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Southwest Portland's Independent Neighborhood Newspaper

INSIDE:
Multnomah
Centennial/
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Special Section
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Volume No. 16, Issue No. 10

www.multnomahpost.com

Portland, Oregon

Complimentary

August 2008

Portland planning commissioners receive guided tour of Southwest

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

Slopes in steep, landslide-prone terrain standing clear-cut and bare. "Skinny" houses spaced less than five feet apart. Streets with no place to walk other than in traffic. Intersections that are accidents waiting to happen – or happen again.

For three and a half hours last month, Southwest neighborhood leaders took the Portland Planning Commission on a bus tour of their community that illustrated the issues they have been dealing with for years. Southwest Neighborhoods Inc. (SWNI) land use committee chair John Gibbon was the main tour guide and narrator, but he had plenty of help.

The tour was the latest of several such excursions the commission has taken of parts of the city. They have previously toured east and central northeast Portland, always accompa-

nied by commentary by either Bureau of Planning staff or local volunteers. In this case, volunteers did nearly all the talking.

Former Southwest Hills Residential League (SWHRL) chair Jim Thayer technically did not go on the tour; instead it was brought to him at the confluence of Southwest Campus and Cardinell drives. There a steep hillside with a history of landslides, the potential future site of 36 housing units, lies bare after the City Forester gave his blessing for all the trees to be clear-cut, Thayer said.

The development approval includes a condition that the developer replant 96 trees and 156 shrubs on the property, "but we have no way of knowing if the city will maintain the agreement," Thayer said. In addition, traffic from the project will use Cardinell, a very narrow winding street. "This will put a huge burden on the neighborhood," Thayer said, but the land use review did not provide an opportunity to bring it up.



Portland Planning Commission members and Southwest coalition leaders climb a stairway July 22 at Southwest Cardinell and College streets in the SWHRL neighborhood, part of a half-day tour of the Southwest area. (Post photo by Lee Perlman)

Dave and Dixie Johnston of Collins View, who joined the tour at a pre-arranged meeting place, had similar issues in their neighborhood. The clay

that makes up most of the soil in this community is "like cement when it's dry, but when it's wet it's like soup,"
(Continued on Page 11)

Maplewood activists see "McMansions" replacing trees and older cottages

By Polina Olsen
The Southwest Portland Post

When Micki Carrier moved to the Maplewood neighborhood five years ago, large, beautiful trees shaded her street. Then, according to Carrier, builders snapped up land and things started changing:

"Either they built from scratch and foliage was moved out of the way or they tore down tidy little ranch homes and made room for the biggest houses possible. When these incredibly large barn shaped structures go up next to little ranches, they look terribly out of place."

The problem of teardowns, of course, isn't limited to the Maple-

wood neighborhood or to Portland. Around the country, trees and older homes are routinely demolished and replaced with houses that dwarf nearby structures and take up most of their own lot. Issues extend beyond changing the character of old neighborhoods:

"We had bio-mass that mitigated storm water and put oxygen in the air," said Todd Williamson whose Maplewood cottage shares the yard with his business, the Sacred Onion Yoga Studio. His neighbor's basement only recently started flooding. Williamson blames the change in foliage.

"Builders put in something that will grow to 20-30 feet as a replacement for something that sucked up 100 gallons

of water a day," said Williamson.

John Gibbon, land use chair for the Southwest neighborhood coalition, questioned Portland's one-size-fits-all approach to building regulations. "The city's had a problem with combined storm sewer overflow," he said. "They are requiring new home builders to put the storm water that falls onto the property into ground on the site."

While this works in some areas of the Southeast, the Southwest has different topography. "It leads to water bubbling up on a downhill neighbor's yard or basement." Before, trees on the undeveloped site slowed down storm water and soaked up the rain.

According to Gibbon, teardowns aren't a major issue in other Southwest communities but large houses on small lots are. Residents complain about blocked sunlight and loss of privacy as new three-story houses tower over older one-story homes. "Big back yards are going away and people are putting in flag lots," he said. "And,

houses are fitted on spots that once seemed impossible to build on."

Both Williamson and Carrier have become Maplewood neighborhood activists. They've testified at City Hall and escorted officials on neighborhood tours. While most city officials agree in principle, the solution requires a change in building codes, an action many are reluctant to take.

"The city wants higher density for the growth boundary thing and they also want more tax revenue," Williamson said. "My fear is by the time we get around to changing the codes, it's too late, and they've changed the whole character of the neighborhood."

West Portland Park neighborhood activist Amanda Fritz agrees. She's worked on this issue for about 10 years. "We've made attempts to fix it but there hasn't been the political will in the city council to restrict home size or to put in neighborhood compatibility standards," she told *The Post*.
(Continued on Page 11)



Micki Carrier and her Chihuahua "Sasha" discuss Maplewood neighborhood issues with Todd Williamson. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

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The Southwest Portland Post
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City Council votes 5-0 in favor of affordable housing for Sears Armory site

By Don Snedecor
The Southwest Portland Post

When I got to the ad-hoc meeting at the Multnomah Center on July 7, the room was bulging with neighbors, many of whom were in favor of a Portland Office of Emergency Response facility at the Sears Armory—an Army Reserve base scheduled to be closed by 2011—instead of affordable housing.

