

An archive of David Bragdon's Council President newsfeed

[David Bragdon bids colleagues farewell](#)

09/01/2010 02:28 PM



David Bragdon controls the Zoo's "Oregon" steam locomotive.

With a last "all aboard" call on the Oregon Zoo and Railway's steam engine, outgoing Metro Council President David Bragdon bade staff, colleagues, family and friends goodbye before leaving for a new job in New York City.

"As some of you know, I have a special fondness for this train," Bragdon told the gathering. "On June 19, 1959 the zoo train took its first run through Washington Park. On the same day, my mother entered the hospital to give birth to me, and I arrived the next day," he said. Nodding to his mother Nancy, Bragdon noted his love of trains and invited all to board the "Oregon" steam locomotive for a ride with him at the controls.

In mid-September Bragdon begins his job as director of long-term planning and sustainability in the office of Mayor Michael Bloomberg. He'll be responsible for the creation and implementation of PlaNYC, the city's long-term vision for a greener, greater New York.

During nearly eight years at the helm of Metro, Bragdon focused on protecting natural areas and the environment, transforming the way the region plans for growth and making the agency more collaborative and financially responsible. He ends nearly a dozen years at the regional government. First winning a council district seat in 1998, he was elected council president in 2002 and 2006.

Bragdon, who moved to Oregon with his family at age 12, was born in New York City. In his new job, he'll lead sweeping initiatives to improve his hometown's urban environment and establish New York as a global environmental leader.

[Learn more about David Bragdon](#)

[Learn more about the Metro Council](#)

[Metro Council President David Bragdon announces his resignation](#)

08/11/2010 09:34 AM

A personal message from David Bragdon

Today I am announcing my intention to resign as Metro Council President, effective Sept. 7, 2010, four months prior to the normal expiration of my term. I will depart Oregon only because America's most innovative local government official has offered me a rare opportunity to continue working on the issues I most care about in a great city: The Honorable Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor of the City of New York, has invited me to serve him and 8 million New Yorkers as Director of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability for the City of New York, starting in mid-September. This position manages the development

and execution of Mayor Bloomberg's far-reaching initiatives to create a greater, greener New York, with the goal of leading our nation's largest city – my hometown – to become the world's leading environmental metropolis.

I believe Mayor Bloomberg's invitation is less about me than it is about the accomplishments of the Portland region and the work of the entire Metro Council and its many partners over the past three decades. Whatever I may have achieved in my public service in Oregon is directly attributable to those with whom I have served, and those who served here before me. In nearly eight years as Metro Council President, I have been part of a team that made a special agency and a special region even better:

- Eight years ago, our land use planning process was dominated by squabbles about where to expand the urban growth boundary, and baffling decisions which defied both good planning and economics. Today, while debating the future is never easy, we do so openly and rationally, with an emphasis on improving and redeveloping our existing communities.
- Eight years ago, our agency's efforts to protect natural resources often confused and sometimes threatened local governments and property owners. Today, we're inspiring people, buying the region's most special landscapes at fair-market values and tapping into Oregonians' innate sense of stewardship.
- Eight years ago, our agency was in an unsustainable fiscal position, spending more than we were taking in, and our bond rating had been lowered. Today, we are one of the most fiscally sound governments in Oregon..
- The Metro Council will be in good hands when I leave, first and foremost because residents here possess an ethic of civic stewardship which transcends changes of elected leadership. Additionally, Metro has excellent staff, whose work will not miss a beat when I depart. Finally, the six remaining members of the Metro Council are experienced and dedicated public servants with a great track record of working together.

My resignation will take effect at noon on Sept. 7. At the Council work session that afternoon, Councilor Carlotta Collette will take the gavel as Acting Council President. At their Sept. 9 meeting or anytime thereafter, the remaining six Metro Councilors may select by majority vote an interim President to serve until Jan. 6, 2011 – when either Bob Stacey or Tom Hughes, having been elected in November, will commence his four-year term. The Metro Council may appoint any eligible resident of the region, including one of themselves, to serve those final four months of my term.

I leave wistfully. Though I was born in New York City – and return there now with excitement – I have been “Oregonian by choice” for nearly four decades. I chose to stay here because I believed it was a place where an individual could make a difference and make the place's natural gifts even better. I would like to think my career since then has validated that idealistic assumption of a younger me. My friendships and experiences here will last a lifetime, not just in my memory but in practice. As I leave the job of Metro Council President, I will take my love of Oregon and the lessons I have learned here wherever I go.

[View a video announcement and read the news release](#)

Joint statement by Metro president, Portland mayor on Columbia River Crossing

08/05/2010 04:03 PM

As leaders of two jurisdictions highly dependent on Interstate 5, we have been working for several years to get a new bridge built across the Columbia River. We believe the right bridge must do more than provide a temporary fix for today's traffic woes. It must serve as a transit and highway crossing that tackles those traffic problems with 21st-century tools and policies.

Next Monday, August 9, local elected officials involved in the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) project will vote on several key decisions. These decisions include the width of the new bridge, the interchange design on Hayden Island, and ongoing management of the project during design, construction and operation.

We plan to vote in favor of the joint recommendation developed collaboratively by staff from our two agencies and their colleagues at the City of Vancouver, Clark County, C-Tran, and TriMet, with input from the Ports of Vancouver and Portland and technical support from CRC project staff. This

recommendation is to build a highway bridge that can accommodate up to 10 lanes, with a new design for a Hayden Island interchange.

On Hayden Island, we now have an alternative that has broad support from community stakeholders - one that provides non-freeway access for island residents and visitors, has a smaller footprint than previous designs, and allows for long-term redevelopment on the island.

Regarding bridge width, we now have data from a leading national engineering firm demonstrating that a 10-lane bridge functions as well as a 12-lane span at a lower cost. Preliminary analysis suggests it could be striped for 8 lanes at opening. We will advocate strongly for this approach.

We are glad to see these decisions moving forward. But we must stress that the *only* reason these two important matters have reached resolution - and earned our confidence and support - is that over the past three months, problem-solving has been **shared** between the local and state agencies. This is a marked change from previous practice, where the CRC project staff (working with the two state Departments of Transportation) made decisions without meaningful local involvement.

During the past three months, our local jurisdictions have commissioned independent engineering studies and spent countless hours to move the issues of bridge width and Hayden Island impacts from acrimonious stalemate to innovative resolution.

We believe these breakthroughs, as well as last week's critical report of the Governors' expert review panel, contain lessons for successfully managing this project. When local jurisdictions are a meaningful part of the problem-solving team, problems get solved. When local officials and staff are excluded, as documented in the experts' report, problems fester. Therefore, on Monday we will insist that this success be accelerated by expanding the role of the Project Sponsors Council.

We appreciate the support of Henry Hewitt and Steve Horenstein, the co-chairs of the Project Sponsors Council, as well as excellent technical support from project staff acting as partners in this mutual effort. We believe that to move forward, the CRC must build on this success and re-align the project management structure so that collaboration and shared responsibility become the norm, not the exception.

Monday's vote does not end the conversation about how the bridge will look, how it will operate, and how it will be funded. Local involvement and oversight will continue to be essential. Project management -- from planning and construction to design and operation -- must remain broadly accountable. Ultimately, when this bridge opens, it must be governed by a bi-state entity whose explicit mission is to manage the crossing over time in a way that ensures minimum traffic congestion and environmental impact, and maximum return on investment.

In addition to these immediate actions, we have set out our vision for what needs to be accomplished over the coming months to ensure project success. We look forward to rolling up our sleeves and getting to work on the tasks to come.

[Cemetery group dedicates award to David Bragdon's leadership](#)

08/04/2010 05:55 PM

The Friends of Lone Fir Cemetery recently surprised Metro Council President David Bragdon by announcing their creation of an award to honor his service. The David L. Bragdon Volunteer of the Year award is the group's highest honor, awarded annually to volunteers who have taken their compassion for Lone Fir and assumed a leadership role that has a lasting impact on the visibility and sustainability of the cemetery.

"We couldn't have made it this far without his help. This award is a way for us to show David our immense appreciation for his leadership," Becky Oswald, Chair of the Friends of Lone Fir, said.

Bragdon was honored by the award and quipped, "I'm not even dead yet!" During his tenure as the Metro Council President, Bragdon has been a dedicated proponent of conservation efforts and remembrance projects at Lone Fir. Never shy to get personally involved, Bragdon has helped pull ivy in the park, clean gravestones, participated in historical reenactments and led many Metro-sponsored events at the cemetery.

The inaugural award went to Frank Schaefer, a 4-year volunteer with the Friends of Lone Fir, on July 24 during a community event at the cemetery. Schaefer, a tireless and dedicated worker, has been credited with helping return historical art and memorials to the cemetery and has spent many hours working at the numerous Friends events held throughout the year. Though he too, was surprised by the award, Schaefer used the occasion to recruit volunteers for one of Lone Fir's most popular events, the annual Halloween celebration.

Bragdon has served as Metro president since 2003; his term ends in December 2010. One of his most important legacies to Lone Fir is his visionary leadership of the Block 14 task force which has worked to reincorporate the burial ground into the rest of the cemetery and restore it to protect its historical value. Block 14 is adjacent to Lone Fir and was a burial site for former Chinese immigrants who played an important role in Portland's development in the mid-1800s. After a repatriation of Chinese remains was conducted in 1948, the burial ground was turned into commercial land, and a building it was placed there. Multnomah County commissioned an archaeological study in 2005 which revealed some remains. Shortly thereafter, the county began restoring the grounds from asphalt to grass and in 2007, the county turned the property over to Metro for it to steward in conjunction with Lone Fir Pioneer Cemetery.

[Learn more about Metro's Pioneer cemeteries](#)

[Read about Lone Fir Pioneer Cemetery](#)

[Learn about the Friends of Lone Fir](#)

[Read more about Block 14 memorial efforts](#)

Metro finds Columbia River Crossing toll bridge with light rail would have negligible impact on growth

07/29/2010 10:27 AM

The Metro regional government today released the findings of its forecast of the population and employment growth that would result from building a proposed \$3.6 billion Columbia River Crossing project, if tolls are used to finance and manage the facility and light rail is part of it.

The agency finds that the proposal would have negligible impact on population and employment growth in Clark County, when comparing the projected growth that would occur with the project with the projected growth that would occur even with no change to the existing bridge. The project's most significant land use effect would be to boost North Portland employment by about 1.5 percent, making that area slightly more competitive than East Multnomah County.

Metro found that the project would increase growth pressure in Clark County, but tolls would mitigate that pressure. This analysis takes into account the effect of tolls and light rail in reducing vehicle trips across the bridge compared with the no-build scenario.

Metro Council President David Bragdon said he welcomed the results of the agency's analysis. He and other local leaders suggested that the Oregon and Washington highway departments conduct such a study several years ago, saying it would add credibility to the states' assertion that the project would not cause unwanted, low density suburban growth. Bragdon also said:

- "This is good information we have been waiting nearly three years for. These results show how Metro's modeling analysts work independent of any political leanings as they produce authoritative analysis of the region's growth. It's important for the public to remember that this growth forecast depends on several assumptions, including substantial investment in other parts of the region's transportation network, including the Oregon 217 corridor in Washington County, the Sunrise Corridor in Clackamas County, expansion of the MAX system to Milwaukie and land use and transportation improvements between Portland and Tigard.
- "Metro's study of the CRC underscores the importance of tolls and light rail to this project. The CRC's proposed tolls and MAX extension help Vancouver reach its goal of a compact, walkable downtown area while also improving access for households that live in North Portland and work in Vancouver. Vancouver's growth as a regional center is something we can all stand behind.

- "Along with the independent analysis the City of Portland recently commissioned by the URS firm which indicates that ten lanes works as well as twelve and at lower cost, this Metroscope work is providing some overdue evaluation of the proposed project options. I'd like to thank the Oregon and Washington transportation departments for agreeing to commission this study. If we had these results in 2008, when Metro and other local jurisdictions were asked to endorse the CRC, we might have avoided many of the contentious debates this project has inspired.
- "Now that we have this independent analysis, local and state leaders can focus on the other remaining issues and ensuring the CRC lives up to the region's goals for a more vibrant economy, with more walkable communities on both sides of the Columbia River."

Using the agency's nationally acclaimed Metroscope growth modeling technology, Metro staff developed a forecast of the growth that would be induced by a full build out of the CRC project, with a 10-to-12-lane bridge, light rail line and \$2 rush-hour tolls each direction (tolls would be lower during off-peak periods). Staff also developed a growth forecast for the project with a "no-toll" scenario. Both the toll and no-toll scenarios were compared with a "no build" scenario for the year 2030. All scenarios assume the Portland-Vancouver region builds many other projects across the region, including improvements to Oregon 217 to expand capacity, large-scale highway improvements to the Sunrise Corridor in Clackamas County, expansion of the MAX system to Milwaukie, land use and transportation improvements in the corridor between Portland and Tigard, and expansion of the Portland Streetcar system.

Metro has found a full build out of the project, with light rail and **\$2 rush-hour tolls each way**, would:

- **Produce an extremely slight increase in residential growth in Clark County, compared with doing nothing.** Clark County would have nearly 1,000 more households with the project in 2030 than it would have in the no-build scenario, growing to a total 250,600 households. That's an increase of about one-third of 1 percent over the number of Clark County households in the no-build scenario. As of 2005, the county had 147,724 households. Northern Clark County would have virtually no household growth compared with the no-build scenario.
- **Generate a 1.5 percent employment gain in North Portland**, compared with the no build scenario, accompanied by slightly less employment growth in East Multnomah County and no impact to employment growth in Clackamas County. North and Northeast Portland would have 1,700 more jobs with the project in 2030 than the area would have in the no-build scenario, climbing to a total 112,600. Eastern Multnomah County would have about 700 fewer jobs, a decrease of nearly 1 percent, compared with the no build scenario. Job growth in Clark, Clackamas and Washington counties would see no change compared with the no build scenario.

Metro has found a build out of the project, with light rail and **no tolls**, would:

- **Produce more household growth in Clark County, especially northern parts of the county, compared with doing nothing.** Clark County would have nearly 1,800 more households with the project in 2030 than it would have in the no-build scenario, growing to a total 251,300 households. About a third of that growth would locate in northern Clark County.
- **Focus employment growth in southern Clark County and north Portland.** North and Northeast Portland would have nearly 1,500 more jobs, an increase of 1.3 percent over the no-build scenario, climbing to 112,400. Southern Clark County would have nearly 1,000 more jobs, an increase of about one half of 1 percent, compared with the no build scenario. Northern Clark County would have nearly 300 fewer jobs, a decrease of 1.3 percent, compared with the no-build scenario. Job growth rates in Clackamas and Washington counties would remain about even with the no build scenario.

Additional information which helps explain the Metroscope findings:

- Though the I-5 corridor has been identified as a national priority, 90 percent of trips across the river begin and end within the four county Portland-Vancouver region.
- Though the project does improve travel times, only about 3-4 percent of all trips in the region would be affected.
- Metroscope considers the travel time benefits and determines household and employment distribution in future years based on a macroeconomic model.

[Learn more about the Columbia River Crossing](#)

[Read about metro's transportation modeling](#)

Jarrett Walker of HumanTransit.org shares tips to help communities move transit projects forward

07/28/2010 02:24 PM



Transit planning expert Jarrett Walker shares his insight during a presentation at Metro.



Walker gave tips on avoiding and resolving common conflict surrounding transit planning.



Metro Council President David Bragdon along with Councilors Robert Liberty and Carlotta Collette listen in as Walker shares his expertise.

Transit moves people, literally. Transit planning, on the other hand, can have communities stopped in their tracks. Transit expert Jarrett Walker says it doesn't have to be that way.

Walker, who writes the popular transportation blog www.humantransit.org, spoke to a packed crowd at Metro on Tuesday. He shared tips on how to avoid and resolve common disagreements that arise around transit planning.

He said new transit projects can be heavily and hotly debated because they redefine people's current sense of home. Transit projects can come unraveled if the discussions shift away from facts to focus on fears and emotions that are not heard or addressed.

Walker said projects can move forward more easily if a framework is laid to acknowledge and separate

personal biases from the fact-based aspects. He feels the practical engineering pieces that determine the feasibility of a project must be balanced with a sense of vision and forethought.

Metro Council President David Bragdon and Councilors Robert Liberty and Carlotta Collette were just a few in the room who listened as Walker explained how important it is for community leaders and transit planners to recognize the hard choices that must be made for transit projects to run successfully.

Walker recommended that goals and interests of all parties be clearly defined and shared at the beginning of projects. He said goals of transit agencies, which are typically defined as maximizing ridership and serving communities equitably, can conflict and often work against each other.

Walker encouraged groups involved with transit planning to find a middle ground between vision and practicality. Walker shares more of his thoughts and insight concerning all aspects of transit and planning on his blog, www.humantransit.org.

Metro and their partners in the region, such as TriMet and C-TRAN, make great efforts to understand community issues and concerns at the beginning and throughout planning for transit projects. They do this by engaging the community and soliciting feedback.

For example, community members can learn more about the Lake Oswego to Portland Transit Project at www.oregonmetro.gov/lakeoswego and get the latest updates about the Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Project at www.trimet.org/pm. Both sites provide information on public involvement opportunities, e-mail lists where people can sign-up to receive regular updates, and offer contact information if community members wish to speak with someone about their concerns.

[Learn more about transportation planning in the Metro region](#)

[Visit the Lake Oswego to Portland Transit Project website](#)

[Go to the Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Project website](#)

[Hear more from Jarrett Walker](#)

Bragdon moderates local music forum

07/28/2010 11:00 AM

On July 9, I had the intriguing job of moderating a panel about the Portland independent music scene at the City Club's Friday forum. The panel featured four of Portland's cutting-edge musicians and artists: Dave Allen, Rachel Blumberg, Jared Mees and Laura Veirs.

[Listen to an audio file of the discussion](#)

David Bragdon
Metro Council President

David Bragdon personal message: July 2010

07/27/2010 02:47 PM

The Metro newsfeed system is up and running! Each councilor now has an online homepage where you can find information about news and events in the Portland region. Subscribe for daily, weekly or monthly updates by using the links in the toolbar on the left-hand side of the screen.

Lately I've been posting stories about Metro events and milestones, like Metro's Lone Fir Cemetery celebration on July 24 and the recent appointment of three qualified candidates to the Metro Investment Advisory Board. Keep your eye out for new stories over the coming month about a variety of topics like the Oregon Convention Center's 20th Anniversary and the Portland -Milwaukie Light Rail project.

[Check out my home page](#)

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David Bragdon

Reflecting on Metro's 2009-2010 accomplishments

07/20/2010 01:28 PM

Here at Metro, we aim to build a livable region by developing great communities, fostering a healthy environment, building a vital economy and conducting our operations responsibly. These goals guide not only our day-to-day actions but direct our long-term decisions. Despite a financially challenging fiscal year, we've accomplished quite a bit to bring us closer to achieving these goals and making the Portland metropolitan region the most livable area in the country.

Great Communities

Great communities aren't just about streets and urbanization. Metro believes that great communities require a variety of vibrant cultural events, access to parks and recreation facilities as well as the preservation of valuable farm land. This year alone, Metro has completed construction on the Cooper Mountain Nature Park, begun work on new trail networks, recorded record attendance for summer arts festivals, opened a new exhibit at the Oregon Zoo and finalized a historic vision for urban and rural reserves that will guide urban growth decisions for the next fifty years. These accomplishments, among so many more, continue to make the Portland area one of the greatest communities in which to live, play and work.

Healthy Environment

As Oregonians, we value the natural beauty around us and realize the important role we play in protecting it for the future. In keeping with our role as one of Oregon's conservation leaders, Metro has worked to spread the message of sustainability through its own public practices and general outreach efforts. Over the past 12 months, we have amped up our "Drive Less/Save More" campaign to decrease residents' single-person car trips, offered waste reduction and recycling advice to nearly 100,000 callers at Metro's Recycling Information Center and served thousands of people through conservation education programs. To decrease its own environmental impact, Metro has worked to develop a climate change adaptation planning framework for the region, cleaned up 3,400 illegal dump sites, awarded \$1.9 million in grants for Nature in Neighborhoods capital projects and another \$145,000 for neighborhood restoration projects, signed a contract to install solar panels on the Oregon Convention Center and received a \$1 million North American Wetland Conservation Grant to help restore and acquire wetlands across the region.

Vital Economy

An economic impact study showed that MERC venues (Oregon Convention Center, Portland Center for the Performing Arts, and the Expo Center) made a fiscal impact of \$522 million in the region, illustrating MERC's role as a catalyst and advocate for community, culture and economic development. Through leadership, stewardship, and expert management of these landmark venues, MERC continues to make a positive impact on the region's business climate.

In order for business to thrive, our area needs a comprehensive plan to decrease traffic jams and ensure the free movement of freight, consumers and employees to all corners of the region. As part of our 2035 Regional Transportation Plan, Metro worked this year to develop a High Capacity Transit Plan to develop corridors of multiple transit options to ensure the quick movement of people and goods throughout the region. We also undertook the beginning phases of planning for both the Milwaukie light rail line and the Lake Oswego streetcar proposal, allocated funds for the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program and worked with regional partners to advance the Columbia River Crossing project.

Responsible Operations

Your trust is important to us which is why we here at Metro continue to examine our work to ensure we're serving the public as efficiently and effectively as possible. This year, we've undertaken measures to save taxpayers thousands of dollars annually including renewable energy generation that will save \$75,000 per year; we conducted a study of best practices which identified and implemented service improvements among Exposition, Convention and Arts facilities with those of other Metro centers and services; and revised solid waste rate setting process to improve transparency, align with best practices and better meet the needs of the Metro Council. We hope these efforts to save money, increase transparency and improve our customer service will continue to build your trust and reward your continued support.

The 1.5 million people Metro serves live in a region that spans from the Columbia River to farmlands south

of the Willamette River near Wilsonville, and from the foothills of the Coast Range near Forest Grove to the banks of the Sandy River at Troutdale. Metro is proud of its work, and is grateful to the region's leaders, experts and the people of the region who have come together to help us shape our shared future.

[Read Metro's management reports](#)

[Metro's Lone Fir Cemetery celebrates heritage tree designation and artistic tributes to Oregon settlers](#)

07/12/2010 11:05 AM



Lone fir Cemetery preserves trees, cultural heritage.

Ceremony to include tribute to interred settlers, screening of film on cemetery's history

Bring a picnic and enjoy an evening of music and festivities at Metro's Lone Fir Pioneer Cemetery July 24. The City of Portland is designating three trees in the 30-acre cemetery as Heritage Trees because of their historical significance. Metro, the city, and the Friends of Lone Fir are celebrating with an event on Saturday, July 24, from 6 to 10:30 p.m., during which there will be screenings of two short films about the cemetery's history and music by local artists.

The trees, to be dedicated in a 6 p.m. ceremony, include the cemetery's namesake Douglas fir; the General Joseph Lane maple; and a 100-foot incense cedar.

After the ceremonies President Bragdon will host an evening of music and movies in the cemetery. Featured artists include Ms. Onnie Irby and the Emmanuel Temple Gospel Choir performing the national anthem and gospel music. Portland musicians, Leigh Marble and Matt Sheehy will perform their original songs from the Friends of Lone Fir compilation CD, "Dearly Departed," about residents buried at Lone Fir. Proceeds from the CD are donated to a memorial planned for Block 14 in the southwest corner of the cemetery.

At twilight two documentaries featuring the cemetery will be shown. A short film "For the Living and the Dead," which debuted at this year's Portland Women's Film Festival, was created by St. Mary's Academy students Mackenzie Berkman, Erica Deffebach and Anna Klos. "Come Together Home," directed by Ivy Lin, examines the history of the Chinese community's connection to Lone Fir, including a look at how the remains of early Chinese settlers and rail workers buried at the cemetery were exhumed and returned to China.

Sponsors for the event include Metro, the City of Portland, Hui Lin Temple, the Multnomah County Cultural Coalition, Ferguson Wellman Capital Management, and the Oregon Cultural Trust.

The partners are expecting a large gathering, as they've made extra efforts to reach residents by working with neighborhood associations surrounding the cemetery. The event is free, but Metro encourages guests to bring canned food donations for the Oregon Food Bank. Pets are not allowed in any of Metro's parks or natural areas, including cemeteries. Alcohol is not allowed at the event.

Founded in 1855, Lone Fir is located is located between SE 20th and SE 26th Avenues; SE Stark and SE Morrison Streets. This is a car-free event. Off street parking only, bike parking will be available or Tri-Met stop IDs 4023, 4024 and 7216.

[Get directions to Lone Fir Cemetery](#)

[Learn the history of Lone Fir](#)

[Read about the Block 14 memorial](#)

Metro Council appoints three new members to Investment Advisory Board

07/09/2010 12:34 PM

The Metro Council on Thursday confirmed Michael "Kipp" Baratoff, Suzanne Linneen and Lori Mueller to the Metro Investment Advisory Board (IAB). Comprised of five highly-qualified members of the general public, the IAB meets quarterly to review Metro's investment report and ensure that investments adhere to strategic policy requirements.

