

## WHAT'S 'GREAT' ABOUT GOSHEN?

Drive down Highway 99 through Goshen and you won't see much: the Land o' Goshen Tavern, some homes, some cattails and a couple mill sites. It's a little unclear what the big deal about Goshen is and why some people from Lane County are pushing hard and fast to have the unincorporated town outside Eugene's urban growth boundary (UGB) rezoned and revamped into an industrial park.

Lane County is calling it the GREAT Plan — Goshen Region Employment and Transition Plan — but some land use and economic development experts don't think it's great at all. On Aug. 21 the Lane County Planning Commission will discuss Goshen at a work session followed by a public hearing.

"You can't possibly invest enough money fast enough to make the site viable," says Bob Warren, a recently retired business development officer with the state of Oregon.

The county wants to exempt 300 acres of land in Goshen from Goal 14, the Oregon statewide planning goal that keeps urbanization inside city boundaries. The land would be rezoned from its current rural-industrial designation and be split in two. The 83 acres east of Hwy 99 would be zoned for light industry and the 283 acres west of 99 would be zoned for general industry, including corporate headquarters. On Aug. 15 the county was scheduled to vote on Goshen's rural-industrial lands becoming a "Regionally Significant Industrial Area" under Senate Bill 766 and recommend that Commissioner Faye Stewart be designated a voting member of the Oregon Economic Recovery Review Council. Senate Bill 766 was a priority for Gov. Kitzhaber in the 2011 Legislative session.

Some of the acres at issue in Goshen are working mill sites; some are for sale. The major landowners in the "Proposed Goshen Goal Exception Area" are the McDougal Brothers, who own more than 114 acres, and Cone Investments at about 72 acres. Both those acreages are in the general industry zone and Lane County has said they have high redevelopment potential.

The McDougal Brothers are associated with Greg Demers and his Willamette Water Company. Willamette Water controversially applied to expand its small water right out of the McKenzie River to more than 21 million gallons of water

a day. On June 1, after an administrative law judge ruled the water right attempt to be speculation, Willamette Water reduced the application to 10.4 million gallons of water a day. Water speculation is illegal. Willamette Water Co. is the water supplier for Goshen.

Goshen lies within Stewart's district and he has been pushing for the Goshen plan. Stewart says Goshen has everything industry needs — power, water, rail access and highway access. He says benefits to rezoning Goshen would include more jobs and preventing development on resource lands for timber and farming.

On May 30, Stewart filed a public records request, using his home address and private email, with the Department of Land Conservation and Development asking for emails between DLCD employees Ed Moore and Bob Cortright (spelled Cartwright by Stewart in the request) and Mia Nelson of 1000 Friends that had to do with Goshen and terms including "Goal 14" and "sewer suitability."

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- Bob Warren, retired business development officer

Stewart says he filed the request as a private citizen. He was concerned, he says, that the DLCD in the past three years had been supportive of the Goshen plan, but when it was finally brought forward, the DLCD was no longer very supportive. He says his public records request turned up nothing inappropriate.

Nelson says, "All he did find was DLCD and me emailing back and forth ideas on ways to help the county do this in ways that conformed to the law." Nelson says she thinks the plan is "an honest attempt to bring some jobs to Goshen, which is great, but kind of naïve." She continues, "It's way premature to talk about committing public dollars to anything on this. You don't throw \$50 million and hope that they sell this to someone who will pay a living wage."

Nelson says the most recent round of edits on the plan in response to public testimony soothed her worries that the zoning changes would allow Home Depot and Costco-type

stores into Goshen. Under current zoning, west Eugene-type development is already allowed there, and the proposed new zoning improves things from a land use code perspective, she says.

But there are still a lot of problems with the GREAT Plan, Nelson says, from the wetlands that are in the area to transportation infrastructure to sewage.

Goshen is not on a sewage line, so buildings there use septic. Bob Emmons of LandWatch Lane County says industrial campuses use a tremendous amount of water — which would be supplied by Willamette Water — and the clay soils are not ideal for septic tanks and the amount of wastewater that would be generated.

Mark Rust, a land use planner for Lane County, says that the county applied for a grant to do a sewer feasibility study including on-site septic, but it didn't get that grant, though the county will be submitting an application to the USDA. He says the county has been working very closely with ODOT (Oregon Department of Transportation), DEQ, DLCD, the governor's office and Regional Solutions. Regional Solutions is Kitzhaber's collaborative economic and community development agency.

Emmons says if septic were to be used and then later found to be inadequate, bringing a sewage line to Goshen would possibly force Metropolitan Wastewater Management to extend sewage to the Lane Community College basin, where he says the McDougals and developer John Musumeci own land they would like to see brought inside the UGB and developed.

Emmons and Nelson are both concerned about the wetlands in the area. Rust says that the county is currently relying on a national wetlands inventory that does show some wetlands in the area, but the county plans to wait until the point when development would actually occur for on-site wetland delineation, which would determine the exact boundaries, he says.

Nelson says the county is doing it backwards — it should first check the wetlands designation and the infrastructure to see if Goshen is even developable, then go for a land use code change. "If it penciled then Goshen would have developed already," she says.

Bob Warren, who has worked with Regional Solutions, says he put it in writing to Ed Moore at DLCD that the proponents of the Goshen plan greatly exaggerated and overstated the benefits, and greatly undervalued and underestimated the problems. From an economic development perspective, it takes many years to develop a place like Goshen; it's not something that can be rushed through, Warren says.

Sewage isn't the only problem; he adds that Goshen's rail, highway, power and water access are all question marks for possible investors. "Uncertainty is what kills it for an industrial customer," he says.

According to Warren, "These kinds of industrial developments not only don't use rail. They don't want rail." Accessing the general-industrial portion of the plan would require crossing the railway line on the west side of Hwy 99, something Warren says the businesses' insurance companies won't allow, nor would the ODOT rail division.

As for the highways, he says Lane County doesn't want to do a transportation study, and upgrading Goshen's I-5 access, which is more of a spur off the route to Hwy 58, or using LCC's already crowded 30th Avenue exit is problematic. "I wonder if [LCC President] Mary Spilde knows in her efforts to upgrade LCC's exit that Lane County wants to throw Goshen into the mix?" he asks.

The county would do one level of review now but would wait to do a detailed analysis of the transportation issue until the time of or near any development, Rust says.

Lane County already has developable land inside Junction City's UGB and the old Monaco Coach site ready to go in Coburg. Warren estimates that would take \$100 million to get Goshen development-ready. Why rush to develop Goshen? "I'm perplexed from the get-go," he says.

The continued Lane County Planning Commission public hearing is 7 pm Tuesday Aug. 21 at the Lane County Customer Service Center, 3050 N. Delta Hwy.

— Camilla Mortensen

**Proposed Goshen rezoning**

