



Making Connections from the Global to the Local



“Think globally, act locally”

is a saying that most of us are familiar with. It directs us to recognize the bigger context in which the actions we take and choices we make day to day are placed. It reminds us to live our lives in ways that increase cultural awareness and emphasize the similarities we have with other cultures worldwide. It challenges us to consider the long-term environmental impacts of our actions and act in ways that minimize these impacts.

The mantra “think globally, act locally” underlies everything the Coalition for a Livable Future does. It would be impossible to pursue our mission of creating a sustainable and equitable region without considering the global nature of the economy, social conditions, cultural issues and environmental concerns that affect every aspect of our work.

Contributors to this issue of *Connections* tackle a range of hot regional issues—focusing on how they fit into the big picture. An underlying theme you’ll find in each article is that in order to make positive change in our region, we must ask big questions and understand the macro-level forces shaping the issues we are confronted with locally. By doing this, we are not only better

positioned to understand the problem, but also the potential solutions.

The authors compel us to act now. As the global becomes more local, change is happening faster than ever before. For us, like all other metropolitan regions, this means that thinking globally and acting locally requires flexibility and the ability to respond quickly in order to keep up with the pace of change happening around us. This also means that we’ve got to get creative and be open to thinking in new ways. Additionally, we may need to revamp established practices and institutions, or discard some altogether. We hope this issue of *Connections* provides a bit of inspiration about some of these new ways of thinking, and how by acting locally, we can make a global difference.

By Jill Fuglister, Coalition for a Livable Future Co-Director

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Get Connected NOW!

...and help us meet the Bullitt Foundation Challenge!
See back cover for details.



Connections is the journal of the Coalition for a Livable Future. CLF unites over 80 diverse non-profits and businesses and hundreds of individuals to promote healthy and sustainable communities. By connecting issues, people and organizations, CLF empowers communities to take action together and shape the big decisions affecting the Portland region's future.

In 1994, the Coalition was created by a diverse group of Portland area non-profit leaders who recognized that the challenges they were working on individually in different communities across the metropolitan area were connected. Realizing this interdependence, they came together to educate each other and work cooperatively to create a more sustainable future for the region.

WHAT WE DO:

COORDINATE *Coordinate the work of our member organizations across disciplines to be more effective and to avoid working at cross-purposes*

RESEARCH *Develop cutting-edge research to empower our partners with the information they need to act*

EDUCATE *Educate the public about current issues and solutions to community challenges; engage residents in shaping decisions about our region's future*

ADVOCATE *Provide leadership and informed recommendations that recognizes the big picture to impact public policy decisions*

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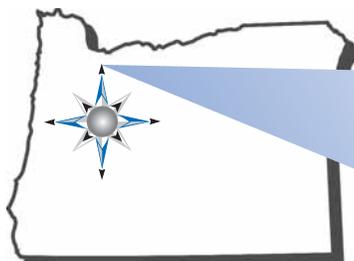
Join Us!

The Benefits of Joining a Coalition — By joining the Coalition, you help create a stronger, collective voice for a just, sustainable region. A diverse membership allows us to understand each other's issues and concerns, to find common ground and to share resources and information.

Individual Membership — While only organizations, businesses and government agencies can be voting members, individual members play a very important role as our advisors and supporters. You can participate in any of our task forces, committees, and working groups. A donation of \$40 or more will open the door for a just and sustainable society and you will receive a subscription to the *Connections* Journal, discounts on our special events, and invitations to participate in our work.

Business, Government and Organizational Membership — Increasing our impact means increasing our intelligence. Community organizations, businesses and government agencies are invited to join the Coalition. We offer a variety of membership levels to suit the needs of your organization. Our voting members are the core of the Coalition, carrying out our policy work and participating most actively. Members at all levels are invited to participate in task forces, working groups, member meetings and CLF events such as the Regional Livability Summit.

How to Join — Use the enclosed envelope to join CLF by making a tax-deductible contribution. If your organization or business is interested in joining the Coalition, please call 503-294-2889 or email us at info@clfuture.org to request an informational packet for prospective members.



Joining CLF can ultimately affect change that reaches far beyond our own community!



Meet Felisa Hagins, CLF Board Member

Felisa Hagins is the Political Director for Service Employees International Union Local 49, a 6,500 member union with health care and property service workers. She has been working in the labor movement for the last four years and believes that as the gap between the rich and poor continues to widen, organized labor must lead the way to the American Dream for working families.

"The Coalition has given SEIU Local 49 a unique opportunity to engage in a variety of important issues such as affordable housing, quality affordable transportation, and regional livability that SEIU Local 49 doesn't have the capacity to do alone, but united with CLF we lend our voices to issues that our members face everyday," said Felisa Hagins.

Felisa is very passionate about the work that CLF does and knows that each issue is important, not only to SEIU Local 49, but to working families across the region.

Moving Sustainability to the Next Level

By Denis Hayes, Bullitt Foundation President and national coordinator of the first Earth Day. Keynote address for the Coalition for a Livable Future's annual conference, April 19, 2007. Edited by Donna Matrazzo.

The 21st century is a time when human beings really began to affect the environment. We humans now have the power to permanently change the climate of the whole planet. We have nuclear and biological weapons sufficient to decimate humanity. We've already dammed most of the mightiest rivers on the planet. We are beginning to engineer entirely new forms of life.

These huge planetary issues address the ultimate threats and the biggest opportunities that are facing the planet.

Environmentalism is a value-based philosophy that promotes a diverse, resilient, just, sustainable world. Yet environmentalists are consistently portrayed as just one more special interest. When we address issues like clean air and clean water, renewable energy, safe food and toxic waste, they are issues of public interest, not special interest. We're not trying to get our own air cleaner than our neighbors' air; we're trying to get clean air for everyone.

Environmentalists had an early genius for communication. I will immodestly contend that Earth Day was one of the half-dozen best brands in the nation's history. It's immediately understandable and it translates into every language in the world in a way that is completely transparent.

But that communication skill atrophied and we grew enamored of complex scientific and economic jargon. We talk about polycyclic-aromatic hydrocarbons. George Bush talks about Clear Skies.

Words really matter.

We're constantly urged by intelligent strategists to pay much more attention to issues that are closely tied to the interest of people. And that is very good advice.

We environmentalists have not made it clear to people that we care about them, care about their problems. We've been too fixated on good science and sound policy, and candidly, on showing how smart we are. We've ignored the solid truth in that old bromide that "people don't care how much you know until they know that you care."

It wasn't always this way. The five year environmental golden age from 1969 through 1974 saw a wide array of far-reaching legislation adopted with strong bipartisan support — and the President was Richard Nixon.

Profoundly, out of that came the right to a safe, healthy environment. That right was a concept that essentially did not exist when I was growing up in Camas, Washington, where every single morning I woke up with a sore throat from uncontrolled sulfur dioxide

➤ Next Level, continued on page 10.



Deb Lippoldt (center) with CLF's Jill Fuglister and Ron Carley receiving her award.

