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Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission

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November 5, 2012

Dear Mayor Adams and City Council,

On July 24, 2012 the Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) held a public hearing on the City's draft request for Metro determination of substantial compliance with Title 13, Nature in Neighborhoods. Title 13 of the Regional Urban Growth Management Functional Plan requires Metro area cities and counties to demonstrate that they have established programs sufficient to protect and restore regionally significant natural resources. Roughly 19,000 acres of these natural resource areas are located within the city of Portland.

The PSC appreciated the collaboration between the bureaus of Planning and Sustainability, Environmental Services, Parks and Recreation, and Development Services in putting together the request. Staff provided information about the impressive array of zoning regulations, non-zoning regulations, and non-regulatory programs that comprise Portland's Title 13 compliance package. This request confirms the critical role of City environmental overlay zones and plan districts, stormwater management manual, willing-seller land acquisition, incentives for trees and ecoroofs, culvert replacement, and other listed programs in meeting watershed goals not only for the city but for the region as a whole.

The PSC also appreciated remarks from a Metro Council representative and Metro staff who expressed support for Portland's natural resource related programs and Title 13 compliance approach.

Several members of the public testified at the hearing. Most supported the compliance request, although the PSC heard some concern that recent legal challenges and budget cuts could constrain City planning and programmatic efforts to protect and restore Portland's watersheds. Most testifiers and the PSC also supported staff's proposal that the City and Metro enter into a separate, voluntary, 10-year Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) as a statement of intent to continue watershed-health related efforts and collaboration after Metro finds the City in compliance with Title 13.

After closing the July 24th hearing, the PSC voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council approve the Title 13 compliance request. The PSC also asked staff for the opportunity to review the draft IGA. On October 10, 2012 the PSC reviewed and endorsed the draft IGA and adopting ordinance, directing staff to forward these documents to Council along with the City's Title 13 compliance request.

The PSC recognizes that Title 13 compliance is an important milestone. However, sustaining healthy watersheds will require long-term effort and investment. The PSC believes that the



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IGA, while not required, will confirm the City's and Metro's intent to continue key efforts in this regard. Establishing the IGA is particularly timely given upcoming planning decisions for the Central City, Willamette River and West Hayden Island. And the Comprehensive Plan Update offers opportunities for further City/Metro collaboration in addressing challenging policy issues, including how to meet goals for watershed health and industrial land supply, and how to encourage ecologically sensitive development as the City and region grows.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Andre' Baugh
Chair

