

Fiscal and economic stability

Comprehensive land use planning is an investment in economic development and private property values. It supports local government budgets and the ability to create wealth locally, build livable communities, and protect farm and forest lands that are a critical part of the state's economic base.



Claim on 350 acres of high-value farmland in Yamhill County.

Businesses and people are attracted to Oregon because of the state's high quality of life. "A critical ingredient in attracting people is quality of life," explains economist Joseph Cortright. "It's not extra. It is really fundamental to the health of our economy."⁵

In contrast, uncontrolled development increases the costs of community services, raising taxes. For example, from the mid-1980s to mid-1990s, the population of Atlanta, Georgia grew at about the same rate of Portland. But the area of Atlanta doubled in size, where Portland's only increased by 2%. To accommodate its sprawling growth, Atlanta raised property taxes by 22%, while Portland lowered property taxes by 29%.⁶

Large-scale development in rural areas comes at a significant cost to county coffers and ultimately tax-payers. Washington County officials explain that "with significant development in rural areas outside city limits, the burden of providing services such as road maintenance, police protection, street lighting and parks will likely strain county resources in addition to creating future management issues as cities grow and the urban growth boundary expands."⁷

Incompatible development also reduces private property values. Numerous studies show that property values increase under regulations that protect and enhance the built and natural environment because they prevent conflicting uses, provide cost-effective public services, and create amenities such as parks. That is because the primary source of real estate value is external to property lines. Recalling the realtor adage "location, location, location," real estate consultant Donovan Rypkema explains: "Real estate has economic value, but that doesn't magically emerge from within the four lot lines. It comes from elsewhere."⁸ Not all factors such as interest rates, can be controlled, but comprehensive land use planning helps to foster good real estate markets and property values.

Fairness in land use planning

1000 Friends of Oregon supports a fair land use system that strengthens our towns and cities and the integrity of Oregon's scenic landscapes and family farms. Consistent with this goal, we support an adequately funded system of compensation for property owners who have experienced individual hardship in the application of our state's land use regulations. In fact, during the 2001 Legislative session we worked diligently on a bill to accomplish just that, only to see it scuttled at the eleventh hour by Oregonians In Action.

1000 Friends continues to advocate for a responsible replacement to Measure 37 that treats all people fairly and makes whole those who have been inequitably treated. No landowner should be exempt from land use laws and made rich at the expense of their neighbors. But, individual landowners' property can be protected while safeguarding neighbors and protecting farmland and communities. We have also recently filed "The Home Owner and Family Farmer Bill of Rights" and "The Compensation for Land Stewardship Plan" initiatives to address these issues.



Photo: Oregon Dept. of Agriculture

Heritage and Community

To many Oregonians, our small towns, family farms and forests are an important part of our heritage and rich culture. As we continue to grow as a state, 1000 Friends works to retain the qualities that make us proud to call Oregon home. Our land and state is our legacy, both as we look back to the past and as we consider what we have of value to pass on to future generations.

Sources

¹ Jerry Raehal, "Claim raises questions about Measure 37" *Molalla Pioneer*, July 25, 2005.

² David Bates, "Measure 37 cases 10,000-acre shadow" *McMinnville News Register*, May 21, 2005.

³ Brent Searle, "A Comprehensive Valuation of Agriculture Lands: A Perpetual Investment in Oregon's Economy and Environment," Oregon Dept. of Agriculture, 2004.

⁴ Amy Jo Brown, "Measure 37: Divide and Construct? Land-use claims reshaped Washington County," *Beaverton Valley Times*, December 1, 2005.

⁵ Ryan Frank, "Westside forum on the economy gives equal time to quality of life" *The Oregonian*, November 8, 2003.

⁶ *New Research on Population, Suburban Sprawl and Smart Growth* online at www.sierraclub.org/sprawl.

⁷ Amy Jo Brown, "Measure 37: Divide and Construct? Land-use claims reshaped Washington County," *Beaverton Valley Times*, December 1, 2005.

⁸ Donovan D. Rypkema, "Property Rights and Public Values" *Land Development Today*, July 11, 2005.