CHAPTER 1

REGIONAL GROWTH MANAGEMENT IN THE PORTLAND METROPOLITAN AREA

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The 1.4 million people of the Portland metropolitan region reside at the confluence of two great rivers of the West, the Columbia and the Willamette. The valley of the Willamette is a highly productive agricultural area generating over $2 billion in farm-gate receipts in 2007. Of the three counties that surround the metropolitan area, Clackamas ranks second and Washington third in the state for the value of their farm products. Mount Hood rises to the east of the region, with the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area on the mountain's north slope. The Tualatin Mountains on the northwest side constitute a significant wildlife corridor between the region and the Coast Range. Across the Columbia is the city of Vancouver, the second fastest-growing city in Washington State.

The region's natural beauty and bounty have led its residents to develop a fierce devotion to the landscape and the lifestyle it affords them . Metro, the nation's only popularly elected regional government, is chartered by voters of the region to protect its high quality of life. This quality of life and the region's reputation for its efforts to protect and enhance it are among the reasons it is one of the fastest growing in the United States. This irony is not lost on residents of the region, who devote much time to contemplating the future.

The State Context for Metro

Metro operates within a state context that has been critical to the achievement of the region's vision. In 1973 the Oregon legislature enacted Senate Bill 100, the

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legislation that set the state on its unique planning course. The law requires every city and county to adopt a comprehensive plan that meets nineteen statewide planning goals (which have the force of law). These goals address issues ranging from citizen involvement to housing, the economy, and protection of farm and forest land.

Upon its founding in 1979, Metro, too, became subject to the statewide planning goals. For Metro, the most important goal is the one that requires every city or urban region to establish an urban growth boundary (UGB) to limit the extent of urbanization and protect farm and forest land outside UGBs. Metro assumed responsibility for the UGB surrounding twenty-five cities and the urbanized portions of three counties that comprise the urbanized region. As discussed later, Metro's growth concept calls for a compact development form. The statewide planning program plays a key role in the successes the Metro region has achieved by prohibiting urban development and requiring every county to protect farm and forest land outside UGBs. This ensures that cities near Metro (with their own UGBs) do not sprawl onto rural land between the cities and Metro, and by preventing nonfarm, exurban development on these rural lands.

Formation of a Regional Government

Concern about regional issues in the Portland area extends back to 1925 with the formation of a legislative committee to study the problems of local governments in the Portland metropolitan area. Over the next five decades, regional governance evolved into two agencies, the Metropolitan Service District (MSD) and the Columbia Region Association of Governments (CRAG). Both were created under a typical model for associations of governments. MSD was created to deliver regional services efficiently and assumed responsibility for operation of the metropolitan zoo and the solid waste disposal system. CRAG was created to coordinate planning for land use, transportation, water quality, and criminal justice. Each had a governing body of predominantly local elected officials, with significant crossover between them.

By the mid-1970s Oregon and the Portland area were going through a significant shift in policy direction. The state had established the statewide planning program described earlier. The city of Portland was aggressively working to reverse the decline of its downtown and retain strong, family-oriented neighborhoods. The region was embroiled in controversy over proposed urban freeway construction that would have had dire impacts on neighborhoods. And the nation was beginning to tackle significant environmental issues, particularly air and water pollution and energy conservation.

Amid this mix of issues, a "good government" coalition of representatives from government, business, and civic organizations called for the creation of a new regional governance structure equipped with authority to tackle these issues and accountability to the public. The experience with MSD and CRAG had demonstrated that a voluntary association produced an approach to decision making

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aimed at the lowest common denominator, hidden from the public eye. Assisted by a grant from the National Academy of Public Administration, the Tri-County Local Government Commission drafted a legislative proposal that was adopted in large part by the 1977 Oregon legislature.