Like most governments, Metro places its available funds in very stable short-term investments. Every quarter, Metro prepares a report detailing its investments and demonstrating its fulfillment of well-established investment policy requirements. The Investment Advisory Board offers a public review and guidance on potential changes to Metro's investment policy and holds the government accountable to its published standards. Allowing transparency and public involvement in Metro decisions is a priority of the Council, and the IAB offers a chance for thoughtful public review to guarantee that tax dollars are invested safely and responsibly.

"The IAB ensures a level of transparency and oversight that few other governments adhere to. I'm proud to do Metro's business with the help of these private sector and non-profit experts," said Council President David Bragdon.

Having worked for a broad array of interests including clean energy and public health organizations, each of the new appointees have strong backgrounds in managing large investment funds and assuring adherence to strict standards of responsibility.

"Having such highly talented members on the IAB will ensure smart and safe investment strategies for years to come. On behalf of the taxpayers I appreciate their advice," Bragdon said.

Kipp Baratoff is currently a Principal at Equilibrium Capital Group. Throughout most of his professional life, Kipp has been fascinated by the combined efforts of sustainability and finance. He graduated from the University of Michigan with an MBA and a MS in Environmental Science and used his talents to lead one firm's exploration of clean energy venture capital. Kipp also has advised a major U.S. pension fund that included a \$250 million allocation to clean technology. Baratoff's term begins immediately and expires on July 31, 2012.

Since 1995, Suzanne Linneen has worked in varying positions for the City of Hillsboro where she currently serves as Finance Director. Her experience in Hillsboro gives Suzanne a great understanding of the challenges and priorities that local governments must address in financial planning, an experience that will make her a valuable asset on the IAB. Linneen's term will begin Oct.1 of this year and runs through Sep. 30, 2013

As Vice President of Finance and Administration at OHSU, Lori Mueller has vast experience in managing and investing public funds. She has helped invest more than \$750 million in assets for the OHSU Foundation and is the primary staff liaison to the Investment Committee for the OHSU Foundation, ensuring that the foundation's assets are invested according to the Investment Committee's strategic direction. Mueller's term begins upon her appointment and ends on July 31, 2013.

[Read about Metro's advisory committees, partners and opportunities for public participation](#)

The Intertwine takes a big step forward thanks to local footwear company KEEN

06/17/2010 11:35 AM

Portland-based international footwear company KEEN is providing a much needed boost to the effort to

create an interconnected system of trails and greenspaces in the Portland Vancouver area.

KEEN was an early supporter of The Intertwine, an ever-growing network of integrated parks, trails and natural areas.

Now, the company has donated \$30,000 to The Intertwine Alliance, which is a coalition of businesses, nonprofits and public agencies that have joined together to promote The Intertwine and commit to linking trails, parks and natural areas with homes, schools and jobs.

The money will be used for a public awareness campaign to spread the message about The Intertwine and upgrade the website dedicated to it.

Metro is a founding member of The Intertwine Alliance, working with partners like KEEN to champion The Intertwine. Beyond physical paths and parks, The Intertwine encompasses active lifestyles, adventurous and fun-loving attitudes and the environmental consciousness of Portland-Vancouver area residents, much as KEEN does in the programs the company supports, including its Hybridlife "create, play, care" campaign.

[Learn how Metro is helping make The Intertwine a reality](#)

[Visit the Intertwine website](#)

[Read about KEEN's approach to corporate social responsibility](#)

David Bragdon statement before the Columbia River Crossing review panel

05/20/2010 02:58 PM

May 19, 2010 - The Metro Council, along with JPACT, is the MPO for the Oregon portion of the region. We also perform sub-contract work for other agencies, including TriMet and ODOT, pertaining to EIS preparation, modeling and forecasting. We are also democratically elected to represent the people of the Oregon side of the region - the people who pay the taxes and fees, rely on the freight, depend on the jobs, live in the neighborhoods, receive the paychecks and breathe the air which this project would affect for the coming decades.

In all these roles - MPO, sub-contractor to the highway divisions, representative of people - we have been intimately involved in the CRC, just as we have been involved in other major transportation projects of the past decades. We take our professional and political responsibilities seriously, do not reach conclusions without extensive study, and we have a track record of successful regional inter-agency collaboration, including completion of projects which successfully engage multiple cities, special districts, and a myriad of state and federal agencies.

My personal involvement dates to 2007 when the LPA proposal drafts first came to our Council. I was subsequently appointed to the project sponsors' council, and like other local officials I have spent countless hours endeavoring to shape this project in a positive direction, and develop a proposal which our region can afford and embrace.

I started this process with two basic principles, both of which once made me a supporter of the conditional Locally Preferred Alternative legislation which I marshaled through our Council in July 2008. Those principles are:

- My first assumption was that the north-south corridor in our region is very important, and in need of improvements: portions of the system are congested at some periods during weekdays, freight is not granted the priority that its economic importance would warrant, transit service is limited, bicycle and pedestrian access is nearly impractical, some of the structural elements are old and worn, the draw span creates challenges to navigation and unreliability for vehicles, and the interchanges discourage optimal urban development. The status quo on Interstate 5 should not be acceptable - we need to act to address these significant disadvantages. No rational participant in this process would dispute that statement, though they may define the problem(s) in varying ways, or with differing areas of emphasis. (Which may be part of our problem today - imprecision in problem statements.)
- My second hypothesis was that solutions in a complex corridor such as this one would of necessity be innovative and multi-faceted, and could only be the result of collaboration and teamwork among a multitude of agencies and interests. Successful mega-projects elsewhere, whatever their other

merits or demerits, ranging from Boston's Big Dig to Denver's international airport, only come to fruition when the coalition in support of them consistently expands - and those coalitions only expand when issues are addressed in a meaningful, inclusive, and problem-solving manner, and a variety of disciplines and creative solutions are brought to bear. By contrast, proposed mega-projects tend to stall, as this one has, and fail, when they are imposed from above, are sold simply on the basis of platitudes not based in fact or financial rigor, or are the product of one agency's or one professional discipline's toolbox to the exclusion of all the other tools in the transportation toolbox.

After my nearly three years of involvement - again, three years which started with me as a vote in favor of the conditional LPA - my reluctant conclusion is that the current CRC proposal by the state highway divisions dramatically fails both of those basic tests: it has not been proven to be a cost-effective solution to the many challenges in this corridor, and it has not been planned and developed in an innovative or inclusive manner. As a result of the state highway divisions resisting any scrutiny or suggestions which did not fit their pre-determined approach, confidence in the project, including my own, has been eroding at a time when a successful project would need to be gaining credibility.

That credibility can only be restored by substantive changes in the product and its direction, not, I stress, not by more public relations efforts, which simply try to persuade the community that the current product is not so bad, or just needs some cosmetic tweaks. "Not so bad" is hardly sufficient compared to the great upside potential opportunity that a new crossing could present for our region, so the fix needs to be a technical, engineering, design, planning, financial fix - not another sales job. We need Plan B, not more promotion and defense of a Plan A which has failed to pan out.

Moreover, we need an expedited process to get us to Plan B quickly, through a collaborative governance model which makes the highway divisions participants in the process, a role for they are qualified, rather than being the manager of the process itself, a role they have shown they are not qualified for. That's not a moral judgment or criticism; it's just a matter of miscasting - one of the institutional causes of the current stalemate is that the state highway divisions are simultaneously a contestant and a judge in the proceedings.

The support will be there for a good product. What's missing is not the support - what's missing is that good product. The support was there not so long ago, and local officials have repeatedly and constructively pointed the way for that support to be revived through re-direction of the project. It can be done, but only through the type of interagency collaboration which characterizes successful megaprojects in urban areas in the 21st century. In this case, the two state highway divisions' unilateral control and limited mission has not only unnecessarily squandered the unprecedented degree of cooperation which exists at the local level, but has jeopardized our bi-state region's chances to capitalize on what should be a great opportunity.

This metropolitan region has a remarkable - indeed, unprecedented - degree of local collaboration. In 2008, governing boards of local governments on both sides of the river joined hands and cast votes on a conditional Locally Preferred Alternative containing elements which prior to 2008 had been matters of dispute rather than agreement, an accomplishment which we should celebrate: we affirmed our common commitment to a replacement bridge in the existing I-5 alignment (rather than in some other alignment, or rather than a tunnel, etc. etc.), we affirmed that light rail transit was an integral part of a solution, we recognized that tolls were an ingredient for paying for and managing this new asset which we all wanted to enjoy. Amid the controversy today, it is worth pausing and remembering that as recently as 2008, that level of agreement among partner agencies was achieved.

Those diverse boards all conditionally approved the Locally Preferred Alternative in a spirit of good faith, with mutual assurances that we would continue to work together to address the many unresolved issues inherent in as complex a project as this. (As I said in my second principle, as we were in the vanguard of supporters for a project, we knew the coalition needed to continue to expand, which can only be done by addressing valid concerns.) Recognizing that different communities and different agencies have differing perspectives, or value different aspects of the project with varying degrees of emphasis, we nonetheless all resolved to continue working toward "yes."

The unresolved issues were all clearly stated in local resolutions and other communications, and done so in a constructive manner designed to reach solutions rather than stymie progress. You can read those communications quite plainly in the record from 2008 and before and since: Some interests were concerned about the impact of tolls on certain segments of the community, either economically or geographically. Other interests wanted to be shown more precisely how improvements would benefit trucking and

commerce, beyond repetition of the unproven assertion that "more road capacity" automatically equates to "greater freight mobility," in the absence of design or pricing features which actually grant preference to freight. Other interests offered to help validate that a project would meet the two states' greenhouse gas emissions laws. Other groups asked for assurances that interchange design would improve their business districts, as had been promised. And everybody involved asked for a realistic finance plan, based on foreseeable fiscal capacity to pay, relative to other priorities.

For the Metro Council's part, in addition to some of the issues I have just mentioned, I might highlight four major overriding concerns which were incorporated in our resolution of support - let me reiterate, this was a resolution of support, with conditions, in July 2008 - four major concerns which have been raised repeatedly in communications from our technical staff or elected officials in one form or another dating from October 29, 2006 through February 24, 2010, copies of which I will give you:

- Concerns about how the size, operations and management of this segment of the interstate would impact other parts of the transportation system, including other segments of I-5, the parallel I-205, and north-south arterials in the City of Portland. We have an adopted Regional Transportation Plan for our region which indicates which portions of the surface highway and street system are mature and are financially, physically and environmentally unlikely to expand, so it was important that the CRC fit that system rather than cause indirect disruption to it.
- Proper application of 21st century forecasting and modeling techniques, particularly on the issue of how increased physical capacity would affect induced demand for single occupancy auto trips (not incidentally, the factor which is the biggest obstacle to freight mobility as well as the largest contributor to greenhouse gas generation) and ensure that the project will support the local jurisdictions' adopted land use aspirations on both sides of the river. Oregon and Washington have very similar land use systems and planning practices, so it makes sense that a new transportation project be shown to support those goals in each state. (In fact, that's the law in both states.)
- Interchanges which fit the context and aspirations of our neighborhoods and business districts.
- And, of course, a finance plan which would reveal what our citizens - whether they pay federal taxes, state taxes, a regional tax, and/or tolls - would pay for this project, and how their paying for this project would affect their ability (in effect, their Congressional and legislative delegations' capacity) to also pay for the other major transportation capital projects we want and need.

I think you would agree that these basic questions, like many others incorporated in the local governments' conditional support of the LPA, are not just reasonable, but are basic and necessary. And I would add that the conditions - while legally binding and therefore perhaps call the validity of the LPA into question since the conditions have not yet been fulfilled - were not stated so much as questions or demands but rather as invitations - as invitations for the state agencies to work with us as partners. "Here are things we can do to make this the best project possible," we were trying to say. When I cast my vote for the conditional LPA, I was not just casting my vote for the physical elements described in that document, I was also casting my vote to work with all the various agencies in good faith to resolve the remaining unresolved issues.

I do not regret that vote, because as I stated in my first principle, the status quo in this corridor needs action and the basic elements of the LPA, I am persuaded, are sound. But, to be quite candid, as I look at that vote, I have come to conclude that my faith in the process was naïve and misplaced, and that avenues toward the mutual problem-solving implicit in our conditional approval of the LPA have been closed, replaced with one-way streets: one way streets along which the highway divisions unilaterally define the problem (auto congestion at certain times of day) and then define the solution (more physical capacity) using a very limited range of tools from a small toolbox, without regard to economic cost or environmental externalities or impacts outside the narrowly defined problem area.

I and many others in our region are eager to be supporters of a project. We have demonstrated through our hours and hours of commitment and carefully crafted proposed work that we are more than ready to be team players. I will leave you copies of communications, with which I am proud to be professionally associated, as I believe they represent the cutting edge of transportation planning issues in urban America today and could lay out the path toward a CRC of which we can all be proud. Those documents are:

- An October 19, 2006 letter from our Council to the CRC task force, highlighting the same issues we are still raising today - many of which have not been addressed by the highway divisions despite the passage of more than three years.
- The Metro Council's July 17th, 2008 conditional approval of the LPA - again, this was an approval -

which lists suggestions and requests such as a truly independent evaluation of the induced demand issue and 21st century forecasting and modeling techniques - major conditions which the highway divisions have still not fulfilled even though the approval of the LPA was contingent on them.

- The Metro Council's February 5th, 2009 resolution, again expressing support for a project and advocating for performance measures and demand management techniques to be fully incorporated in the design and post-construction phases - a suggestion which the highway divisions appear to have ignored until recently.
- A "Road to Construction" policy statement of December 3, 2009 by Portland Mayor Sam Adams and myself, suggesting that fiscal capacity and performance measures be used in the refinement process - which the highway divisions had not done despite prior indications that they might.
- The January 19, 2010 letter to the two Governors from the four elected officials on the Project Sponsors' Council, again suggesting better performance measures and fiscal assessment as well as a truly independent look at assumptions - to which the Governors subsequently replied that they would essentially stay the course and not permit a truly independent review.
- The February 24, 2010 scope of work proposed after unprecedented collaboration among the professional staffs of the local jurisdictions, again in a demonstration of unity which should be considered an asset for a good project. Additionally, at local expense, our agency as well as other jurisdictions have engaged staff and consulting time on various other elements of the project including the proposed interchanges which many of our citizens understandably see as damaging to their communities and businesses. I believe Portland's representative will speak next about the work they have commissioned by the URS firm, which we feel is useful and essential work, but it makes no sense different jurisdictions are having to commission this work in a fragmented way - but they are doing so due to a lack of faith in the state highway divisions' process. It is unclear whether and how this local work would be assimilated into the work of the state highway divisions, if at all. Even after all these years and expenditure of public dollars, the inner workings of the project are opaque even to those of us supposedly most intimately involved.

We feel these documents represent best practices for the era in transportation planning, design and engineering. But my experience of the past several years is that rather than being met on the ground of policy, finance, engineering or design, the promoters of the current CRC proposal choose to engage primarily in the arena of spin and slogans. Rather than addressing issues by hiring an engineer or architect they tend to hire another lobbyist. But spin and slogans are unlikely to generate the broad political and financial support a project like this needs. The public relations effort in support of the highway divisions' version of this project tends to paint local officials as "naysayers" asking for "further" study and supposedly jeopardizing federal deadlines, but the foregoing record proves the opposite is true: we have positively and steadily put forward proposals to get to "yes," and are not saying anything now that was not said in 2008 or earlier. If the state governments had dealt with those issues forthrightly then, a good project would be nearing construction now rather than stuck in this stalemate.

Where does that leave you? As a result, you, with all due respect, have been placed in a bind by your clients. You have been billed as an expert panel, which unquestionably you are. But the Governors and the highway divisions have also billed you as independent, which, again with all due respect, you would need to prove yourself to be. You have been hired by the highway divisions, given a very narrow scope of work by the highway divisions, and are being supervised and given information by the highway divisions. And so it is with no disrespect to you that many of us in the community believe it likely you are expected to rubber stamp what the highway divisions want you to tell them. It was clear from the Governors' letter that you are not allowed to consider the possibilities of an inclusive Plan B - which this situation desperately needs - and are instead confined to implementing their Plan A.

I hope that you can find a way to do the right thing for Vancouver and Portland, within the confines of your contract with your clients in Salem and Olympia. But like I say, I think you're in a bind and may not be able to do both.

Whoever it is, if not you, unless somebody intervenes and helps get us all on the path to a workable Plan B, the impartial body deciding the fate of Plan A may not be you, but very well may be a federal judge - and federal judges don't make good transportation planners and they don't work very quickly. But that is the path, to a federal court room, that this project and its current EIS is on now.

Meantime, we will keep trying to do our job here, on behalf of the people we represent and the economic and environmental needs of our citizens and future generations. In the coming weeks, our Council will

discuss whether or not to officially suspend our 2008 conditional approval of the LPA, in light of the highway divisions' non-compliance with its conditions. We will also have to evaluate whether our agency would be willing to sign an EIS if in our view it does not meet the standards for evaluation of alternatives that the law demands. Our Council will also have to weigh an amendment to our Regional Transportation Plan with regard to number of lanes, which would be required to enable a project to go forward, as well as a unique feature of Oregon transportation planning law called a Land Use Final Order, which the Metro Council also must vote on before a project can proceed.

I would prefer that we be able to do our job, and vote on those decision points, in an atmosphere of collaboration and mutual problem-solving with the state governments. That has not been the atmosphere over the past three years. Only by working together can we all realize the potential that a good Columbia River Crossing project could achieve for all of us.

[Read about the Columbia River Crossing project](#)

National Travel and Tourism Week is May 10-14, 2010

05/10/2010 07:51 PM

In 2009, nearly 8.9 million people visited the metropolitan region, spending \$3.5 billion in area businesses. As one-tenth of our local economy, travel and tourism is a major contributor to the region's economic prosperity and livability.

Metro Council President David Bragdon will join other community leaders to acknowledge the important role tourism plays in the ability to create and support jobs, vibrant neighborhoods and safe and reliable transportation systems at a Travel Rally at noon on Tuesday, May 11 in Pioneer Courthouse Square.

"Despite the economic challenges of recent years, tourism has remained strong in our region, comparably speaking," said Bragdon. He attributes the region's appeal to its proximity to outdoor recreation and scenery, reputation for lively urban neighborhoods and a strong downtown, and a reputation for sustainability - including Metro's LEED-EB Silver-certified Oregon Convention Center.

More than 500,000 people attended conventions, tradeshow, meeting and events at OCC in fiscal year 2008-09, inducing \$421 million in direct and indirect spending in restaurants, hotels, retail stores and services. Because OCC is the gateway to the rest of the state for many visitors, its sustainable operating practices and distinctively Oregon art work convey an important first impression of the state's conservation and cultivation of natural resources and healthy, active lifestyles.

Many return as residents and employees of businesses who share those same principles, contributing to the region's innovative economic clusters including outdoor sportswear, bicycle products and organic food and beverage products.

Bragdon predicts that travel and tourism will play an integral part in the region's economic recovery.

[Visit the Oregon Convention Center site](#)

Auditor reviews Metro's financial condition

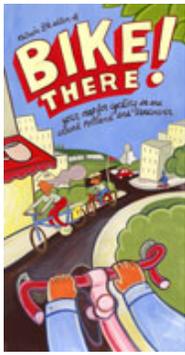
05/05/2010 06:01 PM

The Office of the Metro Auditor released an audit today reporting on the financial condition of Metro. "Overall, Metro seems to be quite strong financially," Metro Auditor Suzanne Flynn said. "Unreserved fund balances are available to withstand downturns and Metro has a strong cash flow position to meet short term requirements, although the current economic situation has had an effect."

[Read more about the audit](#)

Celebrate National Bike Month with Metro's new Bike There! map

05/04/2010 01:48 PM



May is National Bike Month and Metro is encouraging you to bike there, whether you are commuting, exercising or just having fun. To help you find the safest and most direct routes, Metro's new eighth edition Bike There! map, which is printed on durable, waterproof paper, is hot off the press and available at area retailers for \$9.

Since 1982, the Bike There! map has helped local cyclists find their way around Portland and Vancouver. In the new edition, those using two wheels instead of four for their daily travels will find commuter maps of downtown Portland along with 21 local cities. The map also gives bike riders of all types - recreational, commuter and beginners - the knowledge to choose the most suitable routes.

The new map features more routes - a total of 600 miles of on-street bike routes and 235 miles of off-street trails. Users will also notice an expanded regional map directing them to popular recreational cycling destinations where they can get exercise and enjoy the area's natural beauty, an improvement inspired by feedback from local riders. While designing the new edition, Metro watched cyclists use the map. Planners quickly realized the map's legend could be clearer on which routes are the truly the best for bikes.

Metro is marking the release of the new map and National Bike Month with several events including a Bike There! celebration on May 13 that will feature local media celebrities going for the gold in a goldsprint cycling competition, free bike tune-ups and other fun opportunities. Learn more at www.oregonmetro.gov/bikethere.

[Find out where to get a Bike There! map](#)

[Learn more about the May 13 event](#)

[Metro, Multnomah County working to keep Gresham site safe, clean](#)

04/29/2010 05:01 PM

Future TOD property gets spruce-up

Metro staff is working across departments and with partner agencies to improve safety and maintain plants and trees in a future transit oriented development (TOD) property in Gresham.

The four-acre site is in the Gresham Civic Neighborhood, near a MAX station soon to be under construction. Slated for mixed use - businesses and homes - the site has become overgrown with blackberry vines, trees in varying stages of decay and invasive plants.

Neighbors were concerned about some trees that had fallen over onto adjacent properties, causing slight damage, and heavy brush which blocked views through the property.

Metro arborists, wildlife monitors, biologists and TOD project managers coordinated the brush clearing and the removal of the most dangerous trees. A crew of inmates from the Multnomah County Sheriff's Corrections Office was enlisted to cut and load wood, which was then delivered to agencies that serve low-income households.

The TOD site is owned by Metro. Next month, TriMet will break ground at on the new light rail station, which is located at the northeast corner of the property. The new station, on NW Civic Drive between Burnside and Division streets, will include pedestrian crossing improvements, new shelters, ticket vending machines and platform furnishings and interactive artwork. The station is scheduled to open this fall.

Gresham Civic Neighborhood is one of the region's first large-scale, mixed-use neighborhoods. The development supports homes and jobs, encourages walking and transit use, and has improved connections to other destinations within Gresham.

[Read about transit oriented development](#)

[Read about the Gresham Civic Neighborhood](#)

Metro, local leaders seek better ways to maintain and build public structures

04/29/2010 09:47 AM

Jobs, safety and the environment become focus of preparing new land for growth

With decisions about where the Portland region's urban growth boundary may be allowed to expand in the future largely complete, the focus is now on making the most of existing public structures and systems to serve new urban areas and on ensuring that any expansions improve existing neighborhoods, protect farmland and create good jobs.

Historically, the region added land to the urban growth boundary without making agreements about who would pay for or manage needed roads, bridges, pipes, parks and other public structures. Without plans or agreements in place, land added to the urban growth boundary often remains undeveloped for years. Metro and its partners are working to change that.

At an April 28 dialogue convened by Metro, a committee of local elected and community leaders and citizen representatives will have an opportunity to weigh in on important questions that will shape how new communities develop in the future. The questions include:

- How can we ensure that areas brought inside the urban growth boundary have the ability to pay for adequate public structures and services?
- How will existing neighborhoods and communities be given a voice in planning new urban areas before they are brought inside the urban growth boundary?
- How will new communities provide for safe neighborhoods for children and seniors, outdoor recreation opportunities and jobs?
- How can the development of new communities protect environmental quality and natural beauty?
- How can new communities provide well-connected streets, bikeways, parks and trails so they don't make traffic worse for existing neighborhoods?

The Metro Policy Advisory Committee will provide its recommendation on proposed policy changes to the Metro Council on Wednesday, May 12. The Metro Council is currently scheduled to vote on the proposed policy changes and formal urban reserves designations on Thursday, June 3.

[Learn more about MPAC](#)

[Learn more about new area planning](#)

Metro acquires 20 acres of forest to protect water quality, elk habitat in Rock Creek area

04/28/2010 03:54 PM

New natural area is adjacent to another parcel protected by voter-approved bond measure

Metro acquired a 20-acre natural area this month along Alder Creek, one of the most important headwaters of Rock Creek.

Combined with an adjacent 20-acre parcel that Metro purchased last year, this property begins to build a swath of protected land in the Rock Creek area in western Multnomah County. Both properties are situated immediately beyond the region's urban growth boundary, the cutoff point for urban-style development.

"As the population grows, it's critically important that we protect forest habitat and the wildlife that

depends on it," said Metro Councilor Rex Burkholder, who represents this area in District 5. "Protecting this land also provides an important scenic resource for people living nearby."

The property, which was acquired for about \$245,000, will play a key role in safeguarding water quality. It includes 1,700 feet along Alder Creek, which supports winter steelhead and flows into Rock and Abbey creeks one mile south.