A group of next-door neighbors had just given newly-elected City Commissioner Nick Fish a quick tour of the Sears Armory site (2730 SW Multnomah Blvd). They explained at the meeting that there had been an earnest effort to find an alternative space in Southwest for affordable housing.

Fish defended a June 18 joint reso-

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

lution, co-sponsored by Mayor Tom Potter, which recommended redevelopment of the Sears Armory into a “mixed-income, rental and ownership housing development that includes permanent and supportive housing for homeless single adults and homeless families with special needs.”

The resolution designated Community Partners for Affordable Housing as the preferred developer of the Sears site.

But Commissioner Fish and his staff listened to neighbors’ concerns. Among them were: impact of traffic and parking in the neighborhood, lack of bus service on Multnomah Boulevard, the fact that emergency services were not directly available on the West Side.



Stephanie Mohler introduces the new Gabriel Skatepark to skaters while Mayor Tom Potter and Commissioner Dan Saltzman look on. (Post photo by Don Snedecor)

Traffic along Multnomah Boulevard was a concern of immediate neighbors, as was access in and out of the property.

Other concerns included a need for some kind of buffer zone, the need to reuse existing facilities instead of tearing down what is currently available, as well as the possibility of sharing affordable housing and emergency response on the same parcel of land.

“The intent of the base closing was for housing,” said Fish. “And generally, a larger site with mixed use is economically a better choice.” Apparently the City Council agreed with him as two days later they voted 5-0 in favor of the Potter-Fish resolution.

At the end of the meeting Fish pledged to involve immediate neighbors in the planning and development

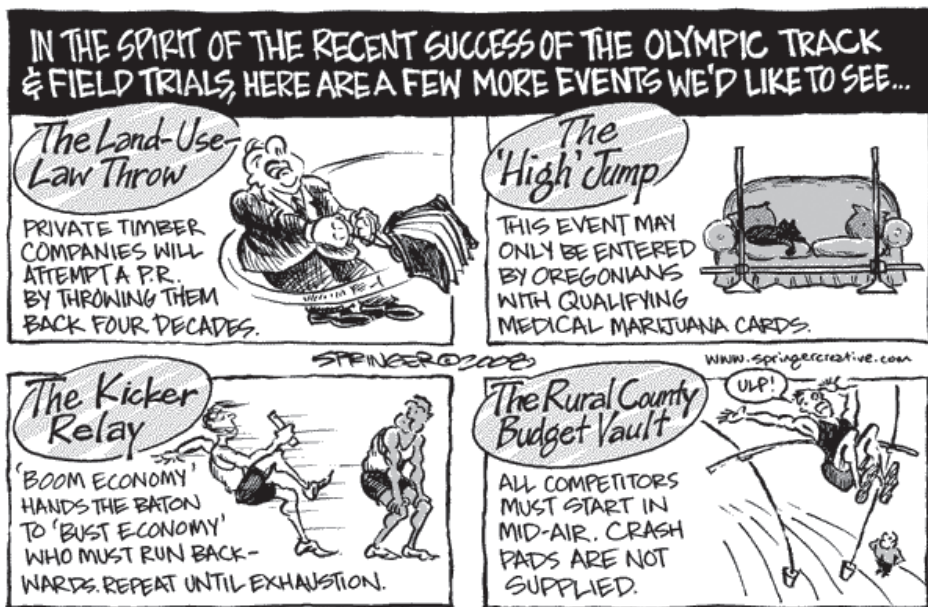
of the Sears site. “I’ve never seen a mixed use development not enhanced from the community being involved,” said Fish.

Despite the City Council vote for affordable housing, it was only a recommendation. The final decision rests with the Department of Defense, the property owner.

Gabriel Skatepark grand opening marked by hot sun and low turnout

After listening to people gripe about skateboarders (read:teenagers)—and the mythological noise, alcohol, drugs, gang violence, graffiti and vandalism—it was a pleasure to find none of the above at the grand open-

(Continued on Page 11)



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Printing: Oregon Lithoprint

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The Post has a circulation of 10,000 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 \$24 per year. Back issues are \$2.50 each when available. All major credit cards accepted.



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BES ditches to swales program not a substitute for sidewalks

By Polina Olsen
The Southwest Portland Post

Jeff Hubbard didn't know he'd need survival skills when he walked to his mailbox each day. But over the three years he and his wife have lived on Maplewood Road, traffic has only become worse. "People use Maplewood Road as a bypass for 45th and don't pay attention to the school zone," he said, adding through traffic regularly zooms past his house at 45 mph despite speed bumps and 25 mph signs.

"A bus got so close to my wife when she was getting the mail that the wind from it knocked her over," Hubbard said. "Kids walk up and down the street, and there are skateboards. It's a question of time until someone is hit."

Vernon Krist, Maplewood Neighborhood Association transportation chair agrees. "Maplewood Road is narrow -- barely wide enough for two cars. People drive too fast and there's no place to walk," he said. "If cars come along, pedestrians need to jump into a ditch."

The ditches Krist referred to butt up against the hill which runs along one side of Maplewood Road. Built to col-

lect water, the neighborhood association has long hoped the city's "Ditch-to-Swale" program would convert the space to a pedestrian trail.

"They take a roadside ditch and fill it with piping and rock so the drainage takes place and gives people a safe place to walk," Krist explained. The solution does not narrow the road, but rather turns the curbside ditch into pedestrian space at a fraction of the cost of sidewalks. The city estimate for the Maplewood Road Ditch-to-Swale conversion is \$34,000.

