Multnomah County

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Submitted values are:

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Testimony:
To Whom It May Concern:

There are multiple, glaring ways in which Metro's proposed trail development plans contradict their stated (and voter-approved) goals. The primary contradiction is that McCarthy Creek and Burlington Creek have overlay zones as protected wildlife habitat. Not only does the wildlife habitat zoning exist, but Metro secured funding via multiple bond measures to buy these land holdings by clearly stating that they would "preserve and protect natural areas, clean water, and fish and wildlife" (pg.1 of Metro's 2006 Natural Areas Bond Measure 26-80).

In reality, Metro's North Tualatin Mountains Access Master Plan does NOT preserve and protect natural areas, clean water, fish and wildlife. Instead it proposes to use voter money to create multi-use trails that will protect the interests of a very minor group of people - trail users, and specifically mountain bicyclists.

Mountain bicycling, by its very nature, disrupts wildlife, erodes terrain, and makes trail-usage dangerous to all other users - I personally would never consider hiking or running on a trail that include mountain bicyclists, whom can silently come around corners at great speeds. And just as research shows (Mountain Biking: A Review of the Ecological Effects, Michael Quinn et al., 2010), elk and other wildlife will quickly learn to abandon habitat that includes invasive mountain bicycling.

Local residents are greatly concerned about Metro's proposed development plan because of the primary fact that increasing the presence of people and bicycles in designated wildlife habitat will: (1) irrevocably displace the local Roosevelt Elk herd as well as other wildlife species (see attached pictures of the elk below on - and adjacent to - Metro land on March 13 and April 4, 2018); (2) contradict the Multnomah County zoning laws that all of us North Tualatin Hills residents abide by in the management of our own properties; and (3) contribute to the erosion of soil and hills and ultimately damage the waterways that Metro is committed to protect.

These concerns directly relate to the following approval criteria: Multnomah County Code (MCC) 33.4500 – 33.4575: Significant Environmental Concern and 33.5500 – 33.5525: Hillside Development, and within the Significant Environmental Concern section of the MCC, 33.4570 Criteria For Approval of SEC-h Permit -Wildlife Habitat and 33.4575 Criteria for Approval of SEC-s Permit -Streams.

For example, the first contradiction that jumps out at me when looking closely at the approval criteria (of development within an overlay zone of SEC-h) is: (B) Development standards: (1) Where a parcel contains any non-forested "cleared" areas, development shall only occur in these areas, except as necessary to provide access and to meet minimum clearance standards for fire safety. It seems to me, if I understand this statement correctly, that development within protected wildlife habitat is simply not allowed.

If Multnomah County decides to make exceptions to the MCC in order to allow Metro to pursue it's North Tualatin Mountains Access Master Plan, does that mean, moving forward, it will make exceptions to other North Tualatin Hills land owners, such as myself, if and when we apply for development permits on SEC-h and SEC-s land? The precedent that adjusting zoning laws in favor of Metro's short-sighted development plan will set is not one that myself, my neighbors, or, I imagine, Multnomah County Planners will feel comfortable with in the long-run.

The protections provided by the MCC serve all Multnomah County residents, now and in the future. To set aside these codes in order for one large land-holder to pursue development that is contrary to multiple Multnomah County codes as well as contrary to tri-county voter approved land and wildlife protection goals simply does not make any sense, nor should it come to pass.

I, and my neighbors, have been considering the details of Metro's Tualatin Hills proposals, in their various permutations, for years. There is just no way to view them through a favorable lens - at their core, they contradict Metro's own stated goals, the desires of residents and voters, and the MCC.

As I've stated before to Metro representatives and will continue to state, voters such as myself will not vote for Metro's bond measures in the future if this development comes to pass. Metro has already lost much of their credibility in our eyes, and if the county is not able to stop this proposed development in light of the multiple ways in which it contradicts the land use laws for the North Tualatin Hills, we, as residents and voters, will lose our respect for and faith in the county's permit evaluation process as well.

Thank you for your time,

Lindsey Laughlin

Attachment 1: https://multco.us/sites/default/files/webform/IMG_1340.jpg
Attachment 2: https://multco.us/sites/default/files/webform/IMG_0796.jpg
Attachment 3: