likelihood of growth in this location.
- We heard from staff that a new growth forecast conducted today would look similar to the one in the draft 2014 Urban Growth Report.
- These are the type of questions meant to be reviewed and revisited as part of our ongoing growth management process so we may need to adjust as these trends play out.

Employment growth

Consistent with my recommendation to plan for the midpoint of the population and household range forecasts, I recommend that the Council plan for the midpoint of the employment forecast range. This midpoint represents healthy job growth that is commensurate with the amount of population growth expected. MTAC and MPAC members expressed more divergent views on the employment forecast range, with some citing the need for setting higher aspirations for employment growth.

As the Council is aware, choosing a higher or lower employment forecast won't make it so. I suggest that policymakers focus on two particular economic challenges that would not be resolved by choosing a higher employment forecast or by adding land to the UGB:

- Creation of a greater share of middle-income jobs should be a priority.
- Particular focus should be given to job creation for the region's younger generation and populations of color, many of whom are underemployed or are struggling to get by.

My thoughts on this topic are included in Recommendation Number Six.

SUMMARY OF GROWTH CAPACITY RECOMMENDATION

Based on Council discussions to date, I recommend that the Council plan for the midpoint of the forecast range. For the 2015 to 2035 timeframe, I recommend that the Council plan for the following numbers of homes and jobs inside the existing UGB. These numbers reflect staff’s revised estimates of the growth capacity in the area now in the City of Damascus as summarized in Appendix 1:

- 195,500 new homes, consisting of:
 - 75,000 additional single-family homes
 - 120,500 multifamily homes
- 260,000 new jobs

If the Council concurs with this recommendation it would mean that, at this time, there is no need to expand the UGB for jobs or housing.

The midpoint I have recommended reflects a 1.12 percent annual average population growth rate for the 7-county area. However, the Council may wish to consider planning for lower or higher growth. If so, I recommend that the Council consider a narrower forecast range than what is presented in the draft Urban Growth Report since the narrower range around the midpoint has a higher probability than the outer ends of the forecast range. A “medium-low” forecast has a growth rate of 1.06 percent and a “medium-high” forecast has a growth rate of 1.18 percent. As noted, I recommend planning for a point in the range between these two forecasts. If directed by the Council, staff will conduct additional analysis of the implications of these alternative growth rates for land needs or surpluses. Staff will seek that direction at the September 15 Council work session. Staff will need that direction before completing a final Urban Growth Report for Council consideration this fall.

Housing needs

At the midpoint of the forecast range, there is a surplus of growth capacity for all housing types. Table 1 summarizes the numbers that lead to that conclusion and incorporate revised estimates of growth capacity in the City of Damascus.

TABLE 1: METRO UGB RESIDENTIAL NEEDS 2015 TO 2035 EXPRESSED IN DWELLING UNITS

	Dwelling units			
	Buildable land inventory	Market-adjusted supply	Market – adjusted demand	Surplus
Single-family housing	113,200	85,200	74,900	+10,300
Multifamily housing	274,100	130,900	120,500	+10,400

Notes:

- *The buildable land inventory has been adjusted to reflect Council discussions on the viability of Damascus. Compared to the draft Urban Growth Report, there are 3,876 fewer housing units of capacity included in the updated buildable land inventory. This is the net of 807 more units in mixed use zones and 4,683 fewer single-family units.*
- *As reflected in the market-adjusted supply, only a portion of the redevelopment and infill supply included in the buildable land inventory is deemed market-feasible over the next 20 years. This was also the case in the draft Urban Growth Report.*

Employment land needs

At the midpoint of the forecast range, there is a surplus of growth capacity for commercial and industrial employment. Table 2 summarizes the numbers that led to that conclusion and incorporates revised estimates of growth capacity in the City of Damascus.

TABLE 2: METRO UGB EMPLOYMENT LAND NEEDS 2015 TO 2035 EXPRESSED IN ACRES

	Acres			
	Buildable land inventory	Market-adjusted supply	Demand	Surplus
Commercial employment	3,750	3,950	3,570	+380
Industrial employment	6,800	4,690	3,700	+990

Notes:

- *The buildable land inventory has been adjusted to reflect Council discussions on the viability of Damascus. Compared to the draft Urban Growth Report, there are 510 fewer acres of industrial land and 450 fewer acres of commercial land included in the updated buildable land inventory. This is based on draft Damascus zoning concepts. Local policymakers may wish to consider other zoning designations to provide more employment land.*
- *Reflecting real market dynamic where commercial uses locate in industrial zones, the market adjustment shifts some of the region's industrial redevelopment supply into the commercial land supply. This was also the case in the draft Urban Growth Report.*
- *As reflected in the market-adjusted supply, only a portion of the redevelopment supply included in the buildable land inventory is deemed market-feasible over the next 20 years. This was also the case in the draft Urban Growth Report.*

Large industrial site needs

The region's economic development strategy focuses on several sectors whose anchor firms sometimes use large industrial sites (over 25 buildable acres). These firms are important because they often pay higher-than-average wages, export goods outside the region (bringing wealth back), produce spinoff firms and induce other economic activity in the region. However, forecasting the recruitment of new firms or growth of existing firms that use large industrial sites is challenging since these events involve the specialized decisions of individual firms.



