

March 2013 outreach summary

The following information summarizes the comments collected during the first round of public outreach for the Sauvie Island/Multnomah Channel scoping report process. This outreach included an open house and questionnaire which was mailed to residents, provided at the open house, and was available on the project's website.

The first open house and questionnaire were aimed at educating the public about the current Rural Area Plan (adopted in 1997) for Sauvie Island and Multnomah Channel and gathering information on a vision for the area in the future. Specifically, the public was asked to comment on:

- What should the Sauvie Island/Multnomah Channel community look like in 20 years?
- What are some of the issues the community faces now? What issues could get in the way of that vision?

About 60 people attended the open house, 120 took the online questionnaire, and 44 printed questionnaires were returned at the open house or via mail. While a summary of the comments (by collection location/type) is outlined below, there were several common themes heard online, at the open house, and through comments mailed directly to the project team. These common themes do not reflect all residents or visitors; however, they are the most frequently heard issues or visions for the community:

- Keep the rural character of the island intact; it is the reason for the visitors and provides a balance to the urban setting of Portland. The current services/infrastructure is meant for a small rural community, but they are used by a much larger group who is not paying for, and puts a strain on, those services.
- The main character of the island is defined by the agricultural nature of the land and land uses should continue to reflect this in the future. Preserve the ability to farm the land by limiting residential development; farm stands, agri-tourism and other businesses; and minimizing land use changes.
- Decrease traffic conflicts by reducing speeds of vehicles; providing off-street paths for walking, biking, and riding horses; charging parking fees for the parks and businesses; enforcing the current regulations and rules; creating a shuttle for island visitors and residents; creating some type of toll or usage charge for visitors.
- The channel should be maintained for multiple purposes, with careful review and enforcement of regulations to ensure that the floating homes, water recreation, and natural environment are able to coexist.
- Consider ways to enhance the natural environment: limit coal trains; increase native vegetation; enhance the nature reserves; and decrease noise, light, and other pollution. Balance the competing interests that use the same space: hiking, birding, hunting, farming, etc.

Open house summary

Notification

The event was announced through a printed mailer that was delivered to properties on the island and channel, as well as property owners if they lived elsewhere. Due to the complexity of the mail delivery to floating homes, project staff identified addresses of individual floating home owners and mailed to these addresses. The mailer had a copy of the questionnaire included. Project staff also attended a Sauvie Island Community Association (SICA) meeting prior to the open house to provide information about the project and to announce the event. SICA posted the open house information on their website and emailed the information to residents.

A press release was distributed to media outlets in the region. Three articles ran announcing the project and open house:

- 2/14/13, Oregonian, "Sauvie Island crowding issues likely to top concerns at upcoming Multnomah County open house"
- 2/14/13, Bike Portland Blog, "County seeks input on Sauvie Island area transportation issues"
- 2/27/13, St Helens Chronicle, "Input sought on Sauvie Island and Multnomah Channel land use"

The project website included open house information and an online version of the questionnaire. Project staff also reached out to several government and community organizations to announce the project and open house through email and phone calls.

Open house format

The open house was structured to allow residents, businesses, and other interested groups to attend when it was most convenient. The drop-in format allowed the public to arrive between 4:30 and 7:30 pm on Thursday, March 7; to accommodate a variety of working schedules. The open house was held at the Sauvie Island School, which was ADA accessible and a common gathering spot for the community. Approximately 60 people attended the open house.



Attendees added issues to maps and spoke with staff members.

The open house included display boards with information grouped around four stations. At each station staff was present to answer questions and collect verbal comments:

- **Background:** where the public learned about the existing plans
- **Vision wall:** where the public grouped their visions by topic areas
- **Issues maps:** where the public drew their issues (current or expected) on maps
- **Next steps:** where the public learned about the future outreach for the project

Of the 60 people who attended the open house, not everyone commented on the issue maps or vision wall. Project staff took notes from conversations and these common topics are shown in the categories below. This summary does not represent the number of times each vision or issue was heard. Many of the issues and visions contradict each other (visions are in **bold**).

Multnomah Channel

Environmental

- Provide native vegetation along the Greenway
- Plant native plants along channel
- Concern about impacts of transporting coal in open train cars to nearby residents
- Concerns about noise and hazards at train crossings with increased coal exports
- Can the state make money on the railroad use/trains? Some come back to residents to fix problems.
- Quarry dust affects Channel Island and Blue Heron Marinas
- Boat scraping operation discharging pollutants into river

Land use/zoning

- Complete Policies 10 and 11, moorage inventories
- Complete Policies 13, 14, 15, and 16, special plan area
- Create opportunity and flexibility for least invasive land uses.
- Recognize the channel as an urban area
- Rural reserves designations for marinas doesn't make sense
- Need clear interpretation of rural reserve rules (Multnomah Co., DLCD, and Metro have different interpretations)

Marinas

- Let the existing marinas expand, as long as traffic is handled responsibly; there are too many hurdles/rules now.
- Put sewer and pump stations in
- Displaced houseboats from CRC need to go somewhere.
- Marinas are legitimate and don't want be lumped with vagabond boaters
- Code interpretation for floating homes is an issue
- It is really cool living on the river

Vision:

Create a balanced mix of uses in the channel; for homes, water recreation, wildlife, and water quality.

