

► *Agatha's Christie's "Murder on the Nile" is playing this month at the Lakewood Theater.*
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► *Southwest was hit by two snowstorms in December—See "Snapshots" on Page 7*



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Multnomah subcommittee considers traffic calming in upcoming project

CAPITOL HIGHWAY PLAN

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

A large Multnomah subcommittee drew nearly 40 people at the end of November to consider a set of improvements for the "Garden Home" section of Southwest Capitol Highway.

This one-mile stretch extends from Garden Home Road south to Barbur Boulevard.

"The city is poised to spend \$19 million on the improvements," chair Chris Lyons said as he opened the meeting. "This seems way too much money. We are trying to bring costs down to \$10-12 million so it's not such a wide thoroughfare."

Marianne Fitzgerald of Ashcreek said she has been working on the road's redevelopment since 1991. Some people in the room said they have been working to improve conditions since the 1950s.

Many in the room feared that the city would not listen to their concerns as with other issues regarding Multnomah Village and the surrounding neighborhoods.

One such fear is spending too much money on improvements to make this section of Capitol Highway a thoroughfare like Multnomah Boulevard or Oleson Road.

"Tonight's purpose," Lyons explained, "is to submit comments with consensus to both the Bureaus of Transportation and Environmental Services for the highway improvements."

"How will this project affect *my* property?" one attendee inquired. "There are so many issues like right-of-way and property boundary lines, hedges, and retaining walls."

"The city took 14 feet back in the Fifties," he remarked. "They can't keep taking more land."

There were additional questions at the meeting about property lines and surveying.

"I have confirmed that PBOT will have a survey crew coming out probably in January," Lyons assured everyone, "but mainly to survey areas that have changed since 2008."

"If at that point the crews find that the old and new data are not lining up," Lyons continued, "they would do a more complete survey of the corridor, which may result in more property corners being marked."



Some 40 people turned out for the Multnomah Neighborhood Association's Capitol Highway subcommittee meeting in November. (Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

Bill Beebe has lived along Capitol Highway for 49 years in a house more than 100 years old. Beebe, like his neighbors, is concerned about specific things, especially people living along the highway.

"There are five adults living in my home," Beebe said. "We like to entertain and many are elderly who come to visit. Where will they park?"

Some of the main recommendations at the meeting were placing a sidewalk on the east side only from the Multnomah Village viaduct to Barbur Boulevard, extending the proposed multi-use path for the entire west side length of the mile-long highway, and creating bike lanes in both directions.

"This will also help to reduce the (Continued on Page 3)

Plans for new 100-foot multiuse building include Comcast, Natural Grocers

THE COUNTRY STORE

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

In Multnomah Village, construction continues on a new building at the corner of Southwest 33rd Avenue and Capitol Highway, across from the Multnomah Arts Center. The project consists of a four-story, 77,000 square foot apartment complex with

72 units, common space amenities, 5,600 square feet of ground floor retail, and underground parking.

Neighborhood residents who have been fighting the project are not content with the size and scope of the building as well as the lack of enough parking. The Multnomah Village Business Association remains neutral on the development.

Matthew Lawton of Sexton Lawton Architecture in Denver, Col., proposes to construct a building at the current

location of the Golden Touch Restaurant (8142 SW Barbur Blvd.) with approximately 45,000 square feet of commercial space, 223 dwelling units, and 452 parking spaces.

Portland Typewriters relocated farther south on Barbur Boulevard some time ago and efforts are underway to vacate a portion of Southwest Falcon Street.

According to city permits, the project has been granted a zoning variance of building height of 101 feet from an original height limit of 45 feet.

Matt Wickstrom, a senior city planner with the Bureau of Development Services, said that the project will include a Natural Grocers supermarket.

"A Comcast facility is being incorporated into the project," Wickstrom told *The Post*. "The media company may move from its current

location into the middle of the site."

Last year, the Hillsdale Neighborhood Association responded to the city regarding the permits. A spokesperson for the neighborhood stated that the proposed development overall represents the type of a vibrant residential and commercial project that is well designed.