The legislation authorized an elected regional government, subject to approval by the voters of the three-county region. The bill called for elimination of CRAG and reorganization of MSD into a freestanding unit of government rather than an association of local governments. It provided for a twelve-member council elected by districts and an executive officer elected at large to manage the organization. It assigned the duties of CRAG and MSD to the new entity and gave it the power to tax and to ensure local plans were consistent with regional plans. In addition, it shrank the boundaries from the larger boundaries of CRAG and MSD to the area of contiguous urbanization. In May 1978, the voters of the three-county region voted 55 to 45 percent to create Metro. That November voters elected the initial Metro Council and executive officer. The change in government went into effect in January 1979.

The late 1980s produced a major evolution for Metro. After a decade of operation, it became apparent that the region needed authority to make governance decisions on its own, without having to seek state legislation for every change in Metro's authority. The legislature authorized and voters statewide approved a change to the Oregon Constitution allowing Metro a home-rule charter. As the charter commission was drafting the charter for consideration by Metro's voters, Metro was going through its first state review of the UGB. Enlightened local elected officials used the charter to broaden Metro's land use planning functions beyond responsibility for the UGB. As a result, the charter declared the livability of the region for future generations to be Metro's primary planning responsibility. It required Metro to adopt a fifty-year Future Vision and a long-range Regional Framework Plan with which city and county comprehensive plans would have to comply. It also called for establishment of a Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC), composed predominantly of local elected officials, to advise the Metro Council on any land use action that would apply to local governments. The charter was approved by the region's voters in 1992.

Regional Transportation Planning

The mid-70s also brought a shift in transportation policy for the region. The initial segments of a regional freeway system had been built, but there were dueling visions for expansion of the region's transportation system. The metropolitan planning organization, CRAG, had adopted a major freeway expansion plan developed by the state highway department. Meanwhile, TriMet, the newly created public transit agency, called for significant transit expansion. Three new segments of the interstate system were embroiled in controversy.

To overcome this stalemate, the Governor's Task Force on Transportation was formed to sort out the region's policy direction. The result was cancellation of two of the three interstate segments that were bogged down in controversy, as well

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as the overall freeway expansion plan. Instead, policies were redirected toward a multimodal transportation system. To strengthen the regional approach to transportation planning and decision making, the role of the regional agency was strengthened at both the staff and elected levels.

Since this shift, regional collaboration on multimodal transportation issues has been focused at Metro. At the policy level, there is a dual decision-making structure consisting of the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT), composed of local and Metro elected officials and key transportation agency representatives, and the elected Metro Council. This structure was established to meet the federal requirements for a "metropolitan planning organization" calling for a decision-making structure that includes elected officials of general-purpose governments and agencies that provide transportation services. To support this structure, a professional staff carries out regional transportation planning, light-rail project development, travel-demand forecasting, land use, economic and demographic forecasting, and, more recently, transit-oriented development and demand management.

A key ingredient of this regional function has been the responsibility to manage allocation of flexible transportation funds. Throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, these funds came from the transfer of interstate funds from the two canceled freeways. After 1991 they flowed from new flexible funds provided by federal transportation legislation.

For a sustained thirty-year period, Metro and its regional partners have aggressively developed a regional light-rail and streetcar system, numerous smaller projects to support a more compact urban development pattern, and an expanding system of bus, bike, pedestrian, and trail projects.

2040 Growth Concept: The Region Charts a Course

Metro established the UGB for the region in 1979, with a supply of land intended to accommodate twenty years of growth. A recession that ran into the early eighties slowed development inside the UGB. But the region's economy came roaring back later in the decade, and its population grew faster than the rest of the nation. Leaders in the region understood that the UGB would not, by itself, stop sprawling development patterns *within* the UGB. Metro developed a base case scenario in 1992 to show what the region would look like in 2040 under existing zoning within the UGB. Development at low densities would exhaust the remaining supply of land inside the UGB and force UGB expansion onto 120,000 acres, much of it productive farmland. Dependence on the auto and the length and number of trips would rise. Air quality would decline, and infrastructure costs, especially for new roads, would be daunting.