- Restrict marina parking lots. Have parking lots with permeable surface like gravel- not paved/blacktop
- Restrict/minimize light pollution at marinas since they affect the river and houses on the hill
- Need a dark sky ordinance to address impacts of light pollution to the hillside.
- Rivers are for fish, not houses. Don't have moorages everywhere.
- The houseboats have positive place for wildlife, also preserve river bank. Moorages need to be, and most are, environmentally responsible.
- Marinas create a tax base for the County

Farmland/Agriculture

Agri-tourism

- Don't let Sauvie Island become a concert venue
- Restrict or prohibit agri-tourism
- Activities at farms are bringing too many people to island
- How does agri-tourism affect MUA zoning?

Farming

- Keep farming as the first priority
- Save agriculture and farming. Want it to be viable/profitable to farm here in 20 years.
- The lure of money to switch to mitigation/habitat restoration is strong.
- With the cost of diesel and minimum wage going up, farms are being pinched. Would hope future planning keeps farming profitable.
- Protect agriculture land for commercial agriculture
- Concern about relationship between crop values listed in the code and the cost of living/operating a farm.
- Conflicts between beaches visitors at same time there is high farm use (summer).

Potential subdivision of land

- Allow wildlife habitat deferrals on MUA land
- Keep Sauvie Island rural
- What about medical marijuana crops? Cash crops might make it easier to subdivide the land, increasing residential use.
- Keep island for farming – 120+ homes is too many in future. don't know how that could happen



All of the issues collected at the open house are shown in the lists to the left.

Business

- Need to address impacts of agri-tourism (traffic, noise from amplified music, non-agricultural activities)
- Heavy traffic businesses, like pumpkin patch, Kruger's need safe access to road (Gillihan Rd) via bike/ped lanes from parking lot and lower speed limits
- Shield very bright parking lot lights (pumpkin patch, Bella's specifically) – Dark Sky Ordinance

Transportation

Travel speeds

- High speed limit + heavy traffic = death
- Lower speed limits and better enforcement are needed (near Wapato Greenway and Sauvie Island Road dike)
- **Reduce speed limit on Gillihan Rd.** to 45 mph (now 55). Too many competing interests. Dangerous
- Excessive speed on Sauvie Island and Gillihan roads. Many drivers pay no attention to the 45 mph speed limit when they enter area where homes are located.
- More speed limitations and reduced to 45mph
- Need 35mph instead of 45mph due to foot traffic from Sauvie Island, Reeder, and Gillihan roads.

Traffic

- Charge/toll the bridge. Pay onetime fee if you live or work here. Charge bikes, have passes.
- Too many visitor attractions on the south side of the island (e.g. farm stand, mazes, corndog stand, etc.)
- Shuttle bus to beaches on weekends
- Traffic worse on Gillihan than on Sauvie Island Rd.
- Traffic counts in plan need to be by date/time for season issues (pumpkin patches)
- Provide more traffic controllers during peak Oct. and summer weekends to abate the chaos.

Vision:

Preserve the island's rural character, with low volume roads to accommodate bikes, pedestrians, cars, and farm equipment.

Parking

- People from off the island use the park and ride because it's end of bus route
- Parking permits for some areas

Bicycles and pedestrians

- Better to have single file law for bikes – weekend bikers do prohibit heavy equipment

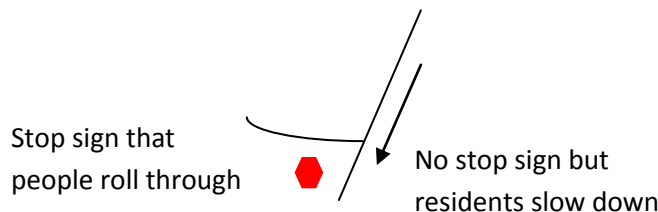
- Bike/pedestrian lane on Gillihan road from parking lot – required. There is heavy bike/pedestrian traffic year –round
- Bike/ped lanes on island loop. Bike trail around circle/dike for safety.
- Widen shoulders so pedestrians and bikes can safely use roads (specifically on Sauvie Island, Gillihan, Reeder roads)
- Lower speed limit on Gillihan Rd. near many residents with small children
- Bike permits – generate money from them
- Levee owned by Drainage District is not being used from Krugers to Wapato – use for **soft surface walking trail** – just mow it.
- Quantity of bicyclists is creating a very dangerous situation. A community solution may be best as there is no budget for larger roads.

