

August 13, 2015

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CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

City of Medford
Mayor Gary Wheeler and Council
411 West 8th Street
Medford, OR 97501

Subject: File No. CPA 14-114, Urban Growth Boundary Amendment MD4-5

Respected Mayor Wheeler and City Council:

For the record, I would like to comment on the question raised at the public hearing of August 6th concerning impacts of new development, particularly the future impact of additional development on the already failing transportation and sewer system in Southeast Medford (MD4-5).

Mr. Dunbar Carpenter and his attorney Ms. Dorothy S. Cofield (Exhibit HH) have presented a strong argument supported by Case and State law in favor of MD3 demonstrating how this area provides opportunities for more compact growth, traffic circulation and less impact on systems as opposed to MD4-5.

At the August 6th hearing Councilman Gordon repeatedly asked those providing testimony in favor of MD5 "who pays for new development services"? Every time the response was "the developer". These were clearly half answers. The fact is that there are external development impacts beyond the boundaries of a project that the public pays for in one form or another. For instance, most of the congestion at the Barnett interchange is caused by development in Southeast Medford, but yet SDC charges were tagged on developments throughout the City to subsidize the cost of the interchange. Council recently approved spending 13 million on improving Foothills Road with 10 million funded as a loan from the City and 3 million in grant money; all to accommodate more southeast sprawl. I suspect that the loan repayment will come at least in part from SDC fees assessed on developments that have little to no impact on Foothills Road. And who will pay for the proposed South Stage Interchange that will be needed as an alternative route to the Barnett Road funnel when it fails as a result of the additional sprawl? Who will pay for upgrading water and sewer systems to accommodate all this concentrated growth? How much will all this cost? Are there other projects where this money would be better spent?

I urge you not to fall for the false promise of parks and trails. How many parks and trails have been built since the adoption of the Southeast plan 20 years ago? The only effort for a meaningful park in this area is the park land at the Village Center that the City recently purchased from the developer for hundreds of thousands of Dollars. I suspect the City will also pay for the park improvements? Again, where are the parks and trails?

I urge you not to support the expensive proposition of continued sprawl into the Southeast on the promise of trails and instead consider more compact areas with better infrastructure that would be less expensive to develop and have fewer social and environmental impacts.

Lastly, I believe the public deserves to hear staffs technical assessment on these issues and Council should ask questions that demand full answers. This would make for a more open and transparent process that will stand up to appeal challenges in the future.

Sincerely,


Diana Desmond