

October 14, 2016

Linda Pauly, Principal Planner
Development and Public Works
City of Springfield
225 Fifth Street
Springfield, OR 97477
lpauly@springfield-or.gov

Re: Springfield 2030 Comprehensive Plan and Urban Growth Boundary Update

Dear Springfield City Councilors and Lane County Board of Commissioners:

Please enter this letter into the hearing record for the proposed Springfield 2030 Comprehensive Plan and Urban Growth Boundary Update.

I am one of five owners of a property within the proposed Mill Race Agriculture-Urban Holding Area Zoning District. We have deep roots in this land. Our great-grandfather, S.E. McBee, was a farmer who purchased land here before 1900 and built a two-story, 10-room farm house in 1905 on McBee Lane (now South 26th Street). In 1910, our other great-grandfather, Anthony Saul, purchased adjacent farm land on what is now South M Street, built a farm house and settled there with his family. Soon, a path was being worn between the two farms as our grandfather, Philip Saul, courted our grandmother, Lena McBee. Our father, Robert Saul, was born in the Saul farm house and lived his entire life on this land, apart from the time he was away serving in the U.S. military during World War II. Dad could look out the window of the house he built on land deeded to him by his parents and see the house where he was born. Dad passed away earlier this year at age 97 at the home he had built, and we have inherited the house and land where we were raised.

I have recited that brief history to establish that quality of life for current residents of the Mill Race area is important to us. Although most of the McBee and Saul farm land has passed into other ownership over time, those owners have been long established in a stable rural neighborhood currently zoned E25. It does not appear that the City of Springfield's planning process has spent any time assessing the impacts of the proposals on current land owners and their quality of life. The City appears to assume that all property owners are speculators, just waiting to sell out to a developer, rather than being happy with their current zoning and quality of life.

According to the Lane County Assessor's office, bringing land zoned E25 into Agriculture-Urban Holding Area zoning does not automatically change property values. However, once land is included in an Urban Growth Boundary, one property owner could, at their choice, submit a plan amendment and zone changes to allow annexation to the City of Springfield and permit urban development. The act of annexation would raise property taxes for all land owners since the city assesses property at a different tax rate than the county.

The proposed Springfield 2030 Comprehensive Plan would allow urban development in the Agriculture-Urban Holding Area such as (1) mixed use, which is usually defined as blending residential, commercial, cultural, institutional or industrial uses where those functions are physically and functionally integrated, and (2) campus industrial, which is defined as providing large areas for a variety of light industrial and office-based scientific, medical, research and development, or other professional businesses in a campus-like setting and typically have a large number of employees per acre. (Exhibit C-1, Table 1).

If one large property owner pursues urban development, pressure will be put on adjacent land owners through increased property tax rates, to also pursue urban development. In addition to higher property taxes, land owners who choose not to develop will be subjected to increased traffic, lights, noise, dust, crime and other effects that come with urbanization.

We question the need for the proposed Urban Growth Boundary expansion at all. The planning documents do not provide any evidence that the City of Springfield's need for four additional 5 to 20 acre commercial sites cannot be met by re-designation of surplus industrial sites currently within the city.

1000 Friends of Oregon has identified additional 5 to 20 acre and 20+ acre surplus industrial sites that were not included in the city's inventory that already are within the Urban Growth Boundary. These sites should have development priority ahead of expanding the Urban Growth Boundary to encourage sprawl.

The proposal significantly overstates the City of Springfield's need for an Urban Growth Boundary expansion. We believe the city should focus on the Springfield 2030 Comprehensive Plan, revisit its inventory of surplus industrial sites, and drop the proposed Urban Growth Boundary expansion in the Mill Race Area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan M. Saul".

Susan M. Saul

Trust Administrator

Saul Administrative Trust

10102 NE 10th Street

Vancouver, WA 98664

(360) 892-5643

susan103saul@gmail.com