

1
August 13, 2015**PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

Caren Caldwell, Medford Congregational United Church of Christ
Urban Growth Boundary Hearing
Medford City Council, August 13, 7 p.m.

RECEIVED
AUG 13 2015
PLANNING DEPT

I am Caren Caldwell, Associate Minister at the Medford Congregational United Church of Christ.

Thank you for holding these hearings. Your commitment to hearing from all who wish to testify shows that you appreciate the importance of having community members' input in this process.

Today I am representing the Green Ministry Team of our church. As people of faith, we value community that practices love of neighbor and stewardship of creation. The next fifty years constitute a critical period in human history. We must meet human needs while using our finite resources in a way that will maintain a healthy planet Earth.

Our Green Ministry Team has examined the proposal to expand Medford's UGB and have held it up to the light of our values, the goals of Land Use Law, and Medford's Comprehensive plan.

This is what we've concluded: The primary criteria for deciding the number and location of acres to add to the UGB must depend on how those acres will be used and whether their proposed uses will meet the City's and the State's land use goals.

We support the development of mixed neighborhoods that are both environmentally sustainable and equitable in their impact on all Medford's people, whatever their income level, race, or culture.

We do not support establishing more monoculture neighborhoods that permit land speculation, build-in permanent inequality, and cause residents and workers to depend on personal cars, producing more and more greenhouse gas emissions and polluting our air and water.

We'd like to emphasize three main points.

First, before developing new properties, we ask the City to strengthen existing neighborhoods and promote infill on acres already within the city limits. This is called the "Fix-It First" Model.

Taking care of what we have in our current UGB is a wise first step. In the next 50 years, our community will have to provide homes, businesses, and infrastructure to a growing population, while meeting increasing demands for clean energy, water, and air. We will have to conserve land and resources to meet those goals.

Vacant acres in the downtown and close-in neighborhoods can be used to meet the needs of people for affordable housing and jobs that pay living wages. These acres are already located on public transportation routes and have developed infrastructure and city services. So maintenance costs to the City are less than those in undeveloped outlying areas.

Second, we urge the City to provide diverse housing choices to accommodate people of modest means and in varied stages of life from birth to retirement. For us, affordable housing is a top social justice concern.

The demand for affordable housing exceeds what we are currently providing and as well as what we will need in the future. A whopping 33% of Medford's population is low income, according to Medford's own Comprehensive Plan. We have a shortage of over 4,400 affordable units right now. So, the UGB needs to

include the right types of land in the right places to make sure that this problem is resolved.

Third, we support neighborhood designs that provide residents, students, workers, and shoppers with a variety of transportation options, including public transit. That kind of development requires densities and infill adequate to sustain bus routes as well as accommodating safe walking and biking paths.

Anyone living in any of the proposed new developments will obviously need transportation. But they shouldn't have to rely on personal vehicles alone. We know that RVTD has had to cut, not expand routes and hours in recent years. The agency has no ability and no plans currently to expand into any of the urban reserve areas that do not already have service.

So making affordable, environmentally-sound transportation available to all residential areas of the City will require both financial support and compact development.

In summary, our Green Ministry Team believes that Medford's Urban Growth Boundary decisions need to reflect the goals of creating an inclusive community where residents of all ages, ethnicities, and incomes may live and work together in equitable, healthy and sustainable neighborhoods.

We urge you to only add only those acres that can be developed to include affordable housing and diverse transportation options. And to do that only after employing a "fix-it first" policy for revitalizing and infill in existing neighborhoods. Thank you.