

Friends of French Prairie

Friends of French Prairie
is an Oregon non-profit corporation

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December 3, 2014

Chair John Ludlow
Commissioners Paul Savas, Tootie Smith, Martha Schrader, Jim Bernard
Clackamas County Commission
2051 Kaen Road
Oregon City, OR 97045

Dear Commissioners;

It was with great concern that we were recently made aware of the new strategic plan “Performance Clackamas: Clackamas County Strategic Plan” that was adopted on September 18, 2014. As proponents of local agriculture and land use, our concerns center in two areas.

First, based on the information we have been able to obtain, it appears that this new strategic plan was compiled, adopted and released with little, if any, formal input from the major stakeholders in Clackamas County. Specifically, we are unable to confirm that any of the cities or Community Planning Organizations in the County were involved in a structured and formal process to define shortcomings in the previous strategic plan and put forward suggestions for needs and ideas to be incorporated into a new strategic plan. Additionally, it does not appear that any of the stakeholders had the opportunity to comment on the final plan before it was released.

Second, elements in this strategic plan strike us as very problematic. The financial goals (i.e. 10,000 family wage jobs and wages earned above the national average and home ownership of 72 percent or greater) seem to be exceedingly difficult to achieve in a five year time line. Additionally, development goals like a “20-year supply of serviceable non-retail employment land,” employment land including “large lot industrial...to provide 500 jobs within a nine-month window,” and an additional 120 miles of county roads plus “I-5 access to Canby,” can only be achieved at the expense of ag lands.

We know full well that the majority of residents living in the Clackamas County portion of French Prairie are opposed to major development at the expense high quality agricultural land. As stated above many of these goals which involve commercial development and rural roads cannot be achieved without impacting ag land. Additionally achieving them would almost certainly require the overturn of the Rural Reserves designation for the French Prairie portion of Clackamas County, to which there is equal majority opposition. The February 2014 Court of Appeals ruling remanding the LCDC order regarding Stafford's Urban Reserve designation does not provide the grounds for seeking to change the Rural Reserves designation in other parts of the County.

Much of this outcome of the new Clackamas County strategic plan can be summarized as major development "south of the river," and we reiterate the opposition of the majority of residents to this – in addition to the "on the record" position of the City of Wilsonville who (as the closest municipality) would likely be looked to for urban services.

We understand that Clackamas County is considering undertaking activity in the next Legislative session to try to change the Rural Reserves designation for French Prairie. We want to assure you that Friends of French Prairies, our members, allies and the majority of your local constituents strongly oppose this undertaking and are prepared to oppose it locally and in Salem.

Finally, we are including for your consideration the enclosed booklet "Champoeg and French Prairie," which summarized the pivotal role of French Prairie in Oregon's history, as well as its critically important ag lands that are what make local agricultural such an important sector in State and local economies.

Oregon's historic and agricultural heartland needs to be preserved, not developed!

Sincerely



Benjamin D Williams

President, Board of Directors

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