While this sounds like a good idea, it may not be a quick solution. According to Amin Wahab, watershed manager for the Bureau of Environmental Services (BES), Maplewood Road is medium priority on the list of Ditch-to-Swale projects. And, he said the budget for even high priority projects "will not kick in for three years. Then, it depends on how much money the city has allocated."

Furthermore, Amin explained, "a swale is not a trail. The [Ditch-to-Swale] objective is storm water management not to create sidewalks. We can make some modifications and do the design in a way to make pedestrian access easier but that's not one of the main

objectives."

Despite this, the project could speed up, Amin suggests, if "neighbors approach BES and the Portland Department of Transportation to say this should be given a higher priority- especially if the neighbors are interested in providing some support."

Meanwhile, Jeff Hubbard prepares to jump into the ditch whenever he ventures down his road. He hopes attention will speed up the Ditch-to-Swale conversion or at least encourage police or radar control to monitor traffic. "This is a neighborhood of kids," he said. "With a community like this, you'd like to make the school zone safe."

For more information about the Ditches to Swales program visit www.portlandonline.com/bes and type in "ditches to swales" in the search box. To contact Vernon Krist at the Maplewood Neighborhood Association email transportation_chair@maplewoodna.com.



A recently converted ditch on Southwest Hamilton Street just west of 42nd Place. (Photo courtesy Victor von Salza)

South Waterfront Greenway construction delayed

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

Construction of the central portion of the South Waterfront Greenway will be delayed until at least next summer.

Portland Parks and Recreation spokesperson Patty Freeman reported that the bureau had failed to properly complete the complex permitting process of the National Marine Fisheries Service, whose regulations govern construction near the shores of waterways such as the Willamette River that are fish habitat.

In such habitat work can only be done between July 1 and October 31, and it is already too late to obtain the permits in time to meet this deadline. Thus, the \$4.3 million project will have to wait until at least next year for implementation.


The effect of the delay? Freeman said

that the park bureau is calculating an eight percent cost increase due to inflation, "In a slower development market, contractors will frequently lower their bids in an attempt to get work."

Some community members have faulted the park bureau staff for failure to deal with the permitting in a timeline manner. One observer, requesting anonymity, told *The Post*, "They've known for years they'd have to deal with this."

Freeman said that the permitting process contained a new procedure for sediment testing. The park bureau was trying to balance federal guidelines calling for minimal use or riprap with a need to give the public access to the riverfront (without which they might not respect habitat areas).


Finally, there were delays in the transfer of land to the City by the developers. The Park Bureau is confident the work can be done in 2009, she said.



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City plans Gibbs Street pedestrian bridge

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

City planners are at working designing a new pedestrian bridge along Southwest Gibbs Street, underneath the Oregon Health and Sciences Center aerial tram.

When completed it would provide pedestrian and bike access from the Lair Hill neighborhood to the South Waterfront, help to re-unite a neighborhood torn apart by large roadways, and help mitigate the presence of the tram on the historic neighborhood.

As Jody Yates of the Portland Office of Transportation told the Portland Design Commission last month, the designers have abandoned their original notion of having the bridge slant downward from west to east.

Instead, they now plan to have its deck remain level. This will make the bridge itself easier to negotiate by foot, bike or wheelchair, but also means its eastern end will be 60 feet above the ground.

While there will be a stairway, most people will use a pair of elevators, which will be large enough to accommodate bikes. Design work for the west

end is not complete, but the bridge will have to "nestle into a developed community," consultant Kevin Peterson told the commission.

The bureau is also working on a pedestrian path, with crosswalks, which will allow people and bikes to continue upward to the tram terminus on Marquam Hill.

Commission member Andrew Jansky was skeptical about this last idea. Noting that the proposed path will have to cross Southwest Barbur Boulevard he said, "Traffic calming is great, but not when people are in a hurry, and that's what you'll have here."

Instead, Jansky said, the city should build "one great bridge" that will take people all the way from the South Waterfront to Marquam Hill with a Lair Hill access point. Commission chair Lloyd Lindley urged the design team to make the span wider than 15 feet.

Commission member Gwen Millius agreed, saying the bridge will be used in a future when "the cost of gasoline is causing more and more people to use these facilities. I'd hate to perpetuate the idea that riding your bike is about personal virtue and nothing more. Make it something that doesn't look horrible and works really well."



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OHSU contemplates adding up to 200 hospital beds in Portland

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

One of the corollaries of Murphy's Law is that before you can do anything, there's something else that you have to do first. So it is with the Oregon Health and Sciences University, which wants to add another 150 to 200 hospital beds to their campus.

OHSU spokesperson Brian Newman told the Homestead Neighborhood Association last month that the hospital has considered seven possible sites for such a building, six of them on their Marquam Hill campus and one in the South Waterfront.

This last dropped out early, he said. "It seems to make sense to put our outpatient facilities in the South Waterfront, our inpatient facilities on the hill," he said. A new wing in South Waterfront would be "like building a brand new hospital cut off from all its support services," he said. It would also create "confusion in the public's mind" about where to find these services.

Another possibility was the current site of the School of Dentistry. OHSU eventually hopes to relocate this, and many similar teaching-related facilities, to its proposed new campus in the South Waterfront.

