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# The Southwest Portland Post

Southwest Portland's Independent Neighborhood Newspaper

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Volume No. 19, Issue No. 4

www.swportlandpost.com

Portland, Oregon

Complimentary

February 2011

## Southwest Portland knitting groups are great places to make friends and relax

By Polina Olsen  
*The Southwest Portland Post*

The food is good, and the lighting is perfect. It's a spot to make friends and have a beer. Maybe that's why the SW PDX Stitch 'N' Bitch thrives two years after Wendy Lee started the knitting group on a hunch.

Each Wednesday evening, Laughing Planet (4405 SW Vermont St.) lights up with bright yarns, clicking needles and gorgeous hand-knit clothes. Drop-ins gather around back tables over southwestern burritos and Zappatista salads. Like all knitting groups, the best part is the people. All skill levels and ages are welcome.

"I started the group two years ago before Thanksgiving," said Lee who learned knitting about five years ago. At that time, the only local group met just once a month. "I wanted more, so I decided to start something. I never dreamed it would get so big."

Ravelry ([www.ravelry.com](http://www.ravelry.com)), a free online knitting community, proved crucial to the group's organization and ongoing success. The place to go for patterns, help with projects, and everything related to yarn, Ravelry

provides space for worldwide virtual groups like "Fair Isle Knitting," and local meetups like "SW PDX Stitch 'N' Bitch." Spreading the word was as easy as posting when and where. Now the group has 138 members. Fifteen to 40 drop by Laughing Planet each week.

We stopped by the group's annual Christmas party. That night the large, laughing crowd prepared a cookie exchange and brought presents. As usual, ages ranged from mid-twenties to sixty-something.

We met attorneys, stay-at-home-moms, teachers, and a budding novelist. Several women have cottage businesses. Raya Budrevich sells hand-dyed yarn and custom-knit children's clothes from her website [blissfulknits.com](http://blissfulknits.com).

"I'm just trying hard not to go back to work," she said as the mothers of young children nodded. Conversation drifted from book club favorites to the best way to make limoncello. Master knitters sat next to scarf makers. Everyone had a good time.

Of course, other knitting clubs have sprung up around the neighborhood. Northwest Wools (3524 SW Troy St.), the Multnomah Village yarn shop, teaches classes and encourages drop-in groups. Each Sunday afternoon,



Donna Arney, (seated red shirt) and Melissa Schmidt (standing) chat about their latest projects at knit night. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

the Knitwits meet and welcome new participants. They've sponsored an annual knitting cruise for seven years. This time, they went to Alaska.

"It was so much fun for the women to hang out together," said organizer Diane Wade. "We all knit berets and

wore them to dinner. And, we had a book club. We read *Skinny Dip*. The beginning takes place on a cruise."

Wade specializes in charity knitting. "I knit all year for the Soroptimists," she said as she picked up her needles. "I  
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While it may be used by the City of Portland for emergency management, the Jerome Sears Armory is no longer being considered for affordable housing. (Post file photo by Don Snedecor)

## City wants to use the Jerome Sears Armory site for emergency use instead of housing

By Lee Perlman  
*The Southwest Portland Post*

The City has given up on plans for housing development on the old Jerome Sears Armory site, and is looking for alternative uses. "I just don't think this pencils out any more," Commissioner Nick Fish said in a voice mail message to the Post last month.

Margaret Van Vliet, Executive Director of the Portland Bureau of Housing, told *The Post* that a local match for a project proposed by Community Partners for Affordable Housing, a non-profit selected to develop the site after the military had declared it surplus, would have been somewhere between \$3 and \$6 million.

Part of this cost was the price of the four-acre site on Southwest Multnomah Boulevard, which the City had hoped the military would donate. "We've pursued a number of housing development projects in the last 18 months, a couple we've had to let go, and this was one of them," Van Vliet said.

The City gained the right to acquire the property in 2007. In 2008, after an extensive public process, housing was selected as the preferred new use for the site. According to Van Vliet, Mayor Sam Adams' office favors using the property as a west side emergency staging area, providing storage for vital supplies for use in case of a catastrophe.

Christine Miles, a spokesperson for

the Portland Office of Emergency Management, told *The Post* that the City currently has no place for the storage of emergency supplies and equipment on the west side of the Willamette River, which could create a major problem if a major earthquake were to make the bridges impassible.