Dear Friends,

I am pleased and humbled to receive the 2007 Robert L. Liberty Regional Leadership Award. I am honored to be among such an esteemed group of previous awardees and hope to live up to that recognition.

I am proud to receive this award for many reasons. It is clear that every nominee for this year's award deserves this designation. Individually and collectively, these leaders work incredibly hard and productively to promote the livability of our wonderful region.

I am proud to receive this award on behalf of my colleagues who have been diligently working to build momentum and success in regionalizing and sustaining a strong local food system. Over the 15 years that I have called Portland home, I have been appreciative of the incredible work in our area to raise awareness about the importance of food and food access as a primary thread in the fabric of this region's planning, land preservation, and social justice imperatives.

The success of this work is marked by many milestones from the seminal report published in 1980 outlining food policy goals for the state of Oregon to the recent establishment of the Portland/Multnomah County Food Policy Council. And along the way, many partners including Community Food Matters, Ecotrust, Growing Gardens, Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns, Oregon Food Bank, Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Land Trust, Portland Community Gardens, Sisters of the Road, Zenger Farm and **so many more** continue to keep our food system firmly seated at the sustainability table.

On behalf of all these partners, I am pleased to accept this award. It is an accomplishment we all share and represents just the beginning of even greater strides to come in securing food and farmland for the regional food system we all deserve.

Deb Lippoldt

Executive Director, Growing Gardens

The Robert L. Liberty Regional Leadership Award is named after the co-founder of the Coalition for a Livable Future. Past award recipients include: Congressman Earl Blumenauer; Wilsonville Mayor Charlotte Lehan; Jeri Sundvall, Executive Director of the Environmental Justice Action Group; Jim Labbe, Urban Conservationist at the Audubon Society of Portland; and Diana Lobo, citizen activist involved in the planning of the Damascus-Boring area. Nominations for the award were solicited from throughout the community, and the winner was chosen by our award committee, which included Sue Marshall, John Mullin and Jeri Williams.

Health Care: Access and Planning Increasingly a Local and Regional Concern

By Felisa Hagins

The cost of health care is directly linked to our economic health and our place in a global economy. The rising cost of care is impacting all levels of our society—from families struggling to afford health care, to businesses finding themselves unable to maintain employee benefits while staying competitive, to state and local governments facing the realities of the growing number of uninsured citizens.

According to Health Affairs, the United States spent \$2 trillion—16 percent of our gross domestic product (GDP)—on health care in 2005, and it is projected that the percentage will reach 20 percent in the next decade. Although nearly 47 million Americans are uninsured, the United States spends more on health care than other industrialized nations, and those countries provide health insurance to all their citizens. By comparison, health care spending accounted for 10.9 percent of the GDP in Switzerland, 10.7 percent in Germany, 9.7 percent in Canada and 9.5 percent in France, all countries with universal health coverage.

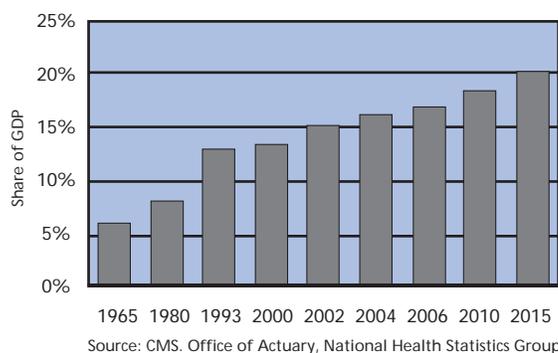
Costs are rising for both employers and employees, making it harder for employers to stay competitive, and harder for families to make ends meet. Since 2000, employment-based health insurance premiums have increased 87 percent, compared to cumulative inflation of 18 percent and cumulative wage growth of 20 percent during the same period, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. The average employee contribution to company-provided health insurance has increased more than 143 percent.

Businesses are finding themselves unable to absorb these rising costs. General Motors is moving plants to Canada, claiming that the cost of employee health care in the U.S. put them at a competitive disadvantage in the global market. In 2005, GM estimated that employee health care added between \$1400 and \$1500 to the cost of the average American-made car. Companies in Oregon such as Intel and Freightliner have also raised concerns about the ever-increasing cost of health care.

In order to compete in the global economy, companies are shifting the burden to the individual. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, employer-based health care coverage is

down from 69% to 60%. The impact on families here in Oregon is clear. According to the 2006 Oregon Population Survey, one in six Oregonians is without health insurance, including nearly 120,000 children. Over 80 percent of uninsured families were working or looking for work, and 69.4% of uninsured Oregonians had incomes above the federal poverty level.

National Health Expenditures (NHE)
as Share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)



Health care is no longer just a national concern, but a pressing issue for state and county and local governments. Debates on potential solutions to the health care crisis are currently raging in statehouses from Vermont to California. Cities like San Francisco are passing local health care initiatives. The Oregon legislature spent much time this legislative session debating an increase of tobacco taxes to cover uninsured children. In the end, lawmakers referred the bill—the

Healthy Kids Plan—to the people. It will appear as a constitutional amendment on the ballot in November of 2007.

Once considered an issue strictly for federal and state budget writers, local governments are increasingly involved with health care policy. County governments are squeezed by increasing social services costs as they see Medicaid funding cut while the number of uninsured rises. Local governments rely on the revenue created by local businesses, many of whom are relocating due to increased labor costs. They react by offering incentives to stay, which in turns puts an even greater strain on school and public safety funding.

A less obvious impact on regional and local government comes from a lack of health care facility planning. It's not common for cities and local governments to consider the location of health care facilities in their larger planning, because access to health care traditionally has been a national problem, but how health care facilities are located has a huge impact on the cost of care and the overall health of our communities. Many consider Oregon on the cutting edge of community planning, and locally we have a unique opportunity with a regional government like Metro.