Alder, maple and red cedar trees are common on the forested property, a frequent stopping point for an elk herd that roams the area. There is also a wide diversity of native plants, including sword fern, Oregon grape, vine maple and salmonberry.

Metro's acquisitions in the area complement efforts by the West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District to protect stream health and promote restoration.

"Caring for waterways like Rock Creek brings together the whole community," said Metro Council President David Bragdon. "Thanks to voters, the Metro Council is teaming up with other governments, conservation groups and private citizens to protect the region's clean water and native wildlife."

Metro helps close gap in Fanno Creek Greenway Trail for walkers, runners, cyclists

04/27/2010 04:23 PM

City of Tigard plans to construct missing trail segment within three to six years

Metro has secured rights to extend the Fanno Creek Greenway Trail on two properties in central Tigard, helping close a gap in the popular walking, jogging and bicycling path.

The side-by-side easements, which were finalized this month, represent Metro's first trail deals funded by the voter-approved 2006 natural areas bond measure.

"Regional trails like the Fanno Creek Greenway provide an important way for people to connect with nature - and connect with nearby communities," Metro Council President David Bragdon said. "That's why voters supported additional trails as a part of Metro's Natural Areas Program."

When the greenway is complete, it will traverse 15 miles and five cities, beginning at the shores of the Willamette River in Southwest Portland and weaving through Beaverton, Tigard and Durham to Tualatin, where Fanno Creek meets the Tualatin River. This commuting and recreational trail connects dozens of neighborhoods, parks, schools and businesses. On a typical summer day, 300 people pass through Tigard's portion of the trail.

Overall, approximately half the greenway has been constructed. Metro is working with local jurisdictions to close gaps where trail users are currently diverted to public streets, including more than one-third mile between downtown Tigard and the city's Woodard Park.

Representing nearly half of this missing segment, the two Metro easements tally a combined \$52,000, three acres and 865 feet of trail - the ground you'd cover jogging two-thirds of the way around a track. The city of Tigard plans to construct this portion of the trail within three to six years.

"Metro is delighted to work with the city, closing this gap in the Fanno Creek Greenway to open up opportunities for local residents," said Metro Councilor Carl Hosticka, who represents the southwestern part of the region in District 3. "The trail will link people with their town center, giving them better access to bus service and WES commuter rail."

The Fanno Creek Greenway is part of The Intertwine, a unifying name for the Portland metropolitan area's network of parks, trails and natural areas. The Intertwine Alliance, a coalition of businesses, nonprofits and public agencies, have joined together to promote The Intertwine and link it with homes, jobs and schools to create one of the greatest outdoor recreation networks in the world.

Metro partners, industry eye compressed natural gas for fleets

04/26/2010 01:41 PM

What runs cleaner, gets around quieter and outweighs four elephants? A 25-ton garbage truck powered by compressed natural gas. Domestically abundant and increasingly popular as an alternative to petroleum-based diesel and gasoline, compressed natural gas might make a comeback as Metro, local governments and the solid waste industry consider the possibilities for waste-collection vehicles.

The fuel, ahead of its time three decades ago when only smaller engines could use it, now represents a more sustainable option for larger trucks, too. It costs less, burns cleaner, yields quieter vehicles and may open the door to other alternatives such as biomethane.

To further explore potential benefits, regional partners and industry will attend a Monday forum sponsored by Metro, the Columbia-Willamette Clean Cities Coalition and businesses. Participants will get an up-close look at a garbage truck powered by compressed natural gas and discuss the technology, tax incentives, air-quality initiatives and regional fueling options.

The Metro region generates 2.6 million tons of waste each year, of which approximately 59% is recovered through recycling or other means. Of the remaining 1.2 million tons disposed, approximately 532,000 tons comes through Metro's Oregon City and Northwest Portland transfer stations and is trucked to the Columbia Ridge Landfill in Gilliam County, which is 145 miles east of Portland.

Metro's ten-year contract to haul waste to the landfill calls for at least a 90 percent decrease in emissions through the use of diesel filters on trucks, provisions to decrease carbon dioxide through fuel consumption incentives and the use of biodiesel blends. The use of trucks powered by compressed natural gas would contribute significantly to these goals and to Metro's commitment to sustainability and a healthy environment.

[Learn about Metro's role in addressing climate change](#)

[Check out the changes at the new and improved M. James Gleason Boat Ramp](#)

04/26/2010 01:37 PM

Metro Council President David Bragdon and Councilor Rex Burkholder will be on hand for the official re-opening of the new and improved M. James Gleason Boat Ramp on Tuesday, April 27 at 9:30 a.m. Oregon State Marine Board chair Trey Carskadon will also take part in the ceremony. The Gleason ramp on the Columbia River, located at 4325 NE Marine Drive, is the second most popular public boating ramp in Oregon and is operated by Metro.

The ramp underwent renovations during the winter that improved the boat launching area and expanded the parking lot. The project involved replacing the gangway and adding floats to the ramp itself so more boaters could put in at the same time. Workers also installed 17 concrete panels to divert waves and reduce the amount of debris that accumulates near the launch. The panels are staggered to allow fish to pass through as they head up river.

Artwork on the panels suggests water and waves, and were created by Northwest artist Buster Simpson. The artwork was partially funded by Metro's One Percent for Art program, which sets aside one percent of construction costs for incorporating art into renovation and building projects.

This phase of the renovation cost \$1.6 million and was funded by Metro, the Oregon State Marine Board and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, through federal Sport Fish Restoration funds. The fourth and final phase will begin in 2011 and include repaving the parking lot and adding bioswales to remove silt and pollution from surface runoff water.

Come join Metro on Tuesday for the official re-opening. The ceremonial ribbon cutting takes place at 10:30 a.m.

[Learn more about Metro's boating facilities](#)

[Metro honors volunteers during National Volunteer Week](#)

04/22/2010 11:05 AM

"Celebrating People in Action" is the theme for National Volunteer Week, commemorated April 19-25, and Metro certainly has a lot to celebrate. Because if its corps of volunteers, Metro is better able to deliver services to residents of the region - and beyond.

More than 2,750 people donate upwards of 248,000 hours of their time each year at the Metro Regional Center, the Portland Center for the Performing Arts, the Oregon Convention Center, Metro's parks and natural areas and the Oregon Zoo. (That's the equivalent of nearly 120 full-time employees.) These community minded experts help guide Metro policy, restore wildlife habitat, build vibrant neighborhoods, connect children to nature, and make sure national and international guests see the best of this place we call home.

"Metro volunteers are deeply committed to this community and this region truly would not be the same place without them," said Metro Council President David Bragdon. "From park naturalists to zoo guides to guest services staff at conventions and arts events, virtually all of us have been served by a Metro volunteer at one time or another."

OCC's volunteer coordinator Peri Muchich agrees. "I could not do my job without the help of the volunteers," she says, who assist guests at conventions and meeting throughout the year. OCC's volunteers keep up to date on area information so guests can fully enjoy the region between sessions and before and after conventions. The group has even organized a monthly "Restaurant Research" event, in which volunteers visit restaurants accessible from the convention center either on foot or by transit to help future guests.

The Oregon Zoo has several categories of volunteers. ZooGuides is in an ongoing program for adult volunteers involved in more than 100 different programs. Youth Volunteer Leadership Corps volunteers are high school students who commit to the zoo year round and take leadership in several conservation projects. Project Volunteers share a specific talent with the zoo, such as volunteer divers. ZooTeens manage seasonal programs; about 300 teens operate the Family Farm and provide interpretation at various exhibits. ZooAmbassadors, a family volunteer program, support seasonal exhibits. This year they'll get to help with the Prehistoric Predators exhibit.

Slogging through wetlands in winter to count amphibian eggs, monitoring birds at dawn and caring for hundreds of ancient headstones at historic cemeteries are just some of the out-of-the-ordinary jobs that volunteers in Metro's parks and natural areas perform. Perhaps it's the uniqueness of the opportunities, but community involvement manager John Sheehan says he's seen a steady increase in the number of volunteers and the hours they donate over the years. For example, volunteer hours were up 25 percent at Metro's Native Plant Center alone this year.

Over at the Portland Center for the Performing Arts, volunteers serve as ushers, greeters and tour guides. They also coordinate the PCPA Noontime Showcase, which draws about 1,000 people every year for free hour-long performances. Shows have included the Portland Opera, Dickens Carolers, Portland Taiko and Oregon Children's Theatre.

"About 150 of our 600 volunteers have been with PCPA for more than 10 years," said volunteer coordinator Margie Humphreys. "With close to a million people visiting our venues every year, our volunteers are a group that I trust will help make our patrons have the best experience possible."

While Metro celebrates volunteers throughout the year, it's time to give back. In the next few months, Metro, the Oregon Zoo, PCPA and OCC will honor these remarkable people at separate volunteer appreciation dinners and events where staff, Metro councilors and commissioners from MERC can thank them for their generous contributions of time, energy and ideas.

[Volunteer for Metro](#)

[Metro Council President David Bragdon honored for leadership in urban forestry](#)

04/20/2010 04:30 PM

The Arbor Day Foundation has honored Metro Council President David Bragdon with its 2010 Excellence

in Urban Forest Leadership Award. Bragdon was chosen for his instrumental role in Metro's efforts to protect and restore forest and park lands.

Each year, the Arbor Day Foundation honors individuals and organizations involved in outstanding tree planting and environmental practices. Its award for Excellence in Urban Forest Leadership recognizes innovative leadership in advancing sustainable community forestry efforts.

Bragdon feels he does not stand alone in the efforts being recognized by the foundation.

"This is an award for the people of the region, and our agency, not for me. By investing in and restoring our forests and natural areas now, Metro is creating a legacy for the future," Bragdon said. "Residents of the region are establishing a way of life in which the sustainability of our forests and greenspaces and clean air and water are a priority."

Under Bragdon's leadership, Metro passed a \$227.4 million bond measure to assure the ongoing purchase of land for parks and natural areas throughout the region. The funds generated from the 2006 measure and those from a prior measure have allowed Metro to preserve and restore more than 10,000 acres of forests, rare woodlands, stream corridors, wetlands and prairies.

Among the other projects Bragdon has lead is the development of The Intertwine, a network of trails, parks and natural areas that connects homes, jobs and schools throughout the Portland-Vancouver area. Bragdon also helped establish The Intertwine Alliance, a coalition of businesses, nonprofits and public agencies that work together to create and promote this valuable system of paths and open spaces.

Bragdon will accept the award from the Arbor Day Foundation at a ceremony on May 1, 2010, in Nebraska City, Nebraska, the home of Arbor Day.

[Find out more about Metro's Natural Areas Program](#)

[Go to The Intertwine website](#)

[Learn more about the Arbor Day Foundation and its programs](#)

Metro supports local residents' efforts to "SOLV IT" on Earth Day 2010

04/19/2010 03:00 PM

Metro teamed up with Stop Oregon Litter and Vandalism (SOLV) in supporting efforts to clean up and restore public lands and natural areas on the 40th anniversary of Earth Day.

More than 6,000 volunteers participated in the annual SOLV IT Earth Day Event on Saturday, April 17. At 200 sites throughout Oregon, the volunteers took on more than 435,000 tons of materials and 467 tossed tires that will now be recycled, re-used or disposed of properly.

The numbers are impressive:

- 154,101 pounds - mixed waste pulled from neighborhoods and natural areas
- 17,310 pounds - plastic, glass, paper and metal material recycled, including 467 tires
- 262,827 pounds - invasive, non-native vegetation removed.

Volunteers also planted 3,965 native trees and shrubs in parks, on school grounds and in natural areas. Other activities included spreading mulch and maintaining watershed restoration sites.

"Metro is proud to continue supporting SOLV's efforts to clean up and restore natural areas," said Metro Councilor Rod Park. "Metro's own restoration projects and those of local cities, non-profit agencies, community groups and local businesses are important to protecting water quality and clean air. By working together, we all help to ensure that residents throughout the region will always have nature in their neighborhoods."

Metro is a major sponsor of the Earth Day clean up, SOLV's spring Clean and Green event and other SOLV projects. The agency also manages the Regional Illegal Dumping Patrol (RID Patrol) to clean up and prevent illegal dump sites on public property in the Portland metropolitan area. Metro works to protect our parks, forests and farmlands through conservation, education and habitat restoration.

[Learn how Metro's Regional Illegal Dumping Patrol keeps your neighborhoods safe and clean](#)

[Discover how Metro acquires natural areas, protects and restores fish and wildlife habitats](#)

[Read about Metro's parks, trails and recreation opportunities](#)

President Obama launches America's Great Outdoors Initiative

04/16/2010 04:56 PM

Metro's conservation efforts align with Obama administration's strategy

At the White House on Friday, Metro Council President David Bragdon watched as President Obama launched the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The initiative will bring communities together to develop a strategy for protecting and preserving valuable lands, open spaces and natural resources.

Bragdon was one of 500 invited guests to attend the White House Conference on America's Great Outdoors. During Bragdon's leadership, Metro has moved to preserve and restore thousands of acres of forests, rare woodlands, stream corridors, wetlands and prairies. He also played an integral role in the agency's efforts to join forces in establishing a connected network of parks, trails and natural areas in the Portland-Vancouver area called "The Intertwine."

During his opening remarks, President Obama mentioned strides his administration has made on a national level to protect large tracts of public lands including some in Oregon.

"Last year, I signed into law a public lands bill -- the most significant in decades -- that designated two million acres of wilderness, over 1,000 miles of wild and scenic rivers, and three national parks. We better protected cherished places like Oregon's Mount Hood. We're taking a new approach to our National Forests to make sure they're not just providing timber for lumber companies, but water and jobs for rural communities. We are restoring our rivers and coasts, from the Chesapeake Bay to the Gulf Coast, from the Great Lakes to the Everglades."

The President also touched on the new environmental challenges the nation faces such as population growth and climate change which place a growing strain on healthy air, water, land and wildlife. He said that the nation needs to develop a new strategy on conservation and called for the writing of a "new chapter" in protecting valuable land, rivers, wildlife habitats and historic sites.

To do that, he said, the environmental discussion needs to take place outside of Washington, D.C. The America's Great Outdoors initiative directs members of the administration to host regional "listening sessions" across the United States, beginning in the next few months. The first meetings will be in Los Angeles and Florida.

"We'll meet with everybody -- from tribal leaders to farmers, from young people to business people, from elected officials to recreation and conservation groups," Obama said. "And their ideas will help us form a 21st century strategy for America's great outdoors to better protect our natural landscape and our history for generations to come."

The President said that strategy will include building on current conservation efforts spearheaded by local governments, tribes and private groups as well as actions to preserve ranches and valuable farmland.

In February, the Metro Council and Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington county commissions approved rural reserve agreements to protect more than 272,100 acres of farmland, forestland and natural areas from growth. Metro also has protected more than 10,000 acres of natural areas in the region through bond measures approved by voters in 1995 and 2006.

The Great Outdoors initiative will be run by the Environmental Protection Agency, the White House Council on Environmental Quality, the Department of Interior and the Department of Agriculture.

[Go to the America's Great Outdoors Initiative web site and share your thoughts](#)

[Read President Obama's speech at the America's Great Outdoors conference](#)

[Read the Presidential Memorandum establishing the America's Great Outdoors Initiative](#)
[Learn more about Metro's continuing efforts to restore and protect natural areas](#)

Metro Council President takes part in White House conference

04/15/2010 03:43 PM

Metro Council President David Bragdon is heading to Washington, D.C. for the White House Conference on America's Great Outdoors. Bragdon received an invitation to take part in the Friday, April 16 conference, which will address challenges, opportunities and innovations surrounding the conservation of lands throughout the nation and here in the Pacific Northwest.

"America's outdoors are part of our national identity. They are the farms, ranches and forests that we take great pride in, and the neighborhood parks, trails and fields where we spend memorable time with our families and friends," said Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. "Too many of these places are disappearing. In launching this conversation, we strive to learn about the smart, creative community efforts underway throughout the country to conserve our outdoor spaces, and hear how we can support these efforts."

Metro and its partners in the region have been leaders in protecting valuable natural areas. In 2006, Metro passed a \$227.4 million bond measure to assure the ongoing purchase of land for parks and natural spaces throughout the region. The funds generated from that measure and those from a prior one have allowed Metro to preserve and restore more than 10,000 acres of forests, rare woodlands, stream corridors, wetlands and prairies.

In recent years, Metro and dozens of public agencies, private companies and nonprofit organizations have joined together in a coalition to create more opportunities for residents to connect with nature. The coalition has named the region's network of parks, trails and natural areas "The Intertwine" as a way to describe and promote these assets as an integrated system. The White House conference will center on similar opportunities and innovative solutions for communities looking to rehabilitate and conserve open spaces.

Bragdon was invited to be a part of the conference by Sutley, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack.

"The Portland region's innovative efforts to build and protect "The Intertwine," the region's network of parks, trails and natural areas, have gained the notice and respect of our nation's leadership," said Bragdon. "This conference represents the next level of federal commitment to our cause. The result will be more opportunities to be active and enjoy nature and to protect precious urban streams and habitat."

The conference brings together 500 participants from across the country to discuss with and learn from each other, identify challenges and opportunities, engage the federal government's support and reinvigorate the conversation about protecting the outdoors.

"There is no doubt that we face serious challenges to our natural resources: climate change, air and water pollution, a lost connection between some Americans and the outdoors, and a fragmentation and loss of open space," said Vilsack. "We believe that the best way to answer these challenges is to work with landowners, conservation groups, sportsmen and women, local communities, and state and local governments to conserve America's great outdoors, and in doing so, reconnect Americans to our forests, working lands and public lands."

[Learn more about Metro's efforts to protect and preserve natural areas](#)

Intertwine Alliance partners unveil bi-state trails plan

04/15/2010 02:33 PM

An extensive network of 37 trails connecting people from Wilsonville to Vancouver and in between has been released. The new Bi-State Regional Trail Systems plan includes 20 trails in the Portland metropolitan area and 17 in Clark County that will connect cities and suburbs to other communities. The plan is the product of The Intertwine Alliance, a coalition of businesses, nonprofits and public agencies that have committed to linking trails, parks and natural areas with homes, jobs and schools to create one of the

greatest parks networks in the world.

The 37 trails were selected based on previous regional and state trail planning that stemmed from 100 years of research. More than 250 miles of regional trails on both sides of the Columbia River already provide bicyclists, pedestrians, equestrians and paddlers access to nature and a safe, enjoyable means of transportation. The long-term vision for the region includes 950 miles of trails that will link 32 cities, six counties and two states.

Metro and the Vancouver/Clark County Parks System wrote the plan, with technical assistance from the National Park Service's Challenge Cost Share Program, which supports groups who work to preserve natural, recreational and cultural resources.

[See the Bi-State Regional Trails Plan](#)

[Learn about The Intertwine Alliance](#)

[Climate change presentation by Dr. William Moomaw now on Metro web site](#)

04/14/2010 11:48 AM

Video of presentations by international climate change expert and Nobel peace prize recipient Dr. William Moomaw to local leaders is now available on the Metro web site. [View the video](#)

Members of the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation and the Metro Policy Advisory Committee as well as dozens of other local leaders and interested people gathered at the Oregon Convention Center on Friday, April 2, to kick off a renewed regional effort to address the issue of climate change, and specifically greenhouse gas emissions. Dr. Moomaw addressed both the scientific evidence of climate change as well as actions that can be taken at the local level to drastically reduce the rate of climate change.

Participants in the workshop ended the day by taking a survey prioritizing possible actions to address climate change locally. Results from those surveys will be made available on Metro's web site and presented to MPAC and JPACT in May.

[Find out how Metro is working to address climate change](#)

[JPACT approves transportation work plan for the upcoming year](#)

04/09/2010 03:32 PM

At its regular meeting on Thursday, April 8, the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation unanimously approved adoption of the 2010-11 Unified Planning Work Program - the list of federally funded transportation activities planned for the upcoming year. The UPWP is prepared every year by Metro as one of its key responsibilities as the metropolitan planning organization for the Portland metropolitan area. JPACT and the Metro Council together make up the MPO and must concur on transportation decisions in order for them to be implemented. The Metro Council is scheduled to consider adoption of the UPWP on Thursday, April 15.

The UPWP describes all federally funded transportation planning activities to be undertaken by Metro, local governments and transportation agencies in the metropolitan region during the next fiscal year. Activities described in this UPWP include both large and small planning efforts, from the Oregon Department of Transportation's study of the I-5 Columbia River Crossing to a regional trail plan by the Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District, from Metro's major long-range planning to TriMet's bus shelter development. [Read the full text UPWP](#)

[Natural Areas Program reports on busy quarter](#)

04/08/2010 03:50 PM

Metro's Natural Areas Program doesn't believe in the winter doldrums. The first three months of 2010 were filled with big news, from the historic acquisition of Chehalem Ridge Natural Area to the announcement of

\$1.9 million in Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants. Plus, the Metro auditor and an independent citizen oversight committee both praised Metro's work in carrying out the voter-approved 2006 natural areas bond measure.

[Download the natural areas quarterly report](#)
[Learn more about the Natural Areas Program](#)

Talking sustainability: Tell Metro what you think

04/06/2010 11:42 AM

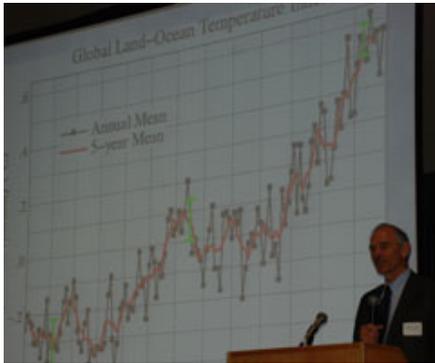
Where do you look online for green-living tips and trends? What types of sustainability information do you seek on the web? How do you share ideas with others? Metro has launched a web survey to learn this and more from folks across the region as the agency updates its online resources.

From recycling waste and protecting habitat to driving less and building green, Metro wants to make it even easier for people to find information, exchange ideas and take action toward sustainable living at home, in the office or on the go. Survey results will help guide development of web content and tools to further promote regional sustainability.

Take the five-minute survey, available through Sunday, April 11, at www.surveymonkey.com/s/oregonmetro.

Nobel peace prize winner addresses climate change with local leaders

04/05/2010 11:25 AM



Dr. William Moomaw shares climate change research with a packed audience of nearly 200.

Climate change is irreversible. That's the bad news delivered by international climate change expert and Nobel peace prize recipient Dr. William Moomaw to a group of 200 elected officials and local leaders. The good news is that acting now will make a huge difference and collaborative efforts on the part of individuals, private industry and all levels of government can drastically reduce the rate of climate change.

Members of the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation and the Metro Policy Advisory Committee gathered at the Oregon Convention Center on Friday, April 2, to kick off a renewed regional effort to address the issue of climate change, and specifically greenhouse gas emissions. Following directly on the release of a regional greenhouse gas inventory commissioned by Metro, the region is embarking on a state-mandated project to develop land use and transportation models that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles. [Read more about the inventory and scenarios work](#)

To get a reality check on climate change as well as some practical ideas on what can be done to make a difference, Metro invited international climate change expert Moomaw to address what was intended primarily as a workshop for the 40 members of the two Metro advisory committees. By the start of the retreat, however, the attendee list had grown to nearly 200 as other local leaders and residents expressed interest in the issue of climate change.

Acknowledging the seemingly gloomy outlook on the future climate of our planet, Dr. Moomaw also expressed confidence in human ability to come up with creative solutions. Looking at the astounding differences in technology and lifestyle from 1905 to 1955 to 2005, Moomaw suggested that there is no reason we can't create a very different future for 2055 if we look differently at what that future could be. "We need to integrate the issue of climate change into everything that we do, not address it as a separate problem."



(L-R) Neil McFarland, TriMet capital projects; Dean Lookingbill, Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council; Bob Austin, Clackamas County Commission; and Metro Councilor Robert Liberty discuss climate change.

As an example of the ability of local entities to create change, Moomaw pointed to the 1975 action of the U.S. Congress banning chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) use in spray cans which led to a 1985 international treaty adoption to protect the ozone. All of this started because of action taken by two states - Oregon and Vermont - in 1974 to ban CFCs. Today, the country has achieved a 95 percent reduction in CFCs. Moomaw stressed that similar outcomes are possible through the collective actions of individuals and local governments.

With a nod to the region's international reputation for transportation planning and the "trailblazing nature" of the region, Moomaw predicted that "if you can create success here and demonstrate what is possible, it does not end with the boundaries of this region."

A video of Dr. Moomaw's presentation will be available on the Metro website next week. [Visit www.oregonmetro.gov/climatechange.](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/climatechange)

Metro's proposed 2010-2011 budget focuses on efficiencies, core services

04/02/2010 11:46 AM

Metro's Chief Operating Officer released his budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2010-2011 to the Metro Council on Thursday, and it reflects a decrease in spending for the third year in a row. The \$425 million proposal, down 8.2 percent from the current budget year, reflects a drop in the agency's revenue while preserving core services and maintaining the agency's commitments to the region's residents.