"It meets current and future zoning and building codes. That will benefit the long term pedestrian, bike, and public transportation user needs of the community," the spokesperson said.

The Hillsdale response also includes suggestions regarding right-of-way improvements, utilities, electric car charging stations, drinking fountains, dog areas, roof gardens, accessibility improvements, and affordable housing. The association is also in agreement with the proposed new height.



An architectural rendering of the proposed mixed use building as seen from Southwest Barbur Boulevard and Evans Street. (Rendering provided by Sexton Lawton Architecture)

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Letters to the Editor



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Drive slowly on every Southwest street as if you live there

As we gear up for the latest Capitol Highway Plan [project], I am once again reminded about concerns about traffic speeds in our area.

Every resident of a Southwest Portland neighborhood wants traffic

slowed or calmed on their street and we understand those concerns.

I would like strongly to encourage each of us to drive on every Southwest Portland street as if we actually live there, too.

Try to remember that we are all part of the problem and we can make an effort to do better. Don't wait for the SLOW or "children at play" signs. Start now to make a real effort to drive the posted speed and even slower if warranted. We all live here.

*Patti Waitman-Ingebretsen
Southwest Capitol Highway*

Regarding "Don't hate 'monstrosities' just because they're big and expensive," letter by W. Brewster Gillett, The Post, December 2016.

Big homes are less eco-friendly than smaller ones

W. Brewster Gillett can think of no logical answer to his or her question, "What could there possibly be about a house larger than the neighborhood average that could qualify it as a monstrosity?" Gillette says the only answer is "envy."

In this century, though, everyone must know that the materials and energy it takes to build, furnish, heat and cool a very large home, relative to a smaller home, contribute more to climate change.

In addition, a bigger home leaves less green space for neighbors to enjoy looking at even if the owner doesn't care about the photosynthesis that provides

our oxygen. I will keep my emotional answers to myself—be assured envy is not one of them.

*Beth Woodward
Southwest Portland*

Large homes can make a real and specific negative impact

In response to Mr. Gillett's letter to the editor, I first want to agree that [the word] "monstrosity" is derogatory, judgmental, and more importantly, offers little constructive information.

However, "logic" can lead to conclusions other than those he has come to. There can be real and specific negative impact when a much larger than average home goes up in a neighborhood.

What harm? People take succor from trees and their presence impacts health and a sense of wellbeing; this

has been demonstrated in studies that link better health and improved sense of wellbeing to the number of trees in a living environment.

Trees are frequently sacrificed to these large homes. Many larger than average homes, especially those that fill their lots, destroy even the comforting illusion of privacy their neighbors may once have enjoyed.

Larger, and especially taller than average homes, frequently block the light available to the homes and yards adjacent to them. Gardens, especially vegetable and flower gardens can and sometimes are lost because of the loss of light.

Lastly, counter to the envy hypothesis, many of us find these new homes not just large, but aesthetically unappealing—sometimes aesthetically inferior to the smaller homes they are replacing.

While we can't all agree on aesthetics, (Continued on Page 3)

