

Clackamas County starts drumming up support for land use deal in 2015

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The Stafford Hamlet is designated as open for urban development in the future, but residents hope to preserve the area's status as a rural farming community. (Brent Wojahn/The Oregonian/2002)

As Clackamas County staff prepares a proposal to create more developable industrial land, the commissioners plan to better explain why they need the land.

The commissioners want to illustrate the poverty and trailing job-growth rate Clackamas County experiences to make a case for allowing properties currently reserved for rural uses to be developed.

"This isn't just because we want developers to roll in and develop land, we really are trying to look out for the good of our citizens," Commissioner Martha Schrader said.

The approach follows a letter the commissioners wrote to legislators about how Clackamas County lacks industrial land, and can't create more with the current urban and rural reserves set-up.

This all follows the February 2014 Oregon Legislature session when Washington County politicians struck a bargain that reconfigured the urban and rural reserves after an Oregon Appeals Court decision said the county messed up the designations.

Clackamas County commissioners wanted a deal, too, but couldn't get a package together and passed. So, the board is gearing up for the 2015 session to try again.

This story builds on reporting about the February Legislative Session from May 2014

Clackamas County board plans to lobby for main transportation corridor projects, compost zoning in 2015

May 7, 2014



Rep. Brian Clem, D-Salem (right) talks with Reps. Brad Witt, D-Clatskanie (center), and Ben Unger, D-Hillsboro (left) on the House floor. (AP Photo/Statesman-Journal, Kobbie R. Blair)

The Clackamas County commissioners plan to focus their legislative lobbying in 2015 on transportation and land use.

The commissioners are drafting a list of top five priorities for the upcoming Oregon Legislature session. Here are the topics on the list so far:

- Loosening restrictions about where compost facilities can be sited. They want legislators to allow compost facilities on some kinds of farmland, specifically.
- The commissioners are anxious for a “petite bargain” or “Clackamas deal,” as they nicknamed a legislative restructuring of urban and rural reserve designations in the county. A “grand bargain” passed the Legislature in February that focused mostly on Washington County. The Clackamas board now wants a turn.
- Receiving state transportation funds for county projects, such as an Interstate 205 expansion, the next phase of the Sunrise Corridor or an Interstate 5 connector to Canby.
- Find a sponsor for a rural area committee on transportation. The Oregon Department of Transportation is working on the idea currently, but the county needs a legislator to move it forward.

The commissioners are keenly interested in any medical marijuana-related machinations, but don't plan to take a lead on the issue.

They also are monitoring and supporting anything that would boost their position that governmental entities should not be able to impose franchise fees on other governments, because of their fight about Oregon City's franchise fees.

There was some discussion about whether Clackamas County should take the lead on composting zoning, but the commissioners feel no one else will do it if they don't.

“We're going to have to do it,” Commissioner Paul Savas said. “We're going to have to be the trendsetters on this.”