Railroad crossings

- No Coal trains.
- Coal trains at at-grade crossings could really congest traffic (mile long trains ten times a day)
- Emergency response time issues with grade crossings

Other

- Fix car detector at bridge light – does not recognize lightweight cars waiting to turn left onto Hwy 30.
- Take care of weeds along the road – they spread to properties
- Plant/maintain native plant hedgerows on the right-of-ways
- Put reflectors on dike road for safety of elderly residents
- Wider shoulders on roads to accommodate large farm machinery
- Reeder Rd and S.I. Road needs to be improved



Residential

Services

- Flood and earthquake preparedness
- Natural gas

- Internet/cable service is a problem on some areas of the island

Channel

- Emergency plan for evacuating houseboat residents
- Hazardous electrical systems from houseboats can be very dangerous
- Building codes/standards for floating homes
- Wakes from boats can disturb houseboats
- Need urban services like sewer along channel – need pump-outs for boats.
- Need special zoning for mainmast floating homes

Recreation

Bicycles

- Don't allow bikes on the dike
- **Post bicycle rules at bridge** – BIG LETTERS – and enforce (before 10 mile loop at beginning and off bridge). Be aware of rules – more friendly and cheap option.
- Bicyclists think they own the road; it is an issue for everyone and getting worse. Most residents are against a bike path.
- Large groups of bikes need to ride single file, now they travel up to 4 wide. If you honk to say “please move over” and don't get mad (both drivers and bikes). Everyone should be courteous.
- License bicycles – it adds to funds and identifies owners when reporting an incident
- Require bikers to wear mirror on helmet (it increases safety for the rider)

Beaches and parks

- Charge to use beaches in summer to pay for improvements to the beaches and roads
- Wapato Park
- No trails thru Burlington Bottom – wetlands and wildlife = sacred area
- Walking/running path on dike for 7 mile trail (mow/cut down blackberries) – low cost
- Need community input on park changes
- What are long term plans (re: dogs)
- Have a leash free area for non-hunting dogs
- Change ordinance: allow pets on leash at Ferry Rd Park and dock (now it says no dogs). Almost all locals pick up after pets. Why is this in place? It's not a wildlife area, why is it protected?



Visions were collected on the walls and questionnaires.

- Have Metro patrol people practice “people skills” and education. Metro staff was rude.

Other

- Enhance wildlife habitat
- Need to reach out to businesses – need a CAC
- Need something to support local artists
- We need better emergency planning
- Need more support services
- Don’t want change – more people create more rules
- For the total community – keep laws as is – as far as growth is concerned. Limited development is working.
- Can/will you please remove the private roads from your maps

Printed questionnaires

Collection and respondent demographics

The following comments were collected through 44 printed questionnaires returned at the open house (12) or mailed back to the project team (32) before March 15, 2013. Most of the respondents lived or worked in the community; with the 97231 (Sauvie Island) ZIP code and a few marina owners had other ZIP codes listed. Most heard about the meeting through the neighborhood association, email, or the letter that was mailed to property owners.

Summary of responses

Visions

Survey respondents identified the following common visions or values for the community:

- Healthy and safe place to live for people, animals, and plants
- The balance between urban and rural; where people from urban areas can visit our community to enjoy the area and support farmers.
- Housing on island should be limited to protect farmland and natural areas. Population remaining stable (around 2,500). Same density and flavor – more farm than city.
- The connection the neighbors have with each other. I like knowing my neighbors on a first name basis. I value the quiet and dark skies. The close knit and caring community.
- The privilege of being able to live on an island. Being able to enjoy the wildlife and beauty of the farms, country, and river with outdoor opportunities (bike, run, hike, kayak, etc.)
- The clean air rural farm environment and small community
- Kept as rural as possible with emphasis on farm activities and farm/produce businesses
- Thriving agricultural economy with family ownership
- Access to rivers and lakes; cleaner river and more wild birds
- Transportation safety improvements for all travel modes (including horse riding)
- No coal trains along channel
- Less hunting and more birding/hiking
- There will not be a change of conditions
- The proximity to Portland

- Like to see farmers convert harvest roads into soft trails for bikes and pedestrians, which they would pay to use, so that farmers could earn an income on the length of trail on their land and they could maintain. Would be perfect for races and to increase farmer incomes.

Transportation issues

Bicycle and pedestrians

- Spring, summer, and fall have highest traffic needs, especially for bicyclist and pedestrians. Visitor impacts (traffic, noise, air pollution)
- Bike/pedestrian trail to circle island
- Bicycle paths; off main roadways especially on the dike road. Control influx of bikes or at least enforce single file. Bike use is getting more intense every year, especially in the summer.
- Remove all bicycle traffic and don't have bike paths. Have a fee for visiting the island.
- Years ago there were safety signs near the bridge/store that outlined bike rules on the island – single file, etc. it should be brought back. It is not uncommon on weekends to see large groups of bike riders (20 or more) riding onto the island and on many of the roads. The riders do not ride single file and do not move to let vehicles pass. Our roads are so narrow for group rides and races and safety of all a primary concern - this needs to be stopped.
- Bicycles should have a license and the rule changed to single file because of narrow roads
- Work to get bicyclists to obey the rules. There are still too many taking up a lane of traffic rather than pulling to the side when cars approach. Share the road works both ways.
- Lack of enforcement of bike riders who seem to disregard the rules of the road
- Safety for cyclists and lower volume/speed of vehicles