This, in turn, would free up space on Marquam Hill for hospital buildings there. However, they concede that bringing this to fruition will take years if not decades to accomplish. In the meantime, Newman said, replacing the Dentistry School is "a \$200 million problem" standing in the way of putting anything else on that site.

At the moment, he said, the idea that "rose to the top" is an expansion of the Kohler Pavilion, best known as the top terminus of the school's aerial tram. This is consistent with the Marquam Hill Master Plan, he said. So far there is no cost estimate for the project.

Homestead land use chair Anton Vetterlein told Newman that Southwest Terwilliger Boulevard is "a tremendous city asset. We resisted OHSU's

expansion so close to it." Failing that, it persuaded the City to attach a number of conditions to the Kohler Pavilion's permit relating to neighborhood impact mitigation, and some of these have not been fulfilled. "We'd oppose any expansion of Kohler until these conditions are met," he told Newman.

In fact, Michelle Seward of the Bureau

of Development Services sent OHSU a notice of code violations on July 2. All violations related to failure to adhere to conditions attached to the Kohler Pavilion's building permits and including failure to provide landscaped screening and screening for lights.

In a related matter, former Homestead chair Rich Davidson inquired about

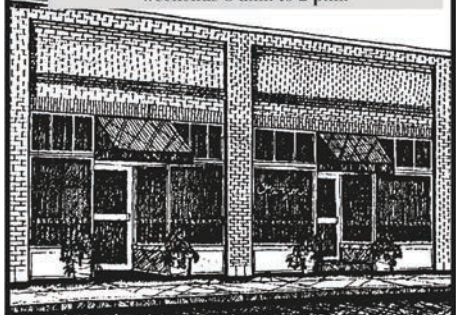
rumors that Ronald McDonald House may soon leave the Marquam Hill campus. Newman replied, "The model for Ronald McDonald has changed. They now expect the university to build facilities for them." For this, he said, "The financing just isn't there." He quickly added, "No one at OHSU wants them to go away. They're an asset."

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COMMUNITY LIFE

By Don Snedecor
The Southwest Portland Post

Garden Home Community Library's Used Book Sale will be held Saturday, August 9 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the library, 7475 SW Oleson Rd. Hardcover, paperbacks, videos, CDs for adults and children plus some collectibles. All proceeds benefit the library. For more information call (503) 245-9932.

Bring your picnic supper! The **Portland Festival Symphony with the band Three Leg Torso** will perform a free concert on Sunday, August 10 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Washington Park Amphitheatre. This is just one of more than a dozen free outdoor concerts being performed in August at Washington Park, including a wide variety of different musical genres. Visit www.portlandparks.org for more information.

The **Portland Ballet** (formerly Pacific Artists Ballet) is presenting a Masters Workshop Performance, Saturday, August 23 at 7:30 p.m. at Portland State University's Lincoln Hall. The Hillsdale company of 30 dancers will be performing George Ballanchine's "Roymonda Variations" (staged by New York City Ballet's John Clifford) and Clifford's

"Sonata" set to Debussy's "Sonata for Cello." Tickets are \$10-15 and are available at the PSU Box Office (503) 725-3307 or www.ticketmaster.com.

Register now for **Summer Swimming Lessons** at the Southwest Community Center at Gabriel Park. Two-week sessions will be held August 4-15 and August 18-29. The SWCC is located at 6820 SW 45th Ave (at Vermont Street). Call (503) 823-2840 or visit www.portlandparks.org for more information.

Enjoy ice cream, face painting, rock wall climbing and more at the **Fulton Park Community Center's 3rd Annual Ice Cream Social**, Thursday, August 21, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Bring family, friends, neighbors and guests... the more the merrier. The community center is located at 68 SW Miles St. Call (503) 823-3180 with any questions.

"**In Search of Beauty**," an exhibit of photographic art by Dankwart Koehler will be on display at the Multnomah Arts Center Gallery beginning August 19. This exhibit celebrates the beauty of the world around us in photographs which are modified after they are taken. Reception for the artist is Tuesday, August 26 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. The MAC Gallery is located at 7688 SW Capitol Hwy in Multnomah Village. The show runs through September 17. Contact Jaye Campbell at (503) 823-2787 for more information.



This year's Multnomah Days Festival will of course include the street fair along Capitol Highway, all day on Saturday August 16. See Page 7 for a schedule of events. (Post file photo by Don Snedecor)

Portland Parks and Recreation, in cooperation with southwest neighborhood groups and other sponsors, is offering free entertainment in southwest parks this month. In conjunction with National Night Out, the **Willamette Park** concert series will conclude August 5 at 6:30 with Hawaiian music by **Koral Jam**. The park is located at Southwest Macadam Avenue and Nebraska Street.

Outdoor Cinema opportunities are certainly abundant this summer. Shrek

III" will be shown August 1 at Gabriel Park. "The Princess Bridge" will be shown August 1 at the Multnomah Center. "Zathura." will be shown August 9 at Dickinson Park. "School of Rock" will be shown August 15 at the Multnomah Center (don't miss the Live Kids' Band at 7:00 p.m. before this show). "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" will be shown August 29 at Holly Farm Park: In all cases, the films will begin at dusk. Visit www.portlandparks.org for details.

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Multnomah Centennial Schedule of Events August 8-17, 2008

8 Multnomah: A Photographic History, an exhibit of photographs from the collection of the Multnomah Historical Association, will be on view at the Multnomah Arts Center Gallery (7688 SW Capitol Hwy) July 29 through August 16. This exhibit celebrates the centennial of Multnomah Village with a gallery reception on Friday, August 8, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Contact the gallery for more information, 503-823-2787.