"The economic climate has caused taxpayers to demand that their governments focus on creating good jobs and on taking care of and making the most of investments they already have," said Metro COO Michael Jordan. "Metro's focus is to continue doing that by exercising fiscal restraint while providing quality services to our current residents, accommodating a growing population and reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

Metro's urban growth estimates indicate the population in the Portland region's seven counties will grow by one million by the year 2030. In that same time period, the cost of providing the public structures - roads, water lines, parks, schools, bridges and other facilities - needed to accommodate housing and job growth in the region is expected to range from \$27 to \$41 billion. Existing sources of money are expected to cover only about half of that need. Metro will be looking at efficiencies and will approach state and federal partners to help in regional investments. The agency will also help local communities identify financing opportunities outside of Metro funding.

The budget includes all major operating functions of Metro which include the Metro Exposition Recreation Commission and the Oregon Zoo. Nearly half of Metro's annual revenues are derived from its major venues including the zoo, the Oregon Convention Center, Portland Center for the Performing Arts, the Expo Center, and other facilities such as Blue Lake and Oxbow parks and the popular Gleason boat ramp as well as from enterprise activities such as solid waste fees. But Metro is seeing a drop in some revenue streams.

Solid waste disposal in the region remains considerably lower than pre-recession levels, with the largest losses in the construction and demolition debris category. While attendance remains high in all venues, visitors are spending less on food, concessions and gift shop items. Bookings at the Oregon Convention Center and the Expo Center are on pace, but recent trends show shorter events with more modest food and concession offerings.

Metro's proposed wages and benefits for the FY 2010-2011 are \$77 million, or about 22 percent of the total budget. Labor costs are just 0.1 percent higher than the current year. The agency will cut ten full time equivalent jobs next year, mostly by not filling open positions. Proposed expenditures are about \$350 million, down 13.7 percent.

"The central core of this budget reflects Metro's efforts to become more efficient, more effective and completely transparent and accountable to our partners and to residents in the region," Jordan said.

[Read the news release on Metro COO's budget proposal](#)
[View the proposed FY 2010-2011 Metro budget](#)

Metro measures the region's carbon footprint and leads the effort to shrink it

04/01/2010 11:36 AM

April 2 workshop brings local leaders together to address climate change as a region

Metro has a long history of working to limit its carbon footprint through its sustainability programs such as recycling education, making and selling MetroPaint and composting animal manure at the Oregon Zoo. Now Metro is taking a leadership role in climate change, hosting a local workshop to find ways to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions on a regional level.

A new study by Metro found Portland area residents create 31 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions in 2006. That's nearly 68 billion pounds of pollution. But the main contributor is not coal fired plants and automobile emissions. It's the consumption of materials such as goods and food, much of which is produced outside the area.

In putting together the Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, Metro planners used information from a recent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) report to get a comprehensive view of emissions. The inventory shows 48 percent of the total Portland-area pollution comes from extracting, manufacturing, shipping, recycling and disposing of products and food which are produced and grown both inside and outside the region. Residential and business energy consumption creates another 27 percent, with the final 25 percent coming from local transportation.

"We need to highlight what consumers can do," said David Bragdon, Metro council president. "This is an opportunity to show people that by making informed choices and changes in the items we buy and the way we get around, we can be part of the solution to climate change."

Metro has been mandated by the Oregon legislature to develop long-range plans for meeting state climate pollution reduction goals for transportation and land use. The agency has invited local jurisdictions to begin addressing how to meet those goals at an April 2 workshop headed by Dr. William Moomaw, professor and founding director of the Center for International Environment and Resource Policy at Tufts University. Moomaw is a lead member of the Nobel Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a United Nations sponsored group of scientists.

At the workshop, members of the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation and the Metro Policy Advisory Committee will work to develop a common understanding of the science of climate change and the impacts of land use and transportation strategies. The groups will begin developing tools to forecast

climate pollution as well as identify shared goals, expectations and policy options for achieving a healthy climate and region.

[Learn more about the Regional Greenhouse Gas Inventory and climate change](#)

Metro Natural Areas Program receives positive review

03/24/2010 04:13 PM

An independent citizen oversight committee has lauded Metro's Natural Areas Program for "staying on course" and moving "skillfully" in the acquisition of new green spaces which will be restored and preserved for future generations to enjoy.

The Metro Council accepted its second report from the 20-member citizen-based Natural Areas Program Performance Oversight Committee. The committee is responsible for evaluating voters' \$227 million investment in rivers and streams, wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation opportunities.

Business, real estate, finance and nonprofit professionals on the committee focused on the changing economic climate during the time period covered by the report, from July 2008 through December 2009. Because desirable natural areas typically aren't on the market, some owners may be inclined to wait out the economy, the report said. But, the evaluation concluded, Metro's "skillful, tenacious" team of real estate negotiators made recession-appropriate deals.

"Independent citizen experts are echoing our belief that Metro's Natural Areas Program is both responsible and visionary in protecting the region's best natural resources," said Metro Council President David Bragdon.

The committee also analyzed Metro's response to previous citizen and expert recommendations, such as strengthening public and landowner outreach, learning from every potential transaction and developing additional tools to measure the success of the program. In every case, Metro has responded by improving, the report says.

"The enthusiasm with which Metro staff greeted the committee's suggestions is encouraging," said committee chairman Peter Krainock, CEO of American International Supply Inc. "They exhibited a genuine willingness to accept feedback and grow in order to generate an excellent outcome."

The committee also praised Metro for bolstering the outreach and geographic diversity of its Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program. \$1.9 million in new grants handed out on March 18 more than doubled the amount that's been awarded since the program chose its first recipients in 2008, bringing the overall tally to \$3.3 million.

[Learn more about Metro's Natural Areas Program](#)

Metro awards \$1.9 million in Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants

03/24/2010 04:09 PM



Great Blue Heron in Tigard's Summer Creek.

Metro has awarded \$1.9 million in Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants to five local projects that will preserve and restore natural areas. The grants are designed to involve the community in innovative projects

that incorporate nature in their neighborhoods as the region grows. Since the program began in 2008, Metro has handed out \$3.3 million in capital grants.

Recipients must match Metro awards with outside funding or in-kind services worth at least double the amount of the grant. Criteria for the grants include "re-naturing" neighborhoods by improving their ecology, restoring rare habitats, demonstrating cost-efficient design solutions and providing public access.

"This program helps nurture new projects, giving them the best possible shot at funding," said Sue Marshall, volunteer chair of the capital grants review committee. "Today, we're recognizing five groups that had the right mix of creativity, resources and momentum."

The third round of Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants were awarded by the Metro Council on March 18 and support everything from natural area acquisition to creek restoration to public structures:

Re-Greening Park Avenue Park & Ride

Recipient: TriMet, Urban Green

Partners: North Clackamas Parks and Recreation District, Oak Lodge Sanitary District, North Clackamas Urban Watershed Council

Grant amount: \$349,305

Total project cost: \$1 million

Finding inspiration in Metro's Integrating Habitats design competition in 2008, this project will create the region's first sustainable, habitat-friendly light rail station and park-and-ride. When TriMet's new orange line pulls up to the station at Southeast McLoughlin Boulevard and Park Avenue in Milwaukie in 2015, commuters will be in for a unique experience. They will find a re-created riparian forest, a natural stormwater treatment system and many other green features including a parking garage with plants built into it. Agencies and community groups are collaborating to showcase development that balances design excellence, ecological stewardship and economic enterprise. Project partners hope to restore the Courtney and Kellogg creek basins and promote low-impact development throughout the McLoughlin corridor - showing community members, Trolley Trail users and thousands of MAX riders how to restore ecosystems in a built environment.

[Learn more about TriMet's green Park Avenue park-and-ride station](#)

Trillium Creek Restoration Project

Recipient: City of West Linn

Partners: Mary S. Young Volunteers, Willamette Riverkeepers, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Harris Stream Service, Robinwood Neighborhood Association

Grant amount: \$55,330

Total project cost: \$179,000

Trillium Creek flows from upland areas in West Linn through a wooded ravine into Mary S. Young Park and down to its confluence with the Willamette River. It should offer a welcoming habitat for plants, fish and other wildlife but contamination, channel and bank erosion as well as storm damage have taken their toll. The Metro grant will help bring students, volunteers and other community members together to rehabilitate 1,045 feet of the creek by re-establishing its natural channel and floodplain. The stream bed will be filled with cobble and gravel materials, and bio-engineering measures will be used to provide temporary erosion control until permanent vegetation can take root. Invasive species will be removed and hundreds of native plants and shrubs will be put in to stabilize the banks and return Trillium creek to a healthy urban waterway.

[Learn about Trillium Creek and future restoration efforts](#)

Baltimore Woods Connectivity Corridor

Recipient: City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services, Three Rivers Land Conservancy

Partners: Portland Parks & Recreation, Friends of Baltimore Woods, Audubon Society of Portland, SOLV, Port of Portland

Grant amount: \$158,000

Total project cost: \$475,000

The Metro grant will help purchase parcels, totaling one acre, within the Baltimore Woods corridor in North Portland. This acquisition will protect rare Oregon white oak trees that provide homes for a number of unique species including acorn woodpeckers and the western grey squirrel. These parcels are part of a larger 30-acre corridor that the Friends of Baltimore Woods, city agencies, land trusts and non-profit organizations plan to restore and preserve. This woodland corridor will enhance the nature experience for bicyclists, walkers, joggers and even commuters who will someday use a future trail along this section to connect with the region's Willamette River Greenway Trails system.

[Learn about the Willamette River Greenway Trails system](#)

Crystal Springs Restoration Partnership

Recipient: City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services

Partners: Johnson Creek Watershed Council, Friends of Crystal Springs, Portland Parks & Recreation, Reed College

Grant amount: \$311,480

Total project cost: \$968,000

Crystal Springs Creek in Southeast Portland is fed only by springs, leaving the water free of the urban runoff that taints so many urban streams. The clean water, along with a constant year-round flow, low temperatures and little changes in gradient make this a potential sanctuary for the area's threatened salmon. This project, partially funded by Metro, helps realize the stream's potential by removing barriers that block juvenile fish passage and restoring the floodplain and riparian habitat along the creek. The Lower Columbia chinook, the coho and the steelhead, all listed under the Endangered Species Act, have been documented in Crystal Springs and are expected to thrive once the stream is rehabilitated. There's even the possibility that the Columbia River chum, which has died off in the Portland area, could be reintroduced to the creek after the restoration.

[Learn more about Crystal Springs restoration projects](#)

Summer Creek natural area acquisition

Recipient: City of Tigard

Partners: The Trust for Public Land, Tualatin RiverKeepers, Tualatin Watershed Council, Fans of Fanno Creek, Washington County, Clean Water Services.

Grant amount: \$1 million

Total project cost: \$5.4 million

Metro will contribute to the acquisition of 43 acres of wetlands and mature forests at the confluences of Summer and Fanno creeks. The property is a high-profile natural area, the best remaining unprotected land in Tigard and, soon, the city's second largest park. The site has functioned as an outdoor lab for students at Fowler Middle School who test the water quality and stream flow, learn about the trees and vegetation, track and study birds and even release newly hatched fish into the creeks. With the help of several community partners, a Summer Creek Environmental Education Program will be established that will allow children throughout the area to come experience and study nature first hand.

These latest grants come shortly after Metro surpassed the halfway point toward its goal of protecting 4,000 acres with the region's natural areas bond measure, which was approved in 2006 by voters in Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties. Combined with a 1995 bond measure, Metro has acquired more than 10,000 acres.

[Find out about Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program](#)

[Learn about Metro's natural areas bond measure](#)

New technology at Arlington landfill to turn region's waste into clean fuels and renewable energy

03/16/2010 11:51 AM

Landfill where Metro sends most of region's solid waste plans plasma gasification facility

Waste Management, Inc. has announced plans to develop a plasma gasification facility at the Columbia Ridge Landfill in Arlington, where Metro sends most of the region's solid waste. The planned facility will convert solid waste into clean fuels and renewable energy through a gasification process. Carbon-based materials are transformed into an ultra-clean, synthesis gas called "syngas." The clean syngas may then be converted into transportation fuels such as ethanol and diesel or industrial products like hydrogen and methanol. It could also be used as a substitute for natural gas to generate electricity or heat homes and buildings.

The new plasma gasification facility will complement the landfill site's other renewable energy production. Waste Management began generating renewable electricity at the site in January 2010 with the startup of a new landfill gas-to-energy (LFGTE) facility. Methane gas generated as waste decomposes in the landfill is captured and used to generate electricity. Wind power is also generated at the landfill, with 67 windmills producing more than 100 megawatts of renewable energy for PacifiCorp.

This new development, although not managed by Metro, is in line with the agency's sustainability goals. Metro will be monitoring this project with periodic progress reports from Waste Management. Construction of the plasma facility is expected to begin in the early summer, with startup scheduled by the end of this year.

[Learn more about Waste Management, Inc.](#)

[Find out how Metro guides the region's garbage and recycling systems and works to reduce waste](#)

Metro Council, county boards protect more than 272,100 acres of farmland and forestland

02/26/2010 04:28 PM

The Metro Council and Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington county commissions approved agreements this week that will set aside more than 272,100 acres of farmland, forestland and natural areas to be excluded from urban growth during the next 50 years. The agreements also set aside about 28,100 acres of land for potential future growth needs during that same period.

Today the Metro Council voted 5-2 on a resolution to adopt agreements with each county to designate urban and rural reserves. The Clackamas and Multnomah county commissions unanimously adopted their respective agreements with Metro earlier in the day. The Washington County Board of Commissioners unanimously adopted its agreement with Metro on Tuesday.

"We have before us today an amazing opportunity to protect and provide certainty for more than 270,000 acres of farmland, forests and natural landscape features for up to a half-century," said Metro Councilor Kathryn Harrington, who served as Metro's representative on the Core 4 group that led this effort.

"We have the opportunity to make it more straightforward to provide land for future employers in places that the market wants to go. We have the opportunity to end forever the old, divisive, inadequate way of expanding the UGB based on soil type rather than on the creation of great communities as needed, when needed, and how it is needed," she added. "We have the opportunity to show the state and the nation how we can work together to shape our own future, and thereby win the confidence about investing in our future."

Prior to its adoption of the resolution, the Metro Council cast separate votes on each of its agreements with the three counties. The agreements with Multnomah and Clackamas counties each passed on a 7-0 vote. (The Multnomah County reserves map was amended to change two areas in the western part of the county from undesignated to rural reserve, in keeping with the action taken by the Multnomah County Commission earlier in the day.) The agreement with Washington County was the most contentious and resulted in a divided 4-3 vote, with Councilors Rex Burkholder, Robert Liberty and Rod Park voting no.

Burkholder, who ultimately voted in favor of the full reserves package, raised serious concerns about the amount of urban reserve land, particularly in Washington County. "While I support providing land needed for employment and population growth, urbanization is a one-way street," he said. "Designating land as

urban will make it more difficult for farmers to make long-term investments. There is also the very real problem of creating demand for infrastructure when we have challenges maintaining the roads, sewers and other infrastructure that we have."

Both Park and Liberty voted no on the final resolution containing all three agreements. "Once again, we spent time looking at the edge instead of focusing on the communities that need it [attention]. Now we have 28,000 acres of distraction," said Liberty. He also stated his belief that there is too much land in urban reserves, noting that the vast majority of new residential development that has occurred in the region since 1998 has taken place inside the urban growth boundary as it stood in 1979.

Park noted that laudable efforts at compromise had been made by many parties to come to the map prepared today. "We do need jobs. We need places for people to live," said Park, who expressed concerns about the amount of foundation farmland included as urban reserve north of Cornelius. "The decision needs to be balanced. It doesn't feel right to me."

Others expressed support for the reserves package and the protection it offers for agricultural land. "If you want uncertainty, go back to the old system. What is certain are rural reserves. This map would protect 98 percent of the [foundation] farmland in Washington County from having to be discussed" for future urban growth boundary expansion, noted Councilor Carl Hosticka.

Councilor Carlotta Collette also expressed concerns about location and sizes of particular urban reserves but supported the proposal and the compromises necessary to produce it. "I'm trusting and hoping that the principles that accompany the IGAs will provide the level of protection for natural resource areas that they deserve," she said.

"One of the valuable aspects of urban and rural reserves is that, by limiting the amount of land and the locations available for future growth, it requires us to rethink how we invest limited resources in our existing communities and make the best use of what we already have," said Metro Council President David Bragdon. "Now the real work begins."

The Oregon Legislature, in enacting Senate Bill 1011 during the 2007 session, provided Metro and the three counties with the authority to designate urban and rural reserves. Since early 2008, Metro and the three counties have led a collaborative effort, working with local governments, business representatives, farmers, environmental and land use advocates, property owners and other residents, to identify areas most suitable for urban growth over the next 40 to 50 years and provide long-term protection to valuable farmland, forestland and natural areas.

The designation of urban and rural reserves will support implementation of the 2040 Growth Concept, the region's blueprint for growth adopted in 1995 that calls for focusing development in city and town centers, along transportation corridors and near employment areas. As the final reserves designations are made, the Metro Council will strengthen its focus on finding ways to maximize public investments to support jobs and redevelopment.

Later this spring, each county will take formal actions to designate rural reserves through their existing comprehensive land use plans, and the Metro Council will designate urban reserves through amendments to its land use ordinances and plans. The Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission will review the entire reserves package this fall before the Metro Council considers a possible urban growth boundary expansion by the end of this year, as required by state law.

[Learn more about the urban and rural reserves process](#)

Metro's regional venues continue to contribute millions to local economy despite recession

02/23/2010 12:48 PM

Throughout one of the most challenging business climates in decades, Metro and its Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission (MERC) continued to infuse hundreds of millions of dollars into the local economy in 2008 and 2009.

A recent study concluded that the Oregon Convention Center, Portland Expo Center and Portland Center

for the Performing Arts generated more than \$522 million in direct and indirect spending throughout Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties during fiscal year (FY) 2009. The independent analysis, conducted by Crossroads Consulting Services, LLC, also estimated that 5,540 local jobs with more than \$203 million in employee earnings were supported, and that \$18.2 million in tax revenues were distributed to state and local governments as a result of the venues' business.

FY 2009 was the second year that economic and fiscal data was collected across all MERC venues. In FY 2008, the facilities generated nearly \$535 million in direct and indirect spending, supported 5,810 jobs and nearly \$206 million in earnings, and generated \$18.2 million in tax revenues. The consulting firm attributed the FY 2009 decreases to implications that industry experts anticipated would arise from the economic downturn, including fewer people attending smaller events compared to prior years.

The 2009 MERC Economic and Fiscal Impact Report includes information about the number of events and visitors hosted at each venue.

[Read the report](#)

Metro acquires six acres along Johnson Creek, Springwater Trail

02/22/2010 11:48 AM

New natural area protects water quality, provides important wildlife habitat

Metro continued efforts to protect land along Johnson Creek and the Springwater Corridor trail last week with the acquisition of 5.6 acres on Southeast Telford Road, just south of Gresham.

The property includes more than 1,000 feet along Johnson and Sunshine creeks, which support Chinook, Coho, steelhead and cutthroat trout.

Forests of alder, cottonwood and scattered Douglas fir trees protect and improve water quality in the creeks. Because this sort of riparian habitat has decreased significantly statewide, it receives special attention in the Oregon Conservation Strategy, a blueprint for protecting native fish and wildlife. Riparian areas in Western Oregon support a wide diversity of animals, including more than 200 bird species.

"The wildlife that makes this region so special will continue to have a home here, thanks to the protection of natural areas like this one," said Metro Council President David Bragdon. "And that's good news for all of us who enjoy the outdoors."

Walkers, joggers and bicyclists pass the property on the Springwater Corridor, which follows Johnson Creek on its path from Gresham to the Willamette River. This regional trail provides easy access to Metro's new natural area, creating the potential for future public use.

The property, which was purchased for \$378,000, is adjacent to a two-acre natural area owned by Metro. The 2006 natural areas bond measure has protected a total of 165 acres in the Johnson Creek area.

"Collectively, all those acres have a big impact on the Johnson Creek watershed," said Metro Councilor Rod Park, who represents District 1, in the eastern part of the region where the property is located. "The community has embraced this creek, and cares deeply about its long-term health."

Johnson Creek is one of 27 areas protected by Metro's natural areas bond measure, which was approved by voters in 2006. The program funds land acquisition and capital improvements that protect water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, enhance trails and wildlife corridors, and provide greater connections to nature in urban areas throughout the Portland metropolitan area. For more information, visit www.oregonmetro.gov/naturalareas.

Metro, the regional government that serves 1.5 million people who live in the 25 cities and three counties of the Portland metropolitan area, provides planning and other services that protect the nature and livability of our region.

[Metro shares children's visions of the Tonquin Trail](#)

02/22/2010 11:47 AM

While parents, neighbors and friends shared their ideas about the future Tonquin Trail at three family-friendly open houses held last December, volunteers helped the children give expression to their vision for the trail through mixed-media art. The selection of the artwork created at the open houses is featured on the Metro web site along with information on the Tonquin Trail master plan. The trail will offer bicyclists and pedestrians safe, new connections between Wilsonville, Sherwood and Tualatin.

An article about the trail was recently published in the Oregonian that highlighted a section of the trail currently under construction and the project partners working on a master plan to bring the rest of the trail to fruition - including Metro, Clackamas and Washington counties, and the cities of Wilsonville, Sherwood and Tualatin. The Tonquin Trail is one example of regional investments to increase healthy and safe recreational and commuting options.

[View children's artwork](#)

[Read the article](#)

[Counties, Metro scheduled to vote on historic agreements](#)

02/19/2010 04:56 PM

Unprecedented planning, compromises, will guide public and private investments, provide certainty for farmers, governments, service providers and landowners

After more than two years of research, study and public input, Metro and the three counties in the Portland metropolitan region are nearing the end of an unprecedented process to agree on where and how our region will grow in the next several decades. Next week, the commissions of Clackamas, Washington and Multnomah counties and the Metro Council will vote on approximately 270,000 acres of land for rural reserves and 28,000 acres for urban development. The individual agreements between each county and Metro, scheduled to be adopted next week, will specify urban and rural reserve lands in each county.

Each of the counties has established agreements with Metro that outline where cities within their boundaries will grow when urban growth boundary decisions are made in the next 50 years, and where they will not - preserving the land for farms, forests and natural areas. The proposed regional maps and the legal agreements - reached after tremendous amounts of study, public input and compromise - are the basis for the land designations. [Go to the agreements and maps](#)

The Washington County commission is expected to adopt its final map and intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with Metro on Feb. 23; Multnomah and Clackamas counties are expected to adopt their IGAs with Metro on Feb 25, and Metro will vote on all three agreements Feb. 25. In the next two to three months, the Metro Council will pass an ordinance to amend its Regional Framework Plan to designate urban reserves and the three counties will also amend their comprehensive plans to formally designate rural reserves.

The reserves process is unique in the nation - never before has a metropolitan area mapped out a decades-long plan that identifies areas for urban growth and lands that should be set aside as rural reserves.

Under Oregon's land use system, Metro maintains the urban growth boundary surrounding the Portland metropolitan area. Every five years the agency calculates how much acreage is needed to maintain a 20-year supply of land to accommodate projected population and job growth and expands the boundary if necessary to respond to that need. Once designated, urban reserves will be the focus of consideration for future urban growth boundary expansions. Rural reserves will be off limits to urban development for 50 years. Metro has already embarked on the region's next urban growth boundary decision, which is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

Representatives of the four elected bodies who worked in consultation with their council and commissions to craft the final agreement-- the Core 4--are Multnomah County Commissioner Jeff Cogen, Washington County Chair Tom Brian, Clackamas County Commissioner Charlotte Lehan and Metro Councilor Kathryn Harrington.

Metro, the regional government that serves 1.5 million people who live in the 25 cities and three counties of the Portland metropolitan area, provides planning and other services that protect the nature and livability of our region.

[Restoration under way at Collins Sanctuary](#)

02/11/2010 04:41 PM

Restoration is under way at Collins Sanctuary in Forest Park. Metro purchased the 86-acre property with money from the natural areas bond measure passed by voters in 2006. Metro Council President David Bragdon and Metro Councilor Rex Burkholder spoke about the rehabilitation efforts after a recent tour of Collins Sanctuary.

[Go to the video](#)

[Learn about Metro's natural areas program](#)

[Visit the Friends of Trees Growth Rings blog to learn more about Collins Sanctuary](#)

[Metro and the Oregon Zoo move forward with \\$125 million bond](#)

02/09/2010 04:45 PM

Oregon Zoo bond oversight committee meets for first time on Feb. 10

The Oregon Zoo Bond Citizens' Oversight Committee, a group of independent citizens charged with reviewing the zoo's \$125 million bond program, will meet for the first time Feb. 10.

In November 2008, Metro-area voters passed a \$125 million measure aimed at protecting animal health and safety, making the zoo more sustainable in its operations and addressing serious water conservation issues. The measure also called for creation of an independent citizen oversight committee to provide a third-party review of the bond program progress and to monitor spending.