Road traffic and issues

- Increased events lead to excessive amounts of traffic and create a threat to residents needing medical treatment. Residents should not have to make changes to their travel behavior due to the congestion from summer traffic (which has hindered emergency response times).
- Control influx of beachgoers; shuttle service with parking near bridge?
- Install a road/use-activated light at the bridge on-ramp coming from Gillihan to keep traffic from pilling up during high use.
- For the dike on Sauvie Island Road widening and improvement; expensive but long over-due
- Consider putting reflectors on the dike between the bridge and Reeder Road so that people can see the edge of the road more easily in foggy weather. It is dangerous driving in the winter.
- Collector roads should be improved to county standards. They are currently a danger to all users – autos, bikes, pedestrians, and farm vehicles

- Rebuild Sauvie Island, Gillihan, and Reeder roads to county standards. The roads are not safe. There are too many conflicts between modes.
- Compensate land owners for loss of frontage from road widening. If roads were to be widened land owners should not have to pay. Money from bike licenses should be the money used to widen all over the state.
- Transportation and congestion issues will grow worse in the future. I think there will need to be more traffic control by Multnomah County. Monitor cars and boat speeds some way.

Other transportation issues

- Coal trains; need more state laws protecting land alongside railroad tracks from pollution
- The only transportation concern has been addressed with the new bridge. Don't expand the transportation system.
- Public transport access; light rail or more frequent bus stops and quicker turn around times. Another person said they don't want public transportation on the island.
- Need to do a transportation study to take care of increased usage but lessen the impact on the residents
- The fire department race on July 4th, which sends the message that the side roads are safe when they aren't.
- More river patrols are needed; post boat speed limits

Land use issues

Multnomah Channel/floating homes

- Multnomah channel is important as a residential and business corridor
- Floating homes should be part of viable communities with redevelopment potential and conversion of marinas to homes
- Need a vision for island and channel issues for 2013 and beyond. Marinas and moorages need to have their own zoning category to address issues specific to water-oriented living/working/playing.
- Protect floating homes and reconcile County/Metro conflict with rural reserve designations

Rural, farm use

- The allure of the island is in its current state. More homes/more visitors/more traffic will spoil the beauty.
- The 80 acre EFU minimum lot size is appropriate to preserve agricultural land for commercial farm use; it is needed as a minimum to preserve farming
- Keep EFU strictly enforced

- Look at small EFU parcels individually to allow some to have at least one dwelling if it cannot be farmed due to financial hardship, since that is not beneficial to the community (no taxes).
- Rethink some of the zoning overlays; parcels of land should drive decision for use and there should be some leniency for locating single family dwellings
- No developments, golf courses, or prisons. Do not allow high density subdivisions

Regulation and enforcement

- Provide the same tax deferrals to MUA properties for protecting their lands in wildlife habitat that is provided for EFU properties. Limit development and promote ecological restoration of water, land, and air.
- Need better land use regulations, particularly for the Willamette Greenway regulations which are weak and poorly written. County should have objective, clear, and enforceable codes.
- There are inadequate enforcement of land use approval conditions and County ordinances; there are illegal dwellings and farm stands that aren't permitted.
- Stress private property rights and in most cases better care of property will follow
- Refer to the Flood Insurance Rate maps (FIRMs) for the area, there are portions that are in a special flood hazard area. Refer to that, the Flood Insurance Study, and the County's floodplain ordinance when reviewing any proposed development in the Special Flood Hazard Area.

Agri-tourism/Farm Stands

- Need clarity on the definition of farm stands; it will be hard but it is important. Regulate and enforce businesses, especially those without permits and require non-profit business to be licensed.
- Better rules regarding the types and enforcement of events on farm and residential lands on Sauvie Island
- Efforts to host large events on the island should not be permitted. The primary resources – agricultural land, wildlife habitat – must be preserved, maintained and protected for their primary economic (agricultural) and resource use (wildlife habitat) uses. Recreational activities like hunting, fishing, visiting the beach, bird watching are fine, but the island should not become a location for big events like concerts, banquets, and the like. Don't concentrate events on the same days or time of year because there is only one access point and narrow roads, which makes it more congested. Encourage other recreational activities that are spread out over the year and not dependent upon businesses.
- Restrict commercial events, especially entertainment, which strains resources and roads along with unacceptable noise levels. I do not object to the uses and activities that the legislature clearly authorized for farm stands, such as harvest festivals, corn mazes, pumpkin patches, etc. These uses are either primarily educational or primarily to support sales of farm products. But the same is not true for fee-based weddings, business or youth gatherings.

- Agri-tourism unrelated to farming (music festivals and kiddie attractions). I like Kruger's activities for the kid's sake, but wouldn't want to see multiple farms holding concerts or other activities that create more noise and congestion.
- I would not oppose one or even two farm-to-plate dinners per commercial farm annually on a farm that is at least 80 acres in size, where the farm operator can demonstrate that they actually farm at least 80 acres.
- Regulate agri-tourism about where the event takes place, sanitation, water quality, and impacts to neighbors.