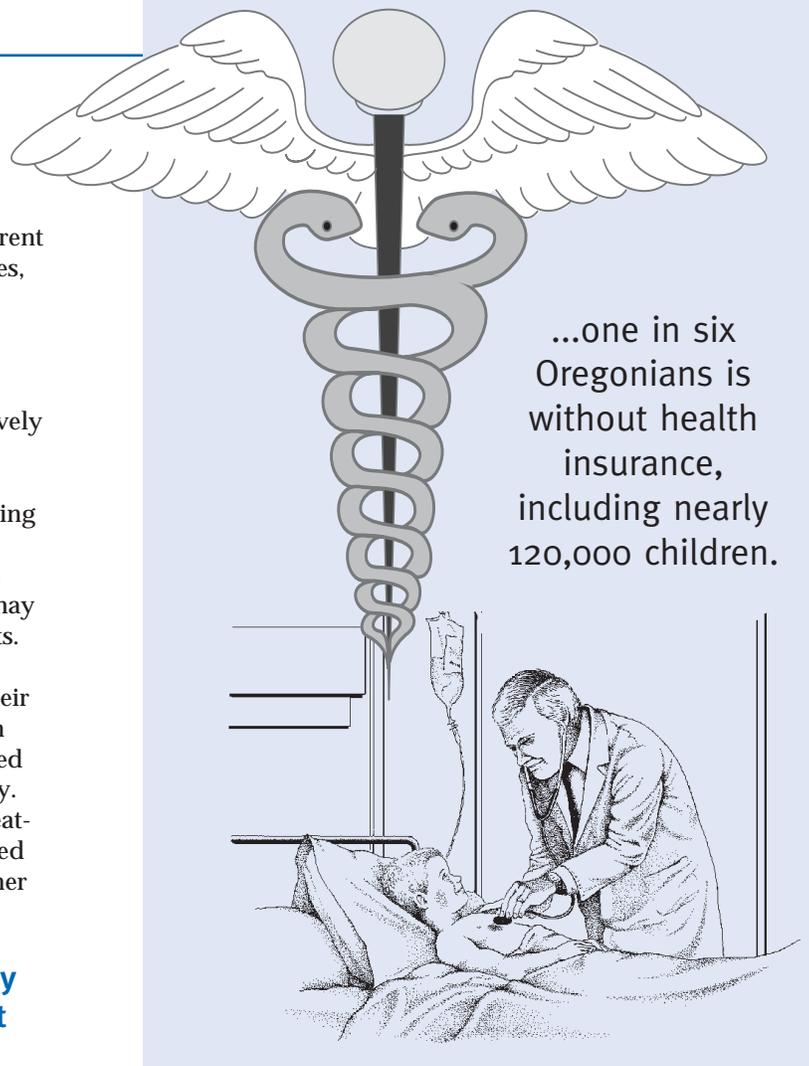
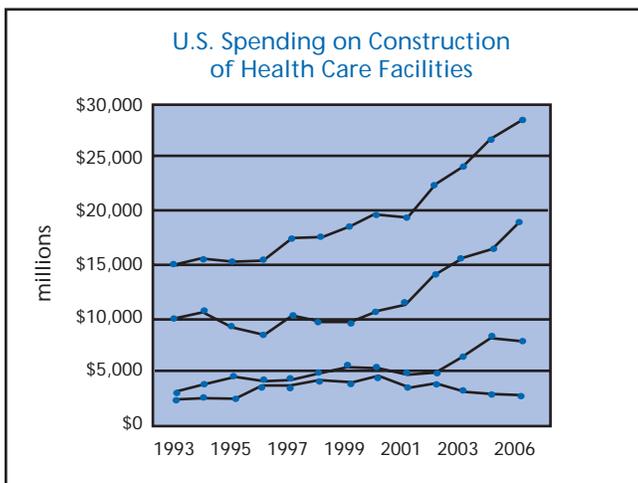
We are experiencing an unprecedented construction boom in health facilities. Total public and private construction spending on health care facilities in 2005 was predicted to reach \$36.7 billion according to the U. S. Census Bureau.

Annual hospital construction spending in Oregon has quadrupled in the last few years, averaging almost \$400 million per year in 2003 and 2004. While record sums are spent to build new acute care hospitals, surgicenters and imaging facilities, critical shortages are increasingly apparent in services such as primary care and mental health services, especially for the uninsured or underinsured.

Hospitals compete by attracting insured patients while avoiding uninsured patients and patients covered by Medicaid. They further this objective by locating in relatively affluent communities and delivering services provided primarily to patients who are more likely to have private insurance or Medicare coverage. Hospital beds are declining in the city of Portland while growth is taking place in the suburbs. The trend to build in suburbs, even as the urban core maintains a high population and need for services, may foreshadow an increased lack of access for urban residents.

Oregon hospitals, on average, are more profitable than their national counterparts. The expansion projects undertaken by health systems in the metropolitan region have reflected hospital systems' pursuit of market share and profitability. Because treating some patients is more profitable than treating others, hospital systems often expand in ways designed to take existing profitable business from competitors, rather than expand to fill gaps in access to health care.

In order to take hold of the health care delivery system in our own communities and to make it work for us, we must come together to decide what health care facilities and services we need and where we need them. Only when we have built that vision, can we take action to hold the health care industry accountable to it. Oregon developed a land use planning culture that puts a premium on bringing people together at a local and regional level to decide what kind of community they want and to plan accordingly. That citizen-driven planning can provide the framework for a much-needed health care planning process. As Oregonians, we have a history of coming together as a community to find creative solutions.



...one in six Oregonians is without health insurance, including nearly 120,000 children.

In the metro area we have a unique opportunity with Metro regional government to incorporate planning for major health care facilities into regional and local planning. Just as the borders of our region continue to blur when it comes to traffic and environmental issues, the service areas for hospital facilities and access to health care are not a direct issue of cities and counties but an issue of our region. As we reach the breach of crisis, our regional government can and should play a role in planning for health care facilities.

It's up to regional governments to keep communities healthy—economically and physically.

As we look to the future of our region and begin to address the issues of economic development, regional planning, emergency preparedness and great communities, health should be part of the discussion. The economic and social costs of not having access to affordable health care are too high for this issue not be a local and regional issue. Every part of government is going to have to work in harmony to solve the growing health care crisis. ✨

Felisa Hagins is the Political Director for Service Employees International Union Local 49. SEIU is the largest health care union in North America, and Local 49 represents more than 6,500 health care and property service workers in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

What has your infrastructure system done for you lately? A Rediscovered Public Utility: Green Infrastructure

By Kelly Rodgers, City Planner/Landscape Designer, David Evans Associates and CLF Board Member

Last year, Mayor Richard Daley announced his intention to make Chicago the “Greenest City in America.” New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg has pledged to create or revitalize a park for every neighborhood and plant nearly a quarter million street trees. In Denver, Mayor John Hickenlooper launched Greenprint Denver, which calls for the planting of a million trees over the next 20 years.

These green initiatives are more than city beautification efforts, although the restful and aesthetic value of greenspaces shouldn't be underestimated. Rather, these plans are a reflection of the renewed understanding of the multi-dimensional value of urban greenspace. Cities are asking their greenspaces to do more. Not only are greenspaces aesthetic and recreational resources for communities, but they also improve urban environmental quality and provide key ecological functions. These functions—often called ecosystem services—include stormwater management, air purification, and reduced heating and cooling costs while sustaining regional populations of fish and wildlife and associated biodiversity. These green resources are the city's unrecognized public utility and natural capital—green infrastructure.

As a system, green infrastructure is an integrated network of streets, forests, natural areas, greenways, and bikeways



Oleson Woods combines affordable housing with access to a protected natural area. Photo © Brian Wegener.

that are redesigned and improved to enhance their ecological function. An example of green infrastructure would be street trees which evapotranspire¹ stormwater, absorb pollutants, and provide cover for pedestrians. Another site strategy for high-density development is combining open space or landscaped areas with an attractive vegetated infiltration basin for stormwater flow control and volume reduction. If planned properly, stream or riparian corridors not only protect stream health by providing shade and habitat, but can also provide migratory bird habitat and recreational services, as well.

