

the chief executive officer veto powers.

A majority of the participants felt that CRAG's mandated planning and coordinating responsibilities should be transferred to MSD and its proposed elected council.

"WE NEED TO ESTABLISH OUT OF TODAY'S HODGEPODGE SYSTEM OF REGIONAL GOVERNANCE A VEHICLE THROUGH WHICH THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY CAN WEIGH THE WHOLE MIX OF AREA-WIDE NEEDS AND SET PRIORITIES."

Conferees were nearly unanimous in their recommendation that Tri-Met be brought under the auspices of the enlarged MSD. Many said that the Port of Portland, however, might be best left alone, while a substantial number thought the Boundary Commission should become part of the MSD.

Most of the workshop groups favored the additional statutory authorization of new functions to the MSD so that, as the need arises, it could operate regional parks, cultural facilities and correctional facilities, coordinate human services and develop water supply and distribution systems. Other services frequently suggested for authorization to MSD included libraries and health services.

On the question of financing the regional services of MSD, most supported giving it a full range of financing options, including authorization to levy an income tax subject to voter approval.

The other issue addressed in depth by the conference was the need for the creation of some process through which

individual citizens could participate effectively in the advocacy of regional problem solving and express their regional citizenship.

"ONE MORE DIMENSION TO THE CONCEPT OF CITIZENSHIP IS NEEDED-- THAT OF REGIONAL CITIZENSHIP."

Nearly all participants agreed that some sort of regional citizens' organization was needed in the Tri-County area to provide an arena in which citizens with shared concepts of the "quality of life" could work together. conferees appeared to be divided concerning whether the organization should play an action-oriented advocacy role within the region or whether it should make recommendations only and leave action to others.

Several of the workshop groups suggested an expanded area-wide organization similar to the Portland City Club while others recommended a structure similar to the League of Women Voters. Some participants thought the organization should be as a citizens' advisory group to MSD's governing council though it appeared that there was a plurality favoring an autonomous citizens' league approach. Another possible vehicle discussed for the formation of a citizens' organization was through a coalition of neighborhood organization representatives, though many thought this approach might be too restrictive.

With respect of financing such as organization, most participants favored some sort of individual membership dues and/or corporate dues. Several workshop groups also suggested seeking funding from the MSD council.

The Critical Questions Conference was sponsored by the Tri-County Local Government Commission and co-sponsored by the First State Bank of Oregon; the law firm of Davies, Biggs, Strayer, Stoel and Boley; the Metropolitan Action Council; and Cogan and Associates. The Bank of California, the First National Bank and the Public Information Department of the Portland Public Schools contributed materials.

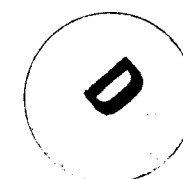
CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Conference Report



TRI-COUNTY LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

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CRITICAL QUESTIONS THE CONFERENCE REPORT

"THE FUTURE IS NOT PLANNED, IT IS NEGOTIATED."

Over 225 participants attended "Critical Questions", the December, 1976, public conference sponsored by the Tri-County Local Government Commission. Conferees included citizens, legislators, civic leaders, elected officials, public administrators, neighborhood leaders and business and labor representatives.

The future under discussion was that of the Tri-County area, its citizenry, the form of government that might best serve its citizens and the structure through which its individual citizens could participate most effectively in Tri-County problem solving.

Despite the diversity of political philosophies, the conferees shared a common concern -- that the problems of regional governance must be addressed now if the Tri-County area is to avoid the governmental disasters seen in other metropolitan areas across the nation.

THE PROBLEM

The growing costs of air and water pollution, traffic congestion and other problems that spill over individual local government boundaries has focused attention on the desirability and feasibility of remedial action on a tri-county level. Some geographic unity is a necessity to provide services which require area wide action.

"THE CITIZEN WHO SITS IN HIS CAR ON A CLOGGED STREET AT RUSH HOUR IDENTIFIES WITH THE AGGREGATE IN THE NEED FOR A BETTER PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM REGARDLESS OF WHERE HE STARTED THE TRIP."

Area-wide government exists to some degree now with each of the five regional agencies playing a governance role by providing a special function or set of services. This system of regional government includes the Metropolitan Service District (MSD), the Columbia Region Association of Governments (CRAG) Tri-Met, the Port of Portland and the Boundary Commission, with combined 1975-76 budgets totaling \$187,153,206.

Unfortunately, the proliferation of special-purpose regional agencies has resulted in a functional fragmentation that makes comprehensive planning and public action difficult.