Other business

- There is a mixture of large commercial growers and smaller "boutique" retail growers. The agri-tourism rules that are developed need to be balanced so that smaller operations aren't penalized/prohibited from creative opportunities to bring the public to their farms.
- Provide adequate signage for licensed business on the island.
- Restaurants and food service can and should be located off-island, in Linnton or St Johns. It may be that one or two food carts are permissible at farm stands during festivals or on summer weekends, but no more.
- Encourage more developments in the Linnton area (for the entire community and for industry to improve quality of life)
- Small developments could occur at the southern end of the island, boutiques and one-of-a-kind development to enhance the island. Another person said they don't want any new development on the island.

Environmental and recreation

- Wildlife habitat can and should be improved. The county should plant or encourage the planting of native vegetation along roadways, fence lines, ponds, and water sources to support wildlife and provide greater habitat connectivity.
- No expansion of parking at the beaches. Concerns about overuse of the beaches. Institute a charge for beach visitation to help pay for the volunteer fire department.
- Some expansion of parking at Wapato State Park is ok. Another person said they don't want to see increased parking because it will be more a city park and no longer wild.
- Water quality at Sturgeon Lack and Gilbert River
- Cooperation with ODFW could lead to more times for access for birding/hiking land
- More access to winter wildlife areas for hikers and birders. Re-evaluate closure of all wildlife areas in winter except to hunters
- Lack of sewer along the channel; to protect waters and citizens. A plan for future expansion moving down Hwy 30 from Linnton to service homes on the Channel and along the Hwy.

- Stop the use of ODFW pesticides and all pesticide use on the island, make it organic.

Most important issues

Respondents indicated the following issues as the most important (both now and in the future):

- Traffic restrictions, regulations, and enforcement. Traffic (safety, volume, noise, speed).
- Slower speed limits in congested areas; Sauvie Island Road from Reeder Road to Wapato Park
- Making the roads safe for all modes of transportation; create bike path or loop. Upkeep of roads/infrastructure to support day-use visitors and residents
- Bicycle access and controlling it; a permit to access and ride on the island. Better enforcement of biking violations on Sauvie Island.
- Increase education; some property owners are very rigid in their views of “us vs. them”
- Railroad crossing along Hwy 30
- Police and ambulance services
- Mass transit
- More river patrol (no wake zones in marina areas)
- Protecting water resources; enhance native plantings in the riparian edges and upland areas.
- Bank stabilization to protect the dike
- Plan for sewer expansion along Hwy 30. Add port-a-potty and water break stations on the island.
- Business installations; provide proper signage for licensed businesses; regulate unlicensed businesses and events (including non-profits). Encourage specialty farms to sell at farmers markets off the island.
- Agri-tourism benefits/concerns. Limit and/or restrict tourist related events on the island. Don’t adopt an agri-tourism position for the island and limit mass public gatherings.
- Rural reserve conflicts; pressure for development/residential expansion; Limit development outside the urban growth boundary.
- Keeping the area livable with its rural character and wildlife protection
- Addressing the increased population influx in the Portland area that will use Sauvie Island for recreation
- Protect family agriculture; keep the area a farming community. Don’t subdivide for smaller parcels.
- Congestion and the use of Wapato Park
- Enforce a daily pass requirement at Reeder Beach to pay for facilities

- Public safety (flood protection, levee maintenance, etc)
- Esco dump site (low level radiation)
- Stop ODFW pesticides and other pollution
- Clean up and prohibit environmental hazards; don't allow coal trains
- Historical marker for Multnomah Tribe at the bridge parking lot to commemorate the 900-person Multnomah tribe that once lived on the island in the summer. The entire tribe is extinct and the tragedy should be acknowledged.

Other issues or topics raised

- Current sheriff's office provides a visible presence and outstanding operations
- The Burlington Bottoms area should receive a protected closed wildlife area
- Removal of Enyart's ship scraping structures operations on the Multnomah Channel across from the Ferry Road.
- There are illegal fills and Zidel fill site on the island is incongruous with the island uses; these activities should be banned and restricted.
- Noise pollution (aircraft from student helicopter pilots from Hillsboro) and light pollution have significantly impacted the island's rural environment over the past several years
- Need for better internet service throughout the island
- Currently we need help from Multnomah County with Special Districts Organization with in the county. Sauvie Island Drainage District reformed a few years ago to escape compression. Many people on the island live outside our old drainage district but receive benefit from our dikes and ditches. We have no way to include them in our district so they can help pay the ever growing costs.
- The old plan speaks to what a unique area Sauvie Island is in both the state and the entire nation. We would like to protect it from being loved beyond its capacity by agri-tourism and beach traffic in the summer.
- Enforce your code and ordinances; compliant driven, voluntary compliance does not work. The county is losing respect and it's hurting the island.
- Most residents follow the zoning law, but we've reported our neighbors several times without changes from the County and more people living in the area (in trailers). No one replies back to us about those reports. Isn't it illegal?
- The plan should be a working document with benchmarks and mandatory language
- Need to update the plan; you have raised expectations through this scoping process

