



## City of Gresham

Mayor Shane T. Bemis

1333 N.W. Eastman Parkway  
Gresham, Oregon 97030-3813  
(503) 618-2306  
Fax (503) 665-7692

March 11, 2009

Chairman Ted Wheeler  
Multnomah County Board of Commissioners  
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd  
Portland, OR 97214

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

This letter concerns three recent issues in which Multnomah County's involvement has an impact on the City of Gresham: the construction of the East County Justice Center (ECJC), the County's desire to sell the land originally reserved for the ECJC in the Rockwood neighborhood, and the County's efforts to pursue the vacation of the right-of-way along 242<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

In recent conversations, we agreed in concept that if Sheriff Skipper were no longer interested in collocating a police function in the ECJC in Rockwood, and the County was not able to close its budget shortfalls on the project at that location, the viability of the project was not strong. Therefore, it made sense to support the County's desire to build the proposed court facilities on County-owned property in downtown Gresham, and explore the possibility of the Gresham Redevelopment Commission purchasing the land that the County has acquired in Rockwood. In short, a new court facility downtown that could actually be built was a better alternative than endless additional rounds of planning on a justice center facility in Rockwood that could not be built.

To be clear, it is under these circumstances only that I support building the courtroom facility in downtown and abandoning the original ECJC concept. If Sherriff Skipper's interest in collocating police services were to change tomorrow, my support would return for the original concept in Rockwood.

We agreed in conversation that if the Gresham Redevelopment Commission were to purchase the County-owned land in Rockwood, it would need to be under extremely flexible terms, due to the constrained availability of urban renewal funds relatively early in the district's life. We conceptually discussed something along the lines of a small down payment and a signed agreement to pay the full amount at the time in which the City sold the land to another party, or at the end of the urban renewal district, when cash would be more available. This would help the County unload an unnecessary asset, and would structure the deal in a way that makes it feasible for the Gresham Redevelopment Commission.

However, it is becoming clear in negotiations between your office and Gresham staff that the County would like to have a substantial down payment for the property, and have it paid in full within five years. Hearing of this proposal calls in to question the strategic value the property would hold for the Gresham Redevelopment Commission. Our potential interest in the property only came as a result of wanting to maintain our strong partnership with Multnomah County, under terms that would make sense over the life of the urban renewal area. At the point at which the County is not willing to structure more flexible terms, this partnership becomes much more tenuous.

One area in which you have shown strong leadership and partnership with Gresham is our efforts in economic development. Your office was instrumental in the City's recent actions to put in place Oregon's first Strategic Investment Zone, a tool that will help us attract major industrial investment in Gresham. However, the availability of viable future industrial land in our region is also of utmost importance for future job growth and investment in our economy.

It was for this reason that the Metro Regional Government recently expanded the urban growth boundary in Springwater, and Gresham began planning for the area. From day one it has been well-known that investment and job creation in this area, as well as other industrial areas in the Interstate 84 corridor, depend strongly on the north-south transportation connection between Interstate 84 and US Hwy 26.

The four East County cities came together around this shared goal in a Memorandum of Understanding, encouraging the exploration and study of viable north-south routes between these major transportation facilities. One of the existing options to be studied is 242<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Of course, keeping this potential connector viable depends upon the availability of the right-of-way along the potential route.

For this reason, the County's continued interest in vacating the right-of-way is quite troubling. When weighing the importance of a north-south transportation link that could help create thousands of jobs and economic investment in the future against selling right-of-way to get some quick cash, the course of action that is most in the public interest seems intuitive.

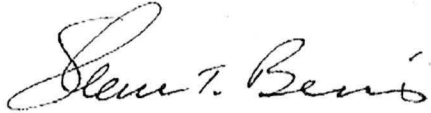
To further complicate matters, when I consider the steps that we are taking to try to be a helpful partner in acquiring the County-owned land in Rockwood, it becomes increasingly difficult to understand the County's actions regarding 242<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

I do not believe that these two issues can be considered independently. To be clear, it would be awfully difficult for me to support our involvement in the land acquisition in Rockwood if the terms of the deal are not as flexible as we first discussed, and if the County continues encouraging the removal of one of the most promising potential north-south connectors.