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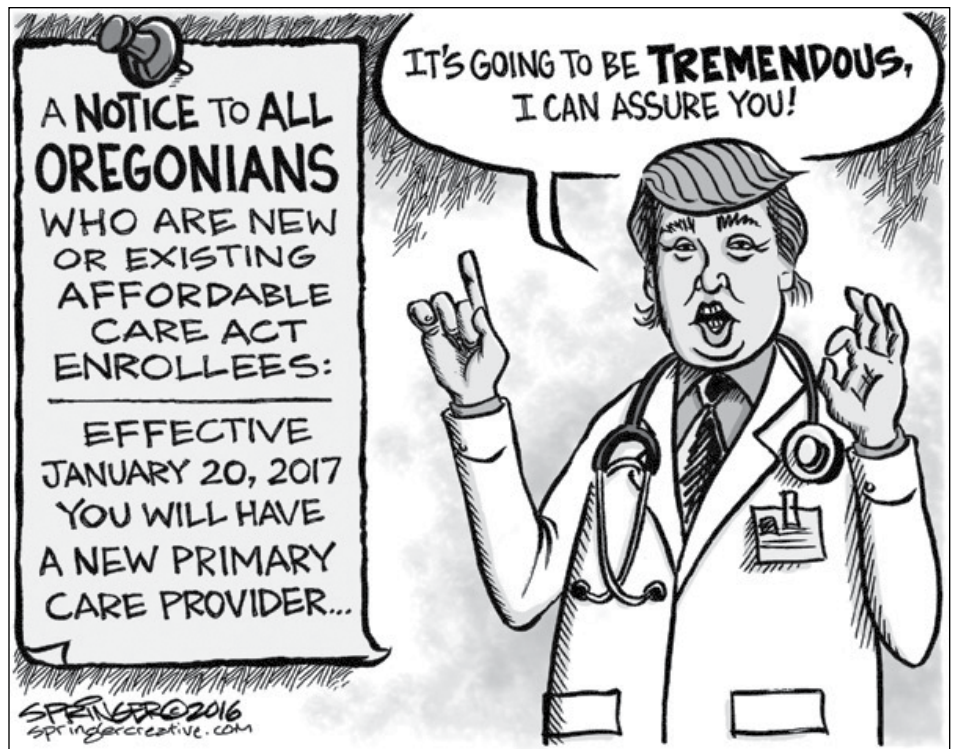
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Letters to the Editor



(Continued from Page 2)

aesthetics are not simply a matter of personal opinion; there is often a social, cultural, and community identity that finds expression in neighborhood aesthetics.

I don't oppose the building of every larger-than-average home. I do oppose thoughtless, short-sighted, wasteful and destructive development.

Ava M. Stone
Multnomah Village

Replacement homes not in character with surrounding neighborhood

In response to Mr. Gillett's letter in which he takes odds with two readers who criticize the building of large new homes, he asks that owners of large and expensive homes not be "hated".

The real issue here is that many people feel that the new large expensive homes being built in older established neighborhoods are awkward in scale and style.

They seem to almost always replace a bungalow or cottage which in itself removes another affordable home in a time when there is a drastic shortage of such properties available in greater Portland.

The result is striking—blocking of direct sunlight, loss of sightlines and a complete loss of any sense of privacy in the backyard.

I can only imagine that the market value of a house sited next to a large building drops dramatically.

I encourage him to walk, drive or bike over to the 2600 block of Southwest Troy Street.

On the north side of the street, Mr. Gillett can view a brand new four-story home sited next door to an older single-story home.

I do not object to the new home in of itself but what upsets me is the imposing presence of the new home as it relates to its single story neighbor.

Mr. Gillett mentions having a large new home at one end of a block while on the other end would be a single-story home.

The two houses I mention are not a block apart but immediately adjacent to each other.

I would like to have a conversation with the owner of the single-story home as to what he feels about his new neighbor.

I also wonder about the economic impact on the single story home.

This is a local example of poor scaling of new buildings as they relate to existing homes in a neighborhood.

I also urge Mr. Gillett to tour North Mississippi Avenue and Southeast Division Street to see further examples of poor scaling and siting.

The question here is this: How do we build replacement homes so that they are more in character with our existing neighborhoods?

Sim Hyde
Multnomah Village

Editor's Note: Sim Hyde wrote two letters this month on the same subject. I took the liberty of combining excerpts of the two letters, as both letters had excellent points. — Don Snedecor

Community advisory committee appointed for future light rail project

SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR PLAN

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

Editor's Note: According to Craig Beebe of Metro, a few weeks after winning narrow support from Tigard voters, a proposed Portland-to-Tualatin light rail project proceeded to its next stop as local leaders finalized the range of routes, stations and related walking, biking and roadway projects to be studied in a federally-required environmental review.

"A MAX line from the Portland Transit Mall to Bridgeport Village is the backbone of the Southwest Corridor vision, which also includes a number of other bus, road, bike and pedestrian improvements and development strategies in the fast-growing area," wrote Beebe.