Leaders in the region rejected the base case and called for new policies to build up, not out. Polling done for Metro showed a majority would accept slightly higher densities in their neighborhoods if necessary to avoid UGB expansion onto farmland. Metro developed three growth scenarios—growing out (large expansion of

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UGB); growing up (no UGB expansion); growing up, out, and in neighbor cities (small expansion, higher densities, and growth in cities just outside the UGB)—and publicized them throughout the region. After unprecedented public involvement, Metro selected elements from the scenarios and composed the 2040 Growth Concept, a long-range regional plan adopted in 1995. The plan called for modest UGB expansion (18,600 acres through 2040), relying on a tight UGB to encourage more efficient use of land, and for new policies in local comprehensive plans to facilitate higher densities in focus areas. During public review there was some opposition from development interests, mostly from those whose principal market was close to the edge of the UGB, with a business model reliant on larger tracts of vacant land. Nonetheless, the cities and counties of the region embraced the 2040 Growth Concept and immediately began to implement it by changing zoning in the focus areas.

The 2040 Growth Concept merges land use planning and transportation planning to reinforce the objectives of both. It concentrates mixed-use and higher-density development in thirty-nine centers, thirty-three light rail station communities, and along 400 miles of corridors that connect many of the centers. The concept then plans for high-capacity transit (principally light rail) to connect the central city (Portland) and eight regional centers. Bus service, often ten-minute headways, connects thirty town centers with the central city and regional centers.

The 2040 Growth Concept builds on this fundamental land use and transportation superstructure. The central city serves as the hub of business and cultural activity in the region. The regional centers are centers of commerce and civic services in a market of hundreds of thousands of people. Town centers provide localized services for tens of thousands within a three- to five-mile radius. At a finer grain, the concept recognizes the importance of main streets as traditional neighborhood commercial hubs within walking distance of surrounding residential districts. The growth concept will bring infill and a mix of uses to some residential areas, mostly in centers and along main streets and corridors. But an estimated 80 percent of traditional residential areas are not affected by these changes.

The 2040 Growth Concept also calls for protection of the region's most important industrial areas, especially growing industry clusters and port, airport, rail, and other transshipment facilities. Finally, it weaves green infrastructure among the centers and neighborhoods and calls for new open spaces throughout the region.

To bring the 2040 Growth Concept to life, the Metro Council relies on traditional land use and transportation strategies and new tools developed with cities and counties in the region. These strategies and tools are collected in Metro's overarching Regional Framework Plan (RFP), adopted in 1997. The council adopted an Urban Growth Management Functional Plan to implement land use strategies in the RFP through city and county comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances. The council adopted a Regional Transportation Plan to implement transportation strategies and build the multimodal transportation system called for in the 2040 Growth Concept. The council also adopted a Metropolitan Greenspaces Master Plan to guide investments in parks and greenspaces. Each of these implementation

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plans is part of, and must be consistent with, the RFP. Recognizing that plans and regulations alone do not, themselves, build better communities, the council aligned its transportation and other investments to encourage development in centers, corridors, and main streets.

Building a Compact Urban Form

The fundamental growth management strategy in the 2040 Growth Concept is to develop in a compact urban form, using lands inside the UGB as efficiently as possible. Maintaining a tight UGB is the first element that has succeeded in channeling market forces from a sprawling edge to a series of vibrant centers. State law requires Metro to review the capacity of the UGB every five years to ensure it provides a twenty-year land supply. But the law directs Metro to seek needed capacity from more efficient use of existing urbanized land before adding land to the UGB. This requirement reinforces the 2040 Growth Concept, which is supported by an analytical and decision-making process that stresses redevelopment and infill (dubbed "refill" locally). Metro has developed a detailed and sophisticated land-monitoring process to inventory vacant land and track the rate of refill. This analysis exceeds the requirements of state law and helps defend Metro decisions in court.