"The community supported the zoo in 2008, despite a tough economy," said Metro Council President David Bragdon, "and a key element of that broad support was the assurance that accountability measures would be in place."

Chairing the citizens' oversight committee will be Sheryl Manning, who has previously chaired the Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission board and served as the commission's acting general manager. She played a leadership role when the Oregon Convention Center construction project was completed on time and on budget. Manning is also experienced in the nongovernmental organization sector.

"With Sheryl's strong leadership, we are confident that sharp eyes will be watching our financial and construction practices," Bragdon said.

The committee will review the implementation of bond-related programs in terms of structure, management, expenditures, personnel and achievement of defined goals. It will also consider and recommend project modifications if inflationary increases cause construction costs to exceed current budget estimates.

Specifically, the committee will help ensure proper oversight of five areas:

- Providing more humane care for animals by updating four outdated and undersized enclosures with larger, more natural and safer spaces.
- Protecting animal health and safety by modernizing the zoo's substandard 45-year-old animal clinic, which was deemed deficient by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.
- Increasing access to conservation education by providing more space for summer camps, classes and hands-on learning for kids, adults and families.
- Improving water quality by replacing the 1950s-era sewer system, while reducing pollution by separating sewage from storm water. The zoo will also harvest rain runoff for reuse.
- Conserving and reusing water by installing water-recycling filtration systems, while replacing leaking, worn-out plumbing and irrigation systems. These changes will save 11 million gallons of water annually.

Metro management will continue to make specific project decisions, while the committee will examine at how decision-making occurs and how business is conducted. Questions they will address include the following:

- Are the right business processes and tools in place?
- Are the right people working on the program?
- Is quality control adequate?
- Are the program results on track and on schedule?
- What, if any, improvements are needed to ensure that Metro is maintaining the public's trust and realizing the best possible value for the money?

The zoo is a service of Metro and is dedicated to its mission to inspire the community to create a better future for wildlife. Committed to conservation, the zoo is currently working to save endangered California condors, Washington's pygmy rabbits, Oregon silverspot and Taylor's checkerspot butterflies, western pond turtles, Oregon spotted frogs and Kincaid's lupine. Other projects include studies on black rhinos, Asian elephants, polar bears and bats. [Learn more about the Oregon Zoo](#)

Creating a sustainable future panel event

02/09/2010 12:03 PM

The League of Women Voters of Portland is hosting a free panel discussion on sustainability tonight, Feb. 9. Panelists include Metro Council President David Bragdon as well as Susan Anderson, Director of the Bureau of Planning & Sustainability with the City of Portland and Dianne Riley, Equity Agenda Coordinator with the Coalition for a Livable Future.

Panelists will discuss policies and programs that promote sustainability, future plans and goals, and ways that local government and the community can work together to implement sustainable practices.

The panel discussion will be held tonight, Feb. 9, at 7 p.m. in the Board Room of the Multnomah County Building located at 501 SE Hawthorne Boulevard in Portland.

Core 4 agrees on 99.5 percent of reserves map; counties, Metro to work out remainder

02/09/2010 11:31 AM

The four elected officials representing the Metro Council and Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington county commissions - the Core 4 - agreed to protect more than 270,000 acres of the region's best farmland and key natural features in rural reserves while securing just over 27,000 acres in urban reserves to accommodate efficient regional growth for the next 40 to 50 years. Two years ago the counties and Metro began studying a 400,000-acre study area encircling the region's urban growth boundary. Today, these four governments are down to negotiating the final 2,357 acres before establishing urban and rural reserves for the next half century.

"It's gratifying to see how far we've come as a region," said Metro Councilor Kathryn Harrington.

Multnomah County Commissioner Jeff Cogen noted, "we're near consensus on about 398,000 of those acres," and that areas left unresolved represent less than one-half of one percent of the total study area. Cogen made a proposal to endorse a revised map presented this morning and enable each county to work directly with Metro to reach agreements on remaining unresolved option areas.

[Download the map](#)

[Learn more about urban and rural reserves](#)

Each of the other Core 4 members agreed to Cogen's proposal, though Clackamas County Commissioner Charlotte Lehan expressed concerns with issues that remain unresolved, particularly the total number of acres in urban reserves and the conditions and principles under which they will be planned and developed over time. "There are a lot of issues that are more global that we really haven't wrestled with," she said.

Since the last Core 4 meeting on Jan. 11, Metro and the counties held six open houses across the region, as well as four Metro Council hearings, where members of the public expressed their views on proposed urban and rural reserve areas. More than 850 people attended the open houses, 237 people offered testimony at the four public hearings and nearly 2,000 people viewed maps and commented online at a "virtual open house" on Metro's web site. Changes in the proposed reserve map reflect comments received as well as the results of discussions and negotiations between county commissioners and Metro Councilors.

Over the next two weeks, representatives of the Metro Council and the boards of county commissioners will work to reach agreement on the remaining option areas and on final language of the intergovernmental agreements to designate reserves. The commissions and council will adopt the IGAs, including the final maps, before the end of February, with the Metro Council currently scheduled to vote on all three on Thursday, Feb. 25.

No further Core 4 meetings are currently scheduled, though facilitator Debra Nudelman asked Core 4 members to leave the morning of Monday, March 8, open for an additional meeting if needed.

[Speaking Freely with David Bragdon](#)

02/03/2010 02:25 PM

KINK radio's "Speaking Freely" show recently featured an in-depth interview with Metro Council President David Bragdon. President Bragdon shared his thoughts on what he believes led to the bitter campaign over Measures 66 and 67, the local business environment moving forward and his philosophy on what governments can do to help local economies. He also talked about the key transportation projects, the benefits of land use planning and the urban growth boundary, renovations coming up at the Oregon Zoo and the future of Metro's newest natural area, Chehalem Ridge. [Go to the audio cast](#)

[Metro Policy Advisory Committee wrestles with reserves](#)

02/02/2010 12:33 PM

At an extended Metro Policy Advisory Committee meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 27, local elected officials and regional representatives discussed policy questions relating to urban and rural reserves and also made recommendations to the Metro Council on a number of specific areas around the region. Before digging into details of specific areas, MPAC members were cautioned by Metro Council President David Bragdon to remember why they supported this process in the first place and what the region stands to lose if the process fails.

Watch video clip



[Go](#)

"The old method can require expansions where they don't make sense or where they aren't wanted, and it can prohibit expansions in communities where they do want it. That doesn't provide certainty for local governments or for property owners," Bragdon said.

State approval of the urban and rural reserves process led to an exceptionally collaborative process by which Metro and Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties (the "Core 4") would determine reserve areas for the next 40 to 50 years. After years of work, negotiations and compromises, Core 4 members have whittled areas of disagreement down to roughly 1,000 acres still under discussion. If Core 4 members aren't able to come to agreement by the end of February, however, the process will revert to the former decision-

making method by which the Metro Council will consider urban growth boundary expansion from limited expansion areas every five years.

"The legislature gave us permission to designate reserves, but it didn't take away our obligation to work with the old method of adding land by soil type if we aren't good enough to plan for the future in a new way," Bragdon said. "Here's what state law tells us: if this process fails, we will have to do something none of us want to do – which is to go back to the old way of doing things."

Bragdon reminded MPAC members of the broad based support from local governments and private sector interests for the reserves process, including unanimous support from MPAC, and called upon them to ensure that the opportunity is not squandered. TriMet representative Rick Van Beveren concurred that "none of us want to go back to the previous scenario."

Washington County chair Tom Brian clarified that the reserves process is not an urban growth boundary decision, but rather a "reservation area for a 40 to 50 year period." The Metro Council will still consider expansions to the urban growth boundary every five years. Expansions would be pulled from urban reserves areas as needed but concept planning, infrastructure and local governance must be established before the areas are able to be developed. Brian advised property owners not to "run to the bank or sell the goats right away" based on a reserves designation because the land might not be brought into the urban growth boundary right away, if at all.

Before adjourning after nearly four hours, MPAC agreed to schedule an additional meeting on reserves to finish discussing specific proposal areas in order to provide the Metro Council with a full set of recommendations prior to the final Core 4 meeting on Feb. 8. The meeting date, expected to be next week, will be posted to the MPAC web page and Metro calendar when finalized.

[Learn more about urban and rural reserves](#)
[Visit the MPAC web page](#)

[Metro Council President Bragdon, local leaders send message to governors on I-5 bridge replacement](#)

01/20/2010 09:43 AM

Letter seeks stronger local role in decision making to ensure the project's success

Four local elected officials, two from Oregon and two from Washington, today warned the governors of Oregon and Washington that the current Columbia River Crossing project "as currently proposed still imposes unacceptable impacts on our communities."

In a joint letter, Clark County Commissioner Steve Stuart, Vancouver Mayor Tim Leavitt, Oregon Metro Council President David Bragdon and Portland Mayor Sam Adams called on the Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski and Washington Governor Chris Gregoire to provide a greater role for local leaders in moving the Columbia River Crossing project forward. [Read the letter](#)

"I want to see this project move forward, but in its current form, it does not have the support it needs," said Mayor Sam Adams. "We are asking for a states-local partnership to take a hard look at the options on the table and come up with something our region can support."

The letter reiterated all four local leaders' support for construction of an improved Interstate 5 crossing of the Columbia River but also demanded "a stronger voice for our local governments in decisions about the project."

"I'm pleased that we are all moving forward together to get a more affordable, effective, sustainable project," said Commissioner Stuart.

The letter proposes three specific actions to get the stalled project back on track:

- creation of a finance plan that is fair and protects local taxpayers and road users and does not jeopardize other important state and federal road and bridge funding priorities in the region
- completion of performance targets to guide the design, and future operations, of the project

- examination of critical project assumptions around traffic and economic consequences.

According to Metro Council President Bragdon, "The proposal currently on the table is stalled in controversy, with an unacceptably high financial and environmental price tag. We believe this re-direction - lead by a stronger local role -- can get us back on the path to an affordable effective project that serves the public well."

The four leaders stressed that broad local support will be critical to wining the funds needed to build and operate the project. Building trust now by giving local governments a greater voice will help ensure success with voters and Congress, they say.

"We seek to join with you in an unprecedented states/local partnership to get this project firmly on the path to success," the letter says. "We share a project vision that will reduce vehicle accidents, replace aged and antiquated infrastructure, enhance marine navigation, expand the availability and accessibility of high capacity transit, improve bicycle and pedestrian access and safety, and improve reliability for the freight movement that is so critical to our region's economy."

[Metro protects Chehalem Ridge Natural Area in the Tualatin Valley](#)

01/08/2010 11:34 AM



View more photos of the Chehalem Ridge Natural Area on Metro's GreenScene Facebook page. [Go](#)

Metro's Natural Areas program started 2010 with big news - literally - by purchasing 1,143 acres of forestland in the Chehalem Mountains of the Tualatin Valley. It's the largest acquisition in the history of the Portland region's two voter-approved natural area bond measures.

The new Chehalem Ridge Natural Area, south of Forest Grove, is one of the metropolitan area's biggest remaining swaths of undeveloped forest. At about the size of Oxbow Regional Park, the property is positioned to protect water quality and wildlife habitat in the Tualatin River Basin and serve as a scenic and recreational resource for the region.

"This acquisition nearly doubles the amount of land the Metro Council has protected with the latest bond measure, but Chehalem Ridge is much more than a number," Metro Council President David Bragdon said. "It's also a milestone in terms of scenery, restoration potential and partnerships."

The acquisition was a team effort. Metro bought the property on Thursday from The Trust for Public Land, a nonprofit conservation group. The Trust for Public Land negotiated a deal with the land's longtime owner, Portland-based Stimson Lumber Co.

Straddling the top of Chehalem Ridge, the new natural area provides panoramic views of surrounding farmland and five Cascade mountain peaks: Rainier, St. Helens, Adams, Hood and Jefferson.

A young Douglas fir forest dominates the property. Cedar, hemlock and grand fir can be found in the drainages on the cooler, eastern side of the ridge. Oak-madrone woodlands, which are increasingly rare in the northern Willamette Valley, make an appearance on south- and west-facing slopes.

Chehalem Ridge is the starting point for a network of streams that flow to the Tualatin River, which provides drinking water for 200,000 people. This feature creates opportunities for Metro to improve water quality beyond the natural area's property line.

"This property is extraordinary," said Metro Councilor Kathryn Harrington, who represents the western part of the region in District 4. "It's exciting to think that we've protected another natural area of this size, scale and quality in Washington County. It's a success for residents of the entire region."

Chehalem Ridge will complement bird and wildlife viewing opportunities planned at the nearby U.S. Fish and Wildlife Refuge at Wapato Lake.

The Metro Council's goals for land acquisition in this area include the potential for recreational uses. At Chehalem Ridge, an existing gravel and dirt road network could form the basis for a future trail system. For now, Metro's science staff will develop a plan to guide forest management practices, habitat restoration and appropriate interim opportunities for the public to experience Chehalem Ridge. (For details, stay tuned at www.oregonmetro.gov/chehalemridge.)

The Trust for Public Land has pledged \$90,000 toward land management and stewardship during the first three years. Helping secure the acquisition and continuing to support Chehalem Ridge makes sense as the Portland metropolitan area invests in its natural environment, said the group's Oregon director, Geoff Roach. A diverse coalition is collaborating on The Intertwine, a movement to connect the region's parks, trails and natural areas and create a common identity. (Find details about The Intertwine at www.theintertwine.org.)

"We are delighted to be working in a region where business leaders, local government and nonprofits are encouraged to collaborate on land conservation," Roach said. "Love of nature is at the core of this region's outstanding quality of life. The Intertwine is leading the country in breaking down organizational and jurisdictional barriers to create, protect and enhance a world-class system of parks, trails and natural areas for everyone to enjoy - and Chehalem's a result."

The Metro Council's voter-approved 2006 Natural Areas Program funds land acquisition and capital improvements that protect water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, enhance trails and wildlife corridors and provide greater connections to nature in neighborhoods throughout the Portland metropolitan area.

[Learn more about Metro's Natural Areas Program](#)

Emerging trends: A transition between two eras

01/07/2010 11:42 AM

David Bragdon's speech at the Urban Land Institute "Emerging Trends in Real Estate" breakfast in December 2009

Each year the U.L.I. forecast describes the past year and current situation in the real estate industry, then forecasts the next few years. It usually describes and forecasts normal cycles, up and down. But no matter how many years you've been reading this report - even if you were reading it over the past several recessions - none of us have ever read a version like this year's. This year's report is different not only because the past year or so was such a steep slide and not only because the outlook for the next several quarters is so grim - though those observations are accurate as well - this year's report is unique because as a reader I get the sense that I am not reading about a lull between cycles but am reading about a transition between two eras - and that when the market comes back it will be fundamentally altered from the market of the past couple decades.

Anybody's crystal ball is fuzzy for the next several years - if there is anyone who still claims to have one after the past year. Fortunately or unfortunately I have the job of looking out, on the public sector side, into a crystal ball far beyond the next several years. The Metro Council is responsible for making decisions about land use and infrastructure for the next forty years.

Forty years is a long time so the best thing to start with is our humility and a recognition that we are fallible. We should admit that the one thing we are sure of is that our predictions are going to be wrong, and we should assess the potential consequences and risks of being wrong in one direction versus being wrong in another direction.

The people in our situation forty years ago, 1969, would not have gotten their predictions of 2009 right

either. If you compare a list of the top ten employers in this community in the mid-sixties and compare it to the list of the top ten employers today you will be struck by the fact that there is no overlap between the lists. The list in the mid-sixties included stalwarts like Georgia-Pacific who are no longer here, Evans Products which doesn't even exist anymore, and Tektronix, which exists but in much smaller form and foreign ownership. The list of top ten today includes employers like Intel who are making products which did not even exist then and companies like Nike who did not exist in 1969 but are marketing a basic product (shoes and clothing) that had a different connotation back then. Anyone in government or the private sector in the 1960s who was asked to draw up a master plan for the ensuing forty years would probably have planned for the needs of Georgia-Pacific and never foreseen the advent of Nike.

So, confident only in our fallibility, we need to maximize our options and be guided by the best information we can find: demographic trends, population forecasts, cost scenarios for various alternatives of infrastructure investment. We need to take "the market" into account - but what is the market? The market is something which is shaped *in part* (but only in part) by government.

There has never been a "free market" in this country - ever since Alexander Hamilton set up the first Bank of the U.S., and ever since he and the other federalists of the late 18th century started advocating for the government to build "internal improvements" like canals and levy tariffs on international trade, government has shaped the economy and therefore the real estate industry - social engineering. Government intervention in the economy has an even longer history than that, of course, back beyond the aqueducts and Appian Way of Rome.

It's been true in our region too: over that past forty or fifty years of change, significant public investments and conscious public decisions shaped how our region grew. Since the mid-sixties, downtown Portland was revitalized through urban renewal and public investments like Pioneer Court House Square and the Portland Center for the Performing Arts and the transit mall which lured private investment. Urban renewal and new infrastructure also created our region's major concentrated employment centers: Rivergate, much of the Columbia Corridor, and Hillsboro's Ronler Acres. The Marquam, Fremont and Glenn Jackson Bridges were built (all with about 90% federal funding) and we have built over 60 miles of light rail (about 50% federal funding), which was a prediction few people would have made in 1969. Most of the water and sewer systems in our suburban areas were built during this period (much of it with federal funds) as were most of the educational buildings we use today. The point: a tremendous amount of government investment over a 40 year period helped create the region, and real estate environment, we have today.

So when we gather today to discuss emerging trends in real estate, I can't help but link predictions about that industry with some observations about public and private finance. They are all connected and are all in the midst of profound change.

In our country over the last fifty years, development - what you could call the "real estate system" - was the result of the interplay of three other systems, each influenced by both government forces and private forces:

- First, the energy system, which artificially under-priced the long-term costs of petroleum consumption and shifted the externalities of its use (including our vulnerability to other countries) to society or to future generations.
- Second, the public infrastructure system, which for decades put a disproportionate share of expenditures toward "new stuff" at the edge of town - new roads, water and sewer systems - and relatively less fiscal emphasis on reinvesting in existing communities. Many government expenditure patterns encouraged dispersed development, and so did some government taxation policies, like mortgage interest deductions for ownership, an advantage initially extended disproportionately to some demographic groups and housing types but not others.
- Third, the private finance and credit system. From the s. and l. debacle of the late 1980s to the deregulation of banking in the 1990s to the dot com bust of 2000 to the sub-prime mortgage trend of the past decade, we gradually converted the definition of "real estate" from something physical we live in (a building or place) into an abstract category of investment, like stocks or pig belly futures. Housing - a word our parents and grandparents defined as "places to live" - became re-defined as a commodified asset class. And, simultaneously, the growth of the finance sector gradually converted the American economy from one in which wealth was created with rewards for inventing, making, growing, or producing real things and real ideas, into a new American economy in which wealth *appeared to be created* mostly by rewarding transactions - including transactions of paper which pertained to that asset class formerly known as housing.

Now, all three of those systems - energy, infrastructure, credit - are simultaneously at best in transition or at worst in trouble - and, as a consequence, so is our real estate system.

That's why the experience of the past year is **not** a down cycle - it's the end of an era, for several of our key systems.

In the past 18 months:

- 50% of developers in some fields: gone, not coming back
- 40% of private equity funds: gone, not coming back
- dozens of banks: gone.

The ULI report also suggests some financing mechanisms may be gone too. Page 3 suggests that the investment world's view of real estate is, eh-hem, being "revaluated." Page 16 questions whether commercial mortgage-backed securities, as a system, will ever return as they were. If real estate again becomes an asset class more appropriate for long-term hold than opportunistic speculation, then won't that perception turn into a different reality of what gets built and how it gets managed?

Those are the dramatic developments in your industry in the past 18 months. But over the preceding years, other industries (including government) have slowly been evolving in ways that we now recognize will make development in the future very different from development in the past.

The local, state and federal financing systems have all changed dramatically. From about 1959 to 1966, infrastructure investment accounted for more than 10 per cent of nondefense federal expenditures. Today, according to a Congressional Budget Office study, it is about half that percentage. At points in the 1970s, federal loans and grants covered more than 50% of states and localities' spending on infrastructure; today those loans and grants cover less than 30%.

That shift to local responsibility could be all well and good for states and localities who pick up their share. But in Oregon, ballot initiatives 5, 47 and 50 in the 1990s somewhat limit localities' willingness to provide new services over time.

Our energy systems have changed too. When oil was \$18 per barrel and mostly came from friendly places like Oklahoma and Pennsylvania, real estate development patterns based on burning petroleum had a different economics than when oil is \$80 per barrel and mostly comes from unreliable places like Venezuela and Saudi Arabia.

Demographics have changed: in 1960, the average household had three people in it. In 2030, the average household will have about 2.4 people in it. People have kids later, have fewer kids overall, and then live longer after retirement. Those trends have huge implications for the types of housing needed in the future - more multi-family, more small units. Based on these demographics - not the Metro Councilors' personal preferences but a peer-reviewed statistical projection - by 2030 this region will need 123,000 to 176,000 more multi-family units but only between 100,000 to 124,000 single-family units. That's a very different proportion than what was built during most of the second half of the twentieth century.

Those trends also have implications for that existing housing stock, most of which was built for the demographics of that late 20th century rather than for the future. That implication is starting to show as smaller, closer-in houses on smaller lots are holding value far better than larger suburban houses on large lots, despite many of the former being decades older than the latter.

The complexion of the region is changing too: poverty is moving to the suburbs -the very places that were "hot markets" in 1969 (the McLoughlin Corridor, Parkrose) are increasingly blighted while the places that were forsaken in the 1970s (Hawthorne, Irvington) are increasingly up-market. If I had predicted in 1969 that one day the most ethnically diverse community in Oregon and some of the deepest pockets of poverty would be in Beaverton, and that the most notable cluster of expensive restaurants in the region would be at the intersection of Northeast 30th and Killingsworth, you would have said I was more qualified to write fiction than plans.

So, all these systems have changed: not just the real estate system, but the systems which underpin the real estate system: energy systems, government infrastructure systems, and credit systems. All these systems are

on the blink. The trillions of dollars which fled the stock market in 2000 after the dot com bust and rushed into real estate as an investment category have now moved to be parked in T-bills, waiting to see what happens. They may not be U.S. dollars at all anymore but have been converted into Swiss francs or Singapore dollars. When the waiting ends, some of that fluid capital may end up invested in Chinese railroads or Indian steel mills instead of in San Diego time-shares or Tucson hotels - or land in the Stafford basin or Hillsboro or South Waterfront.

Government, to some extent, is also waiting, in Oregon to see if the voters uphold tax increases in January, or waiting to see how our local budgets will fare under looming demands from the PERS retirement pension system to be announced this month. In the nation's capital we're waiting to see if Congress will re-regulate the banks, put a price tag on carbon, and invest in the type of infrastructure we need. Whatever happens, the world will be different.

Meantime, while those three systems are frozen, our lives go on. People get born. People move to Portland. People need credit, they need places to live and shop and work. Those needs don't go away while we figure out how to re-invent American finance and real estate or the municipal tax system in Oregon.

So, we have to venture some predictions.

The market - or a market - will come back. It won't look like what the old one looked like, and a new real estate development paradigm will emerge.

For our part, the Metro Council will make the best decisions we can, knowing that whatever we decide is fallible and needs to maximize the region's upside and minimizing our collective risks. Aspects of the Emerging Trends report, compiled from interviews with hundreds of real estate experts across the country, validate the approach the Metro Council is taking:

Pages 27, 32 and 48 all refer to the market strength of just the types of commercial and retail environments we are trying to foster here: districts that are active 18 hours a day, resilient and active with a mixture of uses. Other pages of the report chronicle the rapid decline of value in the types of uses which are more prevalent in metropolitan areas which do not have an urban growth boundary as we do: far-flung subdivisions with no civic amenities, generic office parks which are hard to reach other than by car and offer employers and employees little value.

The "Best Bets" section of the report - again, compiled by real estate professionals in the private sector, not by utopians in government - suggests developers take some time off, but then "Dream about the future" with developments that sound a lot like what the Metro Council would desire too: "Next generation projects will orient to infill, urbanizing suburbs, and transit-oriented development. Housing....close to transit, work and 24-hour amenities...gain favor...People will continue to seek greater convenience and want to reduce energy expenses. Shorter commutes....make up for higher infill real estate costs." That sounds like the region we want to build - and now we need to figure out how to encourage those of you in the development industry to build it, successfully.

But ultimately, the two biggest question marks for our region and our nation are not in the real estate trends at all.

Since real estate is what an economist would deem "derived demand," the biggest question mark of all is job growth. Not just numbers of jobs, but the creation of wealth. Page 5 of the report puts it quite well, with brokers rightfully asking with understandable anxiety - not as brokers but as Americans - where the next high-paying incubator of job growth is going to come from. That is where our region needs to focus, on the fundamentals which enable job growth. Innovation, inventiveness, productivity and new opportunities. I mentioned Tektronix and Nike earlier - it is important to remember (as a reminder of our fallibility) that neither of those success stories would have been predicted by experts or trends - but one thing they have in common is that both Howard Vollum and Phil Knight were Oregonians who were able to get a good education here, had ideas, and decided that this was a good place for them and their families to live and start a business. So in terms of government action that enabled those thousands of jobs to be created, it all started with making sure someone like Howard Vollum or Phil Knight could get a good education here. A lot of the rest was up to them.

