

Theodora (Teddie) Hight: Draft Testimony
Urban Growth Boundary Hearing
Medford City Council, August 13, 7 p.m.

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Planning Dept.

My name is Teddie Hight. I'm a boomer planning to attend my 50th high school reunion in PA. this fall. My husband and I have owned our home at 1848 Woodlawn Drive for 25 years. Before that we traveled the world and lived in 7 different states and Germany during the 20 years we served as medical officers in the USAF. We are permanently in place here, planning to live at the Manor, with our final resting place in the Eagle Point Cemetery. Part of our American dream played out. The next group surpassing my generation's clout are the millenials born in 1976 to 2004. This group is 80 million strong! Their dreams are different. The Urban Institute predicts that 23 million new families will be created in the next 20 years. Only 18% of men and women aged 18 to 34 say owning their own home is one of the most important things to achieve in their lives. So of the 23 million new families predicted in the next 20 years, 2/3rds of them plan to rent. This age group is also driving a quarter less than their counterparts just 8 years ago. Living in larger cities, cars are optional and often a liability. Millentials are experiencing having 21st century expectations, renting their homespace, having available public transportation, with safe bike and walking paths, in a 20th century system

set up for personal vehicles as Medford and our valley require. The millenials I know and love try to manage doing everything on a shoestring. Yet with student debt, depressed wages from the recession, and with child care costs that have increased 70% since the mid 1980's they feel strapped. They are not making as much money as we did at the same age. Dining out has decreased 20% in the last 5 years and wouldn't you know millenials are driving the growth of Subway franchises. They are now the biggest part of the workforce. Where will they choose to or have to live? I don't imagine they will be able to choose our town because of the lack of affordable rental housing. I would hope we could infill all the vacant land of our city with options for them, before expanding much more into the urban reserves. We need affordable housing with intergenerational possibilities--models other cities have successfully created with options for the older folks assisting the younger families with child care and the millenials helping the older generation. The developments I've heard discussed so far do not address the needs of 2/3rds of the millenials and their families. They have different dreams and we may yet see them added to our population growth, if affordable housing is planned for and built for them to rent. Maintaining safe neighborhoods, like I enjoy, with connecting public transportation would support the liveability and vitality of Medford for everyone. Thank you for your work making these very important decisions concerning our city's future picture.