9 Capitol Highway Bridge Marker Dedication, Saturday, August 9, 11:30 a.m. at Multnomah Village Park (Southwest Garden Home Road and Capitol Highway). Presented by Multnomah Historical Association.

Multnomah Village 100th Birthday Party, Saturday, August 9, 1:00 p.m. hosted by West Hills Christian Church, 3824 SW Troy St. All are invited, following the bridge marker dedication.

Bridge Lighting Ceremony, Saturday, August 9, 8:30 p.m. at the Capitol Highway Bridge (crossing Multnomah Boulevard).

11 Historic Walking Tour of Multnomah Village, Monday, August 11 and again Wednesday, August 13 at 6:30 p.m. at Key Bank (SW

35th Avenue at Troy Street). Hosted by Multnomah Historical Association.

14 Multnomah Village Farmers' Market, Thursday, August 14, from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Multnomah Center (outdoor basketball court), 7688 SW Capitol Hwy. Sponsored by Multnomah Village Business Association.

15 Multnomah School All Class Reunion, no-host gathering, Friday, August 15 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Lucky Labrador Pub, 7675 SW Capitol Hwy.

1978 Time Capsule Opening, Friday, August 15 at 5:00 p.m. at the Multnomah Center (7688 SW Capitol Hwy). Gather at back patio area near the Senior Center.

Multnomah School All Class Reunion, main event, Friday, August 15, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Multnomah Center (7688 SW Capitol Hwy). Hosted by Multnomah Historical Association.

Multnomah Outdoor Cinema, Friday, August 15 at 9:00 p.m. (or dusk) at the Multnomah Center (SW 34th and Capitol Highway) at the covered outdoor basketball court. Presented by the Multnomah Neighborhood Association and Portland Parks and Recreation.



The Multnomah Theater circa 1946. This is currently the site of Images By Floom, 7843 SW Capitol Hwy. (Original photo by projectionist J.L. "Bill" Cate. Used by permission.)

16 Royal Rosarian Rose Planting Ceremonies, Saturday, August 16 at 9:00 a.m. at Multnomah Village Park (SW Garden Home Road and Capitol Highway).

Grand Centennial Multnomah Days Parade, Saturday, August 16 at 10:00 a.m. Parade lines up at the Post Office (SW 40th and Multnomah Boulevard) and proceeds to SW 31st and Capitol Highway. Presented by Multnomah Village Business Association.

Multnomah Days Festival, Saturday, August 16. 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Annual street fair presented by Multnomah Village Business Association. Includes vendor and information booths, carnival games, sidewalk sale, live music, and more!

17 Centennial Closing Ceremonies, Sunday, August 17. Meet on the Capitol Highway Bridge at 8:30 p.m.

Multnomah Days Festival - Street Fair & Parade August 16



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EarthTalk™

From the Editors of E/The Environmental Magazine

Dear EarthTalk: What's going on in the music industry with all the CDs and plastic CD holders undoubtedly generating a lot of plastic waste?

-- John S., via email

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), CDs and DVDs are typically manufactured by combining various mined metals (aluminum, gold, silver and nickel) with petroleum-derived plastics, lacquers and dyes.

Given what complicated beasts CDs and DVDs are—products with thin layers of different materials mixed together are nearly impossible to recycle—most municipal recycling program won't accept them, leaving consumers to fend for themselves in figuring out how to dispose of them. As a result, most discarded discs end up in the trash.

These difficult-to-recycle materials can pollute groundwater and, in turn, contribute to a whole host of human health problems. But the low cost of producing such top-selling consumer items means that replacing them with something greener is not likely anytime soon.

Research has shown that polylactic acid (PLA), a biodegradable plastic-substitute derived from corn and other agricultural wastes, could replace plastic polycarbonate as a disc's main substrate, but the present high cost of using such a material makes it unlikely to catch on any time soon with those paying to produce mass volumes of CDs and DVDs.

As for jewel cases, most are made out of Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC), an inexpensive petrochemical-based plastic

that is notoriously difficult to recycle and has been linked to elevated cancer rates among workers and neighbors where it's manufactured.

Furthermore, when PVC is thrown in with regular recyclables it can contaminate entire batches, ruin equipment and cause human health problems. While cardboard and paper jewel cases may be all the rage among a few record labels—Warner Music Group's U.S. division, for example, has been using 30 percent post-recycled paper for the packaging in all of its CDs and DVDs since 2005—the high cost and low durability of such alternatives have kept them largely out of the mainstream.

So what's a conscientious consumer to do? Those willing to pay a small processing fee can send old CDs and DVDs to one of a handful of private companies (such as Washington-based GreenDisk) set up to recycle them into high-quality plastics used in auto parts, office equipment, alarm panels, street lights, electrical cable insulation, jewel cases and other specialized items.

A shift in consumer preferences already underway may be just the thing that will make everyone's personal collections of music and movies greener. Consumers are already able to download some six million individual digital songs via the 500 or so legal online music services now up and running on the Internet.

According to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, digital sales now account for some 30 percent of all U.S. music sales and 15 percent globally. And most consumer analysts expect these percentages to grow steadily in the coming years,

which is good news for the environment.

