

Coalition *for a* Prosperous Region

**Clackamas County
Business Alliance**

**The Commercial Real
Estate Association
(NAIOP)**

**East Metro Economic
Alliance**

**Home Builders
Association of Metro
Portland**

**Portland Metropolitan
Association of
Realtors®**

**Portland Business
Alliance**

**Westside Economic
Alliance**

April 29, 2014

Metro Council President Tom Hughes
Councilor Shirley Craddick
Councilor Carlotta Collette
Councilor Craig Dirksen
Councilor Kathryn Harrington
Councilor Sam Chase
Councilor Bob Stacey

Re: Regional Population & Infrastructure Growth Projections

Dear President Hughes and Metro Councilors,

We have watched with interest as Metro has begun to develop population forecasts for our region. We believe that the process that has been utilized is by far the most transparent process used to date. We also believe that the survey questions and mechanisms, developed by Portland State University, are well designed and will provide a more accurate forecast than the methods used in the past.

With that said, we have some suggestions that we think will lead to an even more accurate and transparent process. We are hearing a lot of confusion from among our members regarding the three county region (Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington) as compared to the seven county region (Clackamas, Clark, Columbia, Multnomah, Skamania, Washington, and Yamhill). It seems that a large portion of the population change is anticipated for the four surrounding counties, but we do not yet have a breakdown of projected changes by county, nor do we have a sense of what the anticipated carrying capacity or cost of providing infrastructure in those counties to serve population growth will be. Smaller counties also have different challenges with available land and infrastructure to accommodate large population growth.

To address these shortcomings in the process, we feel it would be most helpful if Metro provided the estimated population growth for each county and, to the extent possible, an assessment of the realistic carrying capacity and cost of adding sufficient infrastructure, including jobs based land, to accommodate that population growth. We think this is the best time to begin a dialogue between all seven counties to make sure that they are willing and able to accommodate the projected growth, as well as discuss how the infrastructure can be funded.

Additionally, we have observed increasing pushback to urban residential and employment infill. Multiple neighborhood associations have begun fighting projects that increase density, particularly the projects that have little or no onsite parking. At the same time, local jurisdictions have stymied development of lands long counted as available for development in the UGB-setting process, with West Hayden Island the most recent and dramatic but by no means only example. The “not in my backyard” mentality seems to cross geographic and socio-economic lines. While

polling supports a tight urban growth boundary, it, and the decisions of government bodies, also demonstrates that infill, lot-splitting, residential intensification and employment land development are all widely unpopular.

Prior population growth projections have predicted large amounts of infill. While the refill rate did increase the last five years, and that is to be applauded, it is due in part to the small level of building volume that took place during that time and the fact many new urban areas weren't quite ready to accommodate growth yet. Regardless, though, if Metro is to assume that Portland and other surrounding cities can and will absorb a large amount of refill, we believe Metro needs to take an active role in helping ensure those goals can be met. This includes making sure cities are informing and involving their citizens in their refill assumptions and how that will impact existing neighborhoods. It also means ensuring policies and procedures in the region support growth within the UGB, including dealing with the voter annexation issue that has kept areas Metro brought in almost fifteen years ago from being developed.

Finally, in reviewing Metro's 2035 forecasts, we feel there needs to be better clarification and explanation as to why the jobs/housing ratio is so different projected forward for the next 25 years than what it has been in previous UGR work. According to the Metroscope Gamma population forecast, the number of jobs in the four county region in 2010 was 916,000, while the population in that same region was slightly over 2.06 million. This means we averaged about .44 jobs per person.

However, the 2035 forecast gives a much different ratio. The increase over the next 25 years in jobs is 496,000, and the increase in population is 788,000. This is a ratio of .63 jobs person. While expressed as a ratio it may not sound like a huge impact, the difference in population increase is potentially huge. Translation - if the job projections are accurate, and if we had the same ratio of jobs per person going forward as we did in 2010, we should expect 340,000 more people in the four-county region than Metro is projecting. We have heard various theories explaining the change in ratio (people working longer, people holding multiple jobs, people working in the four-county region but living outside of the region). However, we believe this kind of significant difference needs a more detailed breakdown and explanation. It could have serious ramifications for transportation, housing and service issues in our region.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter. We look forward to working with Metro in the months ahead to develop a long range plan to meet both local and statewide goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Drake Butsch', written in a cursive style.

Drake Butsch
President, Coalition for a Prosperous Region

cc: Martha Bennett, Metro Chief Operation Officer

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