An intriguing notion behind green infrastructure is that it makes our infrastructure system—the structural system that supports a community—visible. Cities benefit from the visibility of this infrastructure in two ways. First, is that a visible infrastructure system provides greater opportunity for people to understand how they function and their impact on the environment. For example, if our stormwater management system is made visible, people are better able to understand the hydrological cycle and make the connection to the watershed they live in. Secondly, the increased visibility of green infrastructure in cities simply means more greenspace! In any urban area, and especially heavily urbanized ones, the increase presence of street trees, rain gardens and pocket parks greatly enhances neighborhood character and livability. In fact, studies out of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, suggest that increased vegetation in inner-city neighborhoods is correlated with lower crime rates.

Changing the landscape

On April 18, the Portland City Council unanimously adopted the city's first Green Streets Policy—one of the first of its kind in the nation. With ten years of research and development behind it, the City is ready to launch into Green Street

implementation. The City's decision to forge ahead with green streets is a strategic one; streets are a significant contributor to urban stormwater runoff (and the associated pollution). In a sense, streets are urban tributaries, collecting rainwater and delivering it to the river. However, if we want healthy rivers, we need to think upstream and design streets to better meet the needs of the watershed. Green streets are an excellent example of how to redesign gray infrastructure to green infrastructure to accomplish this task.

The problems associated with conventional stormwater management have provided some impetus to green the system. Typically, stormwater infrastructure is a hidden part of the city, collecting the rainwater shed from impervious surfaces and conveying it through a system of underground pipes before it discharges to a body of water. As a system designed only to protect private property from the danger of flooding or other water damage, it necessarily overlooks other roles of water in the urban landscape. The unintended consequences of this singularity of purpose include the disruption of the hydrological cycle and also the separation of urban residents from the opportunity to learn about and enjoy water in their everyday landscape. Furthermore, this invisible and centralized system of stormwater management has proven to be an expensive budget item for governmental jurisdictions.

The environmental impacts of imperviousness extend beyond watershed health. The increased amount of impervious surfaces alters the local climate through the Urban Heat Island Effect. Ambient city temperatures rise as a result of the reflective heat from impervious surfaces and the lack of vegetation limits the cooling effect of evapotranspiration. The cooling effect of trees is not limited to evapotranspiration; any pedestrian recognizes the shady relief of street trees on a hot summer day.

¹ Evapotranspiration is the sum of water evaporation (the movement of water to the air) and transpiration (the movement of water within a plant and the subsequent loss of water as vapor through leaves).

The reliability and quality of environmental resources is also threatened by global warming. For example, changes in location, time of year, and the form of precipitation are some of the consequences of increased greenhouse gas production. A green infrastructure system that attempts to restore the hydrological cycle and increase vegetation will help offset some of the impacts of global warming. Increased infiltration not only relieves the capacity of the pipe system in the case of stronger rain events but also provides higher levels of groundwater recharge and water availability for potential increases in length or severity of summer droughts. Improving urban forestry captures carbon dioxide and is another strategy in combating global warming, listed in the City of Portland and Multnomah County's Local Action Plan on Global Warming.

What has your infrastructure system done for you lately?

Alternative stormwater management systems are at the leading edge of this change. Recognizing the limitations and problems associated with conventional stormwater management systems, new approaches are emerging to manage stormwater more holistically. In general, these approaches aim to restore watershed health by addressing the root causes of watershed problems, rather than seek solutions for the symptoms. Additionally, these approaches tend to solve for multiple objectives, layering infrastructure, watershed and livability concerns through integrated solutions.

Advantages of these approaches include potential cost savings from reduced infrastructure, an ability to adapt to specific site conditions, and an ability to mimic pre-development groundwater recharge. Green infrastructure systems have the potential to not only resolve these concerns, but provide additional benefits such as an improved pedestrian environment, reduced ambient air temperature, or increased habitat value. Incorporating green infrastructure strategies with smart growth practices provide a way to achieve desired densities (i.e., those that are transit-supportive and promote walkability) while maintaining critical ecosystem services.

Breathing easier

Thanks to early adopters of the green infrastructure concept, the Portland metro area can boast of its successes in open space planning, integrated stormwater management, and access to greenspace. This latter fact has catapulted Portland to number three on the *New York Times*' real estate section (May 7, 2007) Best Places to Live. However, the Portland area is not without its challenges. Access to greenspace is not equally distributed to all of the region's residents as documented by the Coalition for a Livable Future's *Regional Equity Atlas* research. Furthermore, increased urbanization pressure mean that the Portland area must continue to advocate and plan for a plentiful and equitable distribution of greenspace. Also, if we want to offer a friendly challenge to Chicago's claim to be the "greenest city" in America, we need to roll up our sleeves and start planting some green infrastructure seeds.

Getting involved in green infrastructure policy and practices can happen on many levels. Initiatives for community education, policy change and research are needed to move the agenda forward, creating roles for educators, activists and academics in the green infrastructure movement. Communities also need to engage at different scales, from the region, to the neighborhood, to the site. None of these actions operate in isolation, so it is imperative to work upstream and downstream of your work.

Several initiatives and plans are afoot. The City of Portland recently approved \$260,000 for developing a Comprehensive Citywide Tree Policy, which will clarify the City's policy and regulatory framework for trees. In November, over 59% of Portland metro area voters passed Measure 26-80, the largest successful municipal greenspaces bond in U.S. history! CLF is actively working to ensure the equity and renaturing goals incorporated into the Bond Measure are realized through implementation. In late June, Metro convened Connecting Green, an



event that brought together leaders from across the metro area to envision a regionwide system of world class parks.

In addition to these examples, there are hundreds of local projects to highlight. Among them are things like the Wetland Conservancy's Hearthwood Wetland Preserve in Johnson City. This wetland forms the headwaters to Kellogg Creek and is one of the few protected natural areas in this part of Northern Clackamas County. Another is Oleson Woods (page 6) in the Metzger neighborhood of Washington County. Developed and owned by Community Partners for Affordable Housing, it is an excellent example of low-impact development that preserved trees and wetlands, and restored native plant communities. Ecoroofs are popping up everywhere, including on government buildings across the region, downtown condo high rises, neighborhood affordable housing developments, and health clubs in the suburbs..

Our local initiatives are picking up national attention, too. U.S. Representative David Wu, D-Ore., chairman of the House subcommittee on technology and innovation, called city Commissioner Sam Adams and representatives from the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency to testify this spring at a hearing as the first step toward a national policy and federal funding base of support for innovative technologies such as green streets.

Chicago's Mayor Daley summed it all up nicely in a recent speech: "There really is no downside when it comes to protecting the environment. It improves public health; it beautifies the city; it saves money; it creates jobs; and it enhances the quality of life. I truly believe that the cities that thrive in the 21st century will be the ones that embrace environmentalism as a way of life." ✨

6 Six Questions to Ask About the Columbia River Crossing

By Joe Cortright, Economist, Impresa Consulting

As an economist, I'm often asked to evaluate the feasibility and desirability of major public investments. In general, there are two key economic criteria for assessing projects like the Columbia River Crossing: efficiency and equity. Efficiency means that a project's benefits exceed its costs. Equity examines who gets the benefits and who bears the costs, and asks whether this is fair. Understanding the economics of the Columbia River Crossing requires us to ask (and answer) six key questions.