On Dec. 12, the Southwest Corridor Plan Steering Committee reviewed recommendations from project staff and appointed 17 members to a community advisory committee.

"The CAC will advise the steering committee and project staff on public and social issues throughout the corridor," said Eryn Kehe, a senior communications specialist with Metro.

"Committee members will start meeting monthly beginning in early 2017 through spring 2018," she wrote. "One of their main roles will be to review the selection of a route and station areas."

The committee includes balanced representation from Portland, Tigard, and Tualatin. One representative is Michael Kisor from the Ashcreek Neighborhood Association. He is also active with SW Trails PDX.

Kathleen McMullen, manager of transportation and parking services at Portland Community College, was also appointed.

Other southwest Portland members include Jim Gardner, South Portland Neighborhood Association land use chair, and Roger Averbach who represents the Oregon Walks and Portland Pedestrian Advisory

Committee.

"The steering committee also unanimously approved project staff's recommendations," wrote Chris Ford, investment areas project manager for Metro.

"There is an amendment of directing staff to see if an initial traffic analysis could support an early decision to remove the I-5 alignment (between Southwest 13th Avenue and Barbur Transit Center). This would not need a full study in the draft environmental impact statement."

This action marks a significant milestone for the light rail project.

"The environmental review is a necessary step to qualify for federal matching funds," Kehe commented. "The task ahead is to assess the proposed alternatives and propose ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate significant impacts."

"This information will help inform decision makers in selecting the locally preferred alternative scheduled for early 2018."

CAPITOL HIGHWAY PLAN

(Continued from Page 1)
overall project width," Fitzgerald added. "This also narrows the travel lanes and street design as much as possible to slow down traffic."

But some commented that travel lanes aren't wide enough to allow TriMet buses and delivery trucks to safely pass. One question brought up was where delivery trucks would park?

Crosswalks were suggested at every transit stop, at a minimum, with use of rapid flashing beacons or other safety measures as appropriate.

Preserving as many trees as possible that are 12 inches in diameter or greater within the existing right-of-way was listed.

Reducing the speed limit to 25 mph for this entire stretch the highway was also recommended even though some said it wouldn't be adhered to.

"One of the reasons why this highway hasn't been built in 30 years," Fitzgerald said, "is that the city hasn't been able to figure it [the complexities of the area] out."

"Oleson Road is not what we want!" asserted Patti Waitman-Ingebretsen, long time historian and Capitol Highway resident.

Bioswales seemed to be on everyone's mind and not widely liked.

"They are mandated for every inch of cement," John Gibbon of Markham explained. "[Stormwater] needs to be contained, treated, and then disposed."

It was suggested that the Bureau of Environmental Services seek alternatives to bioswales, using permeable services or existing regional water facilities.

And finally, visibility and safety were brought up.

At the December Multnomah Neighborhood Association meeting, members unanimously approved two letters composed by the Capitol Highway subcommittee requesting \$2 million from the Oregon state legislature to ensure full funding of the Southwest Capitol Highway Improvement Project.

The association also unanimously approved the final set of comments on the project's design, which was originally developed and approved by the subcommittee.

Elizabeth Edwards, from Portland's Office of Government Relations, wrote the association:

"I wanted to let you know that support for SW Capitol Highway funding [requesting \$2 million] was included in the draft state legislative agenda considered by City Council last week.

"Thank you, Representative Lininger, and other legislative and community leaders for your advocacy."

There will be a Portland Bureau of Transportation town hall on the project on Thursday, Feb. 23, at 6 p.m. at the Multnomah Arts Center, 7688 SW

Capitol Highway.

"At this event," Lyons said, "PBOT staff likely will present a revised cross section document that responds to our comments, along with a horizontal layout on an aerial map that will provide us with a rough idea of how this cross section could look for the entire stretch of road."

To receive updates or become involved in the subcommittee, send an email to chrislyons7@yahoo.com.

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Construction plans discussed for Neighborhood House, Spring Garden Park



According to Rick Nitti of Neighborhood House, "Attached is a rendering of what it could look like on Capitol Highway with commercial rental space on the first floor and apartments on floors 2 and 3."

