

Metro Council: Don't increase urban growth boundary



The Metro Council, for the first time in a decade, has voted not to increase the number of acres in the region's urban growth boundary. The council's unanimous decision means staff will start work immediately to review possible expansions in the future. *(The Oregonian/Staff)*

Dana Tims | The Oregonian, Nov. 13, 2015

The Metro Council, as expected, voted Thursday not to expand the region's urban growth boundary.

The council, in a unanimous 7-0 vote, accepted a recommendation made in July by Martha Bennett, chief operating officer, to leave the boundary as-is until at least 2018. It marked the first time in a decade that the regional planning government has decided not to add new areas around the edges of existing cities and counties for future development.

Some groups, including the Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Portland, have criticized Bennett's recommendation, saying that lands supposedly targeted to accommodate the next wave of building are too far removed from services such as water and sewer to expect development to occur there.

Metro councilors, however, accepted Bennett's reasoning that available land within the current urban growth boundary provides sufficient opportunity for near-term development. State law requires Metro to maintain a 20-year supply of land to meet projected housing and industrial needs.

The last significant expansion of the 258,000-acre growth boundary occurred in 2011. The next opportunity to expand the boundary will come in 2018. Metro staff, meanwhile, are expected to begin studying immediately the specifics of what a new expansion would entail.