The second major question is how we are going to fund infrastructure and what type of infrastructure it is going to be. The type of infrastructure we funded in the second half of the twentieth century, and how we

funded it and where we located it, created the real estate pattern we have today. It will be different infrastructure spending patterns in the future, but we have barely begun on that path - indeed we are not taking care of the infrastructure we already have.

All these questions - economic growth, infrastructure - are going to take all of us, across sectors, to solve. I appreciate the chance to be with you here, as one representative of the public sector, to understand one another's perspectives on the future.

Metro and REACH Community Development: Working together

01/06/2010 12:51 PM

David Bragdon's speech at the REACH Community Development annual luncheon in November 2009

It is an honor but a daunting one to pinch-hit for Earl Blumenauer, who is a mentor to me and probably to many people in this room. There is a slogan about "thinking globally but acting locally" - Earl does that and the reverse too, he thinks locally but acts nationally, projecting Portland's values on the national stage.

In thinking how I can substitute for him and give a good speech I originally intended to talk about money and real estate and sex and religion and power. But since I am limited to ten minutes I will talk about money and real estate.

Starting with money:

The Metro Council supports REACH because we know that working through REACH our dollars will achieve the purpose we intend.

Example: we have a goal of keeping food waste out of the landfill, and REACH has a goal of helping people live healthy lives, meeting their nutritional needs and making the best use of their resources. To connect our goals with REACH's goals, we provided over \$5000 for refrigerators and freezers at their main pantry and at Station Place - so that perfectly good perishable food doesn't get sent to the landfill simply because tenants had no place to store it overnight. When you visit Station Place today, you can see the results: society and the environment are better off, and so are those individuals.

We also help REACH throw other things away which *should* be thrown away: we have a goal of reducing illegal dumping, and getting hazardous household chemicals out from underneath the sinks and utility rooms of our constituents' homes. REACH has a goal of renovating older properties which sometimes contain those toxics. To connect our goals with REACH's goals, last year we provided REACH with over \$3000 worth of vouchers to allow the free disposal of stuff recovered through clean-ups and rehabilitation of housing. Thanks to that partnership, old chemicals and paint, which had been neglected for years in basements, or debris that had been piled in overgrown backyards, is being properly disposed of. Society and the environment are better off, and so are the individuals being served and the individuals doing the service, who are often one and the same.

Third example: The Metro Council has a goal of enabling people with a range of incomes to live along our transit system. And of course REACH shares that goal. Our agency manages a small transit-oriented development fund of federal transportation dollars to help with gap financing on projects along light rail lines. When REACH proposed building Patton Park along the Yellow Line, we saw a vision and a project that made sense - and we also saw an organization with a track record of delivering on its plans. So we put \$365,000 into the Patton Park project. You see the results: people who have a home next to a park and cultural center, with access to frequent transit to reach jobs. Today you can stand on the sidewalk and see people walking to the light rail stop (less carbon) and you can see how REACH and its investors and tenants jump-started the redevelopment of Interstate.

The Metro Council also has a goal of enhancing Nature in Neighborhoods. REACH obtained one of our small natural area grants many years ago to restore vegetation and bird habitat literally in the backyard of an old house on S.E. Morrison Street. And again, the results: society and the environment are better off, and so are the individuals who worked on the project and live in the house.

These stories have a common lesson. Those of us in government can often achieve our objectives most effectively by working in tandem with community organizations - and collaborating with institutions like

REACH, who can be nimble and innovative and resourceful enough to get real things finished in the time it takes us in government to decide on what type of paper we should print the agenda of the next meeting on. The neighborhood connections and sweat equity of institutions like REACH, if overseen with the integrity and accountability that REACH has demonstrated, helps our tax dollars go further.

This partnership can be a national model at a time when our nation needs a new model, particularly in the world of real estate. So, in the four minutes remaining, how about a history of the past half-century of American urban planning, development and finance, and then, in the final thirty seconds, an assessment of what the national economic situation means for decisions the Metro Council will make in the near future, such as whether or not we need to move the urban growth boundary and what kind of transportation and housing we need to invest in.

Our national finance system and our real estate development patterns are inextricably linked - and both are now on the verge of profound change unlike anything since right after World War II.

While the built environment in much of the modern United States looks random - as if some drunken yet invisible hand of laissez-faire went on a binge in the second half of the 20th century and erratically sprinkled drive-ins and malls and subdivisions all over the countryside - that seemingly irrational spatial outcome is actually the rational outcome of specific systems, just as the design of ancient Athens or 19th century Paris was the rational outcome of other specific systems, of their day.

In our country over the last fifty years, development - the "real estate system" - was the logical result of the interplay of three other systems, each influenced by both government forces and private forces:

- First, the energy system, which artificially under-priced the long-term costs of petroleum consumption and shifted the externalities of its use to society or to future generations.
- Second, the public infrastructure system, most notably for highways, which for decades put a disproportionate share of expenditures toward "new stuff" at the edge of town - new water and sewer systems - and relatively less fiscal emphasis on reinvesting in existing communities. Accommodating the automobile also shifted hidden externalities to society. While government expenditure patterns encouraged dispersed development, so did some government taxation policies, like mortgage interest deductions for ownership of single family houses, an advantage initially extended disproportionately to some demographic groups and not others.
- Third, the private finance and credit system. From the s. and l. debacle of the late 1980s to the deregulation of banking in the 1990s to the dot com bust of 2000 to the sub-prime mortgage trend of the past decade, we gradually converted the definition of "real estate" from something physical we live in (a building or place) into an abstract category of investment, like stocks or pig belly futures. Housing - a word our parents and grandparents defined as "places to live" - became re-defined as a commodified asset class. And, simultaneously, the growth of the finance sector gradually converted the American economy from one in which wealth was created with rewards for inventing, making, growing, or producing real things and real ideas, into a new American economy in which wealth *appeared to be created* mostly by rewarding transactions - including transactions of paper which pertained to that asset class formerly known as housing.

Operate all of three of those systems - cheap energy, cheap infrastructure, cheap (or at least unregulated) credit - run those three systems at a net societal deficit and with only short-run considerations in mind for a few decades and eventually you get the real estate system (and development pattern) this country has.

Now, all three of those systems are simultaneously and irrevocably broke and in debt - and, as a consequence, so is our real estate system. The past year is **not** a down cycle - it's the end of an era for several of our key systems.

In the past 18 months:

- 50% of developers in some fields: gone, not coming back
- 40% of private equity funds: gone, not coming back
- dozens of banks: gone
- local governments' capacity or political willingness to fund infrastructure: reduced.

Demographic conditions have also changed since most of those systems and their underlying assumptions

were devised decades ago:

- energy costs: long-run, going up
- household size: going down, as people get married later, live longer, and have fewer kids
- poverty: moving to the suburbs - so that the very places that were "hot markets" in the 1970s (Oak Grove, Parkrose) are increasingly blighted while the very places that were forsaken in the 1970s (Kerns, Irvington) are increasingly up-market.

At the time REACH was founded or the time the Metro Council was created, if I had stood here and predicted that one day the most ethnically diverse community in Oregon and some of the deepest pockets of poverty would be in (can you guess) Beaverton - and that the most notable cluster of expensive restaurants in the region would be near the intersection of Northeast 30th and Killingsworth - you would have said I was more qualified to be a fiction writer than to be in charge of urban planning for our region.

At the moment, our ability to predict seems shaky, because all these systems are on the blink. Credit markets are frozen, with the trillions of dollars which fled the stock market in 2000 after the dot com bust and rushed into real estate as an investment category have now moved to be parked in T-bills, waiting to see what happens. Government, to some extent, is also waiting, in Oregon to see if the voters uphold tax increases in January, or waiting to see how our local budgets will fare under looming demands from the retirement pension system to be announced soon. In the nation's capital we're waiting to see if Congress will re-regulate the banks, have the courage to put the price tag on carbon that it ought to have, and invest in the type of infrastructure we need (and not the things we don't).

Meantime, while those three systems are frozen, our lives go on. People get born. People move to Portland. People get jobs, lose jobs, get divorced, show up on time, beat cancer, kick alcohol, adopt kids, earn degrees, shift into assisted living, invent software, throw pots, start businesses, get cats, move a maple desk and cherry dining room table set from their boyfriend's apartment in Corvallis to a bungalow in St. Johns. Life goes on. So people need credit, they need places to live. Those needs don't go away while we figure out how to re-invent American finance and real estate.

But that's what we need to do.

The market - or a market - will come back. It just won't look like what the old one looked like - which is a good thing. A new real estate development paradigm will emerge - and that would be a good thing too. We would do well as a nation if that new system has some of the characteristics of the relationships I described between the Metro Council and REACH: wise hybrids of public resources and private initiative, a priority on investments which yield multiple desired outcomes, long-term creation of opportunity, and planning and development strategies which allow both the community and the individual to achieve their full potential. What better principles could there be, exemplified by some old houses and paint cans in Buckman, to guide the reawakening of our country?

Politicians beware: Support for Metro is on the upswing

01/06/2010 11:56 AM

The Oregonian feature editorial for Jan. 5, 2010

The election for council president in 2010 could be the most thoughtful and provocative in the history of the regional government

This year, the Metro regional government will make a momentous decision, perhaps the most important in its history. But the principle behind it is surprisingly simple: Minimize waste.

Oregonians detest waste. Increasingly, they understand that land can be wasted as surely as money can be wasted - and, in fact, that wasting land is a form of wasting money.

This year, along with Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties, Metro will distinguish land that it would be smarter to develop eventually, called urban reserves, from land that it would be smarter to set aside for generations, called rural reserves.

Years ago, Metro made a run at doing something similar. But nothing on this scale requiring the counties and Metro to reach a consensus has been attempted before. That the process might have a few hiccups, or even threaten to implode a time or two, is only to be expected. So many future investments - those of farmers, developers and taxpayers - depend on these critical decisions.

By designating urban and rural reserves carefully, Metro and the counties can boost the Willamette Valley's agricultural industry, spark economic development, encourage the reuse of empty and wasted land inside the urban growth boundary - and save money on extending roads, sewers and waterlines.

Coincidentally, in 2010, David Bragdon will be finishing up his last year as Metro Council president, and three Metro-savvy candidates have already jumped into the race.

Rex Burkholder, a former high school science teacher now in his third term as a Metro councilor, is an expert on regional transportation. Tom Hughes, the affable former mayor of Hillsboro, has considerable expertise in economic development. And Bob Stacey, former director of 1000 Friends of Oregon, is an expert on conservation of farm and forest land.

If these three can't spark a vigorous - and, yes, exciting - debate on the future of the region, no one can.

The decision about urban and rural reserves will likely be settled before a new president is elected. So it will really be up to Bragdon to shepherd this inherently contentious process to a successful conclusion. This is a legacy issue for him.

Not surprisingly, the counties don't all see eye to eye on the reserves. There have even been a few mutterings about Metro disintegrating over the issue.

But that's extremely unlikely. If anything, public opinion is moving in the opposite direction. Surveys by Davis Hibbitts & Midghall Inc. show support for regional land-use planning - what Metro does - has only intensified.

Oregonians are strapped and in a frugal mood, yes. But as the firm's Adam Davis recently told the City Club, people increasingly view compact development as financially smart, preventing waste, lessening the need for taxpayer-funded services and saving families both in money (fuel and other transportation costs) and in commute times.

Pay attention, politicians. Density is no longer the dreaded d-word, easy to demonize. Not so long as it comes, Davis says, with public safety and a few things Metro helps to provide - ample parks, "open spaces and walkability."

People in this region increasingly identify themselves as "Portlanders" and see Metro as a positive force. If you're looking for the usual suspect drawn to a Metro race-the candidate who runs against the very idea of a regional government?

Hey, for 2010, that candidate has yet to emerge.

That's progress.

[Metro announces new director for the Oregon Zoo](#)

12/29/2009 10:37 AM



*New Oregon Zoo
director Kim Smith*

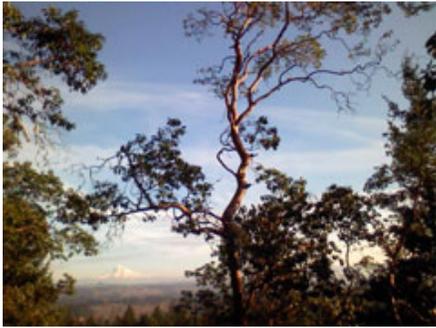
Metro is excited to welcome new Oregon Zoo director Kimberly A. Smith beginning March 1. Smith brings 25 years of comprehensive zoo experience to the position. She has built an exceptional reputation for her commitment to wildlife conservation and has worked closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, along with state and local wildlife officials, on several local conservation initiatives. Smith also has a solid track record in overseeing and implementing strategic and master plans and will lead the Oregon Zoo as it undertakes \$125 million worth of bond-related improvements over the next 10 to 15 years.

"We are very pleased to have recruited such an outstanding zoo director," said Michael Jordan, Metro's chief operating officer. "She is a proven community leader, manager, conservationist and educator - and is well positioned to lead us into a new era of excellence." The zoo is a service of Metro and is dedicated to its mission to inspire the community to create a better future for wildlife.

[Go to the news release](#)

Celebrating 1,200 acres of natural area protected in 2009

12/23/2009 11:32 AM



The view from a protected natural area in the Clackamas River Bluffs.

Metro's Natural Areas Program had another busy year in 2009, buying land across the Portland metropolitan area to safeguard water quality, protect wildlife habitat and ensure access to nature for future generations. More than 1,200 acres have been preserved so far, using about \$47 million of a \$227 million bond measure that voters approved in 2006.

This year's acquisitions ranged from wetlands to cliffs, from big to small, from Cornelius to Gresham. Here are some of the highlights:

- A rare type of wetland called a "fen" was the prime attraction on 13 acres in the Willamette Narrows area near West Linn. A fen, which features a shallow lake with a floating bed of peat moss, provides habitat for important – and very unusual – plants. Metro acquired part of this fen with funds from a previous bond measure in 1998, and completed the job this year.
- Metro continued preserving Council Creek with the purchase of seven acres near Cornelius, west of Susbauer Road. Plans are under way to restore a 670-foot section of creek and improve a small wetland and upland forest. Metro crews share the property with beaver, river otter, deer and ducks.
- An 1,800-acre swath of land near the Sandy River is now in public ownership, thanks to Metro's purchase of a 42-acre gap along Gordon Creek. The new property, which provides spawning areas for threatened Sandy River fall Chinook and winter steelhead, is close to Metro's Oxbow Regional Park, other Metro natural areas and Bureau of Land Management property.

Metro will continue to purchase land next year in 27 target areas across the region. But that's not the only reason to celebrate: Graham Oaks Nature Park is slated to open in September, providing trails, wildlife viewing and nature activities in Wilsonville.

[Learn more about Graham Oaks Nature Park](#)
[Learn more about the Natural Areas Program](#)

A century since Croly's "The Promise of American Life"

A personal message from Metro Council President Bragdon

The 2009 debate about health insurance is framed as a confrontation between the partisans of the common good and the partisans of individual freedom. But as if to prove there's nothing new in the themes of American thought, exactly one hundred years ago, in 1909, a transformative book endeavored to reconcile those two values. An author set out to show that activist government can simultaneously serve both societal betterment and individual autonomy, rather than posing those two objectives as inherently in conflict. The author was Herbert Croly, and the book was "The Promise of American Life," which helped introduce the word "progressive" to American lexicon. In its centennial year, the book now deserves to be rediscovered by American progressives of the twenty-first century.

Before he wrote the book, Croly was an obscure architectural critic in New York City, having never been active in politics or worked extensively in government. By his early forties the extent of his journalism career had been esoteric commentary on buildings and the real estate market. But his authorship of "The Promise of American Life" changed his life, propelling him to become founding editor of the New Republic magazine a few years later, and the book changed American political thought. Nearly a quarter century after its publication, Croly's book would serve as the intellectual foundation for President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal - in particular FDR's redefinition of "freedom" as an entitlement to benefits rather than simply as a protection from government interference.

Croly changed the future of American politics by looking into America's past, and re-interpreting the values of the prior century for the needs of the current century. Now, President Obama, at once among the most history-minded and forward-looking of Presidents, tries to do what Croly did one hundred years ago, drawing on enduring themes of American thought and directing those themes toward new ends. Obama would do well to read Croly.

Croly claimed legacy from both of the competing philosophies which had animated the country's philosophical struggles in the century since the founders, Hamiltonianism and Jeffersonianism. Croly rehabilitated Alexander Hamilton, admiring his dedication to federal action and modernity but criticizing his elitism and his favoritism to what was then literally Wall Street, the district where Hamilton worked. But Croly also debunked Jeffersonianism, writing that his faith in individual autonomy was out-of-date in an era when large institutions like railroads, meatpackers, grain companies and banks could dominate the economy in a manner which rendered the individual less powerful than in a simpler economic time.

In the modern era, Croly implied, the individual had less to fear from active government than from large corporations, an argument which FDR would amplify in his "economic royalists" speech accepting re-nomination at the 1936 Democratic convention. That's a rhetorical direction President Obama has chosen not to go, instead allowing the opposition to define the health insurance debate as a choice between "big government" and "the little guy." Obama could shift that paradigm by taking a model from Croly's book of 1909, or updating F.D.R.'s speeches of 1936, and persuasively arguing that active, well-managed government can do a better job of protecting the average citizen's independence than A.I.G., Enron and Countrywide Finance have done. But whether out of a calculation that the American public today is not in the mood for what might be characterized as divisive class warfare, or whether because the modern Democratic Party and his own advisory circle and his Treasury Department (hello, Alexander Hamilton?) is so financially tied to today's discredited masters-of-the-universe finance sector and insurance industry, President Obama has not followed the line of argument Croly or F.D.R. laid out.

Today's so-called "culture wars" and their perverse influence on political alignments were also foreshadowed in "The Promise of American Life." Croly's critique of the followers of Andrew Jackson, who he perceived as the ideological heirs to Jefferson, pointed out the contradiction between their jingoistic nationalism and their hostility to the very federal government that embodies that national idea and made their white settlement of the frontier possible. Just as today the residents of the states most dependent on federal largesse - waterway projects, agricultural subsidies, rural electrification, under-priced mining rights, military installations - are often the states whose politicians are most hysterical with anti-federal rhetoric, some of Croly's observations about nineteenth century Jacksonians foreshadow Thomas Frank's 2004 book *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, which asks why perceived cultural affinities with the Republican Party induce rural Americans to vote against their economic self-interest.

That modern paradox is also foreshadowed in Croly's analysis of what he saw as the Jeffersonian version

of egalitarianism (limited of course to property-owning white males) having been distorted into the Jacksonians' veneration of commonality for its own sake. Croly argued that the American ideal should be that "anyone" can become President through hard work and merit and extraordinary character, as he said Lincoln did (or as I would say Obama did), while the Jacksonians (not unlike modern-day poseurs like Sarah Palin) subscribed to the notion that "anyone" can become President just by being (or posing as) "an anyone," regardless of hard work or merit or extraordinary character. Just as Croly exposed the Republican Party of the nineteenth century's Gilded Age as defenders of a corporate elite cloaked in rhetoric of freedom for the average person, we might today rightly call the Republican Party of our recent Gilded Age the defenders of a corporate oligarchy cloaked in the costume of Joe the Plumber.

As 2009 winds down with what seems like a tired debate, progressives should learn how similar debates were advantageously framed in 1909 by Herbert Croly's remarkable book, "The Promise of American Life." That promise is still ours to redeem.

[Mural with a message on Springwater Corridor Trail showcases young artists](#)

12/22/2009 09:26 AM



Some young painters are using their art to show their pride and ownership in the Lents neighborhood and maybe in themselves as well. A colorful mural painted by students from Kelly Elementary, David Douglas High School and Portland Youth Builders using 100 percent recycled latex MetroPaint was installed in early December along the Springwater Corridor at Beggars Tick Wildlife Refuge near Southeast 111th Street two blocks north of Foster Road.

The mural is part of a larger, long-term effort led by community activist Ed Kerns to organize and manage regular clean-up efforts and tree plantings along the Springwater Corridor in the Lents neighborhood. With support from Metro's restoration and enhancement grant program, Kerns is engaging hundreds of local youth and adult volunteers to help clean up and restore a 6- block area that once bordered a large lumber mill.

First, the group removed and recycled more than 4,000 cubic yards of abandoned concrete, gravel and asphalt. Next, more than 6,000 yards of clean soil and compost was delivered. Now, the group is in the process of planting more than 12,000 native trees and shrubs to finish restoration efforts.

[Learn more about Metro grant opportunities](#)

[Tour of Untimely Departures voted "most ghoulish"](#)

12/22/2009 08:23 AM



The Metro Council last week acknowledged volunteers who made a

significant and unique contribution to protect the historic and scenic Lone Fir Cemetery from vandalism. During its Dec. 17 Council meeting, Metro Councilors and President David Bragdon commended the group of 72 volunteers worked together to stage the 2009 Tour of Untimely Departures on Halloween night.

During the annual event, volunteer actors play the roles of some of the colorful characters buried at Lone Fir and guide visitors through the cemetery to ensure that they have a safe, but spooky, experience. The community event brings the region's history to life and serves to deter the devastating vandalism experienced at the cemetery on previous Halloweens. In 2009, more than 2,000 visitors, double the 2008 attendance, enjoyed the tour while learning about this culturally significant site. Friends of Lone Fir Cemetery and Metro coordinated the event.

Founded in 1855, Lone Fir Cemetery is the only Portland cemetery listed on the National Register for Historic Places.

[Learn about Metro's pioneer cemeteries](#)

[Find out how to volunteer](#)

Metro Council approves RTP, releases reserves map for further public comment

12/18/2009 03:34 PM

The Metro Council on Dec. 17 voted to approve the Regional Transportation Plan and to submit a draft intergovernmental agreement on urban and rural reserves for public comment in January 2010. Both actions support Metro's larger "Making the Greatest Place" initiative which guides how the region grows and how people travel for the next 25 to 50 years to achieve the public desire for jobs, protection of farm and forestland, and investment in existing areas inside the urban growth boundary before expanding outside.

Together, the RTP and the reserves process represent unprecedented regional efforts to integrate land use and transportation decisions and weigh the impacts on greenhouse gas emissions, regional equity and the kinds of communities we live in. Both the RTP and the reserves process require multi-jurisdictional buy-in and support and will offer further public comment opportunities before final adoption in 2010.

Regional Transportation Plan

The council voted 7-0 to accept the Regional Transportation Plan which, in addition to a list of potential projects submitted by local jurisdictions, also includes performance measures linking transportation investments to job creation, compact urban form and enhancing travel options for residents across the region.

Councilor Rex Burkholder, who along with Councilor Rod Park was the lead Councilor in the four-year process of developing the RTP, praised the plan as being visionary and comprehensive. Contrary to some criticism of the plan as increasing overall greenhouse gas emissions, supporters advocate for the RTP as a crucial first step toward addressing climate change through a variety of measures, including transportation, land use and material consumption.

"This is the first RTP in the country to address climate change," said Burkholder. "This plan will reduce per capita greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled and provide for record amounts of investments in bicycle, transit and pedestrian modes of transportation."

Park, who chaired the Regional Freight Task Force, noted the importance of the freight plan on the region's economy. "The freight plan gives us a base to guide our freight investments in order to support the jobs we want in this region," he noted.

Among other elements, the new RTP contains:

- the first high-capacity transit plan since the early 1980s, which outlines priorities for future investments in an expanded light-rail network, bus rapid transit and other high-capacity transit corridors [Learn more about the high capacity transit system plan](#)
- a regional freight plan that looks at how freight can move more efficiently through the region's

transportation system

- the first comprehensive plan for transportation systems management and operations to make the most of investments already made in the transportation network
- the first climate change action plan to address how an integrated set of transportation investments, land use policies and other strategies can most effectively reduce greenhouse gases.

Yesterday's council vote followed a Dec. 10 action of the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation which voted 11-3 to endorse the plan. [Read more about the JPACT vote](#)

Following the air quality conformity analysis, the plan will undergo further public comment in spring 2010. After public comment, JPACT and the Metro Council are expected to formally adopt the RTP in June.

Urban and rural reserves

The Metro Council also voted 7-0 to accept a draft map and intergovernmental agreement for urban and rural reserves for release for public comment. The Council's action came one day after the Core 4, representatives of the Metro Council and Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties, met to approve a "best effort" map and agreement language.

The Core 4 map includes approximately 24,000 acres of proposed urban reserves and 224,000 acres of proposed rural reserves throughout the region. While much of the Core 4 map reflects a consensus on which areas should be considered for urban and rural reserves, unresolved issues remain on some areas including Sherwood, Stafford, Oregon City, Boring and the West Hills. Public comment will be collected on all areas of the proposal, but is especially sought in the areas where the Core 4 did not reach agreement.