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

Community projects undergoing more study this year include a new

headquarters and affordable housing complex for Neighborhood House, and a city of Portland fueling station at the former Sears Armory.

Rick Nitti, executive director of Neighborhood House, explained that construction on a proposed two-building complex with approximately 32 affordable housing units was delayed in 2016.

The building would house the organization's main offices and emergency food box program proposed at Southwest 35th Avenue and Moss Street in Multnomah Village.

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"Due to the recent merging with the north Portland nonprofit Peninsula Children's Learning Center last fall," Nitti told *The Post*, "we have been involved with restructuring but plan on getting our [project] planning committee together early this year."

"We hope to begin construction in summer 2018."

Nitti estimates that the roughly 450 to 600 square-foot units might rent for around \$600-\$750. Parking could be included underneath the lower building near Southwest Moss Street.

Sears fuel facility on hold

In response to two budget notes from City Council, the project team is working with Portland Fire and Rescue to obtain professional services to perform a scenario planning study to assess whether the former Sears Armory site can meet the fire department's needs and serve as a Westside emergency coordination center.

According to the Portland Office of Management & Finance, the lead on this project contract was awarded last

year to MCA Architects for \$357,877 to prepare all necessary documents for the fueling station part of the project.

Due to potential design conflicts resulting from the study, Facilities Services' Strategic Planning and Development has suspended the design of the new fuel station at the property until comprehensive site impacts are known.

At that time, MCA's contract may be amended to incorporate any significant design impacts as well as any cost of living adjustments to the consultant's fee schedule if necessary.

"We know studies were done on the Sears site by the military before the property was handed off to the city," stated Diane Seaton, contracts manager for the Office of Management and Finance, "but it is our understanding these are about contamination, not impacts of proposed uses."

Seaton was asked if there would be any public meetings by city budget staff.

"No, we do not anticipate the need for public meetings with this phase of the process," she replied. "The results

(Continued on page 7)



Ken Boltz, who lives directly across the street from Spring Garden Park points out the proposed amphitheater area set for development. Story on Page 7. (Post file photo by Erik Vidstrand)

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COMMUNITY LIFE

By KC Cowan and Don Snedecor
The Southwest Portland Post

Everybody's Getting Evicted

Join hundreds around the city in the first selection of Everybody Reads 2017—*Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond. A community reading project of Multnomah County Library, folks have until March 9 to complete the book. There will be numerous talks and workshops to attend about the subject. Visit the following website, multcolib.org/everybody-reads to learn more.

4 Hillsdale Neighborhood Association

The group meets this month on Wednesday Jan. 4, 7 to 9 p.m., at St. Barnabus Church, 2201 SW Vermont St. Visit hna-pdx.com or call 503-823-4592 for agenda information.

6 Healthcare Help

Every Thursday in January, volunteers with the Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance (SHIBA) program will be on hand to help you figure out how to get the most from your Medicare benefits. In hour-long appointments, SHIBA volunteers help people compare insurance options, untangle paperwork, appeal benefit denials, and report Medicare fraud. Thursdays beginning Jan. 6, 5:45–7:45 p.m., at the Hillsdale Library, 1525 SW Sunset Blvd. Registration required; call the Multnomah County Helpline at 503-988-3646.

Murder on the Nile

Follow a web of intrigue and deceit on a steamer traveling up the Nile River in Egypt when an intriguing array of passengers discovers a dead body in this classic Agatha Christie play, "Murder on the Nile." The play runs Jan. 6 through Feb. 12 at the Lakewood Theatre, 368 S. State St. in Lake Oswego. Call the box office for tickets at 503-635-3901.

10 Multnomah Neighborhood Association

The group meets on Tuesday, Jan. 10, 7–9 p.m. at the Multnomah Arts Center, Room 30, 7688 SW Capitol Highway. Visit www.swni.org/Multnomah or call 503-823-4592 for agenda information.

