

Experts urge city housing changes

By TOM JACKSON
Of the Emerald

Unless the City of Eugene changes some of its policies to allow more building of apartments and duplexes, it could face a large shortage of multi-family buildings by 1985, an independent economist and University economics professor told the city council.

Ed Whitelaw, retained by the city to study housing supply and demand, also told the council Wednesday that if current housing trends continue, the city will experience a surplus of single-family buildings.

Whitelaw, a partner in Economic Consultants of Oregon Ltd., says the study is based on projected population statistics for

Eugene, and on the expected trends in housing. He says his two-part study of housing presents a "black picture" for Eugene's housing market.

According to Whitelaw, the increasing cost of housing, especially of single-family buildings, will create a greater demand in the future for apartments, fourplexes, triplexes and duplexes. Consumers, he reasoned, will seek more inexpensive living quarters as housing prices rise.

Whitelaw said his study is, however, unrealistic because it assumes that present economic and social conditions will remain constant until 1985. Also, he said, the report assumes that the proportions of houses to apartments will remain constant.

Whitelaw added that the report gives the city a good idea of what the housing trends are likely to be in the future, so policies may be made to react to those trends.

The report makes three recommendations to the city council on ways to meet the expected increase in demand for multi-family housing units.

The first recommendation is that the city should use already existing powers, such as zoning regulations and building permits, to increase "the efficiency with which the housing market can satisfy the apparently increasing demand for higher density residential densities."

The second stipulates that the city should study areas where the demand for higher density hous-

ing is likely to occur. Whitelaw said his evidence suggests that the demand will center around Eugene's downtown area, the University and other commercial and employment centers.

The report also recommends that the city rezone land now zoned for manufacturing and single-family residential areas to make more room for higher density housing. The report says there is presently an oversupply of land zoned for manufacturing purposes.

Whitelaw also said the expected housing problems won't be solved by annexing more land to the city.

"Annexation won't eliminate the (economic) inefficiency because

the increasing demand is in the downtown area," he said. Whitelaw said the city will have to either increase the density of its housing or expand its borders. "Something's got to give," Whitelaw said. "The city will get more requests to make these kinds of trade-offs."

"The situation could be compounded if we don't have investments in large investments in higher density housing in the metro area," Whitelaw predicted. He added it is unlikely that the large oversupply of single-family houses will materialize, because builders and developers won't build houses unless the demand is present in the market.

Whitelaw added that some other factors, such as the possible increase in the cost of fuel, may affect housing trends. As fuel becomes more scarce and more expensive, he reasoned, people will tend to live in multi-family dwellings near the center of the city.

Betty Niven, city housing specialist, said the "picture may be even blacker" than Whitelaw's study indicates.

Niven said 68 per cent of the available vacant lots of land within the city's urban service boundary are smaller than one-half acre (21,780 square feet). Of those, she said, 74 per cent are zoned for single-family buildings.

She added that of the land parcels of 10 acres or larger, 96 per cent are zoned for single-family use. She said the current housing trends are 64 per cent single-family use and 36 per cent multi-family use—a trend she said may have to change to meet the increasing demand for multi-family use buildings predicted in Whitelaw's report.

...Of environmental concern

By KATHLEEN MONJE
Of the Emerald

A small leak that is releasing radioactive water from one enclosed Trojan nuclear plant system to another does not pose a public danger, according to Plant Superintendent Bart Withers.

Portland General Electric Co. (PGE) announced the leak's existence late last week. Withers said the contaminated water is not escaping into the environment.

The leak is in the primary cooling water system, which passes over the nuclear fuel within the reactor core. Withers said less than one gallon a day is leaking into the steam supply system that runs the electricity-producing turbines.

He said the contamination is completely isolated from a third enclosed system that circulates water through the cooling tower and releases water vapor to the atmosphere.

The plant's operation will probably not be interrupted, Withers said. PGE plans to correct the problem when the Trojan plant is shut down for its scheduled refueling this spring.

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has filed an official notice of intent to develop a formula for allocating energy from the federal Columbia River Power System.

"The long-range apportionment of federal hydroelectric energy is a subject of growing controversy in the region," said BPA Administrator Sterling Munro.

Unless and until congressional legislation is enacted spelling out who gets what share of the federal power pie, he said, BPA has to pursue such a process. "But the resulting formula should reflect broad public input," Munro added.

BPA has scheduled two years for developing the allocation plan; Munro hopes an allocation for-

mula will be adopted by early 1980.

He noted that BPA has firm power contracts with 138 customers in the Pacific Northwest, which will expire between 1981 and 1994. In addition, new public bodies and cooperatives have applied for preference status and access to the federal hydropower.

Many variables and alternatives will be considered before adoption of any proposed formula, Munro said. The class of customer served, customer-owned generation, type of load, grades of energy and their rates, and energy conservation will be included in BPA consideration.

Public information and comment forums will be scheduled in the summer of 1979 for discussion of possible allocation formulas, Munro said.

The Coast Guard recorded 1,008 oil spills off the coasts of Oregon and Washington in 1977.



The total oil entering coastal waters reached 32,000 gallons, according to Coast Guard officials in Seattle.

Two spills accounted for nearly half of the total oil spilled last year. A truck tank accident near Brookings spilled 4,100 gallons of aircraft fuel into a tributary off the Chetco River, and 9,000 gallons leaked from a diesel oil storage tank into a drainage ditch in Raymond, Wash.

The Western Environmental Trade Association and the Oregon Farm Bureau will present "a unique look at the demand side of the energy equation" at a conference Tuesday in Portland, at the Sheraton Hotel.

Gov. Bob Straub and Fred Miller, the director of Oregon's Department of Energy, will speak at the re-scheduled seminar, "Energy and the Consumer."

Registration will begin at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday. Further information is available at the Western Environmental Trade Association office, Suite 200, 2400 S.W. 4th Ave. in Portland, phone 221-0357.

Bain rips assessor's record

Although William Bain, candidate for Lane County assessor, never mentioned incumbent Ken Bylund by name, it was clear he was the target of his comments at the Republican Round Table Forum Friday.

Bain said the county assessor who is completing his first four-year term as assessor has no business "making promises he can't deliver." Bain referred to the incumbent's promise to cut property taxes when "the only thing an assessor can do is properly equalize taxes in the area and work with others in government to shift the property tax burden."

Bylund has not declared whether or not he intends to run for reelection.

Bain criticized the current office management, saying he sees "real problems" such as low morale, high turnover and lack of efficiency in the county assessor's office. He said the current lack of efficiency is a "pie in the face of the incumbent, because it was a campaign promise."

Bain said the level of morale in the assessor's office was so low that it's "akin to a snake's belly." He said 70 of the 147 employees in the office have quit or retired since Bylund took office. Bain urged increased use of computer technology saying "the intelligent use of machines is essential. It's not sensible to jerk programs because you don't trust machines."

Bain referred to a Residential

Computer Program, which was discontinued after what Bain said was a \$90,000 investment.

Bain favors "management by setting objectives at the personal level." He said he would like to see training and cross-training for jobs so there would not be "only one guy who knows how to use the computer."

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