It could also provide storage space for the Transportation and Water bureaus. It could be used to store snow-removal equipment, gravel and sanding trucks, and "a place where crews could store what they need for ongoing projects," Miles said.

Other possible uses could be classes and training for Neighborhood Emergency Team volunteers as well as City personnel, Miles said. "It wouldn't be a place where trucks will just sit," she said, although she was somewhat vague about how much activity would occur there on a daily basis.

Miles said that the City had not yet determined that this is a suitable site. One key consideration is whether the federal government would be willing to donate the land for an emergency preparedness use, as they were not willing to do for housing development.

City representatives plan to attend the next Multnomah meeting, set for 7 p.m. Tuesday, February 8 at the Multnomah Center, 7688 S.W. Capitol Highway. There the City will supply more specific information, community members will have another chance to react, and the association may take a position on the issue.

Don't forget to renew your subscription. Form on Page 2.

The Southwest Portland Post  
4207 SE Woodstock Blvd #509  
Portland, OR 97206



# An update on the Sears Armory site from the housing bureau

## Letters to the Editor



The Southwest Portland Post  
7825 SW 36th Ave Suite #203  
Portland, OR 97219  
Fax: (866) 727-5336  
email: news@multnomahpost.com

Thank you for your engagement with the public process involved in determining the best use for the Sgt. Jerome Sears US Army Reserve Center.

Your involvement has been critical in helping the City of Portland think about important neighborhood needs, and we appreciate your input. I know for many of you, it has been some time since you last heard about the City's plans to reuse the base.

I'd like to give you a quick update about our approach for the site. As you know, following our community

process and initial due diligence as authorized by the Department of Defense, the Portland City Council approved exploration of a reuse plan, with affordable housing as the first priority in 2008.

Since that time, we've been hit hard by the recession, and many housing and real estate development projects have been stalled or cancelled altogether in our region because they could not secure public or private financing in a tightening credit market.

City Council formed the new Portland Housing Bureau (PHB) with a mandate to rationalize long-term housing policy and investment direction.

After analyzing our capital resources against the level of investment needed to undertake the planned development in the current financial climate, PHB has determined that we simply lack necessary capital funding to support the hoped-for affordable housing project on this site.

Our determination is based on many factors, not the least of which is our current understanding that the City is very unlikely to secure the site at no cost, which was an original hope to make a

new development financially feasible.

Housing Commissioner Nick Fish and I both regret that we've come to this determination, as we see clearly a growing need for housing that's affordable across the city, including areas like Multnomah Village in Southwest Portland.

Most of you know that we remain committed to a redevelopment of Hillside Terrace by the Housing Authority of Portland, and we are moving forward with a new housing development in South Waterfront, both of which will address some of the pressing needs in the community.

PHB's next step is to return to City Council with a report that we are unable to move forward with housing at

the site. We have informed the Mayor Adams of this determination, and his staff have begun examining other potential reuse plans, including revisiting the concept that the site could fulfill the City's need for a Westside emergency response center. We have also informed the Department of Defense about our determination and desire to explore other reuse possibilities.

I expect you'll be hearing soon about next steps for considering an alternate public use and how the neighborhood will be involved. I will work with my City colleagues to keep all interested parties updated as that moves forward.

Margaret S. Van Vliet  
Director, Portland Housing Bureau

### Neighbors clean up after contractor on Multnomah Blvd sewer project

The sewer job along Southwest Multnomah Boulevard is complete and I see that it has been tested and found satisfactory by the Bureau of Environmental Services.

Thus, I want to make a note that (while) the people that did the flagging of traffic did a very good job at their work I just want you to know that it was the people of the neighborhood

that cleaned up after them.

Every Saturday at the 40th and Garden Home Road intersection and along the parking areas there would be a 5-gallon bucket of all kinds of trash that was picked up after them. This went on week after week until the job was complete.

I am not sure but this could have happened in other areas as well. So thank the neighborhood that cleaned up their mess.

RW Jepson  
Southwest Garden Home Road



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Reporters/Writers: Polina Olsen and Lee Perlman  
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Graphic Design: Leslie Baird Design  
Printing: Oregon Lithoprint

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Deadline for news and advertising is generally the 20th of the month prior to publication. Please call for current deadline information. Advertising rates are available upon request.