14 Community Hike

Did you make walking more one of your New Year's Resolutions? Then join SW Urban Trails for a six-mile walk which will explore the West Hills. Meet behind the bleachers at Wilson High, Southwest Sunset Boulevard and Capitol Highway, on Saturday, Jan. 14, at 9 a.m. Well behaved dogs on leash are allowed. Dress warm! For more information visit swtrails.org or contact Sharon Fekety at fekety@hevenet.com.

Volunteer at Gabriel Park

Join Friends of Gabriel to help work in the future pollinator meadow on Saturday, Jan. 14, 9 a.m. to noon. Volunteers will be spreading mulch and constructing habitat piles. Directions: Gabriel Park entrance off Southwest Canby Street (near 40th Avenue). Parking is at this location. Volunteers will meet by the winter dog park entrance to the natural area. Tools, gloves, instruction and snacks will be provided. Please dress for the weather, wear sturdy shoes and bring a water bottle. For more information contact Mary Verrilli at 503-823-9423 or mary.verrilli@portlandoregon.gov.

19 Felting for Fun

Create a beautiful 2-D "painting" using wool and barbed needle. On a flat surface we will tangle and blend our natural wool fibers to create a piece of art you can hang on your wall. Bring in a photo of your pet, or choose from a variety of animal photos available in class. Thursday, Jan. 19 at 6:30 p.m. at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center, 6651 SW Capitol Highway. Cost: \$20, which includes all supplies. No experience necessary. For more information, contact the center at 503-244-0111.



Matthew Sepeda, Chase Fulton, Tiffany Groben, Gary L. Anderson, and Sarah Jane Fridlich star in Agatha Christie's "Murder On The Nile." (Photo by Triumph Studios)

22 Wild Survival

If you had to, could you survive in the wilderness? Learn what wild foods are safe to use, which plants to seek, and what your priorities are in recreational and unplanned survival situations. Presented by John Kallas, of Wild Food Adventures, on Sunday, Jan. 22, 1:30–4:30 p.m. at the Capitol Hill Library, 10723 SW Capitol Highway. Free, but preregistration required. Register online, at the library, or by calling 503-988-5234.

25 The Native Way

Hear Portland author Kent Nerburn discuss how his three decades of living and working among Native American people taught him about giving, sharing, grieving and celebrating. He'll read from his new book: *Voices in the Stones: Life Lessons from the Native Way* on Wednesday, Jan. 25, at 7:00 p.m. at Annie Bloom's Books, 7834 SW Capitol Highway. Free. For more information, call 503-246-0053.



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Questions & Answers About Our Environment

Dear EarthTalk: Are self-driving cars good for the environment?
 – Billy Shea, Boston, MA

You know the future is here when you see that the car beside you at a red light has nobody at the helm. That's already happening in California where a few companies (Uber, Google, Apple, Tesla) have begun testing autonomous vehicles on the open road—albeit with human drivers at the ready in case anything goes wrong.

Meanwhile, the major automakers have begun integrating autonomous driving technologies (blind spot detection, GPS mapping, assisted parking, etc.) into existing models, and will surely offer their own fully self-driving cars once lawmakers qualify them as street legal, maybe as early as 2018.

Proponents say that not only will driverless cars make our roads safer (as they can sense walkers, bikers, other cars and road infrastructure to avoid collisions), but will also be a boon to the environment.

Zia Wadud, who co-authored a study released earlier this year assessing the travel, energy and carbon impacts of autonomous vehicles, said the widespread adoption of the technology could reduce energy consumption significantly.

"Automated vehicles can interact

with each other and drive very closely as a 'platoon,'" reported Wadud. "This can reduce the total energy consumption of road transport by four to 25 percent, because vehicles which follow closely behind each other face less air resistance."

Beyond the platoon benefit, driverless cars can also shave another 25 percent off overall automotive energy consumption through more efficient computer-assisted ride optimization.

Yet another environmental benefit could be fewer cars on the road altogether.

"Your car could give you a lift to work in the morning and then give a lift to someone else in your family—or, for that matter, to anyone else. After delivering you to your destination, it doesn't sit idle in a parking lot for 20-plus hours every day," reported MIT researchers Matthew Claudel and Carlo Ratti in a recent McKinsey.com article.