Under the entire range of forecast possibilities presented in the draft Urban Growth Report, there is a surplus of large industrial sites already inside the UGB. As described in the draft Urban Growth Report, the region has a surplus of 40 to 66 of these large industrial sites. However, that does not mean that these sites are all ready to accommodate job growth. Existing sites typically require actions such as infrastructure provision, wetland mitigation, site assembly, brownfield cleanup, annexation by cities and

planning needed to make these sites development-ready.⁴ As described in Recommendation Number Six, I recommend that Metro continue to partner with other agencies and organizations to ensure that more of these sites become development-ready to meet the region’s economic development goals.

RECOMMENDATION TWO: COMPLETE THE NEXT URBAN GROWTH REPORT EARLIER THAN REQUIRED

Our region, like other metropolitan areas, is changing. People and businesses are returning to downtowns and main streets after decades of outward growth. Economic cycles of boom and bust will come and go, but there are several reasons – demographic shifts and infrastructure finance trends, to name two – to believe that when future growth does occur, much of it will be similar to what is happening in urban places like Orenco Station, Division Street, the Pearl District and the Lloyd District.

Recognizing this pace of change, the Council has directed staff to complete a new Urban Growth Report sooner than required by the law, but not until urban and rural reserves are acknowledged. Assuming urban and rural reserves are acknowledged in a timely fashion, I recommend we issue the next draft Urban Growth Report in the summer of 2017 with Council consideration of the report by the end of 2017 and a growth management decision by the end of 2018. During the intervening time, we can observe how housing and employment trends evolve coming out of the Great Recession.

While that work is happening, I also expect that cities that are interested in UGB expansion will do their part to complete concept plans for urban reserves. Metro remains committed to being a partner on those efforts, most tangibly in the Community Planning and Development Grant program that we administer. Metro has funded almost \$8 million in concept and comprehensive planning in the past and the Council reserved 25 to 30 percent of funds over the next six years to fund this work in the future.

RECOMMENDATION THREE: SEEK ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF URBAN AND RURAL RESERVES

After many years of discussion and litigation, the region needs to finalize urban and rural reserves and obtain acknowledgment of those designations from LCDC. Doing so is the best way to provide certainty about where the region may grow and where it won’t. Finalizing these designations will require the collaboration and agreement of many parties.

Metro has existing IGAs with Clackamas County and Multnomah County establishing the location of urban and rural reserves in those counties. In order to obtain final acknowledgement of those reserve areas, Metro must jointly adopt findings with each of these counties in response to the issues identified by the Court of Appeals. Also, all three entities must agree on findings addressing certain region-wide requirements, including findings that the amount of land designated as urban reserve is sufficient to provide a 50-year regional supply. In the absence of agreement among Metro and the two counties

⁴ The inventory of 74 large industrial sites inside the UGB exceeds potential demand for 8 to 34 sites. 24 of the 74 sites are currently held by existing firms for potential future building expansions. The inventory is from the Regional Industrial Site Readiness Inventory completed in 2014 by Business Oregon, Metro, NAIOP, the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, the Portland Business Alliance and the Port of Portland.

regarding the existing reserve maps and revised findings, the only urban reserves in the region will be those located in Washington County.

Below is my suggested timeline for acknowledgment. This proposed timeline is contingent on Metro, the counties and other parties acting in good faith to respond to the specific issues that were remanded by the Oregon Court of Appeals. The urban reserves were adopted after an exhaustive public process of identifying the region’s needs for housing and employment lands and ensuring a supply of land for our region that will last for the next 50 years. There is no basis for a reassessment of that analysis now, only four years later.

Metro and each county will need to undertake a public process that results in the adoption of ordinances with joint findings addressing the remand issues and region-wide standards. My recommendation is to begin the public process that will be required for the adoption of ordinances in October, and conclude by adopting ordinances and findings no later than the end of January. This timeframe should ensure that the reserve designations could be acknowledged by LCDC in 2016.

