

Rod Park

METRO COUNCIL DISTRICT 1 NEWS



METRO

PEOPLE PLACES
OPEN SPACES

**Rod Park represents
District 1, which
includes Fairview,
Gresham, Happy
Valley, Maywood
Park, Troutdale,
Wood Village,
Damascus and
portions of
East Portland.**



Urban and Rural Reserves: A New Approach to Managing Urban Form

The 2007 Legislature gave Metro and local counties a new set of tools to provide greater predictability about where future growth may occur while providing greater flexibility in determining which areas are better suited for growth. This approach involves the creation of urban reserves, which are areas outside the UGB that, based on a number of factors, may be better suited to accommodate growth over 40 to 50 years, as well as rural reserves, which are areas outside the UGB needed to protect valuable farm and forest lands for a similar period of time. The process of designating these lands will stimulate a discussion about how we can create a sustainable region with the types of communities we want.

Current law, which in most cases requires urbanization of the worst areas for farming or forestry first, does not protect farm or forest land permanently, nor does it look beyond each five-year cycle of moving the urban growth boundary. This makes it difficult for both urban and rural entities to plan for their respective needs over the long term. Both want to know if and where it is prudent to make long-term and often expensive investments.

What is unique about this new process is that it will require Metro and the surrounding counties (and the state) to collectively agree about which areas to urbanize and which areas to protect for farming and forestry. This has the potential to create the best for everyone. However, like any tool, it has to be used carefully to achieve a positive outcome.

A steering committee of local elected officials, business leaders, farmers, conservationists and others will convene in January to begin this effort. Public input will be sought throughout 2008 to help us define the shape of this region in the years to come. I urge you to become involved in this effort. If it is successful, it will shape the future of the region for the next 50 years and beyond.

— Rod Park

Metro protects water quality and wildlife habitat in Johnson Creek watershed

Metro has recently purchased two important natural areas in the Johnson Creek Watershed. Johnson Creek flows 26 miles from its headwaters near the Sandy River to its confluence with the Willamette River. In an effort to improve flooding and water quality problems, Metro purchased 53 acres on the north side of the Clatsop Buttes natural area in December, after previously purchasing 49 acres on the lower part of the Buttes.

Those two adjacent acquisitions total more than 100 acres of densely forested hillsides that drain into Johnson Creek and its tributaries, and make the Clatsop Buttes natural area one of only a dozen protected places of this size within the city limits of Portland.

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In November, further east in the watershed, Metro and the city of Gresham made another purchase of almost 20 acres of forested land straddling Johnson Creek adjacent to the Springwater Corridor Trail. The property includes patches of dense forest canopy, important for shading the creek and cooling water temperatures for native fish.

Metro's 2006 Natural Areas bond measure program funds land acquisition and capital improvements that protect water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, enhance trails and wildlife corridors, and provide greater connections to nature in urban areas throughout the greater Portland region. More information can be found online at www.metro-region.org/naturalareas.

Regional Transportation Plan update moves forward

Metro's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is the long-term blueprint that guides investments in the region's transportation system for all forms of travel as well as the movement of freight. The RTP is updated regularly to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations and to address changing demographic, financial, travel and economic trends.

On Dec. 13, the Metro Council and the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) approved the federal component of the RTP, pending an air quality analysis. Taking into consideration projected population and job growth in the region, the analysis determines whether the region would meet requirements of the federal Clean Air Act if all the projects in the plan were built. To ensure that federal transportation funds are not interrupted, JPACT and the Metro Council must approve this component before the current RTP expires on March 8, 2008.

The air quality analysis will be published on Metro's web site www.metro-region.org at noon on Jan. 18, kicking off a month-long public review and comment period to end at noon, Feb. 19. Printed copies can be obtained from the Metro Planning Department. Comments may be submitted by mail to Metro Planning, 600 NE Grand Avenue, Portland, Oregon, 97232; or by email, rtp@metro.dst.or.us.

Waste transport contract action slated for January

The contract to transport waste from the metro area to the Columbia Ridge Landfill in Gilliam County is up for renewal. Nearly 570,000 tons of solid waste per year is trucked to the landfill. The current contract expires Dec. 31, 2009; the new contract will be in effect for ten years.

In October, Metro staff released a draft request for proposals (RFP) and solicited input from citizens and transportation industry officials. With the Metro Council's direction, staff is drafting the final RFP after receiving input from an outreach campaign that included mailings, public meetings and responses to a survey that is currently available on the Metro website at www.metro-region.org (search for "waste transport survey").

The Metro Council will evaluate proposals received from potential contractors based on cost effectiveness, environmental impacts, community concerns and impacts, and flexibility, reliability and risk. A significant finding from outreach campaigns is that citizens rank environmental and community impacts, including jobs, as the most important criteria. In addition, 50 percent of respondents have said they favor truck as the preferred mode of transporting the waste.

A public hearing on the final RFP is scheduled for Jan. 10 in the Council Chamber at the Metro Regional Center, 600 NE Grand Ave. in Portland. During the hearing, the public and industry representatives may suggest additional changes. A final RFP is scheduled for release by the end of January.

Councilor Rod Park contact information

Address	600 NE Grand Ave. Portland, OR 97232
Phone	503-797-1547
Fax	503-797-1793
E-Mail	parkr@metro.dst.or.us
Assistant	Kathryn Sofich
Phone	503-797-1941
E-Mail	sofichk@metro.dst.or.us
Web	www.metro-region.org

About Metro

Clean air and clean water do not stop at city limits or county lines. Neither does the need for jobs, a thriving economy and good transportation choices for people and businesses in our region. Voters have asked Metro to help with the challenges that cross those lines and affect the 25 cities and three counties in the Portland metropolitan area.

A regional approach simply makes sense when it comes to protecting open space, caring for parks, planning for the best use of land, managing garbage disposal and increasing recycling. Metro oversees world-class facilities such as the Oregon Zoo, which contributes to conservation and education, and the Oregon Convention Center, which benefits the region's economy.

Your Metro representatives

Metro Council President
David Bragdon

Metro Councilors
Rod Park, District 1
Carlotta Collette, District 2
Carl Hosticka, District 3
Kathryn Harrington, District 4
Rex Burkholder, District 5
Robert Liberty, District 6

Auditor
Suzanne Flynn

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