Metro's most recent process provided a twenty-year development capacity (2002–2022) by relying on refill at the rate of 29 percent for residential, 45 percent for industrial, and 52 percent for commercial, plus a modest expansion of the UGB (20,000 acres). This means Metro expects 29 percent of new dwellings over the twenty-year period will be built through redevelopment or development of existing parcels of less than one-half acre, and 45 percent and 52 percent of new industrial and commercial jobs, respectively, will locate on already developed sites and through redevelopment. This approach has a self-reinforcing feature: as the region takes actions to increase the refill rate, a higher rate can be accounted for in subsequent reviews, further reducing the need for UGB expansion.

The UGB is only one tool available to Metro and its partner local governments. The region employs a wide array of regulatory, incentive, and investment tools and constantly works to expand and extend the tool kit. The first Metro action after adoption of the 2040 Growth Concept, with the urging of MPAC, was to call for removal of zoning barriers to higher densities in centers. MPAC negotiated a series of household and employment growth targets, with regional equity in mind. The targets became Metro mandates; every city and county went through a local rezoning process to provide the targeted capacity. Now, under Metro rules, cities and counties can distribute and redistribute residential capacity as they choose, but they cannot reduce capacity below the targets. Because the growth concept calls for focusing development in centers and corridors, Metro also set housing unit and employment targets for these areas as a subset of each overall city and county target. Metro also adopted parking ratios to encourage development in centers and corridors. The ratios allow no parking minimums larger than an established

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regional minimum, and no parking maximums larger than an established regional maximum.

This widespread rezoning generated opposition in some parts of the region. The voters of Milwaukee, a first-ring suburb southeast of Portland, recalled its mayor and two city councilors over their support for the extension of light rail from Portland and planned upzoning. Several years later (2002), an antiplanning group gathered sufficient signatures to place a measure on the regional ballot that would have repealed Metro's authority to mandate upzoning in communities in the region. The measure was voted down by the region's voters, but only after the Metro Council placed an alternative measure on the ballot—which passed—limiting its own authority to require cities and counties to increase density in certain single-family neighborhoods. Because the growth concept focuses high density in nodal centers rather than single-family neighborhoods, passage of the measure has not interfered with progress toward the growth concept.

Nonregulatory tools to encourage development in centers and corridors include aggressive prioritization of transportation improvements toward those that leverage development in those areas. Foremost has been the steady expansion of the regional rail system. The goal is to connect light rail to every regional center and make every intervening station an opportunity to establish high-density station communities. More recently, the expansion of the region's light rail system has been supplemented by a central city streetcar system, providing convenient local circulation and leveraging a significant level of high-density residential development.

The region also places a priority on allocating certain categories of federal highway funds to projects that leverage development in centers and corridors. The result has been a decade of projects to improve the amenity value of targeted downtown main streets, sidewalk improvements, bike paths and trails, bus stops, and access improvements for the centers and corridors. Of particular note is the allocation of flexible federal highway funds that are converted to federal transit dollars to help fund transit-oriented development through the use of the Federal Transit Administration's Joint Development regulations. The most common use of this tool has been land value write-downs for developments that include higher density and mixed use beyond what the market would support on its own.

Although the region's long-range vision places significant emphasis on centers and corridors, several important actions have been taken to affect the broader low-density landscape. When the 2040 Growth Concept was adopted in 1995, the smallest single-family lot zoning outside Portland called for a minimum lot size of 7,500 square feet. Due to widespread upzoning, there is now a significant supply of 4,000–5,000 square foot lots, and the market has responded dramatically. In addition, Metro requires all local governments to allow accessory dwelling units in their single-family zones. These provide an affordable housing opportunity, with minimal intrusion on single-family neighborhoods. To ensure efficient use of industrial land and protect freight transport facilities, Metro requires cities and counties to prohibit large-scale retail in the region's most important industrial areas.

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None of this planning comes free. Programs have been developed to fund local, city, and county actions to implement the 2040 Growth Concept. For more than a decade, the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development has operated a planning assistance grant program, and the Oregon Department of Transportation has provided funds through a Transportation/Growth Management grant program. In 2006 Metro adopted a construction excise tax on building permits regionwide to fund planning for the lands newly added to the UGB.

