



CITY OF
West Linn

Memorandum

Date: July 2, 2009

To: Patti Galle, Mayor
Members, West Linn City Council

From: Chris Jordan, City Manager 

Subject: Monthly Report on Stafford Area

Attached is Tom Coffee's monthly update on the Stafford area and continuing regional discussions on growth.

Tom I scheduled to attend Council work session on July 13 and July 20 to assist in Council discussions of the reserve process. .

Attachment

MEMORANDUM

June 30, 2009

TO: Mayor Galle and City Council Members

FROM: Tom Coffee, Consultant 

SUBJECT: Stafford Area Report for June 2009

Overview

In June, regional meetings at Metro focused on the numbers in the Urban Growth Reports on projected residential and employment growth and the assumptions behind them. While at the local level, the Counties continued their analysis and evaluation of the candidate rural and urban reserve areas.

The Clackamas County Policy Advisory Committee, at its meeting on June 23, 2009, concluded that the Stafford Area north of I-205 should not be designated as a rural reserve area. The Committee will discuss the issue of whether the area should be designated as an urban reserve area in July.

The Urban Growth Reports Debate

The residential and employment growth reports both concluded that, with a continuation of existing polices and additional specific policy actions, the existing Urban Growth Boundary could accommodate the next twenty years of population and employment growth. The assumptions underlying these conclusions are now being scrutinized and debated at the regional level. Generally speaking, the assumptions are being questioned by Washington County and several of its cities while the other two Counties and their cities are accepting the assumptions and the challenge of maintaining a tight urban growth boundary. The Metro Council will make the final determination on the assumptions and the capacity of the existing urban growth boundary when it adopts the Urban Growth Reports in December.

Clackamas County Policy Advisory Committee Action

The Clackamas County Policy Advisory Committee took up the question of whether the Stafford Area north of I-205 should be considered further for a rural reserve designation. The County Staff had suggested that only the Tualatin River and Wilson Creek be designated rural reserves because they were identified on the Metro Natural Landscapes Features map. Two members of the committee voted to designate the area rural, six members voted to designate only the Tualatin River and Wilson Creek as rural and eight members voted to not designate any of the area as rural reserve. Councilor Cummings' summary of the meeting is attached as additional information.

The CCPAC found it difficult to recommend that the North Stafford Area be designated as a rural reserve despite the information presented by the City of West Linn and the testimony of numerous citizens. The factors are weighted toward agriculture and forestry with importance also given to significant landscape features that are subject to urbanization and natural disasters or hazards; and contribute to water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, a sense of place, a buffer between urban and rural or natural resource areas and easy access to recreational opportunities. Clearly the CCPAC chose to ignore the presence of the significant natural landscape features of the North Stafford Area as well as the stated preferences of the citizens who presented testimony, the Cities of West Linn and Lake Oswego and the majority of the residents of the Stafford Hamlet.

On June 30, 2009, Councilor Cummings attempted to get the Committee to reconsider their position on the rural reserve designation in light of their actions on other candidate areas. The Committee did not change their position but one member commented that just because the area was not recommended for rural did not mean that it would be recommended for urban. Another member commented that he thought that it was neither rural nor urban and that it required a unique or special designation. Commissioner Lehan also commented that she thought that it was not rural or urban and that the semi-rural area should receive a special designation because of the unique land use functions it provides for both the urban and rural areas.

The advice of the Committee will be forwarded to the County Commissioners as input to their recommendation to the Reserves Steering Committee which is scheduled to be made on September 8, 2009. The County Planning Commission has requested that it be allowed to gather public input on the reserves decision-making process and also provide their recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners. The County Planning Commission is scheduled to hold a public hearing on August 10, 2009.

Observations

If the North Stafford Area is left undesignated at the end of this process it would mean that the Area would not be considered for any expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary until 2016. The disadvantage would be that its future designation beyond 2016 would remain in question. However, if the Cities of West Linn and Lake Oswego and Clackamas County could agree on a long term plan and land use designation for the area that would be acceptable to the State and Metro, the lack of an urban or rural reserve designation over the next five years would have allowed time for a permanent Stafford solution to be achieved.

June 23, 2009

Clackamas Reserves Policy Advisory Committee Meeting for Rural Reserves recommendations

As the PAC committee reviewed rural reserves factors for areas G through M, there was about a 50/50 split that favored rural factors either identified by staff or PAC members familiar with the areas. As the group went through the list, they were usually divided 50/50 between protecting rural/natural/buffers features and avoiding rural designations.

Stafford Triangle area "N", obviously the Elephant in the Room, was introduced with nervous laughter. Walt Gamble from the Hamlet pointed out Clackamas mapping errors that omitted Wilson Creek and the Tualatin Loop area and left other natural resource areas unaddressed. I was allowed to supply West Linn's natural features map to PAC members for reference but some members objected to the new information.

Clackamas staff's suggestion to designate the natural features was not supported as it had been for other areas even though only natural features identified by Metro's (incomplete) mapping were allowed. Despite the fact that Stafford is the most threatened by urbanization, factors supporting rural buffers were ignored by the group.

It was extremely disappointing to see only two PAC members, Doug Neely and I, vote for a rural reserve designation considering the extent that PAC members supported other rural areas. There was little explanation from members who had freely articulated their opinions regarding for or against rural designation for other areas...just an odd silence.

The rural reserves process will be wrapped up this Tuesday, June 30th at the Development Services Building, 150 Beavercreek Rd, Oregon City for area **S-Pete's Mountain** and also M-Clackanomah, O- East of Wilsonville, P-West of Wilsonville, Q-French Prairie, R-Parret Mountain. Since public comment will be accepted for a limited period of time, it is wise to show up early to submit your request to speak. I am hoping that the PAC could be persuaded to reconsider their votes.

Urban recommendations are scheduled July 14th and to be completed at the next meeting, July 28th.

From now until the Clackamas Planning Commission public hearing scheduled August 10, if we want to protect the rural character of Stafford and Pete's Mountain, we must make it perfectly clear in every possible way.

Teri Cummings