I would not be fulfilling my representative duties as Mayor if I did not do everything in my power to stop any action that could inhibit our ability to attract jobs and economic

investment to our region, especially in these difficult economic times. I believe that vacating the right-of-way along 242<sup>nd</sup> Avenue unnecessarily risks the future economic development in which we all depend.

Sincerely,

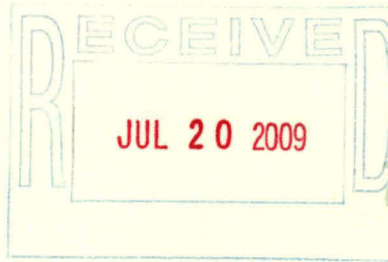
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shane T. Bemis".

Shane T. Bemis  
Mayor of Gresham  
Chairman, Gresham Redevelopment Commission

CC: Gresham City Council  
Diane McKeel, County Commissioner  
Erik Kvarsten, City Manager  
Alice Rouyer, Executive Director, Gresham Redevelopment Commission

July 7, 2009

Councilor Rod Park  
Chair RFGM Task Force  
Metro  
600 N.E. Grand Avenue  
Portland, Oregon 97232-2736



**FAR WEST FIBERS, INC.**

**HILLSBORO FACILITY**

6440 S.E. Alexander Street  
P.O. Box 1139  
Hillsboro, OR 97123  
Phone 503-643-9944  
Fax 503-646-2975  
[www.farwestfibers.com](http://www.farwestfibers.com)



Subject: Future of the RFGM Task Force

Dear Rod;

During our RFGM Task Force meeting today you posed the questions "Is there a future need for and usefulness of the RFGM Task Force?" and "Does Metro need the regular involvement of the business community (in longterm government planning)?" I am responding to your questions. Yes, Metro needs to include as broad a business voice as possible in future discussions involving regional freight and goods movement. The RFGM Task Force appeared to be the proper forum to converse with the affected parties and come to consensus with Metro and other governing institutions. The current diminished presence of interested business parties in the final stage of the process is both disturbing and predictable. If their work is done, then business may have assumed the plan could be adopted as-is in their absence. This may account for the empty chairs at the RFGM table today. On the other hand, if the business community represented on the RFGM Task Force felt disenfranchised or unheard in the planning process, they may have decided to withdraw from the Task Force due to lack of interest or frustration. Calling absent members could quickly answer your questions.

Jeff Murray from our company has represented Far West Fibers and the recycling processors community on Metro's Solid Waste Advisory Committee (S.W.A.C.) for many years and perhaps since its inception. I bring this up because Jeff reports to me that a major policy and position shift at Metro has taken place in the past two years. Metro leadership and staff have decided to reduce the presence and participation of interested parties and businesses in the Metro planning process. In our view, what was clearly at one time an important policy and consensus building organization, which was taken seriously by the Metro Council, has become a diminished S.W.A.C. I'm sure that there is some talk at Metro of further reducing or eliminating solid waste and recycling organizations, businesses and industries from the S.W.A.C. Of course, Metro is free to govern and regulate as they see fit with or without community input. There is no law which I am aware of which requires the participation of non-government interested parties such as haulers and processors and recyclers. However, I believe that it is in the best interest of society to bring all affected parties to the table so that the public can both participate in and at the same time be fully informed about and involved in the governing process. I am sure that you agree.

My hope is that you and Metro will take advantage of the work achieved by the Metro staff and your consultants, by other metropolitan area government organizations, by the public, and by participating businesses to continue to support the RFGM Task Force. Even if there is no immediate work to be done, it would be good to establish a quarterly informational roundtable to keep the interested parties involved and current.