Green in the City

When Metro and the cities and counties of the region committed to more efficient use of land in centers and corridors, they recognized that more intensive development must be matched with better access to parks and open space. Driven by federal and state water quality and fish and wildlife habitat requirements, and the call from conservation organizations to think of the region's floodplains, wetlands, streams, and riparian areas as "greenfrastructure," the region developed complementary greenspaces strategies: acquisition, regulation, and a broad program of public engagement and incentives.

Metro began its effort with a master plan for parks and greenspaces, developed in conjunction with cities, counties, and other public open space providers. The Metropolitan Greenspaces Master Plan was the blueprint for a regional system. In 1995 voters of the region passed a measure sponsored by Metro and a coalition of local governments, businesses, and conservation organizations to authorize $136.6 million in general obligation bonds to purchase land for parks, trails, greenways, and open spaces. The measure enabled Metro to acquire over 8,000 acres across the region and local government park providers to invest $25 million in park and open space improvements.

The success of the 1995 measure led to passage of a second in 2006, this one for $227.4 million. Metro expects to add 3,500 to 4,500 acres to the region's parks, trails, greenspaces, and natural areas. The 2006 measure set aside $44 million for cities, counties, and park districts for projects to protect water quality and habitat and to improve access and facilities. To educate and engage residents in the effort to protect the region's green infrastructure, Metro earmarked another $15 million for grants to schools, neighborhood associations, community groups, and nonprofits for projects of a neighborhood scale. These measures succeeded because the campaigns for public support and the plans for improvements were developed collaboratively by Metro and the other local governments in the region.

Metro has turned to regulation where it is the most appropriate way to protect water quality and guard against flooding. For floodplains, streams, wetlands, and riparian areas, Metro established criteria for development, emphasizing avoidance and mitigation. Metro offered cities and counties the choice between adoption of a model ordinance that guaranteed Metro approval or their own techniques, reviewed by Metro for conformance with regional criteria. Each city and county has now adopted conforming ordinances.

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Protection of upland habitat posed a greater challenge. Upland habitat is more expensive than water bodies and their riparian areas and affects the developable portions of many more properties. State voters passed a property rights measure (Ballot Measure 37) in 2004 while Metro was developing its habitat protections, making a full regulatory program unachievable. Instead, in its 2005 Nature in Neighborhoods program, Metro combined regulation of the most important habitat with voluntary efforts to protect other habitat. Both approaches are reinforced with model ordinances, technical assistance, and grant funds to accomplish the objectives of the program. Cities, counties, and special districts are currently implementing Nature in Neighborhoods.

A Work in Progress

Metro added more than 20,000 acres to its then 235,000 acre UGB in three related expansions in 2002, 2004, and 2005. In the wake of the arduous process that led to the expansion, Metro and the cities and counties of the region are rethinking the region's approach to growth management. Among concerns expressed are the following: (1) the cyclical nature of the UGB process forces local governments to devote precious time and resources to the edge of the region rather than to its centers, corridors, and main streets; (2) state planning laws that emphasize protection of farmland can have the effect of directing expansion to areas not well suited for compact, mixed-use development; (3) the region needs to look further into the future than twenty years in order to offer longer-term certainty for infrastructure planning inside the UGB and for agricultural operations outside the UGB; and (4) for a variety of reasons—ranging from reduced federal funding and property tax limitations adopted by Oregon voters—the region is finding it difficult to extend urban services to the areas Metro added to the UGB. To address these concerns, Metro and the other local governments in the region agreed to pursue new approaches. A series of studies and forums yielded an agenda for change.