"By combining ride sharing with car sharing ... it would be possible to take every passenger to his or her destination at the time they need to be there, with 80 percent fewer cars." Claudel and Ratti conclude that clearing four of five cars from the road would have "momentous consequences" for our cities regarding pollution, traffic, efficiency, and parking.

But Jason Bordoff of Columbia University's Center on Global Energy Policy argues in The Wall Street Journal that driverless cars hurt overall energy efficiency by undermining public transit.

"If you can work, watch a movie or sleep while in the car, perhaps you will take a car rather than public transportation or be more likely to drive for long trips."

Bordoff added that autonomous



Google is among the California companies testing autonomous cars.

vehicles also "significantly expand the universe of potential drivers" bringing more people (and cars) onto the road and possibly increasing total vehicle miles travelled overall.

"Even car-sharing services could increase energy demand if the ease and convenience pulls people away from mass transit, walking or biking and into cars."

Bordoff said he remains optimistic that autonomous vehicles can provide a net gain for society and the environment, but only if we are careful about how we implement the technology.

"To ensure that autonomous vehicles deliver economic, energy security and environmental benefits, we will need supporting policies targeted at those objectives, such as increased fuel-economy standards, investments in public transportation infrastructure, and R&D in alternative vehicle technologies."

For his part, Wadud agreed with Bordoff that driverless cars could

actually be bad for the environment depending on how things shake out.

"Let's not be blinded by the driverless cars by saying they can solve everything – know that there could be risks and be careful about them," he said.

"That said, I do hope that driverless cars will encourage car sharing and help reduce our energy use and carbon emissions. However, what will happen in reality remains to be seen."

Contacts: "Help or hindrance? The travel, energy and carbon impacts of highly automated vehicles," www.sciencedirect.com; Claudel and Ratti's "Full Speed Ahead: How the Driverless Car Can Transform Cities," www.mckinsey.com; Columbia Center on Global Energy Policy, energypolicy.columbia.edu.

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Construction Plans Discussed

(Continued from Page 4)

of this study will help us determine if we want to pursue work on one or more of the sites.

"The study may show us that neither of the two city-owned sites is feasible," she continued. "If we determine that the sites may support development, we will start a public engagement process, alongside other more detailed feasibility analyses."

Spring Garden Park design settled

Portland Parks and Recreation has decided to accept the Project Advisory Committee's recommendation of a concrete pad and seating wall at Spring Garden Park.

There was months-long public involvement that included many stakeholders, a review of survey results, and an additional community meeting to understand concerns about options for a proposed amphitheatre at Spring Garden Park.

A second option involved no concrete

pad but kept a seating wall. The third option, which was most preferred by recent lobbying and surveys, was the removal of the concrete pad and seating wall, leaving a grassy bowl with boulders and trees.

"We understand that some neighbors will be pleased by this decision, and some neighbors will not be pleased," both Fritz and Parks Director Mike Abbate wrote the neighbors.

A resident who lives within ear shot of the future amphitheatre was not pleased.

"We're all disappointed," said Ken Boltz. "It seems like they never intended to change what they were doing and wasted our time and money."

A name change was also brought up. A letter from Commissioner Amanda Fritz states that the bureau will conduct its adopted process for naming of parks.

"While I suspect many will support continuing the 'Spring Garden Park' name," Fritz wrote, "I will be open to considering other suggestions."

"Whatever your preference regarding



A fueling center is planned next to the former Sears Armory office building. (Post file photo by Erik Vidstrand)

the designs, we hope that everyone will keep perspective of the enormous value that the park will hold for neighborhood residents."

Construction will begin in spring

2017 and open by end of the summer.

The entire letter posted to the park bureau's website and other information can be found at <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/67420>.