"This is a regional, best effort proposal," said Councilor Kathryn Harrington, the Metro Council's representative on the Core 4. "Let me make this abundantly clear: *everything* is open to comment."

The Metro Council received a considerable amount of testimony from farmers, land owners and other advocates expressing reservations about the proposed urban and rural reserve areas indicated on the Core 4 map, with most urging smaller urban reserves and stronger protection for agricultural land around the region.

Jeff Stone, director of government relations for the Oregon Association of Nurseries, encouraged the Council to look at the economic impacts of the agricultural industry noting, "Agricultural land is employment land. We don't count that in any of our metrics."

West Linn City Councilor Teri Cummings advocated against urban reserve designations in the Stafford area. "Please err on the side of conservation," she asked, noting that the surrounding cities of West Linn, Lake Oswego and Tualatin had previously expressed an unwillingness to provide necessary services to support urban development in Stafford.

Former Washington County Chair Linda Peters underscored the importance of rural reserves, and not just for protecting agriculture. "It is important that we protect farmland because it forms a ring around the region and it forces us to keep our cities lively and active," she remarked.

The Metro Council noted that several council members still had concerns about multiple proposed urban and rural reserves indicated on the map. Therefore, in addition to the proposed map and intergovernmental agreement, the Metro Council unanimously adopted a second resolution communicating its guiding principles, objectives and concerns to the public and the three metro-area counties involved in the negotiations of urban and rural reserve areas.

If the Core 4 is unable to reach agreement in 2010 on urban and rural reserves, the region will need to default to the "old" process of requiring the Metro Council to review the urban growth boundary every five years and add land based on a state tiered system rather than a comprehensive look at regional growth for the next 40 to 50 years.

Public comment will be accepted on the proposed reserves agreement through open houses from January 6 to 21 and through a "virtual open house" on the Metro web site. The Metro Council and the boards of commissioners for each of the three counties are expected to adopt final intergovernmental agreements in

February, followed by the formal designation of urban and rural reserves.

[Learn about the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan](#)
[Learn more about urban and rural reserves](#)

David Bragdon on KGW's "Straight Talk"

12/14/2009 05:15 PM

Metro Council President David Bragdon discusses the regional government's actions to in the future of the region. Hear his thoughts on the urban growth boundary, urban and rural reserves, transportation and other aspects that will continue to make our region prosperous.

[Go](#)

New natural area completes 1,800-acre swath near the Sandy River

12/14/2009 03:05 PM

Sometimes a little bit of preservation goes a long way.

Metro purchased 42 acres this month along Gordon Creek, filling a gap in an 1,800-acre swath of protected land near the Sandy River. As part of Metro's Natural Areas Program, the acquisition helps safeguard habitat and water quality by keeping key properties intact.

Combined with publicly owned land on either side, this property allows for more cohesive, large-scale management. The goal: uninterrupted waterways and wildlife corridors that nurture critters.

A steep canyon and springs flank Gordon Creek as it runs through the land. The creek, which has high water quality, is the only free-flowing, unobstructed tributary in the Lower Sandy watershed. It provides important spawning areas for threatened Sandy River fall Chinook and winter steelhead. Elk, black bear and pileated woodpeckers make their home on this forested property, which includes trees more than 125 years old.

Restoration in the area has been a team effort, pairing Metro with the Sandy River Basin Partners. Western Rivers Conservancy and the Portland Water Bureau are working with commercial forestry firms to preserve large forest tracts. Metro has coordinated extensive work along Gordon Creek to control invasive species on both public and private lands - including English ivy on the new acquisition.

Directly west of the property, Metro owns 415 acres purchased with a 1995 bond measure and, beyond that, the 1,200-acre Oxbow Regional Park. East of the property, Metro and the Bureau of Land Management own 160 acres.

The Sandy River Gorge is one of 27 areas protected by Metro's natural areas bond measure, which was approved by voters in 2006. The program funds land acquisition and capital improvements that protect water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, enhance trails and wildlife corridors, and provide greater connections to nature in urban areas throughout the Portland metropolitan area.

[Learn more about the Natural Areas Program](#)

Metro Council gives direction on urban, rural reserves

12/11/2009 03:19 PM

On Thursday the Metro Council gave direction to its Core 4 representative, Councilor Kathryn Harrington, to negotiate for particular types of urban and rural reserves in selected areas at the next meeting of the Core 4 on Dec. 16. At that Dec. 16 meeting it is expected that the Core 4 will come to agreement on a draft intergovernmental agreement for urban and rural reserves that will be adopted by the Metro Council and the county commissions for further public review in January.

The Council put forward a map, proposed by Council President David Bragdon and Councilor Carl

Hosticka, that outlines more than 28,000 acres of proposed urban reserves and more than 240,000 acres of rural reserves throughout the region. The map largely reflects many areas of agreement among Core 4 members and proposes specific urban and rural reserve designations (and a few proposed undesignated areas) in places where there is not yet a consensus among Core 4 and the three county boards of commissioners who must agree to the reserves designations.

"Our intention is to accelerate discussion through Core 4 by having a specific proposal on the table to which people can react," said Hosticka. "We're offering this as a result of a number of negotiations that have occurred. From my point of view, this proposal is our best effort to report the state of the negotiations."

Councilors Robert Liberty and Rod Park offered a substitute map that greatly reduced the total size of urban reserves to about 18,700 acres and increased the total amount of rural reserves to more than 254,000 acres.

"We want to do more to protect foundation farmland as well as important farmland. We want to do more to protect natural features. We want to make better use of land already set aside for urban development, and we want to protect taxpayers' investments in existing communities," Liberty explained.

A divided Council expressed concerns over whether the Liberty-Park map would gain acceptance with the other three counties involved in the negotiations. The motion to substitute the Liberty-Park map for the Bragdon-Hosticka map was defeated on a 3-4 vote, with Councilors Carlotta Collette, Bragdon, Hosticka and Harrington voting no.

The Bragdon-Hosticka map, with the addition of a 327-acre proposed urban reserve on conflicted farmland in the David Hill area north and west of Forest Grove, proposed by Harrington, was accepted by the Council by a vote of 4-2 with Park abstaining. (Councilors Rex Burkholder and Liberty voted no.)

Next week the Core 4 is expected to reach agreement on a draft map and intergovernmental agreement language for review and acceptance by the Metro Council and the three county boards of commissioners, which would then be released for public comment and hearings to be held in January. Final action to adopt intergovernmental agreements is expected in late January with formal land use actions to designate urban and rural reserves scheduled to take place before the end of February.

Posted December 11, 2009

[Full article](#)

Metro Council accepts regional forecast and urban growth report

The Metro Council voted yesterday to accept the 20- and 50-year forecasts of population and employment growth and the assessment of the region's capacity to accommodate that growth in the urban growth boundary. Although the state requires that Metro approve the urban growth report every five years, this time staff took a different approach with a range forecast (rather than trying to pick specific numbers) and focusing on six desired outcomes for the region endorsed by the Metro Policy Advisory Committee. The forecast shows a potential gap in availability of residential housing but enough land for employment areas - with the exception of some large lot industrial demand.

Metro Councilor Carl Hosticka introduced the resolution, noting that the process, which included expert review and public input last spring, produced a high quality result - improving over previous efforts in that instead of "arguing about numbers" the council was able to focus on policy issues. Council President David Bragdon commented that the report provided a "sound basis for making good decisions over the next six to twelve months that will impact residents of the region for the next 40 to 50 years."

Seven people testified before council adoption of the resolution, most commending Metro staff on the quality of the report but expressing concern about the diminishing availability of affordable housing. Martha McLennan, director of Northwest Housing Alternatives, spoke of an "alarming picture" of housing

affordability and the need for the Metro Council to actively engage communities over the next year to address this issue and make information more accessible to local governments. Jeff Bacharach of Newland Communities expressed support for the forecast and the report but also called for the region to consider affordable housing as part of the basic infrastructure of community development.

Several councilors noted that the "real work" will begin now as Metro works in 2010 to address the capacity gap identified in the urban growth report, and called upon local jurisdictions and affordable housing advocates for support and participation in the upcoming year.

More concerns about Columbia River Crossing

12/04/2009 05:27 PM

A personal message from Council President David Bragdon

This morning's meeting of the Columbia River Crossing Project Council brought to light even more troubling concerns about the state highway divisions' controversial proposal. While many of us support a replacement crossing because of the age of the existing structures and the lack of transit between the two communities, the more we learn about the highway divisions' particular proposed solution to that problem, the more it seems their version of a project would actually cause more harmful impacts than positive ones.

The following account describes one example of what a Portland resident referred to as the project's "bait and switch" technique of promising one thing in theory and then delivering something else in reality. As that witness described at this morning's hearing, for three years he and his neighbors were promised that one of the positive attributes of the new crossing would be improvements for the residents of Hayden Island. But as details become clearer, the residents discovered that the specific plans being pushed by the highway divisions would obliterate existing businesses and create a large barrier through the community. That's just one piece of the story, but it's another indication that we will need to re-double our efforts to scrutinize all the claims and costs being put forward by the highway divisions about this particular proposal.

There are many good reasons to build a new Columbia River Crossing – improved infrastructure is vital to our nation's recovery. We should keep those objectives in mind and continue working toward a version of the CRC that will have a positive economic impact, expedite the flow of freight, and improve our communities – at a price that is within our capacity to pay through our taxes and tolls. It's increasingly evident that the version of the project being pushed by the highway divisions won't do any of those things, and is unlikely to gain support and funding. We should urgently get on with the task of devising a version that does.

"No more blank checks" for the Columbia River Crossing project

12/04/2009 05:24 PM

The Columbia River Crossing Project Sponsors Council received a large dose of public opinion at their meeting today – most of it telling them the current refinement proposal isn't good enough.

In testimony at times heated and at times tearful, members of the public called for the council to send the project back to the drawing board, although the reasons for their disapproval varied. Hayden Island residents objected to the new bridge footprint that would wipe out much of the commercial area on the island, including the lone grocery store. Others expressed disappointment at the lack of improvements in bike and pedestrian facilities, the size and cost of the new option, and failure to consider all options in the environmental impact study.

Not all testimony was opposed to the new project, however. While acknowledging that the proposal might have flaws, Ed Barnes of Vancouver, a former transportation commissioner for the state of Washington, stated that the refinement plan "contains everything we need – bicycle, train, auto ... Something is better than nothing."

Several people mentioned the need to get the project moving in order to create jobs in the region. Project representative Patricia McCaig relayed that although they believe reducing the number of lanes from 12 to

10 is short-sighted, representatives of the freight industry have indicated acceptance of the refinement.

Metro Council President David Bragdon and Portland Mayor Sam Adams released a joint statement yesterday to fellow members of the Project Sponsors Council stating that although they did not advocate starting the project over, they wanted to see several key areas of improvement and additional information necessary to making a good decision. [Read the policy statement](#)

At today's meeting, Adams said that although he understood the urgency of moving forward, he felt they had enough time to get important questions answered first. Bragdon concurred, stating that "having the right project is as important as being on time."

President Bragdon stressed the need to get a more realistic assessment of what the region could afford, not just looking at price tags of different options. He asserted that the project was "working under 1970s assumptions" and needed performance-based criteria, which members of the Project Sponsors Council had requested but not received. "I cannot vote for more blank checks on this project."

Bragdon also expressed dismay at the refinement plan's failure to address the needs of the Hayden Island community, stating that those objectives were sacrificed in the rush to move forward. One witness characterized the project as a big "bait and switch" since the highway division had earlier promised that the project would improve Hayden Island but then produced a plan that harms it.

The Project Sponsors Council will meet again in January to continue discussion. In the meantime, staff from the agencies represented on the council will work more closely with Columbia River Crossing staff to address the outstanding issues and areas of disagreement.

[A realistic road to construction for the Columbia River Crossing project](#)

12/03/2009 06:44 PM

A personal message from Council President David Bragdon

Today Portland Mayor Sam Adams and I released a joint policy statement to our colleagues on the Project Sponsors Council of the Columbia River Crossing project. [Read the policy statement](#)

Although we support the general direction of the project refinement on the table for discussion at the PSC meeting tomorrow (Dec. 4), we feel it doesn't go far enough or contain enough analysis to achieve specific performance measures, match the scope and scale of the project to realistic revenues, or enable us to make urgent project decisions. The current proposal contains incomplete and potentially flawed assumptions and lacks performance-based criteria that have been requested by PSC members.

Neither Mayor Adams nor I support cancelling or "restarting" the project, as there has been a large amount of solid work accomplished so far. We believe that there are good reasons to do a project, but it needs to be one that meets realistic demands at a price we can afford. The current proposal is not viable, but we are confident that if we have the information we need, we can come up with a version that does work.

The likely delay in federal transportation bill reauthorization would provide a window during which we propose that PSC agency staff work with CRC project staff to develop:

- a reliable budget based on realistic revenue projections
- a realistic assessment of the relationship between tolls, updated demand forecasts, desired land use patterns and size of the CRC facilities
- project elements that are based in performance outcomes
- recognition that the interstate system must function in concert with local systems.

This strategy will enable us to realistically evaluate options and buy the best product to achieve the goals we all agree on – at a price we can afford.

The Project Sponsors Council meets Friday, Dec. 4 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Port of Portland offices at 121 NW Everett St. in Portland.

Coho salmon return to newly protected natural area

12/03/2009 05:37 PM



Just in time for the holidays, one of Metro's new natural areas received unexpected visitors: coho salmon. The fish made an appearance along Baker Creek, in the Lower Tualatin Headwaters – a target of the Portland metropolitan area's 2006 bond measure. [More about the Natural Areas Program](#)

Metro bought a conservation easement this June on 23 acres, including more than a mile along Baker Creek. The land is home to deer, red-tailed hawks, coyote and beavers. But the longtime owners never saw spawning salmon on Baker Creek, despite hearing tales from years past.

That's why Metro's natural resource technician Jeff Merrill was so surprised to find coho in the floodplain. First, he noticed movement in a pool created by a series of beaver dams. After settling in to watch, Jeff picked out one salmon, then a spawning pair. The male followed his partner as she dug a little, quivering her tail and body. Jeff counted seven Coho in all, and he's willing to bet there are more.

The floodplain's reed canary grass and the creek's muddy bottom don't seem conducive to salmon, which lay their eggs in gravel. There must be just enough gravel for spawning, Jeff says. And it doesn't hurt that Oregon is having a record coho run this year.

With a little luck and some improvements to the property, Metro hopes this won't be a one-time phenomenon. The natural areas crew began controlling invasive plants, stabilized an eroding logging road and removed a culvert. This change could lure more coho, if they find high enough water levels and a way around one super-sized beaver dam.

Like any good host, Metro leaves its guests with a standing invitation: "See you next year!"

Metro Council refines solid waste rate and policy setting processes

12/01/2009 11:26 AM

On Nov. 12 the Metro Council passed two ordinances that improve the way decisions will be made on regional solid waste policy and rates, revising the Solid Waste Advisory Committee and the Solid Waste Rate Review Committee.

The Solid Waste Advisory Committee provides policy advice on solid waste issues to the council, including recycling, system management and regulation. To improve the quality and credibility of policy deliberations, the committee membership was revised. While public and private sector representatives will continue to be included, only local government members will be allowed a vote. Additional outreach to industry members and the general public will provide higher quality input to a range of solid waste policy issues, including resource conservation. Several representatives of the solid waste industry testified that, while they supported the changes in general, they disagreed with the proposal to shift solid waste industry members from voting to non-voting members of the revised Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

The second ordinance repealed the Solid Waste Rate Review Committee entirely and replaced their function with a contracted independent technical expert in rate review to align with best practices for setting municipal utility rates. The rate proposals will be released at the same time as the proposed annual budget, providing better budget information and a coordinated opportunity for public input. A separate "periodic review" process will provide a forum for all interested parties to participate in the consideration

of rate criteria and policies.

Metro Council President David Bragdon, the council sponsor of both ordinances, declared that it was a conflict of interest to have industry members advising on rates and policies that would impact their business bottom line. An independent advisory process will better serve the interests of the public. President Bragdon added that he welcomes and encourages the solid waste industry to participate in the periodic policy review cycles, where a variety of viewpoints will strengthen the process.

The Council voted 6 to 1 (Councilor Burkholder voted against) to revise the Solid Waste Advisory Committee and voted unanimously (Councilor Hosticka was absent) to repeal the rate review committee and revise the rate setting procedure for the region, effective February 2010.

[Read the full staff report on the rate setting process](#)

OTA honors Metro's high capacity transit plan

11/19/2009 06:06 PM

On Oct. 28, Metro's Regional High Capacity Transit System Plan was recognized with the Oregon Transit Association's Innovation Award. This was Metro's first award from the OTA, which is composed of mostly transit operators.

Tony Mendoza, who managed the HCT project, accepted the award, which in part reads, "Metro broke new ground by integrating land use and transportation while achieving quality communities with vibrant economies. Metro's progressive thinking and commitment to innovation continues to make the Portland metropolitan area a great place to live."

Especially noteworthy about this award was the recognition for a long-range planning project, since this award is designed to acknowledge innovative concepts or effective problem-solving techniques not previously applied in the public transportation industry.

The plan is an element of the Regional Transportation Plan and develops a 30-year vision to guide investments in high capacity transit in the Portland metro region by evaluating potential extensions to existing and new corridors for light rail, commuter rail and streetcar lines, with a focus on potential land use and development opportunities to support these future transit investments.

In presenting the award, OTA president Mark Pangborn praised the region's efforts to expand HCT and tie the system to land use decisions, noting that we are an inspiration to the rest of the state.

[Find out more about the Regional High Capacity Transit System Plan](#)

[Visit the Oregon Transit Association site](#)

News coverage of equity expert Myron Orfield's visit to the Portland area

10/28/2009 12:44 PM

Read news coverage of equity expert Myron Orfield's discussions with regional leaders and community members during his visit to the Portland metropolitan area this week. Orfield, the director of the Institute on Race and Poverty at the University of Minnesota, was invited by Metro Councilor Robert Liberty to spark and inform a regional conversation about ensuring the equal distribution of the benefits and burdens of growth.

From The Oregonian on Oct. 26, 2009:

[Expert says a strong 'multi-purpose' government serves Portland well](#)

From The Hillsboro Argus on Oct. 27, 2009:

[Equity expert sees segregation in Washington County](#)

Celebrate Family Bicycle Transportation Day on Sunday, Oct. 25

10/23/2009 10:34 AM

Oregon Manifest's six-week celebration of the art, craft and community of cycling continues this weekend with a Family Bicycle Transportation Day on Sunday, Oct. 25 sponsored by Metro and Drive Less/Save More. The free event will include a huge selection of family biking products in a fun atmosphere at a single convenient location. You can try many easy and flexible options for cycling with the family and hauling cargo. There will also be tips and resources about safe routes to school and work, riding with children and bicycle maintenance.

- Product demonstrations are from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- A Solutions Workshop from 4 to 7 p.m. features discussions with bicycle manufacturers, organizations and community members related to the needs of cycling families in Oregon.
- Families can also visit the Dreams on Wheels, Danish Cycling Culture Exhibit. The exhibit showcases Danish cycling culture and Denmark's commitment to sustainability via urban design.

Location

Oregon Manifest Bike Union
539 NW 10th Ave. at Hoyt Street, Portland.

For more information about these events and to register for the Solutions Workshop, visit www.oregonmanifest.com/schedule.

Metro Council supports International Day of Climate Action

10/22/2009 06:14 PM



Oregon Zoo polar bears Tasul and Conrad join in the celebration. [More](#)

As a way to raise awareness about the significance of global climate change, the Metro Council has passed a resolution calling for Oct. 24 to be an international Day of Climate Action.

The resolution voices Metro's support for global grassroots efforts to reduce greenhouse gas pollution and to focus attention on the December United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen where world leaders will gather to create a new treaty on climate protocol. The current Kyoto Treaty is set to expire in 2012.

"The importance of a focused effort on climate change cannot be overstated," said Metro Councilor Rex Burkholder, who introduced the resolution. "All nations, non-governmental organizations and citizens should learn the facts about climate change and unite in finding solutions to reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

The Metro Council is working to reduce pollution through actions in transportation and land use planning, solid waste and recycling, and conservation education. The Council's Climate Initiative works to provide regional leadership in coordinating the efforts of local governments, civic groups, university systems and business representatives to meet the State of Oregon's greenhouse gas reduction goals. Metro's current "Making the Greatest Place" initiative, which calls for limited expansion of the urban growth boundary, alternatives to transportation including transit, walking and cycling infrastructure, and development of urban centers will help reduce pollution associated with global warming.

Metro joins the City of Portland in endorsing an event taking place Saturday, Oct. 24 in Pioneer Square.

The "350 Awareness Rally", which runs from 1 to 3 p.m., is one of several events endorsed by 350.org, a grassroots organization that promotes awareness of global warming, and supports scientific research that argues that the earth is in extreme danger when atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide are above 350 parts per million. Currently, the concentration of CO2 in the Earth's atmosphere is 390 ppm.

Saturday's events include music and speakers, and will feature cyclists, kayakers and walkers who took part in a 350-mile coastal trek to call attention to the effort. An aerial photo will be taken during the rally and sent to the Copenhagen Climate Conference delegates and large-screen televisions in Manhattan's Times Square.

As one of the many species adversely affected by global warming, Oregon Zoo's polar bears - Tasul and Conrad - have made their "voices" heard and have also joined the international campaign. [Learn how](#)

Regional equity: Making sure that all neighborhoods thrive

10/22/2009 11:47 AM

Myron Orfield, a nationally recognized expert in the field of metropolitan equity issues and director of the Institute on Race and Poverty at the University of Minnesota, will visit the Portland area next week to lead regional discussions on the Metro Council's goal of ensuring equal distribution of the benefits and burdens of regional growth.

Orfield was invited by Metro Councilor Robert Liberty to meet with local elected officials, community leaders, students and interested residents at a series of panel discussions to take place Oct. 26 and 27. Orfield is also a professor of law at the university and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. Liberty has been an advocate for regional equity issues in numerous capacities, including his work on Metro's "Investing in Our Communities" project which works to accommodate expected growth and make our communities livable, and as co-chair of Metro's Housing Choice Task Force.

At Councilor Liberty's request, Orfield has prepared an evaluation of how the Portland metropolitan area is currently addressing issues of equity and how we can continue to improve. Participants in the discussions will respond to his evaluations and recommendations. Areas to be addressed include:

- the distribution of the benefits and burdens of growth and change in similar metro regions
- the causes and consequences of inequitable distributions
- the level of equity in our region's current distribution
- the five most important things this region can do to achieve our desired outcome of a more equitable distribution of benefits and burdens
- measurements that could be used to determine local progress towards regional equity.

The following events, which are supported by Metro partners represented by the panelists noted below, are free and open to the public.

Monday, Oct. 26

7:30 to 9 a.m.

Beaverton Community Center

12350 SW Fifth St. Ste. 100, Beaverton

Sponsors: Metro, Washington County, Portland State University, Coalition for a Livable Future, 1000

Friends of Oregon

Panelists: Metro Councilor Carl Hosticka; Beaverton Mayor Dennis Doyle; Washington County Commissioner Dick Schouten; Ellen Johnson, Oregon Legal Aid Services; Russ Dondero, Pacific University

Tuesday, Oct. 27

7:30 to 9 a.m.

Monarch Hotel, Columbia Room

12566 SE 93rd Ave., Clackamas

Sponsors: Metro, Clackamas County, City of Lake Oswego, Portland State University, Coalition for a Livable Future, 1000 Friends of Oregon

Panelists: Clackamas County Commissioner Ann Lininger; Metro Councilor Carlotta Collette; Gresham

City Councilor Shirley Craddick; Martha McLennan, director of Northwest Housing Alternatives; Milt Dennison, superintendent of Clackamas Education Service District

Tuesday, Oct. 27

7 to 8:30 p.m.

Portland State University, Smith Ballroom

1825 SW Broadway, Portland

Sponsors: Metro, Portland State University, Multnomah County, Coalition for a Livable Future, 1000

Friends of Oregon

Introduction by Wim Wiewel, Portland State University president

Panelists: Multnomah County Chair Ted Wheeler; Jill Fuglister, Coalition for a Livable Future; Barbara Rommel, superintendent of David Douglas School District; Promise King, director of Oregon League of Minority Voters

[Reading in 3-D, without glasses – investing in our communities](#)

10/16/2009 02:15 PM

On Sept. 15 our chief operating officer Mike Jordan submitted a set of recommended actions for our region to use to plan the future, and last night, Oct. 15, the Council had the last in our extensive series of hearings, workshops and open houses on the content. You can get the whole document on our web site and read stories about the meetings and hearings on Metro's planning and policy newsfeed.

[Read the report](#)

[Visit the newsfeed](#)

A lot of the conventional news coverage and controversy has focused on the proposed designation of urban reserves, the geographic areas where the Urban Growth Boundary could be expanded in the years to come if we don't do a better job of efficiently using the land we already have inside the existing boundary. That's an important topic, and a collaborative process which is scheduled to arrive at conclusions and action by the Metro Council and local governments in December of 2009. The designation of urban reserves will have long-term consequences, so we are appropriately spending a lot of time this fall to get it right.

