



April 15, 2014

To the Editor, Clackamas Review

Measure 3-439, to authorize general obligation bonds to refinance light rail construction debt, was placed on the May ballot by the City of Milwaukie. Our Hector Campbell neighbors at the April 14th regular NDA meeting approved this letter asking Milwaukie voters to vote YES on this measure.

The city's current finances are seriously underfunded because of a slow economic recovery, lowered property values and unanticipated costs to the general fund. Filling vacant staff positions has been delayed and will continue so even if the bond measure passes because revenue cannot meet a very conservative current and projected city budget. New positions, such as additional police staffing dedicated to downtown patrols following light rail start-up, are well beyond the future budget.

Even those who opposed the Portland Milwaukie Light Rail should understand that the previous City Council signed a legally binding contract to participate in funding the PMLR and committed the City to pay over \$4.1 million. Some savings will be realized by refinancing this debt, but more importantly, that from \$200,000 to \$365,000 per year we would have paid will sustain the general fund budget rather than having to be paid for almost 20 years. In fact, improvements in downtown Milwaukie amounting to \$13 million have been gained by the City through its commitment to Light Rail. The annual bond cost is a relatively small amount of money per household: about \$36 on a \$200,000 house – equivalent to the price of a single carton of cigarettes or 10 gallons of gas.

Even though passing the bond doesn't resolve all of the City's financial issues, it does allow the City to get on a more stable footing. If we wish to support the City so that we can move forward instead of stagnating we need to all vote YES on Measure 3-439.

David Aschenbrenner, Chair
On behalf of
Hector Campbell Neighborhood District Association
Milwaukie