CONTACTS: EPA's "Lifecycle of a CD or DVD," www.epa.gov/osw/students/finalposter.pdf; GreenDisk, www.greendisk.com; International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, www.ifpi.org.

(Continued on Page 9)



CDs and DVDs are made with a combination of various metals, petroleum-derived plastics, lacquers and dyes and as a result are almost impossible to recycle. When discarded, they can pollute groundwater and contribute to a whole host of human health problems. (Photo courtesy Getty Images)

Sellwood Bridge closed temporarily for crack repairs

Sellwood Bridge repairs scheduled for August are designed to extend the service life of the bridge by filling concrete cracks to prevent steel corrosion and further cracking. Field work is expected to begin on Monday, August 11, 2008 and last two weeks. The work will require the bridge to be closed to traffic (except for bikes and pedestrians) on six nights, August 15 and August 18 - 22, from 6:30 pm to 5:00 am.

The vehicle weight limit on the bridge was reduced to 10 tons in 2004 after cracks were found in concrete girders that support the bridge deck. This summer's repairs will not allow those weight limits to be increased. But the project should extend the life of the bridge at its current service level until a long-term solution is implemented.

The \$100,000 project involves cleaning 450 lineal feet of cracks and filling them with an epoxy. The process prevents water from corroding steel rebar in the concrete and slows the growth of cracks. The work was recommended by an independent engineering study in 2005.

The concrete cracks are on the land-based approaches to the bridge on both sides of the river. The cracks will be injected with epoxy on weeknights when the bridge is closed to traffic.

The bridge closures are needed in order for workers to access cracks from a vehicle mounted on the narrow bridge deck and to allow the epoxy to cure without vibrations from traffic.

On two nights the northbound lane of Highway 43 that passes under the bridge will also need to be closed due to work above the highway. The lane will be re-routed west of the bridge so that two-way traffic is maintained on Highway 43 at all times.

When the bridge is closed, the nearest alternate river crossing to the north is the Ross Island Bridge. Access to the Ross Island Bridge is available via Highway 43/ Southwest Macadam Avenue on the west side and via Southeast Milwaukie Avenue and Powell Boulevard on the east side. The nearest bridges to the south are the Abernethy Bridge (I-205) and the Oregon City Bridge.

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EarthTalk™

(Continued from Page 8)

Dear EarthTalk: What are the major environmental issues that our next president, be it Obama or McCain, will have to confront?

-- Melinda Barnes,
via e-mail

Global warming is unquestionably the most pressing environmental issue facing whoever ends up in the White House in January 2009.

Not only does climate change impact—and in most cases exacerbate—other environmental problems, it has even wider implications for the economy and society at large.

Luckily for all of us, both Barack Obama and John McCain are committed to tackling climate change, although their proposed approaches differ in significant ways.

The non-profit League of Conservation Voters (LCV), America's leading voice for environmental advocacy within electoral politics, would prefer to see Obama elected president given his environmental track record and plans for the future.

While both candidates favor instituting a mandatory "cap-and-trade" program (whereby the federal government allows polluters to trade for the right to emit a reduced overall amount of greenhouse gases), Obama is for more strident cuts.

He would like to see the U.S. reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by some 80 percent by 2050, while McCain supports only cutting back by 65 percent. Both candidates have authored legislation in the Senate designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, although no such bills have come close to passing.

Even though McCain is by far the most forward-thinking of the original

Republican presidential contenders on global warming and the need to take action, LCV still gives him poor marks, only a 24 rating (out of 100) lifetime and zero for 2007.

LCV says that McCain missed all 15 critical environmental votes last year and that he "repeatedly clings to outdated policies and flip-flops on core environmental issues." By comparison, Obama earned a score of 100 in 2007 and has a lifetime LCV rating of 87.

One area where environmentalists take issue with McCain is his support for expanding the role of nuclear power in cutting fossil fuel use. Obama would rather bolster alternative energy sources like wind and solar power that do not have the nasty side effect of radioactive waste in need of storage and disposal. (McCain also supports the development of new renewables, but not to the extent that Obama is willing to commit).

Some of the other hot button environmental issues sure to occupy the next president's time include: how to best protect the nation's water resources and wetlands; whether to allow more drilling for oil and natural gas both offshore and within Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Also, whether to reinstate the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, a Clinton-era law (subsequently overturned by the Bush administration) calling for protection of some 58 million acres of public land from logging; how to meet U.S. commitments on existing environmental laws in international trade agreements; and whether to bring back the so-called "polluter pays" part of the government's "Superfund" toxic waste clean-up program.

While Obama is clearly the greener candidate on most of these issues, the fact that McCain even takes them seriously—and is committed to any greenhouse gas reductions whatsoever—is a



Global warming is the biggest issue facing our next president. Both Barack Obama and John McCain are committed to tackling climate change, although their proposed approaches differ in significant ways. (Photo courtesy Getty Images)

plus for environmental advocates exasperated by eight years of green naysaying by the Bush administration.

CONTACTS: Obama '08, www.barackobama.com; McCain for President, www.johnmccain.com; League of Conservation Voters, www.lcv.org.

GOT AN ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTION? Send it to: *EarthTalk*, c/o *The Environmental Magazine*, P.O. Box 5098, Westport, CT 06881; submit it at: www.emagazine.com/earthtalk/thisweek/, or e-mail: earthtalk@emagazine.com. Read past columns at: www.emagazine.com/earthtalk/archives.php.