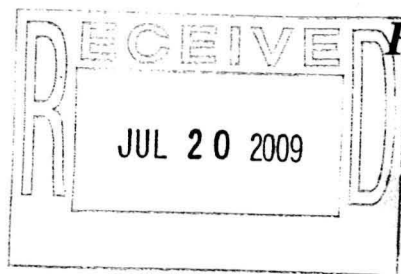
Thank you for your questions about the importance of retaining the RFGM Task Force.

Sincerely yours,

John Drew  
CEO, Far West Fibers, Inc.

July 7, 2009

Councilor Rod Park  
Chair RFGM Task Force  
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600 N.E. Grand Avenue  
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Thank you for your questions about the importance of retaining the RFGM Task Force.

Sincerely yours,

John Drew  
CEO, Far West Fibers, Inc.

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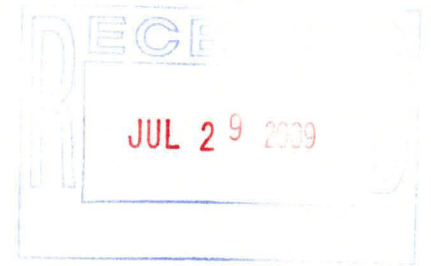
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July 24, 2009

Metro Councilor Rod Park  
600 NE Grand Ave.  
Portland, OR 97232

Metro Councilor Park:

Subject: Charging Oregon's "Economic Engine" To Power Our State's Recovery

The Portland metropolitan region is widely recognized as "the economic engine of Oregon," for concentrating an increasingly larger share of the population growth and economic strength of our state into these three counties.

Now, for the first time, data provided by state and federal agencies has confirmed over half of the personal income tax revenue collected by the State of Oregon is tied to a job and a payroll in either Clackamas, Multnomah or Washington counties.

According to the Oregon Dept. of Revenue, taxpayers living in Washington and Clackamas counties contributed 30¢ of every dollar in personal income tax collected by the state in 2007, while taxpayers in Multnomah County chipped in 20¢ more. We believe this marked the first time >50¢ of every dollar raised by our state's income tax has been generated in just three counties of our state.

The most recent personal income data available, compiled and released this month by Oregon's Dept of Revenue using 2007 tax returns, confirmed taxpayers living in Washington and Clackamas Counties continued to lead the state in adjusted gross incomes, average tax liabilities, and effective tax rates that year.

Remarkably, the adjusted gross incomes in Washington County jumped \$2.2 billion from the year before, to set a new record of \$16.2 billion, allowing personal income tax contributions to soar 18.7% to just under \$1 billion that year. Washington County led 35 other counties across the state with average adjusted gross incomes of **\$72,835**; average tax liabilities of **\$4,481**; and effective tax rates of **6.2%** imposed on full year resident tax returns filed that year.

Neighboring Clackamas County remained a close second in all three categories, with average adjusted gross incomes of **\$72,136**; average tax liabilities of **\$4,251**; and effective tax rates of **5.9%** among our full year resident taxpayers that year. In distant third place, Multnomah County taxpayers averaged **\$59,514** in taxable income, with average tax liabilities of **\$3,479** and effective tax rates of **5.8%** for the 2007 tax year.

By comparison, the lowest taxable earnings in our state were posted in Wheeler County, located in north central Oregon, where adjusted gross incomes among 566 returns from the sparsely-populated county averaged just \$30,953, yielding tax liabilities of \$1,618 per return---and less than \$1 million from the entire county---to the state's coffers.

It remains to be seen just how long and how deep the current economic recession will last, but most economists agree the Portland metropolitan region will need to lead the way when Oregon's economic recovery begins. As business leaders and elected officials, the actions and decisions we choose for our region will have an immediate and significant influence on other parts of our state.

And some of the key economic indicators released this week suggest the agonizing wait for our neighbors and constituents will be longer than in the past.