1. What are the Benefits?

In theory, enlarging a bridge (and attendant re-working of its interchanges) will lessen congestion on the bridge and produce shorter travel times. The value of time saved is the principal benefit of the project.

Proponents of the CRC argue that without additional capacity, increased travel between Vancouver and Portland will cause I-5 traffic to slow to a crawl. The Columbia River Crossing Project is aimed at accommodating an additional 55,000 vehicles per day over the next 20 years. Current volume is approximately 125,000 vehicles per day; projected to be 180,000 in 2020. The key concern is weekday afternoons; the project accommodates an additional 14,000 trips across the I-5 crossing in the four-hour pm peak, northbound (46,000 vs. 32,000).

There are several problems with these projections. First, if there is not adequate capacity, and if commute times lengthen, fewer people will choose to commute between Vancouver and Portland. Second, the projections assume—at least implicitly—a zero cost to crossing the bridge. If a toll is in place—as is almost a certainty, given the lack of funds for this project—then future demand will be much less. Third, and more generally, we have a highway lane shortage on I-5 for exactly the same reason the old Soviet Union had perpetual bread shortages: the price of the product was far below its cost of production, leading people to over-consume it. If the projections are wrong, or are predicated on faulty assumptions, the benefits may be illusory.

2. What are the Costs?

The benefits of a project have to be balanced against its cost. Exact figures haven't been provided yet, but the upper end estimate now bandied about for the cost of a new bridge and related interchange modifications is now a whopping \$6 billion, according to press reports. This works out to \$3,000 per person for every person currently living in the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area; \$12,000 for every household of four. For comparison, the estimated total value of streets in Portland is approximately \$3 billion. A replacement bridge over the Columbia could turn out to be the most expensive public works project in Portland's history, the equivalent of 120 OHSU trams.

3. What are the Prices?

The simple calculus of efficiency is that the benefits of the bridge have to exceed the costs. On a per person, or per vehicle basis, the travel time saved has to be worth more than the cost of saving that time. The simplest way to think about this is to figure the per vehicle cost of building this project. If the bridge were being built and operated as a private business, how much would the bridge owner have to charge each user, on average, to recoup the costs of the bridge? For simplicity, assume that you could build the bridge for \$6 billion. Financed over 30 years at 6 percent, you would need to make annual debt service payments of \$436 million, or about \$1.2 million per day. If 180,000 vehicles crossed the bridge, daily, you'd have to charge each vehicle \$6.70 to match the cost of the bridge.

It's worth asking how many daily users of the I-5 bridge would pay \$13 a day (two crossings per day)? It's hard to imagine that many people will want to pay that much. It's also clear that if that kind of toll were in place, traffic would be unlikely to grow as much as projected.

The unwillingness of drivers to pay the full cost of the project is the most compelling evidence imaginable that this project fails to meet the test of efficiency. Remember that efficiency means that the benefits exceed the costs. If the people using the project are unwilling to pay the cost of building it, it means simply that to them, the benefits of the project are not as great as the costs.



The Columbia River Crossing Project should aspire to create premier bike and pedestrian facilities like this world-class bridge in Paris, France. Photos by Guy de Lijster of OTAK.



Some will argue that federal funds will pay a portion of the cost of the bridge. But regardless of where the money comes from, the price of each trip on a \$6 billion replacement bridge is \$6.70. The need to pay a big part of this project from something other than tolls means that the people who use this project—the people who will benefit from it—want it only if somebody else pays for it.

4. Another Kind of Costs: Opportunity Costs

The possibility that we will finance this project from sources other than tolls raises another concern, something economists call “opportunity costs.” Opportunity costs recognize that real resources (political or financial) used for one purpose can’t be used for some other purpose. Every dime we spend on the Columbia River Crossing is a dime we can’t spend elsewhere on the region’s transportation or livability.

A simple way to think about opportunity costs is as follows. If Bill Gates gave us \$6 billion to make the region a better place to live and work, how would we spend it? Would we spend it all building a new bridge?

Just as one example of what \$6 billion could do, consider that you could build 20,000 condominiums that cost \$300,000 each, and give them away free to each of the 14,000 additional peak hour commuters that this project would accommodate. You would still have 6,000 condominiums left over, to give away free, to whomever you chose. (You could imagine other ways to spend \$6 billion: massively expand higher education or improve K-12 funding, subsidize job development in Clark County to cut down on commuting, etc.)

So why are we so focused on this one project? It is clearly one that is being advanced by the Oregon and Washington transportation departments. But there’s no reason we should be straight-jacketed by a highway building bureaucracy into pursuing a project we don’t need.

Sometimes we forget that we have wrestled with this kind of problem before. Time and again, this region has cast off the bureaucratic blinders and changed priorities—and when necessary, the rules of the game—to make sure investments met real needs and community desires. Take for example the Mt. Hood freeway: much the same argument was made in the 1970s to build a new freeway, slicing through Southeast Portland neighborhoods, ostensibly to relieve the congestion that was choking the Banfield freeway. Then Mayor Neil Goldschmidt, Governor Tom McCall and Highway Commission Chair Glenn Jackson led an effort to develop an alternative, including light rail, and to get federal approval to “withdraw” money from the Mt. Hood freeway to finance light rail and fix the current Banfield freeway. The region took a

Before we spend \$6 billion on anything, we should have a clear sense of the costs and benefits of our investment.

similar approach to the I-505 freeway, which would have carved up NW Portland in the name of better moving freight. Courageous and far-sighted public leaders don’t just take the alternatives the engineers hand them, they demand bold and creative solutions. There’s nothing to say we can’t do that again.

5. Who Enjoys the Benefits? Who Pays the Costs? Is it Fair?

It’s politically correct to say we’re all in this together. But the plain fact of the Columbia River Crossing is that the benefits and costs of the project will not be evenly divided among the region’s residents. The primary beneficiaries will be Clark County commuters who work in Portland—as anyone who lives in the region knows, I-5 traffic problems stem directly from the imbalance of workers

and jobs in Clark County that sends 30,000 persons south to Oregon each morning and home again each evening. The indirect or secondary beneficiaries of an expanded crossing will be land owners and housing developers in Clark County. With an expanded bridge, Clark County will be an attractive location for many more households than will be the case if it is not expanded.

Other users of the system will see little benefit. Non-peak users and non-peak direction users will not be beneficiaries: No one faces significant delay traveling in the off-peak direction (as those of us who drive to Jantzen Beach on weekday mornings know well). In general, Oregonians will not be beneficiaries: they are overwhelmingly non-peak users of bridge and face far less congestion.

