



September 17, 2008

Mayor Tom Potter  
City of Portland  
1221 S.W. Fourth Avenue, Room 340  
Portland, Oregon 97204

Dear Mayor Potter,

Subject: Agenda Item 1301, Application by Haertl Development Company seeking Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map Amendments for property owned by Colwood National Golf Course at 7313 N.E. Columbia Blvd

The pending application before the Portland City Council tonight proposes to convert and redevelop for future use, 138-acres in north Portland. This application also carries important implications for the greater metropolitan region, and the availability of developable industrial land in this fast-growing region. As such, Westside Economic Alliance appreciates the opportunity to comment on this application, and invites your consideration of the recommendations we will offer.

State, regional and local land use policies have restricted urban development around the tri-county region and require public and private sector development to utilize available land more efficiently through infill, increased density, and brownfield redevelopment opportunities whenever possible. The application before your City Council in Agenda Item 1301, proposes minor changes to the city's comprehensive plan and zoning maps from open space designation and recreational use as a public golf course. But your decision will also serve as an important case study that will help shape the future of land use decisions and infrastructure investments throughout our region.

In the past 18 months, four separate studies by Oregon's Community and Economic and Community Development Department (OECDD), Regional Partners for Economic Development, Metro, and the City of Wilsonville have each concluded that industrial land is in increasingly short supply in this region, and is either being developed much faster than expected; converted to other uses; or is being land-banked for future use by the owners. As a result, there is a serious shortage of developable industrial land in the tri county region, and only a handful of accessible sites offering  $\geq 50$  contiguous acres on reasonably flat and well-drained ground.

On March 27, 2008, the Metro Council voted 5-2 to deny an application by the City of Cornelius to expand the urban growth boundary north of that city to add 115 developable acres of industrial land to that community. The proposed site was comprised of "exception" land, not well-suited to commercial agriculture or timber production, and readily served by local utilities and public infrastructure. Even so, the Metro Council denied the city's request, explaining our region needed to make better use of underdeveloped spaces inside the UGB, before expanding on the urban perimeters of our region.

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The application before you represents the first of several such opportunities for the City of Portland and local planners to develop underutilized spaces within our urban growth boundary that are fully accessible and well-served by existing public infrastructure.

With specific reference to the Colwood site, the City has a rare opportunity to work with just one owner to redevelop this 138-acre site that is conveniently located on Columbia Boulevard, and offers quick access to 3 interstate highways, two class one rail carriers and international flight service from Portland International Airport.

These assets are exceptionally scarce and increasingly valuable in our metropolitan region, where the population is projected to grow by more than a million more people, and 600,000 new jobs in the next 25 years. Metro's 2035 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) forecasts that more than half of this growth in regional employment will need to occur in Multnomah County, on sites like the Colwood property.

Westside Economic Alliance is a regional business advocacy organization, currently serving 150 private sector employers, land developers, commercial property managers, as well as nine cities and ten public agencies serving the Westside of the metropolitan region. While our members are geographically distant from the Colwood golf course property, and we do not represent Haertl Development Company among our regional member firms, our clients and constituents share a common commitment to improve the local business climate, diversify the employment and economic base of our region, and improve the quality of life in the communities we call home.

As such, WEA appreciates the opportunity to share these views, and we look forward to your Council's decision on this application.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Schlueter  
Executive Director

Attachment: The Portland Tribune, August 28, 2008