Most significant was the successful effort in 2007 to change state planning law to authorize long-term planning for the region. Metro will designate urban reserves to signal the direction of UGB expansion for the next forty to fifty years. The three counties will designate rural reserves of farmland, forestland, and important natural landscape features that will be off limits to UGB expansion for the same forty to fifty years, to provide longer-term security to farm and forest operators, and to define the shape of the urban region. A unique feature of the new legislation is that all four local governments must agree on the designation of both kinds of reserves. The four governments began an three-year designation process in January 2008. If successful, designation of reserves will also make expansion of the UGB less contentious and litigious.

Equally important, Metro is leading an effort to develop new tools to encourage development in the region's centers, corridors, and main streets and minimize expansion of the UGB. Metro is helping local governments to reexamine traditional

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tools, such as urban renewal, and rediscover underutilized tools, such as discounted system development charges and various state income tax credits for higher-density development. Using these tools, the region will encourage the private sector to "build 2040."

Third on the agenda is to alter the way Metro makes critical growth management decisions, such as expansions of the UGB. Today's method of UGB expansion is determined largely by state statute and administrative rules. These laws require Metro to examine the capacity of its UGB every five years, and to add capacity if needed, based on a twenty-year population and employment forecast, to ensure a twenty-year supply. Metro and the cities and counties are designing a performance-based system to determine whether new development capacity is needed and when to add it. This "metering" of capacity would be continuous rather than cyclical, as under the current system.

Finally, the region is conducting an inventory of its infrastructure needs in hopes of persuading the 2009 legislature to authorize new methods of paying for sewer, water, stormwater, and transportation services. This work will influence the addition of capacity to the UGB by putting new capacity where services are available or financially feasible.

A Property Rights Detour

After many defeats of statewide ballot measures (1970, 1976, 1978, 1982) aiming to repeal the statewide planning program, opponents finally found a formula that would subvert it without calling for repeal. Ballot Measure 7 amending the Oregon Constitution passed in 2000, providing that if any unit of government enacted or enforced a regulation that reduced the value of a property after the date that the property was acquired by the current owner, the government had to compensate the owner for the reduction or waive the regulation. The Oregon Supreme Court struck down the measure as a violation of procedural provisions in the Oregon Constitution. The proponents of Measure 7 answered with Ballot Measure 37 to amend Oregon statues (rather than the constitution), which passed with over 60 percent of the vote in 2004.

A nightmare ensued in which the state, cities, counties, and Metro were flooded with thousands of claims based on existing regulations, ranging from farmland protections to billboard limitations. Governments were overwhelmed by the volume of claims. They were unable to review them to determine whether the regulations had actually caused reductions in value. Because none had money to compensate, governments at every level simply chose not to enforce the regulations and granted waivers to the claimants. More than 2,000 claims were filed with governments in the Metro region, most involving proposed developments of farm and forest land outside the UGB. The state and the three counties of the region approved hundreds of waivers that, had they resulted in development, would have undermined the region's effort to contain sprawl. But development under the waivers encountered a variety of obstacles that slowed land use applications

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following waivers. In the meantime, aided by a steady stream of media on the large subdivisions, billboards, shopping centers, and other big projects authorized across the state by the waivers, the legislature sent a replacement—Ballot Measure 49—to voters in November 2007. The measure limited claims to those seeking new residential dwellings only, dramatically reduced the magnitude of the development allowed under waivers, and raised the bar for proof of reduction in value. Metro compared likely results for the region under Measure 49 with feared results under Measure 37 and estimated that Measure 49 would reduce the amount of new residential development outside the UGB by 85 percent. Prospectively, Measure 49 applies to new regulations that reduce property value and will discourage adoption of them. But implementation of the 2040 Growth Concept Planning relies very little on new regulations. Instead, regional efforts now focus on removal of regulatory obstacles and investments to facilitate refill in centers, corridors, main streets, and light rail station communities.