Portlanders, especially those living in North Portland will bear many of the congestion and environmental costs. An expanded bridge will enable (and generate) more traffic through North Portland neighborhoods. Ramp metering of I-5 gives priority to traffic already on the road, so that in the peak hour, local residents may find it difficult or impossible to use I-5.

As widely noted, the effect of alleviating the current bottleneck is to move it to the next most constrained point in the system—I-5 near the Rose Garden.

The financial costs of the project depend largely on how it is financed. If it is financed entirely through tolls, then there will be a closer connection between benefits and costs. But any use of state or federal funds from gas taxes diverts money that could be used for other projects to benefit just a few of the region’s commuters.

And if the project is financed with tolls, some bridge users will consider themselves to be losers. For example, it is unclear why somebody who faces no congestion today (say someone driving from Portland to Seattle in the morning, or a Vancouver resident attending an evening show in Portland) will find themselves better off paying \$6 or more for a level of traffic service they already enjoy.

➤ Bridge, continued on page 13.

and hydrogen sulfide coming out of the stacks. That right now has become a fundamental, American, core value, possessing wider, deeper public support than many of the values that are actually enshrined in the Bill of Rights.

In 1969 when we began organizing that first Earth Day, American politics were in complete turmoil. America was enmeshed in a deeply unpopular war in Vietnam. Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy had recently been assassinated. Woodstock nation was extolling sex, drugs and rock and roll. Lifelong southern Democrats were defecting *en masse* and becoming ardent Republicans. Prominent Republicans throughout the west and northeast were becoming Democrats. 1970 was a time of utter political chaos.

I think that 2008 is shaping up in somewhat the same way. We have another deeply unpopular war. We have the fracturing of the evangelical alliance. We have huge issues related to immigration and the rising Hispanic vote. We have, for the first time a viable woman, a viable African American, and a viable Hispanic candidate for President—and, a former Vice President who is a prominent environmentalist and might yet toss his hat into the ring. This election could fundamentally redefine the direction of the country.

The first Earth Day (with 20 million participants) emerged from its chaos with a set of reasonably clear, broadly-shared values that quickly became an agenda. A positive agenda is a dream linked to a plan. When Martin Luther King boldly proclaimed that he had a dream, what he really was doing was sketching out the elements of a positive agenda.

Quite commonly, however, national environmental leaders proclaim that they—we—have not a dream but a nightmare. This has proven to be a huge mistake. Environmental nightmares, used sparingly, can be very effective. But used to the exclusion of everything else, they create a perpetual sense of Chicken Little: the sky is always falling.

We environmentalists need to shift our emphasis from selling fear to selling hope. This is the special value of Portland, Oregon, to the United States. It is imperfect, but Portland is moving in a direction that actually offers a dream. It's why Portland, and why this particular meeting, is so incredibly important.

Hope provides a far stronger basis than fear for building long-term commitment.

Right now the nightmare of climate disruption should provide a powerful lever to dramatically advance energy efficiency and wind, biofuels, and especially, solar energy. Instead, we now face a distinct possibility that the answer will include huge subsidies to nuclear

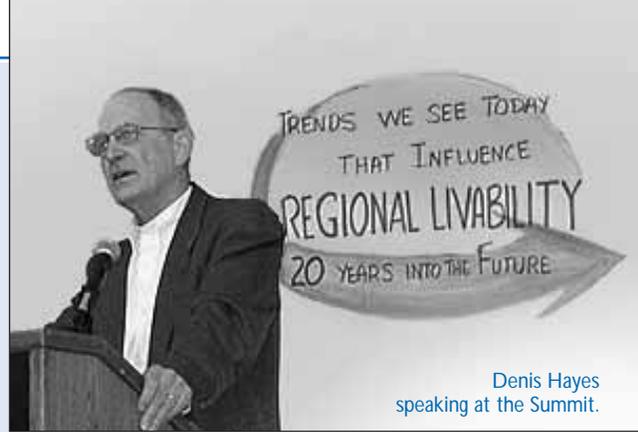
That's the value of something like the Coalition for a Livable Future. . . . It weaves all of their interests together into a coherent fabric.

power. To obtain even one-third of the lowest-end estimates of global energy demands in 2050 from nuclear power would require roughly the equivalent of 500,000 Hiroshima-sized bombs per year.

If nuclear power is going to be the answer, our children's world will be a very terrifying place. Because environmentalists recognized a nightmare but failed to link it to an explicit dream, others are now working to substitute a new nightmare for the old one.

So, dreams. A decent affordable home is the core element of the American dream. Homes have to be affordable to heat in the winter as well as to buy. Green buildings are generally thought of as playthings for the rich. But a healthy, efficient home should not be an indulgence; it should not be a luxury. A healthy, efficient home should be a right.

Then there's transportation. Families at the poverty level spend almost 40 cents of every dollar that they earn on transportation. It's absolutely crucial



Denis Hayes speaking at the Summit.

in places like Portland—places that are trying to do things right—that low cost housing providers begin to buy and bank land near where your transit facilities are going to be, while it's still affordable.

Housing and transportation are just the start, of course. We have to address schools, healthcare, energy, food, jobs, banking and financial literacy, dozens of topics that are part of a vibrant, functioning urban ecosystem. What's the proper sequence?

The answer is that you have to pretty much address all these issues simultaneously. That's the value of something like the Coalition for a Livable Future. It brings all these diverse strands: architects, transportation planners, medical professionals, preservationists, and educators, and others. It weaves all of their interests together into a coherent fabric.

Perhaps my most important job today, coming in as an outsider (even though I still think of this as home), is to tell you that the fabric, for all of its beauty, for all of its leadership, for all of the things it does so very well, appears to have a design flaw.

Portland is probably my favorite American city, for reasons that relate to the lifetime work of so many of you in this room. It's culturally vibrant, intellectually stimulating, eminently livable. But like European cities with the same characteristics, Portland has spun its problems centrifugally to the suburbs. You have to share the benefits of downtown Portland with the whole metropolitan area. This is the most common outside criticism of the Portland version of the American Dream—that ordinary people can't afford it. You need to address this, because the changing demographics of the region will soon



lead the downtown area to be a minority, which is a very dangerous thing to be in a democracy. You need to address it because it's the right, just thing to do. You need to address it because that's the kind of people you are. And finally, you need to address it because Portland embodies the Smart Growth dream for so much of the world. We can't afford to have you fail. So the responsibility on your shoulders, literally on the shoulders of you at this conference, is pretty enormous.

If the whole world is ever to enjoy prosperity we need a different model of what prosperity means.

It's technically possible, and in my view it's even technically fairly easy, to envision an attractive world in which the recycling of basic materials approaches 100 percent. In which, for example, all paper is routinely recycled several times before finally converting the cellulose that remains into ethanol or another fuel. A world where all energy is derived from renewable sources. Where healthy, low-meat diets are within the biological carrying-capacity of the planet. Where information-dense, super-efficient, pollution-free technologies guide commerce and industry. Where interesting, challenging, living-wage jobs meeting private or public needs are available to every person who wants them. Technically, we know how to do all that stuff. The tough part is to envision, and somehow achieve, the social and economic and political framework that makes it happen.

