

Meeting Notes
Rules Committee
January 7, 2009
3:00 p.m.
Columbia River Gorge Commission Office
White Salmon, WA

Committee Members Present: Judy Davis, Joyce Reinig, Jeff Condit, Walt Loehrke, Sara Grigsby.

Others present: Jill Arens, Jennifer Kaden, Jeff Litwak

Public present: Michael Lang, Dan Durow, Dave Berger, Derrick Tokos , Steven Andersen, Anne Debbaut

Committee Chair Judy Davis called the meeting to order at 3 p.m.

Jeff Litwak discussed two emergency rules involving submittal of application for plan amendments and urban area boundary revisions that the Commission will consider on Jan. 13, and a change to which economic development certification applications should be reviewed under the expedited process. The Rules Committee asked staff to present the economic development certification changes to the full Commission on Jan. 13 as well.

The Rules Committee then conducted a brainstorming session to begin its discussion of defining the term "minor" for plan amendments. Members of the Rules Committee, staff, and the public in the room were part of the brainstorming.

Major Revision Brainstorming

- Doesn't protect/enhance SNCRs (Criteria B)
- Really big
- Existing handbook definition – substantial expansion
- Something in SMA
- Adversely affects SNCRs
- Takes prime forest/farm/open space
- Strip development – corridor
- Metro definition of minor (opposite) – greater than 2.5 acres
- Links 2 urban areas together
- Net loss of acreage in NSA
- Isn't justified by need
- Requires additional significant infrastructure, e.g. new arterial

Minor Revision Brainstorming

- Handbook definition
- Justified by need (demonstrated)
- Small in size, land area
- Less than 10% of urban area
- 3 acres
- Small in impact
- No net loss – acreage
- No net loss – SNCRs

- Meets exceptions established
- Impacts less than 1% of NSA (size)
 - at one time
 - cumulative
- Varying standards for different size urban areas
- Process criteria vary by size
- Meets 4(f) criteria
- Doesn't impact wildlife habitat, corridors
- Doesn't impact sensitive plants
- Doesn't impact cultural plants, resources, fishing
- Allows urban areas to grow outside NSA, allows pathway to outside NSA
- Enhances SNCRs
- Demonstrates adequate SNCRS protection within urban area
- METRO's definition of minor revision
- Correct boundary bisecting parcels
- Includes parcels in city limits
- Technical fixes
- Revocable if protection isn't enforced
- A revision that better protects SNCRs (in net)
- Not scenically significant – already developed settings (urbanesque)
- Low priority areas – weighted by priority of lands
- Trade-offs/swaps to protect resources even outside NSA (conservation easement, e.g.)
- Minimal infrastructure changes, needs
- Fulfills second purpose of Act
- Less than 20 year land need
- Meets the straight face test
- 'X'% or no net loss
- Consistent with standards of Act
- Squeezes but not strangles urban area
- Meets ORS/OARS test – consider goal 14
- Doesn't change demographics/urban area character (community)
- Meets/consider Growth Management test (WA)
- Borrows or considers what is already written
- Retain community character
- Minor in short and long-term/overtime
 - not an incremental revision
 - cumulative
- Freezes cultural evolution of community
- Demonstrated capacity to serve area, ability to serve with infrastructure
- Geological issues – e.g. geohazards
- Revisions that include flexible options for cities to grow (outside box), e.g. flexibility in state rules, interstate development

Using a Number (acreage) Brainstorming

PRO

Clear and objective

Zero – flexibility

CON

Cumulative impact

Situational – urban areas vary in size, need

No other criteria are numeric
Hard to justify particular number; arbitrary
Doesn't deal with impacts
More equitable to use %

Using Percentage (acreage) Brainstorming

PRO

Doesn't penalize larger urban areas
Clear, objective

CON

Situational
No other criteria are numeric
Hard to justify a particular number or percentage

No Net Loss/Exchanges

PRO

Could provide protection of SNCRS inside urban areas
Apples for apples exchange (sensitive land in urban areas wouldn't be urbanized)

CON

Need to find a trade
Difficult to ensure protection over time if trade land is outside NSA

No net loss

- Acreage
- Resource

Question – is there an enforceable way to protect resources equivalent to NSA?

The Rules Committee set its next meeting for 3:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 13, 2009, immediately following the Gorge Commission meeting. Location – Hood River County Administration Building.