

Urban Growth Report Roundtable September 29th, 2023

Meeting Notes

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Questions/Discussion

- What is the difference between urban and rural reserves?
 - Certain communities have both.
 - Rural – what will be rural for 50 years.
 - Urban – where the urban growth boundary can be expanded into for 50 years.
 - We are the only region with rural reserves, other regions only have urban reserves
- Some urban reserves seem to be expensive to develop, so is it realistic?
 - It's a choice of the local jurisdiction
- The report needs to be practical, but also aspirational. Also need to look at the wider region as well ex. North Plains.
- Suggestion on creating a document with related definitions – examples like who is involved and basics of process and relevant laws (SB 4)
 - Staff will begin to develop this for upcoming meetings

Land Readiness

- Must have other partners to make land ready – not just local jurisdictions but other partners like CWS
- Important to preserve agriculture, but also also see it as production with use of farmland soil
- The development process for UGB expansion areas doesn't look very nimble
 - Metro has used the land exchange process to be more responsive and nimbler to needs
 - The UGB is meant to be editable, but changed thoughtfully and based on demonstrated need
 - Difficulty in moving too fast
- Think about housing as a part of the infrastructure – and for whom?

Explanation of Group & Role

- Is land readiness a part of the urban growth report?
 - Yes, the report is based on a basic equation, then city send in concept plans to demonstrate readiness
 - Metro provides funding to help cities create concept plans - 2040 planning and development grants
 - Community readiness is about workforce, housing, etc.
- Hope that housing may be built earlier anticipating workforce needs, especially transitive workforce
 - As a practical vision – Plan for growth today and in the future

Activity Discussion

Hopes/Aspiration:

- Three factors that businesses use for deciding if they want to go to a new area – workforce, transport, and land. Hoped that they will focus on transport for people now and in the future.
- Land as resource or vehicle for better jobs and homeownership (example their child bought a 50-year-old house for \$500,000). Hope for generational wealth
- Appreciated Metro's willingness to be flexible. Hoped for input from developers and consumer preferences and what the market looks like (what it is incorporated in the report)
- Balance Metro's need for growth with irreplaceable soil and access to food – can't get the soil back.
- Acknowledge that we have problem in the UGB process and housing process.
- A process that is collaborative and creative in regulation.
- Collaborate and federal investment in area (housing, workforce with services).
- Infrastructure – Metro becomes partner with cities on finding funding.
- Metro leadership hears their concerns.
- Do more infill redevelopment – it doesn't get enough support.
- That this process is messy and to have conversations. They also need to be visionary (what can be, what we want to have happen).
- Equity in the process and where they are – Ex. people in Gresham that work outside of Gresham.
- Housing is critical for workforce.
- Inclusive economic growth
- What is the vision and how to balance vision together, know the limitations and constraints of the UGB process, and that climate change/reducing emissions is considered.
- That Metro can affect change – mentioned that some lands are still not developed – pay attention to process and increase speed
- Combining what is needed for the people and the community that we want to build. The community needs to be a part of the discussion
- Rebalancing of urban growth expansions, more middle housing, and transportation for them
- Future generations can look back and see that they made the right decision.
- Forward thinking

Concerns:

- Pricing ourselves out of the housing market (example - their child is trying to buy a house), how are we looking at policies
- Not much Clackamas County in the group
- Funding
- Environments conservation

- Fiscal balance – homes built but can't afford services
- Supersiting is a failure of land use
- Feasibility and barriers to development
- What if we are wrong about what buyers want
- Public comment – make scientific approach to find out what people want – unrepresented people
- Timing and delivery won't align with need
- Timing and availability
- Competition for land
- Past mistakes (Ex. Damascus) will inform and affect the future
- Highest and best use not considered
- Reputation of the region
- Retain talent we have, funding for areas, how to stay competitive

Future Conversations – “Parking Lot”

- Time from UGB to development - How can we speed this up?
- Document that defines all the terms (who, what, why) UGB, UGR, Urban/rural reserves, etc.
- Jobs need nimbleness – fit this into “readiness” approach
- Need a chart with definitions
- Cities aren't the only entity involved in planning for readiness – e.g. Special Districts etc.
- Make sure we are thinking about modern agriculture techniques and needs (not all 50 years ago)
- Understand housing as critical infrastructure (not just an output of expansion)

Activity – Additional sticky notes

Hopes/Aspirations:

- Strengthening community/ government alignment on volume of UGB's
- Keep a mantra of nimbleness with processes moving forward and common-sense
- Economic Opportunity – Manufacturing has the strongest potential for upward economic mobility. More industrial development can create generational wealth.
- UGB and its process is not about adding building capacity for housing, jobs but that is about people – with the community we want as the center of the discussion
- We remember the value of the irreplaceable soils in the Willamette Valley
- We can find a way to balance our need for growth and our need for affordable locally produced food and fiber
- We don't cower in the face of a great but challenging, opportunity
- Adoptive system that moves quickly
- Forward-looking planning, not rear-view mirror planning
- Metro seizes opportunity to be visionary and forward looking

Concerns:

- Race to development over SB 4 and other desires that leads to unintended consequences
- Lack of Climate change consideration in these decisions
- Feasibility of/ barriers to development. i.e. infrastructure, parks delivery
- Equity across region
- Supersiting is a failure of the land use system. Example employment – semi-conductors & housing (affordable)
- Agriculture land is not simply flat land for development (housing/ other employment sectors)
- Agriculture production is employment land, and housing is critical for the workforce
- Fiscal balance - Cities, counties districts are limited in revenue sources. Without commercial/ industrial development, they will not survive
- Infrastructure costs to cities with limited resources
- Lack of diversity and inclusion in expanded areas
- The competing demands for lands currently zoned EFU
- We will forget how much Oregonians value locally produced and accessible agriculture
- Time is running out
- Past mistakes (Damascus) dictating future decisions about growth
- Recognize system of UGB expansion is largely responsible for the housing crisis
- Nimbleness and collaboration with cities/ counties and with development community to inform decisions – what does the consumer want?
- Transportation – what if we don't take this into account – it will get so much worse
- We won't "take highest and best use" as a priority
- Regional reputation
- Transportation to include transit for workforce

- Rigid forecasts in uncertain world
- Resistance to building infill development
- Please do not react to developer's whining. Capitalism will always find a way. Lowering boundaries and improving profit is short-term thinking
- Assumptions, perspective – no growth, slow growth as opposed to right sized middle-class housing manufacturing
- Certainty for investors
- Timing and delivery won't align with need for delivery of employment lands
- Cities need support from Metro and state to get to readiness, infrastructure funding is a huge lift for all but the largest cities
- This room is heavily westside – oriented, no one from Clackamas County

Additional questions/thoughts:

- Modify our infrastructure cost limitations!
- How do we better account for and collaborate with all the parties it requires to solve new Metro area demands?
- How can we better account for the housing crisis?
- What if we get it wrong? (Housing people don't want to live in)
- What is Mayor A is obstinately no-growth and Mayor B is pro-growth, and both cities have viable land?
- Is affordable housing stock part of this process in any way?
- Who is looking across the region to see where there is opportunity - If this is driven by jurisdictions, it will be piece meal with no coordinated vision
- Urban unincorporated areas – do they do the planning they should?