

To: Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission  
March 13, 2015

RE: Community Involvement in the Proposed Draft Comprehensive Plan

I support the broadening of the definition of “communities” to include groups outside the traditional neighborhood associations, but how those community groups are empowered in the city decision-making process needs to be explicit. Their role is vague and un-defined in the Draft Plan. An un-defined role is powerless. This Draft Plan gives lip service to equity but in actuality it disenfranchises all community groups.

Portland became the progressive and well-planned city that it is famous for today in large part because of neighborhood groups that challenged the power of politicians and the private interests that supported them. They helped to create a city that put civic-minded planning ahead of special interests and that attracted progressive planners and technocrats from around the country. But now those planners and technocrats think that citizen’s interests are too parochial and are seeking to disenfranchise them with a new Comprehensive Plan. A community group – whether geographically or ethnically based – is parochial by definition. The Comprehensive Plan needs to maintain the current role of neighborhood associations in city planning and government and equitably extend that role to other community groups. Anything less is a power-grab by bureaucrats and politicians and a return to the old days of special interests having un-due influence in city government.

Sincerely,

Anton Vetterlein  
430 SW Hamilton St.  
Portland, Oregon, 97239  
antonvett@comcast.net