

1342 ½ 66th Street
Springfield, OR 97478
March 10, 2010

Transmitted electronically

Dear Springfield and Lane County Planning Commissioners,

As the former Development Services Director and Assistant City Manager of the City of Springfield, I have been reluctant to become part of the discussion surrounding whether or not Springfield needs to expand its Urban Growth Boundary, or if so, where that should occur. However, at this point it would appear that serious discussion is still being given to the idea that it is an appropriate strategy to encourage future economic growth in our community by expanding the UGB into the floodplain.

I have lived in one of the areas targeted for future economic expansion, the area identified as Area 3: North of 52nd Street, for more than 25 years. This area is considered for inclusion into the UGB in Concepts 2 and 3. What the attached aerial photograph depicts and what I have personally experienced is that during high water on the McKenzie River, the river breaches its banks and straightens out. The 6 miles of Cedar Creek that flows through the heart of Area 3 becomes the river. This happens with some regularity – at least five times in my memory. Highbanks Road has earned its name. The attached photo was taken during the 1996 flood which was classified as a 30-year flood event. As you can see, most of the land proposed to be included in Area 3 is under water or isolated by the flood channel.

While I am certainly ambivalent about the future of my home becoming an industrial site, I am more concerned about what kind of decisions are being made about Springfield's future. Is it really the best, or even an appropriate strategy, to have a core component of our future growth and employment base centered on the risky strategy of developing in an area of the floodplain that is known to have higher velocity flows and more frequent flooding? I think not.

I am proud of my career with the City of Springfield and what we were able to accomplish during some of the strongest prosperity the City has seen. The hard truth is that Springfield is constrained geographically and that there are no easy solutions for continued prosperity. But there are enormous opportunities. Glenwood is a great example of where redevelopment will create significant opportunities. The Urban Renewal District in downtown can provide much more commercial revitalization and job growth than is currently anticipated. Springfield should be focusing its time, energy and limited resources on redeveloping underdeveloped areas that are already in the UGB first. Without a constrained UGB, there is no incentive for redevelopment, and Springfield will have lost a significant opportunity to create new jobs in Glenwood and downtown. Parcel consolidation, particularly along east Main Street, can create some of the larger sites that may be needed.

What the community needs for these or any alternatives to take shape is a vision- one that is compelling enough for people to earnestly support. Is locating our future employment expansion in an active floodplain that vision? I certainly hope not. Springfield can do better.

Thank you,

Cynthia Pappas

February, 1996 McKenzie River Flooding
Thurston Rd on left edge continuing into Highbanks Rd at top of picture