- October 2015 – begin public process
- November-December – hold public hearings and prepare revised findings
- January 2016 – adopt joint findings via ordinances and submit to LCDC

RECOMMENDATION FOUR: EXPLORE WAYS TO EVOLVE THE URBAN GROWTH
MANAGEMENT PROCESS TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL CERTAINTY TO THE REGION,
COUNTIES, CITIES, AND STAKEHOLDERS

Our current urban growth management process was largely built during the era before urban and rural reserves. Acknowledgment of urban reserves – when complete – will represent an important milestone for our region and will change the way we manage growth going forward. Unlike the past, we will have already decided as a region where the region may grow for the next several decades. This will allow us to focus more on why we would need to add land supply to the UGB, and how rapidly.

Future growth management decisions may also need to consider qualitative factors that traditionally have not received as much attention as the “numbers game” of capacity, units and acres. For example, many of the stakeholders we have worked with during this growth management cycle wonder whether we should look at how their communities are performing – in supplying infrastructure, in making decisions and in being market-ready – in addition to looking at regional land need. The Metro Council has indicated that they are interested in looking at these factors, but to consider them when making growth management decisions would require that we change our process.

Building on the work that our region has done to identify urban and rural reserves – those places that the region will or won’t develop over the next 50 years – I recommend that Metro convene its partners to discuss how we might allow for regional consideration of modest city requests for residential UGB expansions into urban reserves. But identification and implementation of any such system will require that the region first resolve the status of urban and rural reserves.

Evolving our growth management process should carry forward the Metro Council’s policy to take an outcomes-based approach, refocusing our dialogue on the ingredients needed to get housing built (city governance, infrastructure finance and market feasibility) and who would benefit from that housing, rather than divisive arguments about whether there is a regional or local need for land.

A first step would be to convene a regional discussion, perhaps involving the Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC) or a subcommittee including key stakeholders. However, I recommend first getting urban and rural reserves acknowledged before convening this discussion. Below are some proposed guiding principles for how this system could work.

PROPOSED GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EVOLVING THE REGION’S GROWTH MANAGEMENT PROCESS FOR HOUSING

The following proposed guiding principles are for Council consideration though the Council does not necessarily need to come to an agreement on these at this time. Council’s decision will simply be whether to direct staff to begin a process to explore possible improvements to Metro’s growth management process once urban and rural reserves are acknowledged.

- Consistent with Oregon’s land use planning program, locally-adopted community plans and the public’s core values, the region remains committed to focusing most housing growth in its existing downtowns, main streets, corridors and station communities.
- Acknowledged urban reserves represent the maximum residential urban footprint for the region through the year 2060. Consistent with existing law, urban reserves will be revisited in 2031.
- Rural reserves will remain off limits to urban development through at least the year 2060.
- Carefully made residential UGB expansions into acknowledged urban reserves are consistent with the 2040 Growth Concept and can support its implementation. However, as growth management discussions and ongoing litigation illustrate, identifying a regional need for residential UGB expansions, as required under existing state law, is not a purely technical exercise.
- UGB expansion requests made by cities will be considered in a regional dialogue, with recommendations made by MPAC and decisions made by the Metro Council.
- UGB expansions into urban reserves will be considered based on the practical outcomes that they could produce for the region and requesting city. Policymakers will consider factors addressing topics such as governance, finance, market, housing choice and affordability.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE: SHIFT THE REGION’S EPISODIC FOCUS ON HOUSING, JOB GROWTH, AND CHANGE TO AN ONGOING DIALOGUE

Our region is approaching the halfway point for our regional vision, the 2040 Growth Concept, which laid out where housing and job growth should occur through 2040. Public support for the core values embodied in the plan remains strong. Nevertheless, we should all be aware of the challenges of implementing that vision, which is why I recommend that Metro monitor community development

trends on an ongoing basis. Using that information, Metro must continue to work with its partners to find innovative solutions to the challenges we see now and in the future.

This is one of the purposes of Metro’s Regional Snapshots program, which will be launched as a quarterly series beginning in September. The first installment of this series will focus on housing and can serve as an ongoing regional forum for identifying housing policy best practices. Subsequent quarterly themes will include transportation, jobs and community character and design before returning again to housing. These Regional Snapshots will use a variety of methods to bring forward the region’s challenges and opportunities in preparing for housing and job growth and are likely to include:

- Data on housing, job creation and transportation trends
- Case studies on community building efforts around the region
- Personal accounts of people from around the region
- Guest speakers at MPAC and other venues

In addition to monitoring and reporting on housing and job trends, Metro should continue to work with its partners to increase regional knowledge about housing market preferences through additional market research and analysis. While residential preferences are not the only objective that policymakers must address, it is an important, if complex, one. Policymakers should continue seeking solutions that find the balance between:

- Preferences for single-family homes
- Preferences for walkable communities with amenities nearby
- Strong public support for focusing most new housing in existing urban areas to protect farms and forests

Facilitating design innovations for new housing types holds potential. One design concept worth exploring is that of “missing middle housing⁵,” occupying that space between single-family homes and

What are Regional Snapshots?

