

Urban Growth Report Roundtable

July 26, 2024

Meeting Notes

By Georgia Langer, Council Office Support Intern

Introduction

Catherine Ciarlo introduced herself and shared that today they will be walking through the Urban Growth Report. She noted that she thinks that they have been successful in these discussions and celebrated the ways in which this group talks about things that they do not agree on. She noted that these discussions have been extremely respectful.

COO Marissa Madrigal shared that the people in this region have the intellect and heart to tackle the issues of today. She shared that she has appreciated a recognition of what an urban growth report can accomplish, and what it cannot accomplish. She noted that updating the 2020 Vision is something that will incorporate things that the Urban Growth Report could not. She shared that Metro wants to have a region that the future generations can thrive in.

People introduced themselves.

Presentation

Staff gave participants an overview of the Urban Growth Report (UGR), sharing that the UGR is a point-in-time collection of data and analyses to act as a resource, for as long as it is relevant. They shared that it is the basis for a policy decision about the UGB, but not a policy document itself.

The staff shared that the critical topics and actions are housing; DEI and justice, economic development; development barriers, demands on agricultural land; access to nature and climate adaptation; role of Metro and local government, and regional vision for the future.

Staff shared other ongoing and future Metro work. They discussed the committee engagement for this work, and discussed where they have presented this work, and discussed the technical review panels.

The staff shared the housing reports.

Question: Mayor Rosener noted that they have a low base and high for housing density and population. He asked why the density would change with a higher population forecast.

Response: Ted Reid shared that with low growth, they have an increasingly aging population which would skew more towards single unit detached housing. If we have increased growth, census data shows that the age groups that are most likely to migrate are young people who completed their education and are looking for job opportunities, who are more likely to seek out apartments.

Comment: Mayor Rosener shared that that may not reflect the demand.

Response: This is something that Metro Council can consider.

Question: When you talk about constrained land, you are still counting one lot. Why?

Response: To comply with state laws, provisions allow property owners to build at least one unit even if it is constrained.

Comment: I want to make sure our employment projections are not too flat.

Response: Accounting for work from home eliminates the need for office spaces and we believe a healthy vacancy rate is around 7%. We think that the market is going to absorb some of the vacant offices in the coming years.

Question: Brad Smith asked that if they are deducting the office spaces, are you accounting for the need for home offices. He shared that people who live in suburbs may need another space if they are moving to the suburbs for an at home office.

Response: No. We do not look at sizes for single family homes, we just look at different types. This is an interesting question, but we do not look at this.

Comment: Mayor Callaway shared that they should skew more to single family detached because folks need spaces to have their office spaces.

Comment: Sam Desue asked what the baseline is to determine whether it is backfill for a couple of years and then there is growth. He also noted that being on national briefings with their counterparts about what is going to happen in November is going to have a huge impact for Oregonians. He added that student loan programs are also at stake which will deeply determine what folks can afford.

Response: We look at job growth from this year to 2044. Also, all the questions we have just had really point back to the demand scenarios, and which of the scenarios (following in footsteps, new normal, and strong urban markets). All we can do is show the projections, but there are some things that really need some consideration and discussion.

Comment/Question: Preston Korst shared that the market may justify other scenarios. He noted that it seems like a lot of migration data that they are relying on is from the post-recession world rather than the post-covid world. Younger people did not have nearly the number of resources that they wanted. 2020 and onward, there are different migratory patterns with folks coming from California and younger people who are prosperous are coming. I wonder if the demand scenario is somewhat limited. Is there an opportunity to offer an alternative path?

Response: The age group that is most likely to change their location is 20-24 and it changes as population gets older. There is a 1% chance that someone 65 or older will move within a given year. They also shared that this gets updated every few years, and so this is not a permanent document. The mid-cycle process was developed in 2017 and came up with ideas for growth management process.

Question: Elin Michel-Midelfort asked about why the numbers have changed so much.

Response: Ted Reid shared that they have changed the methodologies, as well as the fact that those were preliminary results.

Comment: Elin Michel-Midelfort noted that this is concerning.

Response: They can discuss this in depth following the meeting.

Question: There are different types of industrial, so what are you anticipating for jobs per acre.

Response: We convened a group of local planners and market experts, and they gave us advice on the square footage per jobs.

