

From: Angie Brewer
To: [Jeff Litwak](#); [Steve Harris](#); [Scott H](#)
Cc: [Tyler Stone](#)
Subject: Urban Area Meeting
Date: Sunday, September 16, 2018 10:29:53 PM

Jeff, Steve, and Scott:

I had planned to participate in Monday's urban area meeting and share a few thoughts about the local need for a process, but my son is sick with the flu and I'll need to be home with him instead. I'm sorry.

Jeff, I'm wondering if you could share my points below with the group? Feel free to print this email as a hand out to share.

Thanks and again, my apologies. Let me know if there's a way to call in and I'll give it a go.

The Need:

Communities of all scales occasionally need space to accommodate growth, community needs, and unforeseen circumstances. Just about all communities have the desire to be sustainable and most would like to be vibrant with visible growth and improvement. Gorge communities are no different but they do not have the predictable path forward that their counterparts do outside of the NSA. Without a clearly defined process to address boundary adjustments of any scale, communities in the Gorge do not have the tools necessary to effectively plan for their futures. Assumptions about land use are not something we have the luxury of making, they are political decisions and Gorge communities are relying on the Gorge Commission and Forest Service NSA Office to make those decisions in a fair and equitable manner. Ideally, the process would be complimentary to the state's process - containing only requirements specific to the NSA. However, if expansions are simply not possible, then that clarity would better inform planning decisions within the existing Urban Areas.

Why Now?

First, the Commission has had consistently inconsistent levels of funding to do the job they have been tasked with. This process has been started and stopped several times in the past due to capacity constraints. There is no better time to finish this task than now. Secondly, the pacific northwest is receiving - and is projected to continue receiving - a higher than average number of migrating persons. This is one of the reasons we are seeing housing shortages in our communities, resulting in increasing prices most long time residents cannot afford. There are several other reasons for the housing shortage in our region, but it is important for the communities to know what tools are available to them as they consider their options to meet the public need. Third, this task has an extremely high risk of litigation. Any resulting policy decision is likely to be appealed and may take several years before a resolution can be agreed upon. Please start this process sooner rather than later so Gorge communities have the direction they need to make decisions that will affect the people who live, work, and play in the Gorge.

Past Efforts:

The cities of The Dalles and Mosier are more appropriate parties to share summaries about past efforts to expand their boundaries, and their recent studies to date. However, I can share that staff recently found a draft map from 1988 produced by Wasco County Planning that proposed extending the boundary west to align with the Enterprise Zone boundary. It is not

clear whether this map was ever transmitted to the Gorge Commission. I can also share that I've discussed this with past Wasco County Planning Directors and learned that the process was lacking clarity of roles and responsibilities - which led to some confusion, redundancy, and extra expenses in the most recent request that ultimately did not have a path forward.

Wasco County Planning's Most Frequent Requests:

- Port of The Dalles has expressed a high level of concern about the lack of available industrial and commercial zoned lands available for development
- Wasco County School District 21 has been evaluating their options to replace schools and struggle to find suitable properties in the existing Urban Area (Steve may be able to provide an update on this one)
- About 5 years ago, Mosier Fire was considering a fire department just outside their Urban Area due to a lack of available lands for what was perceived to be a current need that couldn't wait
- In the last five years, we have not received any individual requests or proposals from landowners to make a property easier to develop. I only add this to make the point that a clarified process is unlikely to result in a flood of applications from developers or a tidal wave of inappropriate development in the NSA.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this with the group.

Best,
Angie



Angie Brewer, AICP | Director
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

angieb@co.wasco.or.us | www.co.wasco.or.us
541-506-2566 | Fax 541-506-2561
2705 East Second Street | The Dalles, OR 97058

[We are updating our plan! Learn more at Wasco County 2040](#)

Note: This correspondence does not constitute a Land Use Decision per ORS 197.015. It is informational only and a matter of public record.