The Post has a circulation of 7,000 in Multnomah Village and the surrounding neighborhood business districts including Burlingame, Capitol Hill, Garden Home, Glen Cullen, Hillsdale, South Portland, Raleigh Hills, West Portland and Vermont Hills. The Post is published on or about the 1st of every month. Subscriptions are \$14 per year. Back issues are \$2.50 each when available. All major credit cards accepted.



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## Lines drawn on proposed Lake Oswego to Portland streetcar

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

As planners and politicians move toward votes on the proposed Lake Oswego to Portland streetcar line, the lines for and against are being drawn, and the South Portland neighborhood finds itself in the unlikely position of being a defender of the project.

The project's Citizen Advisory Committee may make its recommendation at its next meeting, 5 p.m. February 7 at the Easter Seals Building, 5757 S.W. Macadam Ave. If necessary an additional meeting will be held February 15 somewhere in Lake Oswego.

Based on their discussions during the last two months, the CAC is expected to endorse the streetcar extension. In its last two meetings a majority of the group heaped scorn on two alternative proposals, No Build and an Enhanced Bus.

At a December meeting the group dubbed the No Build the "Head in the Sand" option, predicated on the theory that the corridor operates well now and will do so in the future.

The Enhanced Bus would cost \$51.1 million, as compared to the official cost of \$379 to \$458 million for the streetcar extension. (The latter, for the sake of local match for anticipated federal funds, includes \$97 million for the Willamette Shore Line right of way, which is already publicly owned.)

However, the bus is anticipated to attract just 730,000 new transit trips compared to 1.1 million for the streetcar, to take 39 minutes to travel the route compared to 30 to 33 minutes for the streetcar, and to cost \$1.54 million more to operate than the streetcar.

In addition, South Portland resident and CAC member Kerry Chipman told the group last month, "The enhanced bus will mean loss of service." Not only will it have five fewer stops, but also "A bus that fills up in Lake Oswego will not stop for us in South Portland."

Another CAC member, Beverly Bookin, said that on a recent trip, "By the time we left Lake Oswego it was standing room only, and by the time we got to South Portland there was no room for anyone." With more capacity, a streetcar can handle more people, she said.

Matt Brown, a former City of Portland transportation planner, focused

on the bus's greater operating costs. To maintain it, "TriMet would have to cannibalize the rest of the system. It's not a good deal for the region."

Developer Verne Rifer took a different tack: the streetcar is a better stimulus for development. "We have a pretty good bus system, but without help we'll be seeing Johns Landing at best remain fallow, at worst see disinvestment," he said.

"It's really suffering and the retail isn't doing well. Even in boom times there were numerous vacant lots on the river not being developed. I don't see an enhanced bus contributing to redevelopment or preservation," said Rifer. In the wider world, however, the project faces strong opposition. In the wealthy Dunthorpe community, through which the streetcar will pass and which has always been hostile to the project, opponents are reportedly fundraising for a major legal fight.

Lake Oswego was considered a supporter, but in the last election three candidates ran for City Council on anti-streetcar platforms, and two were elected to the seven-person body.

At a meeting last month of the Portland Streetcar Advisory Committee, Rifer compared these communities to "Beirut," and South Portland to "the liberation of Paris" in their attitudes toward the project. This is ironic because South Portland's stance has been less than wildly enthusiastic.

Indeed, it is conditioned on most of the route through their territory being located on Southwest Macadam Avenue rather than the Willamette Shore right of way, as project engineers would prefer. The latter route would be faster and easier to operate, but would have more impact on existing homes and less benefit to businesses.

The Lake Oswego opposition is in fact based largely on the idea that the streetcar would be too effective a development tool. Opponents have charged that it would create "30 Washington Squares" in the town. Aside from being grossly exaggerated, consultant Doug Oblatz told the project CAC, "Washington Square is a shopping mall, and no one is suggesting that for Lake Oswego. It was used to get people's attention."

A related issue is the future of a proposed bike and pedestrian trail through the territory. There is virtually universal support for this. However, there is some

(Continued on Page 6)



Portland Streetcar stops at Gibbs Street in the South Waterfront neighborhood. (flickr file photo courtesy of pchurch)

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Completed applications must be received at Metro no later than 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 9, 2011. Qualified applicants will be interviewed by the Metro Council at a public meeting to be held on Wednesday, Feb. 16, beginning at 5 p.m. at the David Douglas School District headquarters, located at 1500 SE 130th Ave. in Portland. The Metro Council may vote to appoint a new Metro Councilor at that meeting or hold its vote over to a later date.