Snapshots



(Clockwise, from top left) A city snowplow makes its way through Multnomah Village on Dec. 16, (Post photo by Erik Vidstrand). Kent Thompson is riding his scooter in the snow on Southwest 52nd Avenue on Dec. 15, (Post photo by Leslie Baird). A transformer explodes at Southwest 28th and Multnomah Boulevard due to ice in early December, (Photo courtesy of Stuart Ellis). Trees came down on Moss Street and weren't removed for three days. This photo was taken on Dec. 10, (Post photo by Erik Vidstrand).

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Riverdale senior is political activist looking to improve education

By Jack Rubinger
The Southwest Portland Post

Riverdale High School senior Gabe Abdellatif said he is reaching out to elected officials, school administrators and others to address urgent concerns impacting all young people in Portland.

Those concerns include the results of our recent national election, ethnic diversity, and key Portland school district policies currently in place.

Abdellatif is the youth liaison to Portland city commissioner Amanda Fritz. The two met in mid-December to discuss youth reactions to the outcomes of the election, and about what they want their elected leaders and other adults to do to support those feeling frightened and vulnerable.

"Meeting with Gabe always leaves me hopeful that the next generation will keep pressing forward in positive directions, and I am determined to do my part to support them in their journeys," said Fritz.

Abdellatif and Fritz are actively talking about the issue of making TriMet youth passes available to all students in Portland, year round and for every student.

Earlier in the year Abdellatif said he participated in Portland's Black Male Achievement Program.

Abdellatif said that he and several other black youth helped the city's Office of Equity and Human Rights plan a community event to spread awareness about the reform of Measure 11, an Oregon law passed by initiative

petition in 1994 that requires mandatory minimum sentences on certain major crimes.

Abdellatif and others have expressed frustrations with the law as they believe there are currently large racial disparities amongst those convicted.

Abdellatif said he counts President Barack Obama as one of his inspirations. He said he also looks up to Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest-ever Nobel Prize laureate.

The teen said he was attracted to Riverdale High School mostly because of its small size and teacher support. One drawback? The school's lack of racial and ethnic diversity.

Over the past year Abdellatif said he has collaborated with faculty and students to develop course work that explores whiteness, privilege, and allyship — a practice of identifying bias in oneself paired with an active and consistent practice of unlearning and re-evaluating.

As a member of the Multnomah Youth Commission (Portland's youth advisory board), he said he focuses on improving local policies that directly affect youth.

Serving on the Education/Youth Voice Committee, Abdellatif and his fellow youth commissioners have pushed to decrease rates of chronic absenteeism in local high schools.

Last year, Abdellatif and others met with groups in alternative schools and traditional schools struggling with chronic absenteeism to obtain input on their policies. The committee is currently

advocating delaying school start times.

Reasons cited included the physiological (in regards to adolescent health) and societal (in regards to decrease auto accidents) benefits of delaying school start. Most parents see the struggles their teens face with getting up in the morning.

Abdellatif doesn't take much time off in the summers either. Last summer, he participated in the SummerWorks program and was matched with a paid internship in the office of Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury.

He said he provided general office support, supported constituent relations, and also attended meetings about Portland's housing crisis.

"Like others on the Multnomah Youth Commission, Gabe is knowledgeable, thoughtful, engaged and constructive. He keeps me informed on the priorities of youth, since the youth commissioners choose which issues to pursue," said Fritz.

There's a certain type of person that gets politically active relatively early in life. Abdellatif's parents have been on board since he was just a child, when he hosted a mock presidential election in kindergarten.

"My parents encourage me to



Gabe Abdellatif (center) is an active member of the Black Male Achievement organization. (Photo courtesy of Gabe Abdellatif)

express my feelings regarding what is happening in the world, and stand up for what I believe to be right. It was not uncommon for my family to have a spirited discussion about politics around the dinner table, even when I was still very young," said Abdellatif.

Abdellatif said he plans to study either political science or sociology in college. After college he said he sees himself either working for the government, a non-profit or a social organization to make changes specifically in the realm of education. He said he would also like to spend some time with Teach for America after college.

Abdellatif is a member of Riverdale's site council. He said he participates in Model United Nations, and competes with Riverdale's mock trial team. For fun, he said he enjoys spending time with his friends, cooking, photography, and reading about social justice.

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