



CITY OF

PORTLAND, OREGON

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Earl Blumenauer, Commissioner
1220 S.W. 5th Avenue, Room 407
Portland, Oregon 97204
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March 28, 1991

Dear Ned :

In the aftermath of Measure #5, I have given a great deal of thought to ways we in local government, and in particular my role as a representative of the City of Portland, will change to accommodate new realities.

Part of my thinking is captured in the context of a presentation I made to the City Club on March 8, 1991 (copy enclosed). I call your attention to the conclusion, which deals with a 10-year reorientation amongst the various regional governments. Briefly stated, I see the counties emerging in a different and larger role that could probably best be served by combining them with METRO. A number of short-term steps are identified that could be undertaken now to really blaze what would be a national model for cooperation and efficiency. I also see significant changes in Portland's governance as well.

There is a real need for evolution of this process over the next 5-10 years, so that everybody in the bureaucracy, the political arena, and the voters can make this transition as smoothly as possible. My hope is that sometime this spring we can set aside time to discuss these ideas further. I am keenly interested in both your critique of the approach and your thoughts about where we go from here.

Sincerely,

Earl Blumenauer

Enclosure

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the future. The first, I see President Ramaley here and Dr. Toulan. My first point, and I had this before I knew you were going to be here, was to activate the Portland State/metropolitan studies programs under the direction of Dr. Toulan to provide the data, the forum, the research, to be able to do the good work that needs to be done in the future without having to rely too much on City Club study committees and research advisors. I think even in these difficult Measure #5 times that the state system of higher education, the City of Portland, the three counties, METRO, Tri-Met, and the private sector can come together with enough money to fund that adequately and make it a model for the nation, and to help us do this difficult business.

Second, the City Club should take the METRO charter as a project. We have the home rule coming down the track, Councilor Knowles, in a matter of months? Weeks? Days? The City Club ought to adopt that. Every single member who's on that charter commission should be a member of the City Club either going in or coming out. There ought to be a special study committee that is established to help that commission. A series of forums to really capture that to equip our Metropolitan Service District to provide the framework that it's going to need as it gradually assumes regional responsibility this decade.

Third, I think, our County Commissioners ought to enter in via a contract an agreement to administer several regional programs that can efficiently be operated now. I think of three -- assessment and taxation. We are spending \$10.5 million for three inadequate tax

assessment and collections systems in the metropolitan area. Because of Measure #5, all three counties are going to spend more money on those inadequate systems. I think it is time to negotiate a program where there is one adequate program, one computer, one set of people administering the program out in the field. I don't think we have any reason to want property assessed any different in Washington County versus Clackamas County or Multnomah County. Certainly there is no political mileage in being the jurisdiction that sends out the tax bills, so this ought to be something that if they can't offload they could at least share the blame.

Areas like elections that are completely dictated by state statute, the regional park program that I know has been an interest of a number of folks, these things can come together, we can have consortia, and we can move forward in a matter of months.

I think those ought to be accomplished by July 1, 1992.

By 1994, we ought to have the next generation of regional programs in place via contract. The cable television industry is consolidating like mad, certainly local government could do that to consolidate the regulation and programming on the metropolitan level. Emergency response -- another City Club report -- your speech topic next week is timely. If we had the big one here (earthquake) it would be a disaster. We are no more equipped to handle it than we were when the City Club started ringing our bells on this several years ago. I frankly think that it's not going to be possible unless there is one

governmental agency in charge. The future of open space in this region ought to be regionalized and could be done in that fashion.

By 1996, I would hope that the charter commission for METRO has in place a proposal that essentially folds in the METRO Councilors and the County Commissioners into one set of regional policy-makers.

We have 26 of them now; we don't need quite that many. It would help set the date far enough in advance so no one would lose his or her job. You can track that and just serve notice that by 1996 if you want to be involved on a regional basis, you run for this regional council.

1998 there needs to be an infrastructure integration on a regional basis that includes sewer, water, and roads.

People often ask if we regionalize, what's in it for the suburbs. If people are going to offload their problems or the suburbs are going to try and push things in the central city. We don't need to get into that discussion by having the City of Portland take the lead in regionalizing the infrastructure. We already provide water for 2/3 of the people in the region. We have the largest sewer system. We will have the largest road system. If we're willing to contribute that, we're infrastructure rich compared to most of the region, the Central City, Multnomah County is human service poor. And if we do those two things together, there is something in it for everybody.

Although I must confess that when we speak to the social service issues that hopefully people would be motivated by the special needs

of children, the mentally ill, the elderly and the homeless without that sort of trade-off.

Finally, the City itself should initiate immediately an effort to pull together the resources for a charter review, privately funded, for this city, do it right, and have proposals to the voters by 1994 at the latest that would either change the commission form of government, to one that is more centrally managed or put something in place that will strengthen it. We can't continue to operate the way we are now.

I find that I'm going a little longer -- you laughed longer than I thought you would -- so I can't talk about building inner city suburban neighborhood coalitions, which I think are critical. Maybe there will be a question about that before we're through.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to talk a little bit about my vision of how these pieces fit in place. I think it is appropriate to do it at the City Club; it has been the genesis of many of these ideas in the past. I think it will be the City Club that helps pull together these pieces so we actually are able to deliver on it in this decade.

Thank you very much.