- Make an assessment of the current state of affairs on the island and channel; how things are not keeping up with the times; address changes and new suggestions for updating the plan. County needs to look at these areas with a progressive and protective eye.
- Make sure that all “land planners” do not change the laws or take payoffs from special interest folks
- Overnight fee for the dock may be beneficial; there is a need for parking near the Dike Road and facilities for fishing
- Big plastic boats and ski-dos are degrading the channel from noise, erosion, and public disturbance due to boat wakes
- The use of Sauvie Island game preserve by gun people shooting released pigeons is unacceptable; it is intolerable for some people and pets
- If property owners felt there was something in it for them they may be more amendable, but now they are only hassled by the island being loved to death. It seems that landowners are paying a disproportionate amount for someone else’s recreation. We pay for the dike/levy, fire and police, traffic, trash, crashes into fences. There are a million visitors using the services for a couple hundred people.
- There should be “don’t disturb the locals” signs; people are always coming on my land and asking tons of questions or to have a picnic in the yard or to use the bathroom.
- My family settled on Sauvie’s Island in 1849, I have lived here 74 years. The old timers have never been asked what they want. We get steamrolled by the new, small acreage people who have moved to the island. The planning commission has never listened. The island will never be the quiet rural area that I grew up in. Is that progress?
- Engage the community for ideas on revenue generation. We are all in this together, so working toward fiscal solutions is something we should do as one community.
- Be careful how you use the data, enough farm land has been destroyed already and it’s impossible to reclaim. It should be people that are knowledgeable about the island and farming that are making the decisions.
- We were told in 1984 that a bike path was on the books, but the Grange resisted the idea. With our proximity to downtown we would serve the public, young and old, with a bike path and business for islanders.

Online questionnaires

Collection and respondent demographics

The following comments were collected through the online questionnaire. 126 people completed the questionnaire online and there appears that one person accidentally submitted a comment 3 times (there response has been included once in the summary below). Most respondents heard about the questionnaire through news articles (27), word-of-mouth (24), email (19), and “other” venues (39); a large number of respondents heard about the questionnaire through the BikePortland.org blog and Facebook.

Just over half (55%) of respondents live or work on Sauvie Island; ZIP code 97231 (Sauvie Island) occurred most frequently, followed by ZIP codes from the City of Portland. Almost all respondents indicated that English was the primary language spoken at home and most respondents were Caucasian and over 50 years of age.

Summary of responses

Visions

Survey respondents identified the following common visions or values for the community:

- Rural farming atmosphere: many respondents identified this as an important value to maintain into the future (often referred to as “community”).
- Unique circumstances of the island: the undeveloped nature and proximity of the island to the Portland metro region make Sauvie Island unique.
- Access to and ability to live on the water
- Natural areas & wildlife
- Bicycle tourism is important

Issues

Transportation

Survey respondents identified the following transportation issues:

- Traffic congestion is (or will become) bad: many respondents were concerned about traffic congestion, particularly on weekends and during holidays and events.
- Transit service is lacking

- Safe cycling facilities are needed: this was a common concern for many respondents. A related concern is that cycling traffic is currently too heavy, creating dangerous conflicts.
- Safe pedestrian facilities are needed
- Traffic enforcement is lacking; speeding is a particular problem on the Island.
- Keep the transportation system constrained: do not expand vehicle capacity on the island.

Land use and environmental

- The island community will experience excessive pressure from recreational visitors. A related concern is that the island's rural atmosphere will be compromised as a result.
- Do not change land uses on the island; prevent sprawl and development.
- Recreational beach use is high with no support services
- Camping facilities are lacking
- Agro-tourism needs to be better accommodated
- Regulate land use to prevent sprawl
- Do not increase land regulation: some respondents would like some regulations revised so that farmland can be used for a greater variety of economic uses.
- Allow for some compact, mixed-use, sustainable development
- No structures should be allowed that block views
- Natural areas should be restored
- Invasive species are a growing problem
- Water quality should be improved
- Issues surrounding access to Oregon Fish & Wildlife lands on the island

Other

- Island residents should not have to pay for improvements warranted by outside visitors
- Consider the needs of Island residents first and foremost
- Prevent coal trains from using rail lines near the Island

Most important issues

Respondents indicated the following issues as the most important (both now and in the future):

- Traffic safety for all users
- Address speeding; increase traffic enforcement
- Increase road maintenance

- Bicycle access to the island is poor on Highway 30
- Need for safe cycling facilities
- Need for safe pedestrian facilities
- Preserve the rural atmosphere while accommodating recreational users
- Preserve the island in its current state
- Keep agriculture viable
- Large events need to be better regulated
- Make land use regulations clear
- Protect wildlife habitat
- Public safety: many respondents are concerned about crime, including theft and vandalism. Emergency response time is also a concern.

Additional outreach

Multnomah County Planning Commission briefing

On Monday, March 4, 2013 Kevin Cook presented a staff report to the Multnomah County Planning Commission. Kevin informed the group that staff has begun a scoping project for the Channel and Sauvie Island Rural Plan Area to gather feedback from citizens, property owners, and other stakeholders regarding land use and transportation issues important to them. The County has contracted with CH2M HILL to compile this information into a scoping report. The last Scoping Report was done in 1995 and preceded the 1997 Rural Area Plan. The Rural Area Plan includes the portion of Sauvie Island within Multnomah County and both sides of the Multnomah Channel, inclusive of properties east of and adjacent to Hwy 30. We anticipate a report in May of this year, which we will share with the Commissioners prior to presenting a final report to the Board of County Commissioners. They will decide how best to respond to the issues compiled in this report.