In conclusion, let me just say a few more words about hope.

If America—led by those at this conference and other similar gatherings sharing the same environmental values—can find ways to link those who are motivated by social justice, with those who are motivated by concerns for personal health and community health, with those who are fascinated by new technologies that promise comfort and creativity while reducing energy and material requirements (not a little bit, but maybe by a factor of ten), with those who are motivated by the drive for a sustainable future on a diverse planet shared with myriad other species, and with all races achieving a level of equality—then we will have the political muscle to implement the agenda that will produce our dream. ✧

Let's do it!



The 2007 Regional Livability Summit program engaged participants in developing collaborative strategies-for-action to address critical issues facing the Portland-Vancouver region. The Summit sought to tap the energy galvanized in the November 2006 election and engage participants in considering how we take sustainability to the next level. Dialogue was focused around three big questions:

- What trends are emerging?
- What opportunities for leverage do we see in these trends?
- What can we accomplish or set in motion by working together that we cannot achieve by ourselves?

Two prominent themes emerged:

First, communication is essential. To lead sustainability in the 21st century, we must reframe the core messages we use to communicate with different audiences. Our language must communicate the true costs of different actions and decisions we make, but it must also be a message that articulates a positive vision for the future, rather than the list of dire problems we are facing.

Second, we must seize the great political opportunity that exists right now! In light of the political shifts that occurred locally and nationally after the 2006 election, participants sense that there is a unique opportunity to advance many of the progressive issues that they are working on at the local, state and national levels.

To read more about the Summit and find out who was there, visit www.clfuture.org/events/Summit07.

Thank you to this year's sponsors and supporters:

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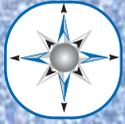
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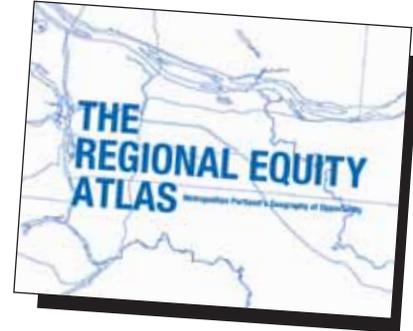
CLF Notes



CLF wants to thank Americorps volunteer, **Joy Margheim**, for her many contributions to its work. Joy has been organizing the Regional Equity Atlas Community Forum Series, and will continue this work for the next couple of months. She is a graduate student in the Urban Studies program at Portland State University. Her interest

in sustainable food systems and food access originally drew her attention to the work of CLF, particularly the *Regional Equity Atlas*. She just accepted a position with the Oregon Center for Public Policy and will be sorely missed by all. *We all wish her luck in her new work!*

Regional Equity Atlas(T) ...It's finally here!!



The much-anticipated, first-ever collection of maps, data and intelligence on the concept of equity planning in the six-county area of metropolitan Portland is available now! In vivid color, **The Regional Equity Atlas: Metropolitan Portland's Geography of Opportunity** displays over 50 unique maps that examine the geographic distribution and people and assets in the region, along with the relationship between the two. **Order your copy online at:** www.clfuture.org/projects/atlas/index_html or call Allison at 503-294-2289 to place your order.



Talented Auction Volunteer Needed

CLF is seeking a dynamic volunteer who wants to "own" the silent auction for **LAUGH for Livability** (November 16, 2007). The ideal candidate would be committed to organizing the silent auction from start to finish—leading other volunteers to solicit donations as well as working with CLF staff to run the auction during the event.

This is a great opportunity to put your organizing skills to work for a great cause. Contact Ron at 503-294-2889 or ron@clfuture.org if you are interested.

CLF welcomes our new members!

AARP Oregon

Community Partners for Affordable Housing, Inc.

Friends of Portland Community Gardens

Wish list

- Paper shredder
- Four-line telephones (5)
- Conference table
- Small conference room chairs (8)

You are invited to subscribe to the **clinfo** electronic mail list.

Subscribers receive a weekly digest of action alerts and announcements from CLF member organizations. To subscribe, send your email address to:

info@clfuture.org

Visit www.clfuture.org to download past issues of *Connections* and other CLF publications.

➤ Bridge, continued from page 9.

This region has lots of demand for increased transportation capacity in the next couple of decades. It's worth noting that the \$6 billion cost of the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) is 50% more than all of the public resources metro has identified for its Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) over the next 20 years. The 2004 RTP estimated that between 1994 and 2020 the region would have to accommodate more than 600,000 new "average weekday work trips." The CRC project proposes to spend \$6 billion on accommodating less than 10% of that increase: the 40,000 or so additional persons projected to travel over the Interstate Bridge. Is that equitable? A massive investment in bridge capacity makes sense only if you believe this jobs/housing imbalance is a good thing and you want to encourage even more of it.

6. What about the future?

Bridges last a long time. Six billion dollar projects ought to make sense, not just today, but for decades to come. There are serious reasons to question whether such a massive investment in transportation capacity, chiefly to move single occupancy commuter vehicles, makes any sense in light of the energy and environmental trends we can clearly see today.

It's worth noting that the models and projections on which the Columbia River Crossing is predicated are based on trends and conditions that we know are not likely to continue. Except for the last two years, all of our experience about transportation demand for the past two decades has been in the context of declining real gasoline prices and blissful unconcern about global warming. Gas prices in 2004, adjusted for inflation, were about half of what they were in 1984.

Does it make sense to invest \$6 billion in an asset that is predicated largely on cheap oil and unfettered use of the atmosphere as a carbon dump? Or should we plan to spend that money as if oil will cost at least \$3 a gallon, and maybe \$5 or more for the indefinite future? And shouldn't we invest in infrastructure that allows and encourages people to reduce their carbon footprint, rather than encouraging more and longer commutes? The models underlying the CRC planning simply don't consider these possibilities.

*The benefits of a project
have to be balanced
against its cost.*

*If the projections are
wrong, or are predicted
on faulty assumptions,
the benefits may
be illusory.*

A Bridge Too Far?

Before we spend \$6 billion on anything, we should have a clear sense of the costs and benefits of our investment. We ought to know that the price we're paying is reasonable in light of the benefits we're likely to receive. We ought to know that we're not foregoing much better alternatives

for spending our limited resources. We ought to be in agreement that the benefits and costs are fairly apportioned among the region's residents. And we ought to know that the project we're undertaking makes sense in an era of expensive, constrained energy supplies, and the need to deal aggressively with global warming. So far, the proponents of the Columbia River Crossing haven't answered these questions. Until they do, residents of this region should be extremely skeptical about the wisdom of this project, because it may simply be a bridge too far. ✧



Two tandem bridges currently span the Columbia River to accommodate travel on I-5. The first opened in 1917 and is one of a handful of historic bridges in our region. The second span opened in 1958. Photo © Paula Levin.