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## Knitting Groups

(Continued from Page 1)

make a lot of purses and hats." Auction buyers opt to keep the items or donate them to a women's shelter.

Other women were knitting scarves. "I have a 22 year old daughter who talked me into making eight of these for presents this Christmas; her friends love them," said Clackamas County Mediator Amy Cleary. She started knitting during her mother's serious illness and later found Northwest Wools. "A girlfriend of mine asked if I wanted to take a class. We decided to do the sampler scarf. I've gotten such a kick out of the way the men in my family have taken an interest in what I knit."

Meanwhile, the Hillsdale Library offers a treat for those ready to take up knitting or crochet. Once a month two experts offer free instruction and help. Called the No 1 Hillsdale Knitting Society, others show up to work on existing

projects and chat. Children and adults are encouraged to bring their own supplies and give knitting a try.

Both retired librarians, instructors Darlene Wheeler and Flora Persons sometimes knit under a sign in the main reading room to drum up interest. They often remember how they started the hobby they've enjoyed throughout the years. "I locked myself up for a weekend with a knitting book with pictures and came out with something that looked like knitting," Persons said. Now, she makes it easier for others to enjoy the craft.

### Southwest Knitting Groups

Every Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., Laughing Planet, 4405 SW Vermont St. To contact, go to [www.ravelry.com](http://www.ravelry.com), select groups, enter "SW PDX Stitch 'N' Bitch," and click Search.

Every Sunday, 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.,



Wendy Lee founded her Southwest Portland knitting group more than two years ago. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

Northwest Wools, 3524 SW Troy St., 503.244.5024. Join the Knitwits meetup.

First Saturday of each month, 1 p.m.,

Northwest Wools, 3524 SW Troy St., 503.244.5024. Call to confirm.

One morning per month, Hillsdale Library, 1525 SW Sunset Blvd., 503.988.5388. The No. 1 Hillsdale Knitting Society sets up in the meeting room. Check the schedule at [www.multcolib.org/events/knitting.html](http://www.multcolib.org/events/knitting.html) or pick up an events flyer at the library.

First and third Friday of each month, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.; Fulton Park Community Center, 68 SW Miles St., 503.823.3180. A room is available, and all crafts are welcome. Call to confirm.

First and third Wednesday each month, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Sip D'Vine, 7829 SW Capitol Hwy, 503.977.9463. Call to confirm.

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# County Commission approves steel deck arch design for new Sellwood Bridge

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

In late January, the Multnomah County Commission unanimously approved a design for a new Sellwood Bridge, one with a brand new west side approach system with lower cost and less environmental impact than a proposal approved late last year.

As before, the bridge will have a Deck Arch design, with an open top deck free of superstructure. It will probably be made of steel, although County planners are still considering concrete as a material.

The biggest new change is the west side interchange. In place of a large, roundabout curve to take traffic to southbound Highway 43 without stopping, there will be a series of traffic signals. Reducing the "footprint" of the bridge will reduce by more than half the needed excavation into the hillside to the west, reducing the "rock cut" from 88,000 square feet to 40,000.

Another change is the elimination, for now, of tracks and an approach ramp for a future streetcar line on the bridge, at a saving of \$5 million and \$6 to \$8 million, respectively.

County spokesperson Mike Pullen said that these items could be added later. Interestingly, Portland Mayor Sam Adams has been a consistent proponent of streetcars but has also called for ef-

orts to reduce the Sellwood Bridge's cost.

The changes reduce the cost from \$331 million to \$290 million. Project manager Ian Cannon told the Commission that the changes "retain functionality and safety for all modes of transportation, and reflect a community consensus."

The changes were endorsed by the project's Community Advisory Committee. Heather Cook, a Sellwood resident and member of the CAC, thanked the Commission for "listening to the CAC." She did urge them to "commit to" rather than merely "consider" a series of projects on the east side designed to ensure safety for all modes.

Diana Richardson, a Sellwood commercial property owned, was more critical. The construction work will involve the temporary displacement of some of her commercial tenants. "It would be a hardship for them," she said. "Some just won't return, and that would be a hardship for me."

Terry Parker, a consistent critic of non-auto transportation, complained that such interests had had a disproportionate voice in the design of the project. He applauded the removal of the streetcar facilities, but also called for narrowing of pedestrian and bicycle lanes and the elimination of viewing areas on the bridge.