Joanna Valencia added that in addition to the Rural Area Plan, this scoping effort is also taking a look at the Transportation System Plan (TSP), last updated in 1998. That plan included areas of the West Hills, so an update to the TSP would likely match what the Rural Area Plan is going to look like geographically, as Kevin described. Joanna described the various outreach efforts the team is engaged in. They anticipate creating a focus group from interested participants.

The Commissioners were asked to share their thoughts:

- Ingle thought that it would be helpful to try to elicit the severity of the issues and severity of the conflict. We hear about many of the complaints, but on a scale of one to ten, how do they rank?
- Foster asked how the agencies were going to be involved, and Kevin said they have stakeholder outreaches which involve many government agencies, local, State and Federal, as well as non-government groups that have concerns on the Island. Foster stated that the Channel is pretty distinct from the Island and does not want them to get lost in the discussion. He would like some expert recommendations from involved agencies.
- DeBoni said that as both a Planning Commissioner and an Island resident, he would like to see information about the circulation system, transportation alternatives, safety, and health issues/emergency services, so that when they are faced with making recommendations, they will be able to make informed decisions.
- Kessinger said he had been to some conferences recently, one addressing policy problems with agri-tourism, and found that some of the other counties have some good suggestions and/or solutions to some of the issues involved. He thought it would be wise to research and perhaps incorporate some of their ideas.

- Rettig mentioned that farm stands are probably going to be a trend and should be addressed. DeBoni said there is a lot of concern about safety on the island with the volume of people attracted to events.
- There was discussion about the constraints involved with bike paths due to the physical capacity of the Island.
- There is only a volunteer fire department, with one road in and one road out, a lot of farm trucks, pedestrians, bicycles, with increased traffic levels, so there are concerns about the emerging health and safety issues because of the level of activity, as opposed to the kind of activity. People would like to see a balance of activities rather than a never ending escalation.
- As for the three most important issues for Multnomah County to address:
 - DeBoni said increase in public usage is the most important driving issue, because that drives the rest of them.
 - Foster said, keep in mind that it is an island, with limited resources, and cannot expand outward. Foster said that, because of that, there have to be some limitations on some of the uses.
 - DeBoni agreed saying that in other urban areas, there are options for improving services such as roadways, access, and emergency services, however, those options do not exist on Sauvie Island.
 - Kessinger believes that there needs to be a big plan to determine how to make all of these problems work together. This island is a beautiful place for a huge metro area, and will continue to draw people, so there should be ways to ameliorate the problems.
 - DeBoni agreed that people will continue to come to the Island, but we can possibly control the generators of the activities.
 - Ingle said they need to maintain a sustainability balance because there are limits to the capacity of the Island. Ingle would like to get people's perceptions on limiting events, increasing user fees and such.
- Kevin said another thing to consider is SB 960, state rules that allow other agri-tourism activities.
- Kessinger submitted handouts from the Oregon agri-tourism Summit he attended, defining the business sectors, which could be helpful to the group.
- Ingle reiterated that he does not want the Channel to get lost in this discussion; should they think about separating the two? DeBoni suggested it could be a subsection. Valencia said that in regards to transportation, they have been very mindful of that issue.

Sauvie Island Community Association (SICA) general meeting

On Thursday, February 21, 2013 Kevin Cook and Joanna Valencia attended the Sauvie Island Community Association (SICA) general meeting to announce the open house on March 7, 2013. The meeting was held at the Sauvie Island Grange Hall located at 14443 NW Charlton Road near the Sauvie Island School and was well attended (estimate 35+). Copies of the questionnaire and other materials were distributed.

Land use discussion

Following the open house announcement, there was a general discussion regarding agri-tourism. Mark Greenfield, who chairs the SICA Land Use Committee, led the discussion. County staff answered some general, technical questions regarding the regulatory environment as it exists today, permitting processes, and the evolution of farm stand permits in the County over the years.

Much of the discussion centered on Oregon Senate Bill 960 which provides language regarding how counties may go about regulating agri-tourism on EFU lands apart from what is currently allowed under farm stands and/or mass gatherings. Multnomah County has, to date, not taken up SB 960 and at this point in time is not required to adopt provisions in SB 960. It is unclear whether changes to SB 960 will be taken up by the latest session.

Citizen comments to staff

Scoping Report process

- Concern that if an update to the Rural Area Plan (RAP) and Transportation System Plan (TSP) proceed that the County may fast track the effort and might not take the time needed to carefully weigh diverse issues and resulting policies.
- Concern that if updates to the RAP/TSP occur, that they will then be shelved and there will be lack of follow through once the updates are adopted. Also heard similar comments that once a plan is adopted, there is an implied mandate to follow through with it.

Farming

- Farmers sometimes need an economic shot in the arm, so agri-tourism is something to consider.
- Some farmers disagree and prefer to focus on their core business.
- Some talk regarding the price of farm land driving the need for new farmers to take up agri-tourism and/or events in order to make the mortgage.
- A few comments spoke to the changing nature of how urbanites view farmland (as a destination and a source of locally grown food) as opposed to times in the past (the hinterlands).

