

Christopher H. Foster, Multnomah County Planning Commissioner
15400 NW McNamee Rd. Portland OR. 97231

August 19th, 2016

Chair Deborah Kafoury and Multnomah County Board of Commissioners

501 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Suite 600

Portland, Oregon 97214

Re: Multnomah County Comprehensive Plan

Dear Chair Kafoury and Commissioners,

I'm writing you to let you know there is at least one Planning Commissioner that does not agree with either the Comp. Plan substantive changes our commission made on May 26, nor the more recent additional changes the Metro asks for in their August 5th letter. I am in support of the position led by Mark Greenfield and Carol Cheserek. With regard to the "complementary" language at Recreational Policy, the original language as drafted by the SIMC and Comp. Plan processes should remain.

On May 19, I wrote a brief piece to my fellow planning commission members outlining my position. That position has not changed and I find it in agreement with the Greenfield/Cheserek view. This applies to the most recent piece and new requests from Metro too. A bit of the original context may be missing here, but I think the message still comes through and is applicable today :

Christopher H. Foster, Planning Commission Member
15400 NW McNamee Rd. Portland 97231

May 16, 2016

Re: Multnomah County Comprehensive Plan Deliberations, May 26th, 6:30 PM

Dear Chair Ingle and Fellow Planning Commission Members,

As I am unable to attend, and after checking with County Counsel, I offer a few brief comments in tonight's deliberations as though I were present. There are many aspects to consider. Here's just a few:

Confusion About the Rural Area Comp. Plan And Statewide Goal 2 - Planning

Current Metro Parks and certain Mt. bike club members make written comments that misunderstand the nature of our Comp. Plan process saying it is "*to represent and govern all Multnomah county residents*" and "*not just rural*", distorting our charge. I find that notion a bit like saying the City of Troutdale's Comp. Plan is for and governs all residents of Multnomah county, not just Troutdale residents. No jurisdictional perspective? Goal 2 says "*Cities and counties are expected to take into account the regional, state and national needs...*" To imply that the CACs or the county planning staff did not fulfill this expectation or not seek out Goal 2 co-ordination is baseless. I was present for those discussions. The record shows when solicited by staff, a number of agencies, land managers and owners submitted timely comment. That included a Metro letter from another department dated Feb. 3rd (see attached). Going back, my recollection is that Metro declined participation in both plan processes including technical advisory meetings. Many others agencies were present. Staff may help clarify .

Statewide Goal 8 on Recreation

Under Goal 8, we are not expected to provide for recreational opportunities as though we are Portland. The Goal Guidelines Metro Parks cities should be viewed within the context of our planning process. Metro Parks would have us think otherwise. We are expected to make reasoned provisions for residents of the jurisdiction and for visitors within the carrying capacity of air, land, water or natural resources. I think Guideline 11 is particularly important here. I believe the record shows the CACs of the Sauvie Island/MC Plan and the new Comp. Plan, in crafting recreation policy, acted judiciously & responsibly.

On the “Complementary” Language at Recreational Policies

First, I do not think the language is as onerous as opponents make it to be. I prefer the existing language particularly in how it seemingly holds the line better on cumulative impacts, commonly an area of weakness in many policies. Secondly, abandoning the language amounts in part, to a reversal of the Sauvie Island plan; something we promised not to do. For consistency in regulation and for the fragile resources of the affected SEC natural areas, that same language has been extended to the West Hills. Metro makes the very same plea for consistency. Comprehensive planning is an approach to planning that is inclusive and considers all known factors and interrelationships among these factors. The the SIMC CAC, Comp. Plan CAC and staff in sum were engaged in that process for several years. On the other hand, the Metro Parks objective is narrow and without the wider context. There are many irrevocably committed and conflicting land uses both present and future in the Plan area. (logging, farming, roads, and the myriad of compromises that come with residential use for example) that Metro Parks is simply not contemplating or weighing. I support the existing language for all of these reasons.

Conclusion

Having attended 13 of the 15 Comprehensive Plan CAC meetings as a non-voting member, and having attend dozens of SIMC meetings including technical advisory sessions, I'm asking that you have give the benefit of doubt to the years of work that is represented in both of these plans. The CACs and planning staff are worthy of our support. I encourage you to ask questions of staff and members of the CACs that might be present. While I'm sure some of the Metro technical fixes are fine, I am unaware of any CAC members supporting substantive changes, nor do I.

Sincerely,

Chris Foster