The Commission gave lavish praise to everyone involved in the project. Commission Chair Jeff Cogen, who had feuded openly with Adams and accused



A new steel deck arch design (with the provision for using concrete if necessary) was approved by the Multnomah County Commission in January. (Photo courtesy of Multnomah County)

the mayor of blocking the project, gave a brief acknowledgement to "our partners the City of Portland." Cogen added, "This brings us much closer to actually getting a new bridge."

Commissioner Deborah Kafoury said, "We're doing what the public wants us to do." However, she urged staff to continue working with Richardson to have the least possible impact on her and her tenants. "We've bought a lot of good will with this project," Kafoury said. "We need to continue to retain it. Even with compensation, displacement is a hardship."

Cogen said that staff is seeking to gain a solution without using property condemnation, and aiming for a "win-win" solution. Pullen later told *The Post* that the CAC would probably reconvene in March to look at design details for the bridge. Construction should begin by late 2012, Pullen said.

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#### How would you improve pedestrian and bicycle conditions on Multnomah Blvd?

Please mark your calendar and plan on joining us on Tuesday, February 17th anytime between 6:30 and 8:30pm to learn more about a project to provide sidewalks, stormwater management, and improved bicycle facilities on SW Multnomah Blvd between 21st and 31st Ave.

Staff from the Portland Bureau of Transportation and the Bureau of Environmental Services will be on hand to present background information and design options for public review and comment.

This project provides a great opportunity to improve pedestrian connections between SW Barbur Blvd and Multnomah Village, in addition to improving safety for both

pedestrians and bicycles. Current funding should allow for improvements on the north side of Multnomah Blvd between SW 21st and 31st Ave. in conjunction with the Bureau of Environmental Services sewer main project. The project also intends to develop a design concept for the entire corridor up through Multnomah Village to SW 40th Ave for future construction phases.

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## City Council considers whether or not to allow detention facility in South Portland

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

For three hours last month, the Portland City Council pondered the South Portland Neighborhood Association's appeal of a proposed building addition at 4310 S.W. Macadam Avenue to create what the federal government says would be an office building and neighbors say would be a jail.

Council members were polite to the 17 people who testified but, with one possible exception, showed no indication of accepting their stance on the issue.

The Lindquist Development Company is seeking a three-story addition to a four-story former bank storage building. The resulting 65,000 square foot structure would be rented to the General Services Administration and its Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which would use it to "process" suspected illegal immigrants. About 4,000 Square feet would be devoted to Holding Cells.

The staff of the Bureau of Develop-

ment Services determined that this was an office building, allowed by right, and subject only to design review. The Portland Design Commission, in three hearings, voted to approve the design.

Planner Kara Fioravanti told Council that they had two questions to answer. The first was whether the proposed design was acceptable. The second, which the Design Commission deliberately declined to consider, was whether the use was allowed by right or a was a new use requiring a Conditional Use permit that would delve into its suitability for this site.

Fioravanti conceded that the latter issue had been a "tough question" for staff. However, they had decided that the building was more like an office building than a detention facility as defined by the code. In part this was because the "detention" cells take up such a small part of the building, in part because those "processed" and held there are not necessarily charged with a crime, she said.

Builder Pat Prendergast later added that the building would have neither beds nor food facilities, and those de-



This building located at 4310 SW Macadam Ave in South Portland could be home to a new federal jail. (Post file photo by Don Snedecor)

tained there would under no circumstances spend the night there.

Another issue was the presence of the Southwest Charter School due to open across the street from the building, just 60 feet away. The appeal noted that processing facilities are not to be placed within 300 feet of schools.

Fioravanti said that this is not a City code requirement. Scott Mattson of the General Services Administration said the rule is a requirement of the federal "procurement" policy for selecting a site.

Since the charter school hadn't signed a lease at the time the site was selected, he said, it wasn't considered. "This is not a regulation, and we can't prevent a school from locating next to us," he said.

Those who testified expressed unhappiness with both the proposed facility and the process. Karmela Ungerleider Abrams, a charter school parent who testified along with her two daughters, said, "This makes me almost want to pull my daughters from the school I love and cherish."

Architect Fred Ganz said that even in developing countries, "I have never ever seen the lack of requirements we've seen with this project." When it was examined by the Design Commission, it was "already a fait accompli." There was no chance to judge "the practicality of placing this use on this site." The South Waterfront is "at a very fragile place in history," and "to introduce a jail at the gateway makes absolutely no sense."

