

November 29, 2020

McMinnville City Counsel

Re: Testimony regarding the Urban Growth Boundary Amendment, Docket G 6-20

Counselors,

The Urban Growth Boundary proposal under consideration is an important milestone for McMinnville. As such, it needs to set a high standard for the quality of growth being planned. There is no doubt that McMinnville must expand and there seems little challenge to that notion. What is equally as important is maintaining McMinnville's character. The density goals set by the proposal are the most significant compromise of that desire. The primary argument, walkable neighborhoods, and the associated attributes, are the reason many folks move to large urban centers. Folks that have stayed in McMinnville have chosen a suburban lifestyle. I do not care to see the city come to me.

Accepting that a high-density plan will likely be approved, the city leadership must assume the responsibility to maintain the character of the city. McMinnville must, as part of moving forward with this plan, establish minimum neighborhood design standards for development that the community is comfortable with.

It is easy to see what not to do. Closely spaced housing of uniform shape and size, as we find on Hill Road does not meet this standard. A variety of shapes and sizes would serve better. Narrow streets with inadequate off-street parking is already prevalent in McMinnville and is problematic for traffic flow and safety. Automobiles will continue to be necessary whether there is a corner market in a neighborhood or not. Adequate off-street parking needs to be planned. Apartment buildings must be kept to a minimum. Duplexes have served McMinnville well and should continue to have a significant role in development. And transitions must be prioritized. It is unfair to persons who have carefully selected their own properties with a desire for lack of crowding, to be faced with apartment buildings across the street.

Many factors influence the notion of McMinnville's character, and are likely somewhat subjective. Most importantly, a continued conversation with the citizens of McMinnville should occur at every stage of approval for new or renewed development. AND they should be listened to. This has not been apparent recently, particularly with the new development north of Baker Creek Road. The push of developers and allowance under rules does not, by itself, make a plan good for McMinnville. Every effort must be made, in every instance, to assure that development reinforces, and does not detract from, the character of McMinnville.

Thank you,

Steve Leonard

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