

PERC Speech

Pod
Pack
6/10

Topic: Land Use Planning: Friend or Foe

Theme: the people of our region have made the choice that they want a high-quality of life.

The People through voting in the 1992 Home Rule Charter have decided that Metro is the key to preserving that lifestyle because we can do the big picture planning needed to protect the nature of our region.

Local governments, working alone can't succeed for the same reason individual states can't do the same as working as a nation. It requires coordination which Metro provides.

I. Introduction

A. Anyone who's been to Portland knows why people come... and come again... and again and, again ... and why a good number of them eventually end up staying. (don't gag)

1. The vibrant, lush green that goes on and on.
2. Farms and forests are abundant and define the surrounding landscape.
3. The white topped mountains standing guard around our valley
- 4 The clear, cold rivers running out of old growth forests on their way to the vast Pacific ...

B. The challenge we face is protecting what we have. We realize that the very thing that draws us and keeps us in Portland also encourages others to come and our children to remain causing growth. Even our daunting rain is not enough to people away!

C. Before we get started, I want to tell you a little about who I am.

1. I am a nurseryman ... my family has been in the business for 50 years. I graduated from Oregon State University in 1977 with a B.S. in Horticulture.....significant only because it was during game 6 when the Blazers won their first and I regret to say, their only championship..... after last Sunday. 16 points up on the Lakers in the third quarter and blow it!
2. I am a “working environmentalist” ... I know the real-world implications of what Metro’s success or failure can mean for Oregon agriculture and urban development.. .. my land lies just inside the urban growth boundary. As a matter of fact the dirt road between my nursery and the neighbor’s is the UGB.
3. I am a past president of the Oregon Association of Nurserymen and a former Chair of Oregon’s State Board of Agriculture.

D. I am working to move Metro and our region beyond the extremist flame throwers. 100% protection of farm and forestland won’t work any better than providing developers with an unlimited supply of land. Oregon’s land use laws recognize that our 19 goals compete with each other just like each Amendment in the U.S. Constitution.

II. UGB History

Our topic today is “UGB: Friend or Foe.” I think we need to start with a little history -- it’s the basis of everything we do, everything we are.

A. Greenbelting (1969)

1. What it was: Oregon's first attempt to really protect our natural resources of farm and forest land thru a deferral program to ease the tax burden on farmers.

Back before SB100, all land was developable and was taxed accordingly. The problem was that farmers were being taxed off their land as they could not make enough money to pay their property taxes based upon developable value -- not its value as farm land.

2. Why it failed: counties refused to designate "greenbelt" areas.

B. SB 100 (1973)

1. Result of failure of greenbelting

2. What it said: every urban area in Oregon had to establish and maintain an urban growth boundary -- a line to separate farm and forest land from urbanizable land

3. Created the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) which is overseen by the Land Conservation and Development Commission. (Arnold Cogan, first director) This made sense since we are choosing which land to **Conserve** and which land to **Develop**.

C. Beyond Tom McCall

1. SB 100 survived three referendum challenges by popular vote in 1976, 1978, and 1982.

2. 1995 -- legislature, prompted by home builders, passed a law saying that UGB had to contain 20-year supply of land for homes --

D. UGB quandary -- the UGB debate really depends upon your viewpoint. Do you see it as urban areas encroaching onto farm and forest land? Or, do you see it as farm and forest land protection hurting urban development?

III. Acknowledging the problems with UGB

I'm not going to stand here and tell you that every single thing about UGBs is positive. Not everyone has the will.

A. The 20 year land law I just told you about forces us to focus our energies on the edge as opposed to concentrating on helping to build communities inside the boundary

B. State law Criteria (197.298 sub(c)) says exception lands are what are supposed to be developed first. Exception land is land that is no longer farmable because of its size or composition.

Problem is that developers (June 4, 2000 Commentary) have now flatly stated they want flat farm land after forging HB2709 only 5 years ago.

C. Affordable housing -- restricted land supply may increase land prices but the offset is the potential of increased infrastructure efficiencies.

1. Oregon did not make the top 10 last year in price growth (June 2000 Realtor Magazine, U.S. Office of Federal housing Enterprise Oversight) Outpaced by Massachusetts, Colorado, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Michigan, Maine, Georgia, New York, South Dakota, California, Kansas

Mr. John Charles will call our work “the worst of an outdated statewide system that attempts to solve environmental problems through central-state planning, inflexible bureaucracies and high public subsidies.”

Nothing could be farther from the truth as our people have CHOSEN to have Metro try plan for growth to stay Oregon and what is wrong with that?

IV. Goodness of UGB

What critics refuse to acknowledge is that what they hate about the UGB and growth planning does have GOOD aspects

A. PROTECTION OF FARMLAND -- The UGB is protecting farm and forest land as it was designed to do.

According to the U.S. Census of Agriculture, between 1982 - 1992, 4.1% of the nation's farmland was converted to other uses. In Oregon, where every city is required to have an urban growth boundary and a plan for growth, only 0.7% of farmland disappeared.

1. Ag. Oregon has \$ 3.5 billion worth of goods coming off its farms every year. . Half of that comes from the Willamette Valley -- that's half of the entire state's production on 6/10 of one percent of the land. (Willamette Valley where most of the people are.)
2. Nursery industry for example is over half a billion dollar, and is all within 1 hour drive of downtown Portland.
3. Land consumption versus population growth/comparisons to other cities: In 1998, the population of the Portland

region was 1.47 million compared with a population of 1.37 million in the Kansas City region. In comparison, Kansas City covered 1,034 square miles of urbanized area, versus an urbanized area in the Portland region of only 468 square miles.

