

From: **Robin Vora** <robinvora1@gmail.com>

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Subject: Urban Growth Boundary Expansion Areas and Transportation

To: CouncilAll <councilall@bendoregon.gov>, Nick Arnis <narnis@bendoregon.gov>, Tyler Deke <tdeke@bendoregon.gov>, Brian Rankin <brankin@bendoregon.gov>, Damian Syrnyk <dsyrnyk@bendoregon.gov>, David Abbas <dabbas@bendoregon.gov>

I listened to the presentations March 21 by city planners and consultants on Urban Growth Boundary expansion and continue to be concerned about how the necessary infrastructure will be paid for. From what I understand, the objective is to have the areas in the approved UGB expansion ready for development within 10 years. These areas include redevelopment of the “Core Areas” within the existing city and several expansion areas around the periphery of the city.

I support the proposal for Area Plans for larger areas that have multiple ownership (Urban Core, North Area, Northeast Edge and Elbow). It makes sense to coordinate that planning, especially to get efficient placement of roads, water and sewer, and the best placements of parks and schools.

I support placing first priority on the Urban Core since projected housing units and jobs would be greatest there, near-term infrastructure needs are the least, it has more opportunities for multiple approaches to financing, it adds the least additional vehicle miles driven, and has the best opportunities to be served by public transit, thereby reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. More specifically Bend’s Central Area going south to KorPine should be designated an urban renewal district to facilitate financing of significant improvements to that area. The other Opportunity Area on west side of Bend should also be redeveloped as the next priority. The City will need to work through local opposition to 5 to 6-storey buildings but I believe Bend has no choice but to facilitate mixed development in taller buildings within the present city, and that is far better than continued outward expansion.

As a taxpayer and resident of the city, I am concerned about what I will be forced to pay to allow for others to profit from development while we suffer the consequences of added congestion. For the North Area, Northeast Edge and Elbow, city planners estimated \$190 million in near-term transportation infrastructure needs and an additional \$55 million in long-term transportation expenses. In addition, for sewer, the Elbow would require \$7 million, the Northeast Edge \$14 million, and the North Area \$60 million. If some of the arterial and collector roads, such as 27th Street, Knott Road, Butler Market Road, Deschutes Market Road, and O.B. Reilly road are presently failing to meet traffic needs, existing residents should help pay to upgrade the capacity of those roads. My understanding is that there are no significant issues with current traffic capacity in relation to the above-mentioned roads except for portions of Highways 97 and 20. City staff should prepare a map showing present capacity issues as a benchmark and I understand this may be done with an update of the Transportation System Plan with an analysis of present traffic at intersections.

However, the additional costs to upgrade to add capacity to those roads because of new development should be paid largely by the developers of those new areas. Over the past 20 years the city has often caved into the building industry’s requests for reduced System Development

Charges (SDC) and available funds today are insufficient to pay for this infrastructure need. The costs are far greater than the estimated \$60 million in SDC revenue these projects may generate. I would not support a \$200+ million bond and the added financial burden on existing residents to pay for new development around the present city periphery. I think the developers of those properties should pay the lion's share. We just had a very large school district bond along with several smaller city, park district and other bonds in recent years, along with big increases in water and sewer bills, and possible further increases in water and sewer fees to pay for the new development. The average household in Bend lives on less than \$60,000/year and cannot continue to support repeated increases in taxes and utility bills.

We should not allow developers to proceed without paying the cost of the needed infrastructure or having a financially guaranteed plan to pay for it in the near future. We should not allow, as we have in the past, developers to privatize the gains while all of us incur most of the costs through added taxes or traffic congestion.

I support incentives to build more affordable housing. However, if SDCs are reduced to facilitate that, then that is less money available for infrastructure improvements. I know this is a dilemma. Reducing SDCs should not be the first place the city looks to for funding affordable housing.

I think it is a good idea to develop a 10-year schedule for UGB expansion implementation, with funding for transportation and sewer included in that schedule. The City may not be able to wait two years for the city's new transportation funding committee to propose suggestions and the city's long-range transportation to be approved. I understand the results of the City's current intersection use analysis may be discussed at the May or June Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Technical Advisory Committee meetings. If presented with enough data, that MPO committee may be able to make some preliminary recommendations on scheduling.

I also urge the city to continue with long-planned and needed road projects such as the Empire Extension all the way to 27th Street rather than just going on to something new. It could be combined with an upgrade of the north end of 27th Street, if needed. I am happy to see the City's 2018-2022 Capital Improvement Program includes \$15.6 million for the Empire extension to Purcell and I hope that will be funded. I think the full Empire Extension to 27th Street would provide quicker access to the hospital from the north for ambulance service, which is important for public safety. Secondly, the Empire business park is increasingly important to the city and facilitating transportation in there may help business investment. Thirdly, it may reduce some overcrowding on Neff-Olney-8th. If this project is undertaken, it does need to include a trail underpass for park access.

I think the city will need a gas tax to help pay for maintenance and improvement of existing roads. It makes financial sense to have tourists who visit Bend, and use our roads, pay for some of that use when they buy gasoline in Bend. Studded tires damage roads and the city should also impose a tax on studded tires to help pay for that added maintenance required because of use of studded tires.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. You are welcome to share this letter with the newly formed city transportation committee, the MPO committees, and consultants who may work with the City on UGB expansion implementation.

Sincerely,
Robin Vora

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