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Date: August 23, 1991
To: Metro Council, Executive, Distribution List
From: Betsy Bergstein
Regarding: Charter Committee Meeting - August 22, 1991

The Committee held the first of four scheduled "background" meetings last night at Metro. The agenda (attached) was a "discussion of Metro's future role in the region, particularly in the area of growth management" and featured the former Metro Executive Officer and Councilors plus Bill Blosser representing the State Agency Council for Growth Issues and Steve Schell, Chair of the Managing Regional Growth working group from Portland's Future Focus.

Highlights include:

Rick Gustafson. The Metro government is the regional service delivery mechanism. Its role is to define the "urbanization policy", the delivery of services within areas defined for urban growth, and growth management.

When questioned about the next logical step (Regenstreif) Mr. Gustafson responded, "another service...one slow step at a time." He mentioned GREENSPACES-a Regional Park System

He thought the transit agency should be run by a commission appointed by the regional commission not a state authority.

He went on to say that the elected body should stay focused on policy (eg. taxes) and not where the bus lines run. He favored commissions, like a transit commission, regional parks commission to actually manage operations ("balancing responsibility of elected leadership with day to day management").

When questioned about broader planning role for Metro (Egge) he responded that there is a "growing recognition and support for regional planning" but that "local governments are the foundation for any planning process."

When questioned on a funding source for Metro (Regenstreif) he said "as much taxing authority as you can imagine and require it all to be voted on."

Mr. Gustafson stressed the importance of Metro's functional planning authority, stated that a region-wide elected official was essential and that position should also serve as the policy head as the Chair of the Council.

He liked the commission form of government (eg. 5-7 full time commissioners) and stated that 12 councilors was too big a number. Not comparable to the state legislative system; too big a number; an enormous job to manage.

Sharron Kelley and Gary Hansen

Sharron Kelley also represented Gary Hansen. Both submitted written testimony which is attached. They are strong statements for REGIONALISM.

Commissioner Kelley urged the Committee not to constrain Metro. Multnomah County is in a crisis --- it is a logical time to take a look at a division of service.

Corky Kirpatrick

Basically agreed with previous speakers. Urged Committee to be visionary; look twenty years from now; have a plan that is flexible. Likes incremental process that "works in this state." Look at Minnesota taxing plan. Urged looking at apportioning the benefits of growth. Stated the need to have a regionally elected chair of the Council. She favored a larger council.

Charlie Williamson

Advocated broad taxing and functional authority. Stated he had a tough time as a councilor with more and more functions being added. Likes professional city manager and fewer councilors (5 full time.) Did not think Metro should takeover Tri-Met. Felt Metro should seize opportunities where it could help, eg. counties.

Richard Waker

Stated he had served both under Ric Gustafson and Rena Cusma; he felt the public had been well served under the "dynamic tension with Rena." Urged Committee to wear their regional hat --- stated a difference between interests of local officials and citizens of the region. He said the local governments want Metro to give them the money and let them handle the problems.

Any authority Metro receives needs to be taken away from someone else. Local government is reluctant to give up power but certain issues like regional drainage, water supply and land use planning require a regional framework. There may be a need for sub-regional foci.

Locals are reluctant to give up power.

Ernie Bonner

Give Metro the widest authority. Don't need full time councilors; don't need an executive. Elect part time councilors to do policy; use commissions to do operations (eg. solid waste). Cited Minnesota/St. Paul region. Councilors should stay out of operations altogether.

Believes there is "no such thing as rationale planning. People do things in crisis. It takes brutal change to make money change hands." For example, a shortage of water or a crisis in financing the extension of a water system.

Controlling the financing of the cost of extending water and sewer service is one way to get at the growth problem. Control the pipes.

Jane Rhodes

Efficiency and cost efficient; total cost reduction. Don't add another layer. Look for the most efficient way of doing things. Don't assume regional is better.

Elsa Coleman

Focus on growth management. Offered a definition of growth management. Managing what exists to highest and best use and making sure new does not distract. Urged the Committee to look at "managing the manifestation of growth." Directed them to Goal 12, transportation planning. Bring consensus to region on economic development. New development must contribute and not detract to community.

Bill Blosser

Described the State Agency Council for Growth. It was created because of Governor Goldschmidt's desire to support regional government. Sincd endorsed by Governor Roberts.

Stated that a weak Metro tosses regional issues in the hands of state agencies and "reluctantly the state will step in and play a greater role."

Believes state has taken too short-term a view (20 years). They are now using 50 years to look at water, greenspaces, sewage, air quality, transportation issues.

RUGGO is the right thing for Metro to do and we encourage it.

The greenspaces issues is a long term issue that needs to be faced now.

The state's interest is consistent with RUGGOs.

Josselson - "Could we eliminate Metro and turn everything over to you?"

Blosser responded that same argument could be used for any unit of government (eliminate local government and turn it over to the state; eliminate state government and turn it over to the feds, etc.)

Wes Myllenbeck questioned Mr. Blosser about Clark county. He responded that they are looking for Metro to get involved in their planning process which is just beginning. Greenspaces includes Clark County; a regional water supply study was done which included Clark county.

He spoke about the state's need to develop measurements --- how would the state know if something happened here that was in our interest?

The "true cost of development study" (new) will give them information like "what is the cost of abandoning North Portland and building a new city in Washington county?" (better measurements of cost).

He had no response to Ned Look's query on the Tri-Met/Metro merger, other than to ask why not the Port?

Steve Schell

Mr. Schell was the Chair of the Regional Growth Working Group from Portland's Future Focus.

He stated their viewpoint was from Portland out to the region. What is good for Portland and the region, they asked, recognizing that Portland can not survive in a vacuum.

He reviewed the process, stated the three assumptions they work from (1) 500,000 more people in the next 20 years in the four counties; (2) consequences of Ballot Measure #5; (3) more reliance on user fees; moving away from general fund allocation.

Key recommendations include (1) a shift in regional transportation planning to move away from consumptive patterns and be more energy responsive; (2) revision of the state constitutional structure to allow a special vehicle registration fee to encourage energy efficiency; (3) establishment of highway tolls; (4) creation of a hub light rail system connecting Portland, Oregon City and Vancouver; (5) an emphasis on natural areas and open space, the "key to liveability"; (6) a functional plan for zoning and mixed uses on light rail corridors; (7) recognition of the UGB as a long-term vision to shape regional urban form; (8) consolidation of the three counties and Metro; (9) developing a housing trust fund; (10) making the Tri-Met board a locally elected body.

The Committee will meet again next Thursday, August 29. The agenda will continue backgrounding with Chambers of Commerce, Corridor Associations and the Association for Portland Progress. A review of the RUGGOs is schedule for September 12.