Transportation

- County should consider cumulative traffic impacts with respect to peak summer and fall visitation season when approving new uses on the island.

Sauvie Island/Multnomah Channel



- Emergency service vehicles –from volunteer Sauvie Island fire department and/or Scappoose cannot respond to emergencies in a timely fashion.
- Road and traffic conflicts include narrow roads/constrained right of ways with bicycle, cars, and farm equipment all using the roads. Conflicts have resulted in heated exchanges between users of different modes.
- Several citizens noted that beach users cause much of the traffic problems through the summer apart from farm stands/farm events. Question regarding whether the Wildlife Refuge should charge more and better manage parking and activities at beaches.
- Quality of life issues raised by residents included traffic, noise, and a change from a sleepy rural setting to a major tourist destination.



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April 4, 2013

Kevin Cook
Multnomah County Land Use and Transportation Program
1600 SE 190th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97233

Subject: Sauvie Island/Multnomah Channel Plan Update

Dear Kevin:

On April 2, 2013, the Board of Directors of the Sauvie Island Community Association (SICA) met to develop SICA's responses to the County's questionnaire regarding our vision for how the island and channel should look in 20 years. We appreciate the opportunity to voice our opinion and submit these comments on behalf of the community association. Because we see a number of areas for improvement, we do encourage the county to move ahead with a revision to the 1997 Sauvie Island/Multnomah Channel Plan and Transportation System Plan.

1. What do you value most about the Sauvie Island community?

SICA values most those aspects of the island that make it unique and livable:

- The island's rural setting and "sense of place", including its openness, its low population, its agriculture setting and wildlife habitat, and its opportunity for recreational activities like fishing, hunting, bird watching, hiking, and boating.
- The "serenity of place" one feels upon coming onto the island – that special, unique quality of the island reflected in its rural agricultural and natural resource character, its openness, its low population, and its low to moderate level of use.
- The fact that the island feels like a "real community" of people.

2. How do you envision the community in 20 years.

Generally, we'd like to see little or no change. We want to preserve the existing character of the island, with the following changes:

- A safer transportation system for all modes of travel. This means roads built to safety standards and a bike/pedestrian path along the dike.
- Enhanced wildlife resources with improvements to habitat and better connectivity.
- We believe the island may be reaching its carrying capacity, especially on summer and early fall weekends and at the beaches. We do not want to see significant expansion of recreational visitations given the limitations of the island in terms of infrastructure and services. The scale of new development should be in keeping with the existing character of the island.

3. What transportation concerns must be addressed to reach that vision.

We would like Multnomah County to do the following during the next 20 years:

- Bring Sauvie Island, Gillihan, and Reeder Roads up to current safety standards.
- Provide bike/pedestrian paths to reduce conflicts between travel modes.
- Bring dikes up to current safety standards.

- Find a way to limit the number of daily visitors to avoid traffic backups; the number of visitors should not exceed the island's capacity to accommodate them (e.g., parking spaces) or its ability to provide emergency services.

4. What land use concerns must be addressed to reach that vision.

A main concern is that farms engaging in events and activities be commercial farm operations where the production of farm crops remains the primary activity and events are clearly subordinate to farming.

- For farm stands, find an effective way to apply and enforce the 25% limitation on sales of retail non-farm items and fee-based promotional events, consistent with state policy to preserve and protect farm land for farm uses.
- Limit large events and even simultaneous smaller events that can adversely impact the island's rural character and charm or overwhelm its infrastructure or carrying capacity.
- Ensure that both individually and cumulatively, events remain incidental to the rural agricultural character of the area and of the farm properties on which they are located; fee-based activities must play a minor role in comparison to the production of farm products on the farms where they occur.
- Revise the code to include standards that are more clearly and objectively stated.
- Avoid vague and ambiguous language in land use approval conditions and provide better code enforcement; vague conditions, a complaint driven approach and voluntary compliance orders are not effective.

5. What are the 3 most important issues for the county to address in the plan?

SICA sees the following as the three most important issues for the county to address:

- Preserving and enhancing the agricultural features and natural resources of the island that give the island its character and make it unique.
- Transportation safety for all modes of travel (including farm equipment) and emergency preparedness (through an adequate roadway system).
- Levee maintenance and flood protection.

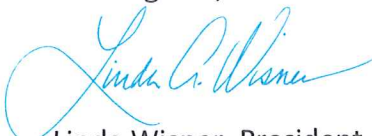
6. Anything else we want to say?

There are several other things we'd like to see in the next 20 years:

- Better cell tower coverage and internet service. Islanders should not be left in the dark ages when it comes to providing this service.
- Improve the quality of Sturgeon Lake and other island water resources.
- Provide a plan that goes beyond being merely "aspirational"; give the plan meaning with real policies that make it a working document.
- Update and improve the zoning code; be more clear and objective in the standards; eliminate ambiguities in code language wherever possible.

Again, we appreciate this opportunity to provide comments and ask that you keep us involved throughout the plan update process.

Best regards,



Linda Wisner, President
Sauvie Island Community Association