Gabriel Skatepark

(Continued from page 2)

ing of the new skatepark at Gabriel Park. Actually it was a rather low-key event.

July 11 was one of those hot summer days that we dream about in the middle of January. About 50 people attended the opening ceremony, huddling around Mayor Tom Potter, Parks Commissioner Dan Saltzman, and Stephanie Mohler from Airspeed Skateparks that designed and built the 10,000 square foot concrete modified snake-run.

There is no doubt in my mind that skateboarding in general is becoming a more accepted form of recreation.

This is the second fastest growing sport in the United States behind snowboarding. And local skaters have waited a long time for this one.

So it was sort of surprising that the turnout was so low. The young and old skaters that showed up were quickly rewarded, skating almost as soon as Commissioner Saltzman cut the ribbon.

The new skatepark is located near the tennis courts along Southwest 45th Avenue. Gabriel Park is the fourth of 19 planned skateparks in Portland, following respectively Pier Park, Glenhaven and Holly Farm. Now, about those BMX bikes...OK, that's another story.

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North/South light rail project planning moves forward without funding

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

Public bodies last month gave their approval to a revised Portland to Milwaukie light rail route, including a new transit bridge across the Willamette River.

As *The Post* went to press, the South Portland Neighborhood Association, the Portland Development Commission and the Portland Planning Commission had given their blessing to the \$1.3 billion project. The Portland City Council and Metro Council were scheduled to vote on it in late July.

The proposed line would extend from the Transit Mall to a station at Southwest Third Avenue and Lincoln Street. From there it would go to a station at Southwest Porter Street in the South Waterfront, near a proposed new Oregon Health and Sciences University campus and within five blocks of the school's aerial tram.

From there it would cross the river on a new bridge, available for rail transit, buses, bikes and pedestrians, to a station at Southeast Sherman Street, near the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry and land it intends to develop. From there it would proceed south through southeast Portland, with several stops along the way, to Milwaukie.

A major unknown is where the funding for the project will come from. Metro will apply for \$750 million from the Federal Transit Administration, but to receive it they must have specific commitments for the rest. Making the application "doesn't require the city to come up with the

money now, but we do need to start looking for it," TriMet's Dave Unsworth told the Portland Planning Commission.

Representatives of the urban renewal advisory committees for the North Macadam and Central East Side Urban Renewal districts gave their support in principal to the project, but made it clear they could

contribute little if anything to it.

Steve Gray of the North Macadam URAC told the PDC Commission, "We need rail transit; otherwise we'll have more cars than the district can support." However, he added, "All our urban renewal funds are committed through the year 2012. We also have fees and Local Improvement District assessments that are

excessive."

PDC chair Mark Rosenbaum noted, "Light rail has served this city in the past extraordinarily well. A key concern is that the two urban renewal areas this route will go through have no funds, and no expectations of having any in the future. We will need creative solutions."

South Waterfront Park to get new European-style public toilet

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

The South Waterfront's proposed new public park may become a guinea pig for a new public toilet. As City Commissioner Randy Leonard told the Portland Design Commission last month, he is working on a prototype public toilet that would provide necessary privacy, yet be open enough to preclude the types of crime and misuse public toilets traditionally are used for, and would cost a fraction as much.

Modeled on European models, the new facilities would have enough opaque material to cover the mid-section of a man standing up or a woman sitting down, but allow people to see in at the bottom and top.

The first prototype will be placed at Northwest Third Avenue and Couch Street, an area where public urination is a serious problem, he said. Among other locations identified is the South Waterfront Park, bounded by Southwest Moody and Bond avenues and Curry and Gaines streets.

"Americans are a very modest people," Leonard told the Commission. "Europeans have a very different attitude. They don't care if you can see the lower bodies of men and the upper bodies of women" while they are using a toilet."

They could be used downtown, in parks and other locations, in place of more conventional toilets that cost as much as \$350,000 apiece and often are kept locked for security reasons.

Leonard conceded that the new toilets aren't for everyone. "The original idea was to have a restroom your mother would be comfortable using," Leonard told the Commission. "My reaction is that your mother is not the problem." Tourists could use the facilities in their hotel rooms or restaurants, he said.

He conceded that the facilities could and probably would be used for "illicit activities" in some cases but added, "To use that as an excuse not to have public restrooms is not a sufficient argument. Balance that against the alternative."


Leonard's prototype called for plastic panels that could be easily

replaced if damaged. The commission was skeptical of this, and called for a more permanent and durable material such as stainless steel.


The idea is to put the first model in place as quickly as possible, Leonard said. "We want it to be used, abused, and adjusted," he said.

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Jim Thayer, of SWHRL, near a lot clear-cut for development at Southwest Cardinell and College drives. (Post photo by Lee Perlman)

Southwest Tour

(Continued from page 1)

and very prone to large-scale slides, Dave Johnston said.

At one location on Southwest Fourth Avenue a couple built their "dream house" by the side of the road, only to have it buried by a landslide, Johnston said. The land is now vacant and for sale.

The Johnstons also spoke of the dangers along streets such as Boones Ferry Road, where multiple streets carrying heavy, fast moving traffic come together at intersections that are poorly designed and have poor visibility. Similar problems exist in adjacent neighborhoods such as Arnold Creek, with its "punch and pray" intersection of Southwest Stephenson Street and Boones Ferry Road.