South Portland land use chair Jim Davis argued that the proposed facility was "clearly" a jail and a change of use for the site, both of which would require a conditional use permit. The concept of "proportionality," the amount of square footage devoted to a given activity as an indicator of its "primary use," is not part of the code, he said.

Both the Cedarwood School and the College of Naturopathic Medicine

needed conditional uses, even though they were locating in former school buildings, he said. He also said that the GSA, in its procurement instructions for the site, had referred to the use as a detention facility.

"With a conditional use, neighbors will get a chance to have their legitimate concerns addressed," he said. "The developer may hear things he never thought of before, and would benefit from."

Mayor Sam Adams was polite to those who testified against the facility, but told two of them that their issues could not be considered under the hearing's rules.

He was more aggressive with Davis, several times asking, "How is that germane to the criteria we have before us?" At one point, when Davis suggested that those detained might in fact be held overnight, Adams asked, "Do you agree that if that happened it would be a violation of the code?" "I'll take your word for it," Davis replied.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz, herself an immigrant from England, brought out that the Main Post Office, on the edge of the fashionable Pearl neighborhood, contains both detention facilities and classrooms where people such as herself could attend required citizenship classes. She did ask whether Council could require a conditional use permit as a condition of approval.

The most critical Council member was Commissioner Nick Fish. After questioning Fioravanti for several minutes he said, "The code doesn't give us a lot of guidance. Reasonable people can differ over this because the definitions are subject to interpretation."

Council eventually agreed to allow both sides to submit additional written material through January 26 – this at Lindquist's request. They will then have until February 2 to rebut the new evidence. Council will hold a second hearing on the case at 2 p.m. February 16.

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 THE PORTLAND PLAN

### Lake Oswego Street Car

(Continued from Page 3)

question as to whether the Willamette Shore Right of Way, re-assembled in 1988, would be available if rail wasn't built on it.

At the moment it is used in summer by the Willamette Shore Trolley, which provides recreational riding rather than service, as a sort of placeholder. "Some parts of the right of way were purchased specifically for rail use," Oblatz said, "and without rail on them it would disappear."

### OHSU Building

(Continued from Page 7)

move back and forth to their main campus quickly."

OHSU's next priority is to relocate their dental school. "The existing one is crying out for a wrecking ball," Williams said. "Everything in it wouldn't meet current accreditation standards."

They also have other plans for the space the old structure now occupies, he said. The project will be subject to design review, and construction will begin in "about a year," he said.



# OHSU plans for \$160 million building in South Waterfront

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

The Oregon Health and Sciences University is gearing up to build its first building on its new South Waterfront campus.

OHSU vice-president for development Mark Williams told the South Portland Neighborhood Association in December that the school feels it has the \$160 million needed for the proposed

Life Sciences building in place.

The state of Oregon has contributed \$50 million, and has given the school permission to borrow another \$60 million contingent on the sale of bonds, Williams said.

An anonymous benefactor has donated \$40 million and TriMet is contributing \$10 million. Part of TriMet's share will be used to build its new light rail station on the adjacent bridge.

Asked if \$160 million will be enough for the project Williams said, "It will

have to be." A silver lining to the current recession is that construction costs are down, he said.

The building will be 263,000 square feet, compared to 400,000 for the existing Center for Health and Healing at Southwest Gibbs Street. OHSU will own the structure, Williams said, but Portland State University, Oregon State University and the Oregon Institute of Technology will be tenants.

"We said, 'If someone is willing to contribute \$20 million for incubator

space, come forward,'" Williams said. "We didn't really expect anyone to respond, but someone came forward."

This will be the first structure to occupy the new 19-acre campus donated by the Schnitzer family and, Williams said, "If we were doing this on our own we'd put this in the center of the new campus instead of the southwest corner."

But PSU need this to be next to the light rail station so that they could  
*(Continued to Page 6)*

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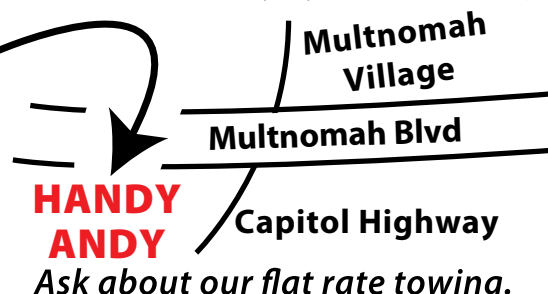
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