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OREGON STATE SENATE  
SALEM, OREGON  
97310

December 20, 1991

To : Members of the Metro Charter Committee  
Subject : Metropolitan Government Structure

After last night's meeting I reflected on the discussion we had regarding the pros and cons of commissions being in charge of most if not all Metro functions other than planning. I think we are not as far apart as it appears and thought it might be useful to give you my thoughts in these regards.

Major points on which there is apparent consensus are these:

(1) The Council's primary responsibilities will be to deliberate and decide planning and policy questions.

(2) The principal reason for considering commissions is to relieve the Council from the day-to-day decision making that responsibility for an operating function requires. Our concern was that the Council would spend all of its time on details and busy work; never reaching planning and policy.

(3) A major problem with the use of commissions is the risk of loss of accountability to electors.

(4) The use of commissions to oversee operating functions will be appropriate in many cases.

In talking to Betsy Bergstein near the end of the meeting, I learned that the assigned workload of each member of the Council was to participate in two meetings of the entire

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Council each month and to serve on two committees, each of which meets once a month. This translates into about one scheduled meeting each week. The Council and committee agendas that I looked at during our meeting each contemplated a meeting of less than two hours. While I am sure that preparation time is needed in order to function effectively at these meetings and that there are special meetings scheduled from time to time, it does not appear to me that the workload of the Council is excessive. Thus, there should be room for the Council to responsibly address policy and planning matters.

Perhaps the answer to our dilemma is to require in the Charter that Council members give primacy to planning and policy issues. This should lead the Council to schedule at least one-half their full Council meetings to planning and policy deliberations. This requirement of primacy should also lead the Council to appoint intervening commissions as necessary to relieve their workload and permit them to properly perform their assigned duties regarding policy and planning.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be "Bob", followed by a horizontal line.