But if you want to think about the truly big issue, follow the money, and flip to the section of Mike's report that has not gotten a lot of attention yet but which I predict is where the action will be in the years to come: section 3-D, which raises provocative questions about Oregon's system of municipal finance and how and where we pay for public infrastructure – and the kinds of outcomes, including economic opportunity and community development, which result from that investment in public infrastructure.

The urban reserves debate has been about the edge of our community, while section 3-D is about where we really live today. And while other parts of the report are, in a sense, "conclusions," – for example, conclusions of the Urban Reserves process and a conclusion of the Regional Transportation Plan process – section 3-D is really the start of something. It's the chapter of the report which is, metaphorically, a preface rather than a summary. Section 3-D raises more questions than answers, appropriately so since as a region and a state and a nation we all have a lot of work to do in reaching some answers. Mike's done a great job of framing the questions.

The whole document fills hundreds of pages, two jammed three-ring binders. But if you can only read seven pages of the whole thing, here are the seven pages I recommend: the [executive summary of section 3-D](#), about how we invest in our communities. Read those seven pages and you'll have just a taste of issues that we need to get to work on in the years to come.

[Regional leaders discover success stories in the Twin Cities](#)

10/16/2009 01:26 PM



Metro Council President Bragdon riding a trail along the Mississippi on a tour of the Twin Cities.

Every year a group of business, political and community leaders from the Portland metropolitan area visits another city to look at what that city is doing well and what our region might learn from those examples.

This year's best practices trip, organized by Greenlight Greater Portland, explored the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minn. from Oct. 7- 9. A delegation of 52 people, including Metro Council President David Bragdon, Clackamas County Commission Chair Lynn Peterson and Portland Mayor Sam Adams, made the journey and received a large dose of "Minnesota nice" and a small dusting of snow flurries.

The delegation heard about some very interesting initiatives:

- The best regional parks and trail system in America
- Miles of very wide and nicely landscaped off street bike trails that in many places separate pedestrians from cyclists
- A program that guarantees to arrange scholarships, grants, and cover the college tuition cost of any graduating high school senior from the Minneapolis public school system who cannot afford college tuition
- A "district energy" system that currently heats more than 185 buildings and 300 single-family homes (31.1 million square feet) and cools more than 95 buildings (18.8 million square feet) in downtown Saint Paul with strictly renewable energy, mainly urban wood waste
- A multi-billion dollar statewide investment in land conservation passed by voters in November 2006 (The Clean Land, Water and Legacy Fund) increasing the state sales tax to fund land protection and water quality efforts, with a small percentage going towards local arts programs

Here in the Portland metropolitan area the Twin Cities' approach to parks and trails is being used as a model for The Intertwine, our newly named system of natural areas, parks, trails and recreation opportunities. [Learn more about The Intertwine](#)

All of the Portland region's delegates came away impressed with the strong relationship that exists in the Twin Cities among the business community, the philanthropic community and the public sector. Through these partnerships, they have been able to pull off many "big ideas" and have a very livable, dynamic city.

[We need a Columbia River Crossing that works](#)

10/14/2009 04:01 PM

A personal message from Council President Bragdon

The Columbia River Crossing controversy continues to be in the news this week. As reported by the [Portland Tribune](#) yesterday, U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio once again cautioned Oregon and Washington State to be realistic about expectations for the federal government's contribution to the project, and he reiterated once more that the huge price tag being bandied about these days is not reasonable. That news this week echoes an article by Dylan Rivera in the Sept. 18 Oregonian, entitled "[Big Idea but no money](#)," which accurately described the diminishing prospects for this project in the unrealistic "jumbo" form currently being promoted. And a Sept. 19 editorial in the Oregonian, entitled "Right words but a frowny face," further described the eroding local support for this huge version. So, members of Congress from both

Oregon and Washington State have given us that good advice earlier, and local officials have been saying it for months. What needs to happen? The two state governments need to start listening, or we won't have any project at all.

It's increasingly obvious that the "jumbo" proposal currently under consideration is not going to work, so people of good will need to re-mobilize and fashion a realistic, positive alternative which will work. This vital transportation corridor is too important for us to do nothing. Local officials on both sides of the river recognize that, and in fact the mutual respect and dialogue among myself and other local officials in Oregon and our counterparts in Washington is high, and while we may debate details there's a constructive commitment among local leaders to getting something done. To avoid missing this opportunity I thought it would be useful to once again express my hopes and fears about the various forms this project could take, and get us back on the path to success.

My position is simple and unchanged over the past two years: I have been working hard to construct a replacement Interstate 5 bridge, which would be paid for in part with tolls, and would offer new light rail and great bicycle and pedestrian sidewalks. But I am very, very skeptical about the "jumbo" version of this project currently being pushed by the two state highway divisions. The version being promoted -- as if it were the only alternative -- is proving very difficult to finance, and moreover would probably either result in much worse traffic than we suffer from today or simply move the traffic around to spots where the impact would be just as bad. Clearly we need to abandon that fruitless approach and construct a new consensus to design a reasonable project that will get the job done without all the negative impacts of pollution, sprawl and congestion that the jumbo version would cause.

A little history would be helpful in tracking how consensus for a project (including my support) grew through last year, but has unraveled more recently as the frightening details and price tag of what the two state governments are proposing became clearer. In 2008, most of the local governments involved voted to endorse a replacement bridge with light rail, bicycle and pedestrian paths, and three through auto-truck lanes in each direction to be partially paid for and managed with tolls. I was and remain an enthusiastic proponent of those goals. The unprecedented consensus between Portland and Vancouver on those major points could have been a good start toward building a great project. (Again, cross-river communication is at a healthy level now, as is my respect for the local officials in Vancouver and Clark County who I get to work with.) But what happened with that consensus? Unfortunately, the two state highway divisions who are managing the plan instead took enormous license with those local endorsements, and while we were asking for a 2,600-foot replacement bridge across a river, now we find we are being sold a 5-mile mega-project through our neighborhoods. Instead of designing a replacement bridge to meet our foreseeable long-term needs and budget, the state highway divisions insist on trying to double -- double! -- the bridge's width and constructing a multitude of Texas-style interchanges miles and miles to the north and south.

We can't afford that version, and it wouldn't work anyway: the jumbo proposal has no realistic financing, loses public support the more people learn about it, and would probably make traffic much worse than it is today and/or simply move the traffic to places where it would be even more detrimental to our communities on both sides of the river. There is certainly no point in spending a huge amount of money in ways which just make congestion worse. But there is still a path to success for a Columbia Crossing: over the next several months, working together through the Project Sponsors' Council on which I serve, local officials and congressional pressure must refine this project back into what was originally intended: a replacement bridge that meets our current and future needs and budget.

Just as the jumbo version is a self-defeating option, doing nothing is not a good option either. Common sense and the need for economic trade both say we ought to replace a 90-year-old bridge which is built on wood pilings in an earthquake zone. Common sense and the experience of other states and countries also says a replacement can be accomplished within a realistic time, scope, size and budget which fits the region's needs and does not simply induce more traffic than we already suffer from. The sooner we all acknowledge that the jumbo version would be harmful to our region and unaffordable to toll-payers and taxpayers, the faster we can get on with building something that works. That's what I and other local leaders must continue working to do.

[Salute to Forest Grove Mayor Richard Kidd](#)

10/14/2009 10:06 AM

A personal message from Council President Bragdon

Monday night I attended the Forest Grove City Council meeting, to salute the final meeting with Mayor Richard Kidd presiding. Richard has served Forest Grove as Mayor, a City Councilor, and Planning Commissioner for well over a decade, and is resigning later this month. I feel lucky to have worked with him on parks and transportation issues, and one year he also chaired the Metro Policy Advisory Committee, the panel of local officials who help advise the Metro Council. That's why I went to the city council to add my goodbye to the other tributes being made.

I particularly value two of Richard's attributes. One, he's someone who knows how to strongly advocate for the particular interests of his own community while simultaneously understanding that one city's interdependent relationships with the surrounding region. He never hesitated to articulate the needs and views of Forest Grove, but he always did so as a regionalist who knew that Forest Grove itself is part of a larger region, state and nation. A second characteristic I appreciate about Richard is that he's voracious for new ideas, no matter where they come from. He'll go look at condominiums in Vancouver B.C. or trails in Virginia and come back and say, "How can we adapt that idea for here?" When the Metro Council had Mayor Richard Daley from Chicago visit us in June 2007, we arranged for many of our Mayors to meet him to compare notes, and I vividly remember Mayor Kidd going toe-to-toe with him, the two talkative Richards, with Kidd of Forest Grove (the taller of the two) leaning in to Daley of Chicago (the stockier of the two), telling him about Forest Grove yet also asking probing questions about Chicago.

Forest Grove is fortunate to have had Richard Kidd as Mayor and the region is fortunate to have had him involved in metropolitan affairs. He's a model public servant and I will miss working with him.

[Metro makes first land acquisition to protect upper Rock Creek watershed](#)

10/07/2009 03:11 PM

Metro secured its first land acquisition in the Rock Creek Watershed and Greenway target area in September with the purchase of 20 acres on the edge of Portland. The acquisition safeguards water quality in the Rock Creek watershed and protects wildlife habitat in the Abbey Creek headwaters.

Located north of Germantown and Kaiser roads along the western flank of Forest Park, the property includes a portion of the wildlife corridor connecting Rock Creek to the region's largest protected nature park. There is abundant evidence of elk on the property and in the nearby area.

Originally zoned for commercial forest use, the property was logged in 1995 and reforested with Douglas fir. Today the fir, combined with Western red cedar, big leaf maple and cottonwood, provide an intact forest canopy. Two small, year-round creeks collect water from larger, primarily undeveloped properties on the western slopes of the Tualatin Mountains and the northern portion of Forest Park.

The Rock Creek headwaters are located in one of the 27 areas identified for protection in 2006 when voters approved Metro's Natural Areas bond measure. The program funds land acquisition and capital improvements that protect water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, enhance trails and wildlife corridors, and provide greater connections to nature in urban areas throughout the Portland metropolitan area.

[Learn more](#)

[Metro efforts showcased at Low-Carbon Cities Conference in Yokohama](#)

10/02/2009 03:03 PM

Metro Council President David Bragdon is attending the International Conference on Promoting Low-Carbon Cities in Yokohama on Oct. 5. Bragdon attended last year's conference and was asked by the government of Japan to join the discussion again this year to share Metro's approach to regional transportation planning, compact development, natural areas protection and recycling.

Japan's leadership role as the host nation of the Kyoto negotiations is evident in encouragement of municipalities to adopt localized strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Government grants and other assistance is available to cities that agree to implement GHG-reduction strategies involving public

transport, non-fossil fuel use, and stewardship of resources.

Bragdon will present Metro's strategies at the convention, which was organized by government officials including cabinet ministers at the highest level, where representatives from cities across Japan share how they are reducing reliance on carbon.

The Japanese government believes it can learn from, and share expertise with, other nations. In addition to the Portland metro region and the nearly 100 cities from Japan, representatives from Copenhagen, Stockholm, Dalian, Hamburg, France and the European Commission have been invited to speak. During three days in Japan, the international visitors will tour energy-recovery facilities, transit systems and environmental education classrooms that showcase the efforts of Yokohama and the Chiyoda Ward in Tokyo.

[Europeans: Oswego, Portland – so close and yet so far](#)

09/30/2009 09:49 AM

A personal message from Council President Bragdon

On this misty last day of September in Oregon I am trying to cycle from downtown Portland to downtown Lake Oswego with five intrepid European transportation engineers. These experts in planning and traffic are here for three days as part of the German Marshall Fund's Trans-Atlantic Cities Network, which last year selected the Portland region as one of its 25 participating cities in the US and Europe. Through this fund, European and American specialists in a variety of fields exchange ideas and advice.

We at the Metro Council want to use this opportunity to advance our agenda for active transportation. [learn more](#) The Europeans visiting us are from Belgium, the Netherlands and France. [learn more](#)

This morning we are literally and figuratively heading upstream, albeit on land, testing various options for a bikeway from Lake Oswego to Portland in the corridor which today only has Highway 43 and in the future should have a streetcar or light rail. Today, biking between the two cities is perilous, but if conditions were safer, thousands of people would do it. The Europeans, who come from cities that have made cycling safe and convenient, may give us some tips to achieve that reality.

Tomorrow, they'll be in Beaverton, looking at similar opportunities to increase biking there and meeting with business leaders in that high technology, software and sports apparel capital of the U.S. They will conclude their visit evaluating some of the existing bike lanes and trails in inner Portland on Friday.

In our modern age, it is now possible to fly nonstop from Portland to Amsterdam on Delta Air Lines. Why shouldn't it be just as simple to ride nonstop from Portland to Lake Oswego on a bike?

[OregonLive.com post helps clarify population forecasts](#)

09/29/2009 05:03 PM

The phrase "one million more people" often is associated with Metro and the future of the region's urban growth boundary. It's a compelling number and it's easy to remember too. The truth however, is the numbers are a bit more complex than a simple but effective catch phrase.

Oregonlive.com's Eric Mortenson recently posted an article that helps clarify the various population forecasts and geographies that are being discussed by Metro and its local government partners as they near decisions about the future of the region.

[Visit the Oregonian site](#)

[Metro area legislators briefed on Metro staff growth recommendations](#)

09/25/2009 03:53 PM

In order to limit new expansion of the urban growth boundary into rural areas, governments are going to have to be a lot wiser with how it spends public money.

That's the message Metro chief operating officer Michael Jordan stressed Friday while meeting with state legislators about Metro staff's growth plan.

"We're going to have to be deadly efficient in how we invest the public's money," Jordan said, adding that different levels of government cannot work independent of one another. "We have got to figure out ways to collaborate, to make decisions together."

That means investing in existing infrastructure, repairing and revitalizing existing town centers and corridors, renovating dilapidated buildings and maintaining existing transportation systems.

"We believe that the first focus of those expenditures should be repairing and maintaining what we've already built," Jordan said. "We've got a fairly good system and by golly we'd better take care of it."

Jordan's comments came during a Friday morning meeting among the Metro Council and staff and regional representatives from the state legislature to discuss Jordan's growth recommendations, titled "Making the Greatest Place: Strategies for a sustainable and prosperous region." The report encourages channeling most growth into the existing urban growth boundary, investing in repairing and maintaining existing buildings and infrastructure, and holding Metro and its local government partners accountable for the goals they put in place for the region.

The legislators were generally positive about Jordan's recommendations, though many said this was their first look at his report and that they had not yet analyzed all of its points. But Sen. Martha Schrader, a Democrat from Canby, said she's concerned about area businesses' tepid response to the report. Local business groups have worried that Jordan's recommendations could limit economic growth. Schrader said those concerns shouldn't be taken lightly.

"Our business community knows what drives the economy," Schrader said.

As Jordan outlined the report's goals to invest in existing infrastructure, he told the legislators that "infrastructure" means different things to different people. And for many, the popular definition of the word is changing.

"People are saying 'I want a plaza near my home where there will be a farmers market on Saturday,'" Jordan said. "That's what kind of investments we're talking about. Investments need to be made in town centers."

Throughout the meeting, legislators frequently interjected with questions for Jordan and the Metro Council. Portland Democrat Rep. Mitch Greenlick asked the council how Jordan's report relates to specific pieces of legislation.

"[Jordan's] recommendation will be the foundation for at least three pieces of legislation," said Metro Council President David Bragdon: adopting the Regional Transportation Plan, the urban growth report, and the urban and rural Reserves.

Portland Democrat Rep. Mary Nolan asked how Jordan and Metro staff weighted different factors in developing the growth forecast in the report.

"What things that we don't control make the biggest difference?" Nolan asked.

Jordan said the job market played a key role and that the staff had broken the job market into different sectors rather than looking at employment as one factor. For example, technology development and technology manufacturing are different sectors, Jordan said.

"We believe we'll still be a leader in high tech, but we won't be a leader in the manufacturing of high tech," Jordan said of the forecast.

Metro Councilor Rex Burkholder added that population growth was "the basic fundamental driver" that deserved high attention.

"All of these policy streams are inextricably linked," Jordan said.

The meeting also addressed recommended urban reserves, a process that gets the most attention in the press, Jordan lamented.

"Any time you talk about the edge [of the urban growth boundary], it's controversial," Jordan said. He said Metro staff believe that the urban growth boundary may not have to move at all during this round of decision-making, and if at all then very minimally.

The process of designating reserves tries to balance agriculture, natural resources and urban areas. It's not an easy task, Jordan said. Focusing growth inside the boundary could leave much of the current boundary unchanged, Jordan said.

Metro Councilor Carl Hosticka tried to stem fears that focusing growth inside the urban growth boundary could affect single-family neighborhoods, alluding to the recommendation's emphasis on focusing new development in downtowns and along main streets.

"Nothing that we're doing assumes that we're going to increase the density in single-family neighborhoods," he said.

As the planning process moves forward, Jordan said he hopes this round of urban planning goes more smoothly than in 2004, when plans were constantly challenged in court.

"It was excruciatingly difficult and highly unsatisfying," Jordan said. "Every point on the political compass was at least in agreement on that."

[Opinion survey gauges public views about growth](#)

09/25/2009 03:35 PM

Metro today released the results of a public opinion survey designed to develop valid and statistically reliable information regarding the attitudes of residents about the quality of life in the region and growth management principles. Six hundred voters in the Metro region were randomly selected and interviewed on the phone between July 31 and Aug. 3, 2009. The margin of error for the survey is +/- 4 percent. Summary of findings prepared by Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc.

Residents are optimistic about the direction of the region, and enjoy the quality of life they have. A majority of voters (58 percent) think things in the region are headed in the right direction. As found in other surveys for Metro about the quality of life in the region, residents value the environment, landscape and the types of activities and lifestyles these things provide. They also value the small community feel, access to a variety of activities and type of people living in the region.

There is widespread support for the region's urban growth boundary, smart growth and protecting the region's farmland, natural areas and standing forests. The environment is one of the top things that contributes to residents' quality of life in the region, and many communicated they do not want population growth and new development to jeopardize it. Residents strongly support development within the current urban growth boundary, including along transportation corridors, building on vacant lots, redeveloping old buildings and creating higher density neighborhoods (if they have parks, natural areas and access to convenient shopping and public transit) to preserve farm and forestland.

Residents across the three counties feel similarly about the quality of life they have in the region. They like the same things (e.g., outdoor recreation opportunities, environmental quality, weather and people/sense of community). They also have similar concerns (e.g., traffic congestion, public safety, government, employment).

While there are differences in priorities and the acceptability of planning principles across age, education, and income groups, the starkest demographic differences are by residency type and county. Residents in Multnomah and Washington counties showed stronger support for the urban growth boundary, higher density growth and alternative modes of transportation than those in Clackamas County. Even so, a majority of Clackamas County residents supported new development to accommodate population growth coming through the redevelopment of land within the current urban growth boundary, reusing and revitalizing old buildings and vacant lots in already developed areas resulting in more people and increased activity in those areas, and development of public transit biking and walking as an alternative

to the automobile.

Importantly, during the past decade Washington County residents, whose views were once more uniform with those living in Clackamas County, have identified closer to or in many cases almost equally with their counterparts in Multnomah County. Residents with higher levels of education and income levels also showed the most support for the urban growth boundary and the planning principles tested. While those ages 18 to 34 had strong support for high density development and public transit infrastructure, they were less likely to have strong opinions about whether or not the urban growth boundary is expanded.

Resident support for the urban growth boundary and higher density development is dependent on certain things:

- understanding the potential for redevelopment of vacant lots within the urban growth boundary and revitalizing old buildings, and being assured that this kind of development will precede or be done concurrently with the development of any undeveloped land within the boundary
- being assured that new development of any kind is carefully designed, accompanied with parks, natural spaces and easy access to public transit, and is walkable
- knowing the location of any new development relative to nearby neighborhoods and the level of increase in population density and activity level; otherwise, residents will assume the worst
- understanding that higher density development is a way to conserve farm and forest land and natural spaces, and is an alternative to urban sprawl.

[Download the full report](#)

[The Intertwine launches on streets across the Portland-Vancouver region](#)

09/17/2009 02:11 PM

The streets will be paved with green Friday, Sept. 18 as dozens of groups come together to create parks in public parking spaces around the region. Park(ing) Day celebrates parks and promotes the need for more of them. People in cities from Portland to New York participate in this annual happening.

This year's Park(ing) Day is the occasion for the unveiling of The Intertwine, a unifying name and brand for the Portland metropolitan area's network of parks, trails and natural areas. Whether you walk, hike, bike, bird, paddle or play – whatever you love to do and wherever you love to do it – if you're doing it in the Portland-Vancouver area, you are already using The Intertwine. The Intertwine Alliance, a coalition of businesses, nonprofits and public agencies have joined together to promote The Intertwine and commit to linking trails, parks and natural areas with homes, jobs and schools to create one of the greatest parks networks in the world.

Mayors from throughout the region, including Gresham Mayor Shane Bemis, Lake Oswego Mayor Jack Hoffman and Forest Grove Mayor Richard Kidd will join Metro Council President David Bragdon and Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish to officially launch The Intertwine at 10 a.m. at a Park(ing) Day park at Hotel Monaco, 506 SW Washington St. in Portland.

[View the news release](#)

[Learn more about the event](#)

[Transportation speaker series: Global experiences in congestion pricing](#)

09/09/2009 04:38 PM

Join the regional discussion about innovative solutions to transportation planning challenges. The latest installment of Metro's transportation speaker series welcomes Naveen Lamba, an international expert on congestion pricing. The lecture is from noon to 1 p.m. this Thursday, Sept. 10, at Metro Regional Center.

The need to reduce congestion will become more important as the region's population increases and puts more pressure on our infrastructure. One solution that has been successful in other cities is congestion pricing, which shifts the cost of peak demand for the public transport network to the users. Learning from the experiences of other cities is the first step in the discussion on how, or if, our region could use these tools to meet our future needs.

Naveen Lamba from IBM's Global Business Services will address examples of successful and unsuccessful congestion charging programs from around the world. He will also discuss the development of the next generation of congestion pricing solutions.

[View calendar](#)

[Guest opinion in The Oregonian by Council President David Bragdon](#)

08/10/2009 03:58 PM

Read a guest opinion piece by Council President David Bragdon published in The Oregonian on Aug. 10, 2009 in response to criticism about the urban growth boundary decision-making process.

[View the article](#)

[1,000 acres and counting](#)

08/08/2009 04:21 PM

Since 2006, Metro's voter-approved Natural Areas Program has funded land acquisitions and capital improvements that protect water quality, preserve fish and wildlife habitat, enhance trails and wildlife corridors and provide greater connections to nature throughout the Portland metropolitan area. With the addition in June of three new properties, the total acreage of protected natural areas has reached the 1,000 acre mark, moving the program closer to the goal of protecting up to 4,000 acres in urban areas and areas where development is likely to occur. With nearly nine miles of stream and river frontage included in the new total, habitat quality for fish and wildlife can be preserved and improved. [More](#)

[Connecting Green](#)

01/31/2009 08:22 AM

David is leading an initiative to fully capture the opportunity presented by the region's exceptional natural inheritance.

In 2007, David launched "[Connecting Green](#)," an initiative to create one of the world's great systems of parks, trails and natural areas.

In 2004, David convened a group of business, government and nonprofit leaders to develop a vision for the region's system of parks and natural areas and to outline steps for implementing the vision. After more than two years of work, the Greenspaces Policy Advisory Committee completed a vision and strategy for creating a multi-jurisdictional, interconnected system of neighborhood, community and regional parks, natural areas, trails, open spaces and recreation opportunities distributed equitably throughout the region.

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Connecting Green 2007

On June 28, 2007 David convened the "Connecting Green Summit" to draw together the diverse array of public, private and nonprofit groups necessary to implement a vision of this magnitude. David was joined by a host of distinguished speakers including Chicago's Mayor Richard M. Daley; Columbia Sportswear CEO Tim Boyle; David Fisher, Great Rivers Greenway District; Mike Houck, Urban Greenspaces Institute; Karen McDonald, Trust for Public Land; and Rutherford Platt, Ecological Cities Project.

The Connecting Green Summit launched three initiatives deemed necessary to create a parks system of the stature envisioned: 1) open new regional parks to broaden the region's portfolio of recreational opportunities and further distinguish the region; 2) connect the entire region together with a regional trails system for recreation and transportation, and; 3) restore 10,000 acres of natural areas for clean water, clean

air, and wildlife habitat.

Each of these initiatives builds on years of groundwork and successes. For example, in 2004, David directed Metro staff to begin work on three new regional parks: Mount Talbert near Sunnyside in the southeast part of the region, Graham Oaks near Wilsonville, and Cooper Mountain near Beaverton. These [parks](#) demonstrate the tremendous potential that can be unlocked when a small amount of investment is made in lands already in public ownership.