Things Look Different Here

The results of the Portland metro area land use and transportation policy direction are among the most studied topics in urban planning. Frequent independent studies find the Portland area remarkably different from other metropolitan areas, and the region's efforts are beginning to pay off. Here are a few indications:

- A Smart Growth America study of eighty-three metropolitan areas rating sprawl based on centeredness, street connectivity, mix of uses, and density found Portland metro to be the eighth least sprawling in the country (Ewing et al., n.d.).
- The Brookings Institution in 2007 rated metropolitan areas for walkability and found Portland metro area to be the fifth most walkable region in the country (Leinberger n.d.).
- The League of American Bicyclists awarded the city of Portland its gold status for bike-friendly cities. Summer daytrips across the four principal Willamette River bridges to downtown Portland rose from 2,855 in 1991 to 14,563 in 2007, a 410 percent increase and 11 percent of all trips across the bridges. Some 4.4 percent of Portland commuters biked to work in 2006 (U.S. Census Bureau 2007).
- The latest annual congestion study by the Texas Transportation Institute reveals an interesting story for the Portland metro region. While the region ranks twenty-fifth in population, it ranks twenty-first for "travel time index," a ratio of peak hour auto speeds to free-flow auto speeds. It appears that there is more congestion due to the higher density concentrating vehicle trips. But a closer look yields a more complete picture. The Portland metro area ranks twenty-eighth in excess fuel consumed per peak traveler, thirty-third in delay per peak traveler, and thirty-third in congestion cost per peak traveler. In other words, the road network carries more congestion than one would

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expect, but the traveler is not as burdened by this congestion: the compactness of the region brings destinations closer and shortens trip lengths. Finally, the Portland region ranks thirteenth in the contribution that public transit plays toward congestion relief, substantially higher than the size of the region would suggest (Texas Transportation Institute 2007).

- According to the Federal Transit Administration, the Portland metropolitan area ranks twenty-third in population, while TriMet, the region's principal transit provider, ranks tenth in overall annual ridership and eighth highest in annual ridership per capita. Transit ridership and mode share continue to increase (Federal Transit Administration 2005).
- The Federal Highway Administration's Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) shows the Portland metropolitan area's average daily vehicle miles traveled per capita is lower than the national average and declining, while the national trend continues upward. This saves 1.4 million tons of greenhouse gases each year (at 19.4 pounds of carbon/gallon burned). According to economist Joe Cortright (2007), driving less than the national average also puts $2.6 billion per year in local spending power back into the local economy (Federal Highway Administration, n.d.).
- Despite growth pressures in the region (which is home to over 40 percent of the state's population), farm sales in Washington, Clackamas, and Multnomah counties have increased each year for the past five years (Oregon Department of Agriculture 2008).
- A common criticism of a tight urban growth boundary is the impact on housing affordability. It is a simple matter of supply and demand, say the critics: constrict supply for a growing demand and prices go up. The region's overall growth strategy, however, is to manage growth, not to restrict it, by adding land to the UGB when needed to ensure a long-term supply. Furthermore, the real availability of supply, taking into account actions to support redevelopment and multifamily housing, keeps the region's housing relatively affordable.
- According to the Surface Transportation Policy Project's report *Driven To Spend,* households in the Portland region do spend a higher share of their household income on housing than the national average (34.5 percent vs. 32.9 percent). However, according to the historical housing price index maintained by S&P/Case-Schiller, housing price escalation in the Portland region has been nearly the lowest of the major West Coast metropolitan areas. Furthermore, also reflected in the report is a comparison of the share of household income spent on transportation, which shows the Portland region with nearly the lowest of all regions studied. Finally, the combination of household income for housing and transportation (the two highest costs typically faced by a household) shows the Portland region to be, again, nearly the lowest of all regions studied. The region's strategy is successfully contributing to lower transportation cost with minimal impact on housing cost.

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- Over the past fifteen years, Metro has protected open space through stream and wetland setback regulations and public acquisition. Regulations have protected over 38,000 acres of wetland and riparian areas, and acquisition has protected nearly 2,000 acres of open space inside the UGB and nearly another 7,000 acres in large blocks outside the UGB. Another 4,000 acres are now being acquired.

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