B. PROTECTION OF OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES

1. Parks and open space land within and on the edge of the UGB (hitting 6,000 acres this summer)

- a. It is where and how you use urban land -- you can put it into pavement or greenspaces.

2. Streams/rivers/riparian areas -- no one can say that Metro and our region is willing to sacrifice waterways for development.

- a. Stream and Floodplain Protection Plan (1998) - 50 foot setbacks to protect land within floodplains and waterways

- b. Goal 5 -- working with local governments to protect waterways for fish and wildlife -- protecting their habitat -- and NO this does not include 200 foot no build zones. --

We are working to make the rules flexible enough to encourage property owners and developers to come up with GOOD solutions to the problems we face.

But, this is another whole topic of debate that's probably best left alone today

C. GOOD URBAN FORM and therefore density --

The UGB is not just about preserving farm and forest land however, urban development must also occur in a high quality fashion too.

1. First, Density is not a dirty word. I'd like to clarify that Metro does not dictate density. Each city in Metro's jurisdiction decided how much growth they could accommodate and then they told us -- not the other way around.
2. Secondly, the densities proposed for the Portland region will not result in street after street of high rise apartment buildings:
 - a. The City of Portland's current density is comparable to Omaha or Tacoma. Even with the potential 30% increase in population forecast for the next 20 years, Portland would still be at 75% the density of Seattle, 30% the density of San Francisco, and 60% of Los Angeles's density.
3. Thirdly, Metro's working to keep established neighborhoods as stable as possible. Where there is development in this existing neighborhoods, it is often on reclaimed brownfields or renovation of abandoned buildings/land.
4. We do encourage new development to include higher levels of density -- especially those near transit. But we also encourage these new developments to include all levels of housing types ... putting single family homes next to existing neighborhoods and transitioning into

apartments, condos, townhouses, etc.

5. What does density bring? A critical mass that is necessary for things such as pro sports teams, viable transit systems, a vibrant and economically sufficient downtown urban core. Good Schools. No donut effect, just the opposite (DJC June 2000)

D. REDUCTION OF POLLUTION

Based on Metro's 2040 Growth Concept, region-wide emissions of Carbon Monoxide, Hydrocarbons, and Nitrogen Oxides in the year 2040 will be 6% less than if the Portland metropolitan region had continued to grow traditionally.

E. Surety when it comes to BUYING AND PLANNING INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Development community has fought SDC's every step of the way ... we still can't collect SDC's for things such as libraries and schools

2. Given this climate, it is crucial that local governments be able to plan 10 - 20 - even 50 years ahead ... where they will need sewers and roads and electrical grids

3. UGB and the 20 year land requirement shows exactly development will happen in the future - giving locals that surety they need

4. Economic versus Political UGB

a. Economic -- this is the land that can realistically be developed right now -- the infrastructure is in place. Economic checks and balance.

b. Political -- this is usually bigger -- this is the land that is the region's elected officials -- at Metro and at the local level -- have voted to include into the UGB.

c. Political UGB gives locals and service providers the information they need to make smart, cost effective decisions about what they need, when they'll need it and where they should put it.

F. HELPS THE ECONOMY -- protection of natural resources and viable urban core lead to good economy:

1. We lead the nation in business start-ups by women -- 56% growth since 1992

2. The region's economy has spurred the creation of jobs -- 187,000 jobs in the last 6 years (22%).

3. Wages have increased by 34% in the last 6 years

4. Don't take our word for it: This excerpt is from "Emerging Trends in Real Estate" by ERE Yarmouth:

"Portland...ranks at the top of the second tier group for both investment and development prospects -- an unusual one-two punch. It also claims the lowest risk for overbuilding. Who says 'growth boundaries' are dirty words?

"Cities and regions with growth limitations are healthier and inherently more stable investment markets than those without limits. There's no greater risk to land values than unrestrained development."

IV. Support of the People

We give citizens and the local governments a chance to step up and have some control over growth pressures. And, the result is that Oregon is the ultimate example of free choice environmentalism.

- The majority of the people of Oregon are willing to accept regulations if they will save the salmon.
- Portland General Electric recently responded to public demand by giving people the option to buy shares in salmon-friendly power.
- They are willing to accept restrictions on where urban development can happen if that will save the farm land.
- They are willing to support transit because they know that will keep the pollution from congestion from clogging their view of the mountains.

Oregonians have spoken and said they are willing to pay the price for a higher quality of life.

How do we know this?

A. Polls

1. a 1999 poll shows that 83% of those surveyed believe in the statement that it is "better to plan for growth than ignore it"
2. the 1999 poll shows that 80% believe in the statement that growth management should "protect wildlife areas, fish

habitats, streams and floodplains"

3. the 1999 poll shows that 79% believe in the statement that growth management should "protect farm and forest land"

4. other polls done in the late 90's showed that 60% said we need more regulations to protect urban streams.

5. Other polls done in the late 90's showed that 67% of those surveyed said that more mixed residential, commercial and industrial development is "somewhat" to "very" desirable.

B. Elections

1. 1998 (Bragdon, Atherton, myself)

2. 2000 (Burkholder, Hosticka)

C. People are voting with their feet -- 55 people arrive every day

V. Conclusion

It is a matter of choice. We in the Portland/Metro region have chosen a life style that embraces nature and the natural resources around us. We made the choice as a region in creating 2040, our version of whole communities. It might, we don't know for sure, cost more, but we think the trade off in the quality of life issue is worth it.

You can live cheaper and in a lousy environment or maybe more expensively and in a good environment. We've made the choice to try have both.

And you know, I feel good about it for us, and for our children, which has no price on it.