Presentation Continued

The presenters shared the buildable industrial acreage by tax lot size. They noted that the table does not account for adjacent tax lots that may be in common ownership. The presenters also shared a map of the buildable land inventory.

Request: Steve Callaway asked if they could provide the number of vacant and infill parcels between 1-5 acres, 5-10 acres, 10-25 acres, and 25+ acres to help stakeholders understand how much of the 6,000 acres of identified industrial capacity is within medium and large-sized parcels.

Response: We can get them to you hopefully, but we do have some privacy restrictions that we need to check on.

Comment: When we say buildable and industrial land, the ORS does not have a definition of buildable. It could mean it has a slope of 25 degrees. This does not consider the reality of whether they can actually build or want to build.

Response: There are a lot of questions about what the needs are and what is attractive to the market. This is something that needs to be a conversation that continues after this process.

Comment: Jurisdictions know best how to zone their land. You should talk with the jurisdictions to show that you trust them to zone correctly.

Response: That goes back to our partnerships and the importance of partnerships.

Comment: When we talk about impediments to development, there are very complex code, and it is long and difficult with many factors to work through.

Response: We are 100% in alignment with you, and we need to think about how that can be articulated in the report

Comment: Do we have sufficient capacity for medium sized lots? A lot of attention has gone to large sites but that is something we need to be aware of.

Comment: I would hope that business and trade organizations look at the data. One of the things that we learn is that we need accessible industrial land. The question is do we have the land or do we not. If you are a mayor or council, you are struggling to find the revenue to fund infrastructure need. We need to be getting infrastructure funding for this land readiness, so people do not need to resort to expansion instead of fixing land readiness. We have lost so much land readiness and folks should be saying no to big box stores and defend industrial land and make industrial sanctuary. We need to support our leaders.

Question: Do y'all have a sense that the story the data is telling will allow them to support brownfield and investments that will help the region?

Response: Investing in communities is throughout the draft report.

Comment: The leads that come into the state of Oregon, 75% start with the State Government and we would distribute those to cities, counties, tribes, and ports. One of the things that would maybe help

when we are debating is to go back and look at those leads that do not get responded to. We are in a better place than Washinton. When I have a semi-conductor business that wants to go to Oregon, we cannot figure out where to put them due to constraints and some jurisdictions do not have the ability to say yes. There are folks who cannot afford essential services because they cannot afford basic necessities. There are a lot of things out there to help private and public landowners get development and we are missing out on a lot of opportunities.

Response: Yes, if we are going to solve for these issues, we need to understand that.

Presentation Continued

The presenters shared the timeline of the project.

Comment: Thank you so very much for your fabulous facilitation efforts. Mayor Callaway also shared that the appendices should be shared in the report.

Question: Where is the rigorous conversations about policies, where folks are snatching up homes. How are you going to safeguard housing for families rather than for monopolies.

Response: Within the report that we are just wrapping up, what you have said is not considered because what we are looking at is a pretty dry equation about available land. However, what you are saying feels so fundamental to the way housing is working.

Comment: Housing is not in a vacuum. As a property owner, you can get equity. Landlordship is also a factor, as is climate change. This speaks to who can have their own apartment or home. Thinking about space and expansion may not solve for the housing issue.

Response: Yes, land availability is such a huge discussion and in the future, we should have more discussions about this. Metro is tasked with a regional coordination strategy.

Question: What do we do with the timeline of all of this?

Response: One of the things we have been thinking about is that it depends in terms of what action would be taken, where it would be taken, what the focus of that would be, whether there is an interested company. Right now we are on the schedule where we need to complete our work. The state has told us to wrap up this year and they are very clear on wanting us to meet the deadlines on this process.

Comment: Mayor Batey thanked Metro staff for this process and shared that this has been a very interesting experience. Mayor Batey shared that we are in the beginning stages of Middle Housing. I will be very curious as to what the demand is. In Milwaukie, we have no urban growth boundary and only limited opportunities for cottage clusters. The Metro Housing Bond helped provide us with a 15 unit cottage cluster. When Middle housing can be placed next to a commercial hub, that is a real model that could take off.

Catherine Ciarlo thanked the roundtable participants for attending the meeting, for their time and commitment, and their ability to push back. Ciarlo shared that they all share a desire to have a great and strong region.