According to WorkSource Oregon at least 100,800 workers in our tri-county region were unemployed last month, and more than 241,956 Oregon workers---one of every eight statewide---remained unemployed in June. Both figures represented new and unwelcome records, and are more than double the corresponding figures from just one year ago, when 45,800 workers in the metro region and 116,073 workers statewide reported they could not find work in June 2008.

For the latest economic and demographic indicators, please refer to the attached profile of population, income and employment in our tri-county region, listing the most current data available from five public agencies through July 1, 2009.

Yours for a prosperous economy,



Jonathan Schlueter  
Executive Director

Encl: Clackamas County – By The Numbers  
Multnomah County – By The Numbers  
Washington County – By The Numbers

# Multnomah County --- By The Numbers

<b>Resident Population</b> (July 1, 2008)	<b>714,567</b>
<b>Total Non-Farm Employment --- Public and Private Sectors</b> (June 2009)	<b>434,900</b>
<b>Percentage of Resident Work Force Who Are Currently Unemployed</b>	<b>11.7%</b> (June 2009) <b>12.2%</b> (Statewide)
<b>Adjusted Gross Income</b> (2007 tax returns)	<b>\$19.125 billion</b> (19.4% of statewide totals) (40.4% of tri-county totals)
<b>State Income Taxes Paid</b> (2007 tax returns)	<b>\$1.1 billion</b> (20.0% of statewide totals) (39.7% of tri-county totals)
<b>Median Household Income in 2007</b>	<b>\$46,811</b> \$ 50,007 (U.S. Average)
<b>Average Age of County Residents</b>	<b>36.9 years</b> (36.4 years — U.S. Average)
<b>Education Levels:</b> (High School Diploma or GED among residents age 25 or older)	<b>87.9%</b> (84.0% — U.S. Average)
(Bachelor's degree or higher-- among residents age 25 or older)	<b>35.1%</b> (27.0 % — U.S. Average)

Note: The figures reported above in blue-colored font represent all-time record highs

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau  
Portland State Center for Urban Studies  
WorkSource Oregon  
Oregon Dept. of Revenue

Updated: July 24, 2009



# Washington County --- By The Numbers

<b>Resident Population</b> (July 1, 2008)	<b>529,216</b>
<b>Total Non-Farm Employment --- Public and Private Sectors</b> (June 2009)	<b>234,500</b>
<b>Percentage of Resident Work Force Who Are Currently Unemployed</b>	<b>10.4%</b> (June 2009) <b>12.2%</b> (Statewide)
<b>Adjusted Gross Income</b> (2007 tax returns)	<b>\$16.2 billion</b> (16.4% of statewide totals) (34.3% of tri-county totals)
<b>State Income Taxes Paid</b> (2007 tax returns)	<b>\$999.4 million</b> (17.8% of statewide totals) (35.4% of tri-county totals)
<b>Median Household Income in 2007</b>	<b>\$60,254</b> \$ 50,007 (U.S. Average)
<b>Average Age of County Residents</b>	<b>35.0 years</b> (36.4 years — U.S. Average)
<b>Education Levels:</b> (High School Diploma or GED among residents age 25 or older)	<b>90.1%</b> (84.0% — U.S. Average)
(Bachelor's degree or higher-- among residents age 25 or older)	<b>37.4%</b> (27.0 % — U.S. Average)

Note: The figures reported above in blue-colored font represent all-time record highs

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau  
Portland State Center for Urban Studies  
WorkSource Oregon  
Oregon Dept. of Revenue