Anton Vetterlein of Homestead concentrated on Terwilliger Boulevard. It is separated from the downtown Park Blocks by a few blocks of pedestrian-unfriendly territory. The entrance to Oregon Health and Sciences University "looms" over Terwilliger in an unbecoming way.

A different issue is that the growth of vegetation has obscured what were once spectacular views; Vetterlein suggested cutting back brush and pruning and selective removal of trees. On the positive side, public and private agencies such as Metro have accumulated 200 acres of land adjacent to Terwilliger that will be kept in permanent open space, including the 38 acres of George Hyams Park.

As several speakers noted, much of southwest lacks anything resembling safe pedestrian walkways on streets. SWNI transportation chair Marianne Fitzgerald complained, "There's not a single arterial street in southwest Portland that has sidewalks along its whole length. There are a dozen plans approved by Council for installing them, and they're all sitting on shelves." A case in point is Capitol Highway, the main route from Multnomah Village to Hillsdale Town Center, where a 1996 master plan that includes sidewalks has yet to be completed. On the brighter side, on Southwest Texas Street, the Portland Office of Transportation agreed to relax its normal standards in the interests of getting the street improved.

There were complaints about the quality of new development. In the Crestwood and Ash Creek areas Southwest Neighborhoods Inc. land

use specialist Leonard Gard pointed out flag lots where additional houses have been squeezed in at the expense of yards, and "skinny houses" installed at double the zoned density and placed very close together.

In the Bridlemile neighborhood, some heavily-wooded terrain has been replaced with subdivisions containing virtually no trees. "These are nice homes, but I have a real issue with the lot coverage," Gibbon said.

On Southwest Upper Road, SWHRL activist Simone Goldfeder feared that a two-acre parcel will become a miniature version of the development Thayer complained of.

A developer proposes to build seven units there, and Goldfeder feared that he will simply clear-cut the property and sell the lots. "We're not opposed to development or infill here," Goldfeder said. "We're concerned about how it's done."

Gibbon and others said they felt new development should be concentrated on arterials such as Barbur Boulevard.

SWNI Trails Committee chair Don Baack spoke at length about the 40 miles of trails he has helped create and his frequent battles with public agencies over their regulations. In one case, he said, he accomplished with \$10,000 a trail improvement that public agencies estimated would cost \$900,000.

"We don't need gold-plated trails," he told the commission. "There are low-cost alternatives. Don't believe what you're told if it doesn't make sense." At Hyams Park he noted that neighbors have been given prizes for keeping invasive species at bay in their own yards.

The tour did not include the South Portland neighborhood. Gibbon said that neighborhood chair Ken Love, who did not accompany the tour, agreed that this area had so many complex issues that it needed a tour of its own.

Gibbon and others pointed out the positive aspects of the Southwest community. They proudly showed off the Southwest Community Center at Gabriel Park, Multnomah Village, Hillsdale Town Center, the Headwaters and Watershed housing projects, and Alpenrose Dairy.

Asked later if the tour was of value to the commission, chair Don Hanson told *The Post*, "Oh, yes. We got to hear about some important issues, from a different perspective."

McMansions

(Continued from page 1)

"That's one of the reasons I'm running for City Council."

Fritz said she believes that compromise is possible. "You can have homes that are big enough for families, and they don't need to cover the entire lot."

Williamson and Carrier stressed they are not anti-development and want to work with developers, although efforts along that line can be discouraging: "A number of builders spoke to the neighborhood association," Williamson said.

He was particularly impressed when one developer's blueprints showed him building around a tree. "Well, that's not what happened, and when we talked to the developer afterwards, he said - 'oh that was just a possibility. I didn't say that was what we were going to build.'"

On the plus side Peter Kusyk of Mariner Development saved trees by moving a garage per the neighborhood's suggestion. "It's always been my policy to work with the neighbors and make whatever neighborhood I go into a better place," Kusyk told *The Post*. "However, everything has a cost."

In this case, the time to redesign and then re-negotiate city approval meant the project scheduled to complete a year ago remains a work in progress.

Building smaller, greener homes also has a cost as proponents readily attest. Still, many hope demand

will increase as a byproduct of high-energy costs. "People are looking for single-story houses to retire into," Williamson said.

"They don't want stairs or to have to manage too much space. In the past, banks were reluctant to finance something green with low square footage but I think that's going to change." Williamson hopes the city will provide tax incentives for green developers.

While Kusyk sympathizes, he finds a dichotomy between buyers' genuine desire for green and value for their money. "There's definitely a market for smaller homes; it's just a limited market," he said. "Most buyers shop for square footage."

According to Kusyk, builders figure the lot will cost 1/3 of the total sales price. If the house's square footage is smaller than comparable new homes, many buyers consider it a poor value. Kusyk believes tax incentives for green buyers rather than builders are key.

Carrier and Williamson remain cautiously optimistic despite Maplewood's rapid change. They see today's building practices as unsustainable. Like Fritz, Carrier foresees a compromise between smaller existing homes and what some call McMansions or Starter Castles.

"This is like rolling more SUVs off the assembly line," she said. "Maybe there's something in the middle where we can spare at least half these trees."

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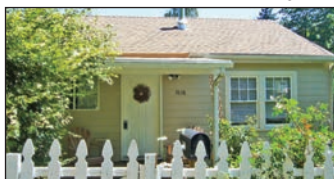
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