A series of quarterly check-ins on how the greater Portland region is growing, changing and getting around. Each Snapshot seeks to illuminate issues that matter to people and businesses in the region, using data and relevant storytelling. It’s not a report card or a magazine story, but somewhere in between. It lives primarily online and is clickable and shareable.



⁵ See <http://missingmiddlehousing.com>

mid-rise housing. Examples include duplexes, townhomes, accessory dwelling units and courtyard housing. The region needs to explore how these less common housing types might provide desirable options for households of all types, whether 1- or 2-person, with children, lower-income or retiree.

Taken together, observing trends in the markets and researching housing preferences can inform the development of best practices for promoting housing that addresses challenges such as housing affordability. Metro’s current Equitable Housing Initiative is one example of such a program that is proceeding from a data-driven understanding of the current affordable housing situation to technical assistance delivery.

RECOMMENDATION SIX: CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT THE COUNCIL’S STRATEGIC GOALS FOR MIDDLE AND UPPER INCOME JOB GROWTH

As noted earlier in my recommendations, choosing a higher or lower employment forecast won’t make it so. I suggest that policymakers focus on two particular economic challenges that would not be resolved by choosing a higher employment forecast or by adding land to the UGB:

- Creation of a greater share of middle-income jobs should be a priority.
- Particular focus should be given to job creation for the region’s younger generation and populations of color, many of whom are underemployed or are struggling to get by.

Solutions to these challenges are difficult and many extend beyond the influence of the Metro Council (from education and job training to improvements in global macroeconomic conditions). I recommend that Metro continue its strategic focus on projects, policies, programs and partnerships that enhance land readiness and improve mobility of people and goods.

Metro investments in family-wage jobs

Metro programs and activities are aligned to help the region create more family wage jobs.

PROJECTS

- RISE (Regional Infrastructure Supporting our Economy)
- Southwest Corridor and Powell Division Investment Areas
- Economic Value Atlas Initiative

POLICIES

- Past additions to the UGB for industrial land
- Protecting regionally significant employment areas from conflicting uses
- Freight and transit system planning

PROGRAMS

- Community Planning and Development Grants
- Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program and Regional Flexible Funds
- Enterprising Places

PARTNERSHIPS

- Industrial Site Readiness Coalition
- Oregon Brownfields Coalition
- Greater Portland Inc 2020

RECOMMENDATION SEVEN: CONTINUE TO INVEST IN IMPLEMENTING REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLANS

A thread that weaves through many of our recent efforts – whether Climate Smart Communities or the Council’s urban growth management decision – is that we intend to implement existing community plans. It is incumbent on us to do this to meet carbon reduction goals, create walkable communities, and make sure there is enough housing and jobs to meet expected growth.



The next update of the Regional Transportation Plan comes on the heels of the region’s adoption of the Climate Smart Strategy. During that process, cities, counties and the region all agreed that investments are critical to implementing our community visions. The 2018 update of the Regional Transportation Plan is an opportunity for us to make good on those plans. Likewise, the Southwest Corridor Plan and planning for the Powell-Division Corridor provide opportunities for making investments that advance community and regional goals. With scarce resources, this region needs to make the most of what it has.

CONCLUSION

We are extremely fortunate to live in a region filled with great places and passionate people. Making decisions about the future of this place requires that we think deeply and listen carefully. It also requires that, while respecting the past, we squarely face the challenges and imperatives of the future.

With these thoughts in mind, I am pleased to make my recommendations, which represent my best judgment about how to embrace change while protecting the special qualities of this place we call home. I look forward to working with the Metro Council, with MPAC, with key stakeholders and with the people of our region as we consider these recommendations and conclude the 2015 urban growth management decision.

NEXT STEPS

These recommendations are intended to provide a framework for decision-making this fall. Following are some key dates for those discussions and decisions:

Dates are preliminary and subject to change

- July 28: Metro Council work session – discussion of Chief Operating Officer recommendation
- August 5: MTAC – discussion of Chief Operating Officer recommendation
- August 26: MPAC – discussion of Chief Operating Officer recommendation
- September 2: MTAC discussion (if needed)
- September 3: Metro Council work session (if needed)
- September 9: MPAC – recommendation to Metro Council
- September 15: Metro Council work session (provide direction to staff on point in range forecast and direction to finalize the Urban Growth Report and housing needs analysis based on that point forecast)
- September 24: First reading of ordinance and public hearing
- October 27: Proposed final Urban Growth Report available for review (reflecting point forecast)
- Dates TBD: Additional public hearings
- November 19: Metro Council adoption of final Urban Growth Report and legal findings