Updated: July 24, 2009

# Clackamas County --- By The Numbers

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<b>Resident Population</b> (July 1, 2008)	<b>380,576</b>
<b>Total Non-Farm Employment --- Public and Private Sectors</b> (June 2009)	<b>140,600</b>
<b>Percentage of Resident Work Force Who Are Currently Unemployed</b>	<b>11.4%</b> (June 2009) <b>12.2%</b> (Statewide)
<b>Adjusted Gross Income</b> (2007 tax returns)	<b>\$11.9 billion</b> (12.1% of statewide totals) (25.2% of tri-county totals)
<b>State Income Taxes Paid</b> (2007 tax returns)	<b>\$703.5 million</b> (12.6% of statewide totals) (24.9% of tri-county totals)
<b>Median Household Income in 2007</b>	<b>\$59,709</b> \$ 50,007 (U.S. Average)
<b>Average Age of County Residents</b>	<b>38.9 years</b> (36.4 years — U.S. Average)
<b>Education Levels:</b> (High School Diploma or GED among residents age 25 or older)	<b>90.7%</b> (84.0% — U.S. Average)
(Bachelor's degree or higher-- among residents age 25 or older)	<b>30.9%</b> (27.0% — U.S. Average)

Note: The figures reported above in blue-colored font represent all-time record highs

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau  
Portland State Center for Urban Studies  
WorkSource Oregon  
Oregon Dept. of Revenue

Updated: July 21, 2009



August 20, 2009

Sheila M. Ritz  
City Administrator  
City of Wood Village  
2055 NE 238<sup>th</sup> Drive  
Wood Village, OR 97060

***Subject: Proposed Vertical Housing Development Zone in the City of Wood Village***

Dear Ms. Ritz:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed Vertical Housing Development Zone in the City of Wood Village. Please enter this letter into the hearing record for this matter.

I commend the City of Wood Village for considering the tools needed to create the desired investments in the Neighborhood Commercial and Town Center zones within the City. By developing a Vertical Housing Development Zone encompassing these areas, the City will provide an incentive and encourage growth to occur in compact and sustainable ways. As a result of focusing development in the town center and major corridors, the City of Wood Village can reach a balance between jobs and housing, create a unique blend of amenities, and support a healthy economy.

Mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development projects built around these special places typically require a much higher upfront cost, resulting in a higher risk to investors and developers regardless of impressive mid and long-term returns. These limitations, combined with an overall decrease in funding for these federal programs, present cities and counties with the need to find new sources of revenue to fund local community development activities. Oregon's Vertical Housing Program can help bridge the gap between these traditional financing levels and the costs of building higher quality, more sustainable projects, making these desired investments possible in centers and corridors. As a result, local communities can build vibrant downtowns and main streets that create places for businesses to flourish.

The benefits of developing in centers and along corridors also include greater transportation choices, better air quality, and more effective targeting and coordination of public investments. Mixed-use centers also maintain consistently high property values, create a sense of community, and attract new businesses. Promoting redevelopment and well-designed residential development along major transportation corridors, which typically have good transit access, can provide similar benefits. Furthermore, investing in existing communities can help balance land needs with the importance of preserving land for the agricultural economy and retaining natural features.

CITY OF WOOD VILLAGE

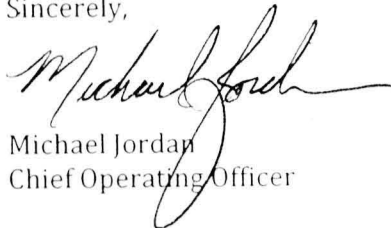
August 20, 2009

Page 2

I commend the City of Wood Village on exploring and acknowledging the advantages of the Vertical Housing Program in working to develop a sustainable city. The use of this tool can help the City of Wood Village build a vibrant downtown and main street that will create places for businesses to flourish and citizens to enjoy while preserving natural areas and single-family residential areas. I hope the City's effort in establishing a Vertical Housing Development Zone will serve as a model for other local jurisdictions in the region that may also consider using this tax abatement.

Metro supports these efforts and does not wish to opt out of this property tax abatement program. Metro also looks forward to working with the City as needed to share information and resources gathered on Oregon's Vertical Housing Program during the development of Metro's Community Investment Toolkit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Jordan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael Jordan  
Chief Operating Officer

cc: Councilor Rod Park, Council District No. 1  
Robin McArthur, Planning & Development Director