Because important area-wide decisions are made by functional specialists, there is no means to establish priorities through a political process by which competing demands for tax-raised revenues are evaluated and balanced.

"THE MOST IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE OF OUR AMERICAN EXPERIMENT IN DEMOCRATIC SELF-GOVERNMENT IS THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE TO SEEK REGULARLY THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED AND BE DIRECTLY ACCOUNTABLE TO THEM."

The appointive governing structure of these special-purpose agencies has tended to reduce political account-

ability as they are free from broad political control, often remote from citizens and not able to provide for any voter participation in their governance process.

There is also good reason to believe that part of the problem of the Tri-County community is a crisis of its civic life. Too often, discussion of problems of the metropolitan area tend to reduce these problems to functional matters such as sewage, transportation, housing, etc. This reduction leaves out the political element that gives meaning to civic life and structure to communities. By neglecting considerations leading to a shared conception of the "good life", the essence of citizenship in a democracy is denied.

AGENDA FOR ACTION

Keynote speaker Kent Mathewson, President of the Metropolitan Fund in Detroit and a nationally recognized expert on regionalism and community involvement, charged the conferees to devise a process of structured regionalism for negotiating plans and operations that deal with problems of a regional scale.

This involves addressing two critical needs. One is the need for a more effective structure by which regional problems can be addressed by government. The other is the creation of a regional constituency -- some process by which individual citizens might understand and express their regional citizenship. A sense of regional citizenship is a critical dynamic... an imperative... in the regional problem solving concept, Mathewson said.

"A SENSE OF REGIONAL CITIZENSHIP IS AN IMPERATIVE IN THE REGIONAL PROBLEM SOLVING CONCEPT."

Though this feeling of regional community might happen eventually if allowed to grow unattended, most participants agreed with Mathewson that we cannot afford to wait that long. The regional problems are here now, and solutions are desperately needed. Mathewson suggested that residents in the Tri-County area consider forming a regional citizens' organization through which individuals could work actively as regional citizens.

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

In small, informal workshop meetings, the conferees discussed these two critical needs. In most cases, the workshop groups developed consensus reports regarding various solutions and alternatives which were then presented to the full assembly at the end of the conference.

In tackling the need for improving the structure by which regional problems can be addressed by government, the participants examined the current policy-making process of regional governments in the Tri-County area. An overwhelming number of the conferees agreed that regional policy-makers should be directly accountable to the people through the election process.

"IT'S TIME FOR AN ELECTED TRI-COUNTY GOVERNMENT."

Many participants also believed that the chief executive officer for the recommended elected body (the Metropolitan Service District Council) should be elected while a considerable number of others questioned whether that process would result in the selection of someone without the skills necessary to administer such an agency. Regardless of the selection process, a plurality expressed opposition to the concept of giving

over



TRI-COUNTY LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

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April 8, 1977.

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Dear Conferee:

Here is the long-awaited "Critical Questions" Conference report. We apologize for the embarrassing delay -- but with our reduced staff, budget limitations and other on-going research and legislative activities, it proved impossible to meet our original deadline.

We appreciate your patience and hope this final product measures up to the time and energy each of you contributed to the conference. The Commission was very pleased with the success of the conference and feels very strongly that it was a worthwhile and productive forum. It couldn't have happened without your participation and for that we are most grateful.

No conference report can do justice to all the ideas and comments generated by its participants. This report attempts to capture and highlight the general attitudes and common concerns voiced during "Critical Questions". And, as a result of the discussions that day, several of the concerns frequently expressed regarding the Commission's legislative proposal have been addressed by the Commission in the form of amendments to the bill.

We had intended to include an analysis of the individual questionnaire distributed to each of the participants; however, only twenty-five were completed and returned to our attention. This was not a sufficient sample size for any meaningful analysis, consequently the report focuses on the workshop discussions and recommendations.

Interest in forming some sort of regional citizens' league was so great that the Commission established an ad hoc subcommittee to study further the various alternatives suggested at the conference. This subcommittee was also charged with the responsibility of exploring in more detail interest within the community toward a regional citizens' league.

The subcommittee, chaired by Commission member Bob Simpson, will report its findings to the Commission. If you are interested in helping organize a vehicle for regional citizen action or if you would like to receive a copy of this subcommittee's report, please notify Bill Cross, our public information coordinator, at 229-3576.

Again, our heartfelt thanks for your role in making "Critical Questions" a success.

Sincerely,

Ron C. Cease
Ronald C. Cease
Chairman

Carl M. Halvorson
Carl M. Halvorson
Vice-Chairman

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