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"With the RPAC we've put the paranoia to bed," said charter committee member Jon Egge.

The charter committee was divided over how much power the RPAC will have. The advisory group will exert its greatest influence in two areas: when Metro wants to absorb services that have previously been provided by local governments, and when Metro takes on a new regional planning function never before provided.

Supporting a strong RPAC, committee member Mary Tobias told members that communication between their elected Metro councilor will be limited due to the vast number of people each councilor represents. She called the RPAC "The way to make the council closer to the people," because the local officials and appointed citizens of the RPAC would "reach smaller pockets of people."

"The more connections we can make between the regional government and the local governments, the more we put them together, working together, the better the people will be served," she said.

However, fellow committee member and state senator, Bob Shoemaker, countered that the RPAC would not necessarily be more representative of the voters than the Metro Council, and should not be powerful enough to interfere with the council's decision making powers.

"They (councilors) are subject to political pressure. They are subject to reelection. They are subject to having to justify what they do for their constituents," he said.

"I don't think it's appropriate that another body be able to veto, effectively, those kinds of decisions."

But other committee members said only the voters should be the ones to allow Metro authority to take on another service or planning function.

"You're talking about an arena and a time when people are feeling very strongly that there's

not much communication between themselves and government anyway," State Senator Ron Cease told his fellow committee members. "I think we would make a mistake to leave the folks out."

He also suggested that city and county officials on the RPAC would not necessarily be more representative of the residents than the Metro Council would be.

"There is a very strong feeling in the neighborhoods of Portland that there is too great a distance between them and (city) officials," he pointed out.

In the end, the committee voted that the charter should state that new service functions previously provided by local jurisdictions or any new metropolitan planning functions Metro

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SENATOR RON CEASE

wants to take on, must be approved by either a majority vote of the RPAC or a vote of the people.

If Metro wishes to take on a service function not currently provided by a local government, however, the RPAC would only have to be consulted.

The committee has not yet written its first draft of the proposed charter, but has agreed on a number of powers and functions that should be included in it.

For instance, the committee wants what they label "a conceptual statement" to be adopted by

the Metro Council that addresses such regional concerns as population levels and where best to locate housing, preservation of land and natural resources, livability and quality of life, and economic growth.

Referred to as "Future Vision," the committee stresses in its current work-outline that it is not to be a regulatory document. Instead they describe it as "a long-term, at least 50-year, visionary outlook." The Future Vision is to be written by an appointed commission from the private, public and academic sectors.

The first draft of the charter will also mandate that Metro adopt a "Regional Framework Plan" to address issues that impact upon the entire metropolitan area, establish regional goals, and formulate the plans to make these happen.

The specific matters the Regional Framework Plan will deal with will be determined by the Metro Council, with input from the RPAC.

The committee, however, will list several subjects in the draft charter that they believe would benefit from regional planning. These include water sources and storage, housing densities, greenspaces (preserved natural areas), and the siting of "significant land use developments."

The committee continues to revise and refine its first charter draft. The public will have the opportunity to express their support or concerns at three upcoming public hearings: March 30; March 31; and May 14. These dates are tentative, and the exact locations and times have not yet been determined.

In the meantime, residents who wish to study further how the charter committee's proposals will affect them should obtain the current proposed charter outline. This document is available by writing the Metro Charter Committee at P.O. Box 9236, Portland, 97207, or calling 273-5570.

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