CLF member organizations:

AARP Oregon

African American Health Coalition

American Institute of Architects, Portland Chapter

American Society of Landscape Architects

Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates

Audubon Society of Portland

Better People

Bicycle Transportation Alliance

Bike Gallery

Cascadia Behavioral HealthCare

CITE, Creative Information Transformation Education

Clackamas Community Land Trust

Columbia Group Sierra Club

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

Community Action Organization

Community Alliance of Tenants

Community Development Network

Community Development Student Group at Portland State University

The Community Housing Fund

Community Partnership for Affordable Housing, Inc.

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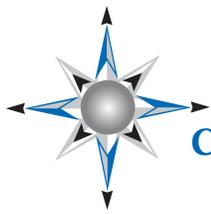
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Please use the enclosed envelope to specify the amount you would like CLF to charge to your credit card each month.

Questions?
Call 503-294-2889.



THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

- 1 Protecting, maintaining and restoring the social and economic health of our urban, suburban, and rural communities, especially the distressed parts of the region;**
 - (a) Preventing displacement of low and moderate income residents and people of color as neighborhoods improve;
 - (b) Assuring easy and equitable access to employment and affordable housing throughout the region;
 - (c) Promoting the preservation and development of housing affordable to low and moderate income residents throughout the region;
 - (d) Protecting, maintaining and encouraging the development of living wage jobs, small businesses, and community-based and sustainable economic development throughout the region;
 - (e) Reversing the polarization of income and raising income and opportunities for the region's low-income residents;
 - (f) Preserving and enhancing a high quality public education system for all parts of the region and all residents;
 - (g) Encouraging the development of food production, processing, and distribution strategies that contribute to the local economy and ensure access by all community members to healthful and affordable foods within each neighborhood;
- 2 Developing a more sustainable relationship between human residents and the ecosystems of this region;**
 - (a) Reducing consumption (particularly of non-renewable resources), pollution, and waste;
 - (b) Changing the patterns of urban expansion from low-density suburban sprawl, which relies on the automobile and wastes valuable farm and forest lands and other natural resources, to more compact neighborhoods with a mix of uses conveniently served by public transportation;
 - (c) Expanding transportation options, including reducing dependency on automobiles and vehicle miles traveled per capita and increasing transit, bike and walking opportunities throughout the region;
 - (d) Protecting, restoring and maintaining healthy watersheds, fish and wildlife and their habitats, greenspaces, and other natural resources within and outside urban growth boundaries;
 - (e) Ensuring that the built and natural environment are integrated in a sustainable manner that supports neighborhood livability and protects wetlands, streams, water quality, air quality and the natural landscape and recognizes that both natural resources and humans are part of the urban ecosystem;
 - (f) Addressing past, present and future issues of environmental equity including: the siting and cleanup of polluting industries and waste disposal sites, remediation of toxic waste sites and water pollution, and the distribution of neighborhood parks, trails, and greenspaces;
 - (g) Encouraging the development of food production, processing, and distribution systems that regenerate and support natural systems and biodiversity, enrich neighborhood development patterns, and build community;
- 3 Assuring the fair distribution of tax burdens and government investment within the region;**
- 4 Promoting a diverse and tolerant society;**
- 5 Increasing public understanding of these regional growth management issues, developing effective democratic discourse, and promoting broader citizen participation in decision-making regarding growth in our region.**

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Hotlips Pizza
Humanists of Greater Portland
Jobs With Justice
Johnson Creek Watershed Council
The Justice and Peace Commission of St. Ignatius Catholic Church
League of Women Voters of the Columbia River Region
Livable Place
Mercy Corps Northwest
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Become a Business Member

Community-minded businesses can now become members of the Coalition for a Livable Future.

To request an informational packet, please call 503-294-2889 or email ron@clfuture.org.

2007 Get Connected C : A : M : P : A : I : G : N

The Coalition for a Livable Future unites over 90 diverse organizations and hundreds of individuals to promote healthy communities everyday and for everyone. By connecting issues, organizations and individuals, CLF empowers communities to take action together to shape the big decisions affecting the Portland region's future.

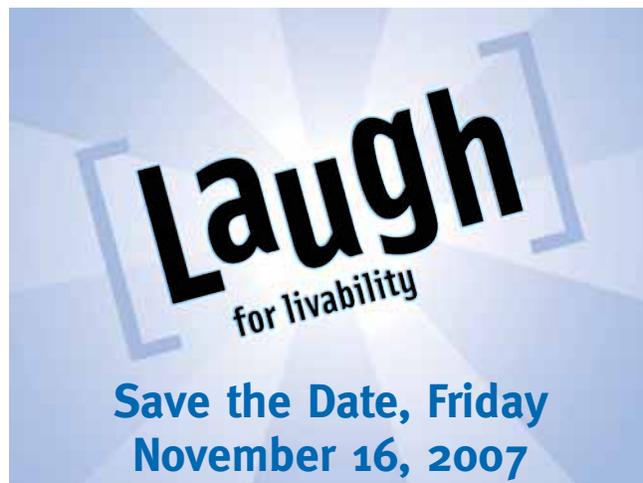
Creating the future we want is not an easy task. It takes vision, creativity and cooperation. It means building a movement that can tackle the challenge of ensuring a healthy metro region as it grows by nearly 1 million residents over the next 25 years. The Coalition for a Livable Future is leading this movement, and we want you to be a part of it.

Get Connected Now and Help us Meet The Bullitt Foundation C : H : A : L : L : E : N : G : E

CLF was recently awarded a \$30,000 grant from the Bullitt Foundation, \$10,000 of which is a challenge grant. This means we need to raise \$10,000 from local sources to receive the full grant. So there is no better time to join CLF than during the **2007 Get Connected Campaign**, because every dollar you donate will be matched by the Bullitt Foundation!

Becoming a member is easy! Basic membership is only \$40 and will open the door to a just and sustainable future. You'll receive great benefits like discounts to events, a subscription to our journal, *Connections*, and more! All contributions are tax-deductible.

Take charge of tomorrow. Sign up today at www.clfuture.org or fill out and return the enclosed envelope to CLF.



[Laugh] is an evening of sharp-tongued political satire, witty skits and original songs featuring the unseen and unheard talents of our region's elected officials and community leaders. All proceeds from the event will benefit the Coalition's work to connect issues, organizations and individuals to ensure a livable region for everyone.

- Date: November 16, 2007 • Time: 7 pm - 10 pm •
- Location: Melody Ballroom, 615 SE Alder •
- Silent Auction & Raffle begin at 7 •
- [featuring wonderful items from regional businesses]
- Comedy Show: starts at 8:30 •

If you had a chance to enjoy [Laugh] 2007, get ready to have even more fun at our **LAST [Laugh] of 2007!**

For more details about how you can support the event as a sponsor, volunteer, auction item donor or guest, e-mail Ron Carley at ron@clfuture.org or call him at (503) 294-2889.

Our sincere gratitude to sponsors of our February 2007 LAUGH

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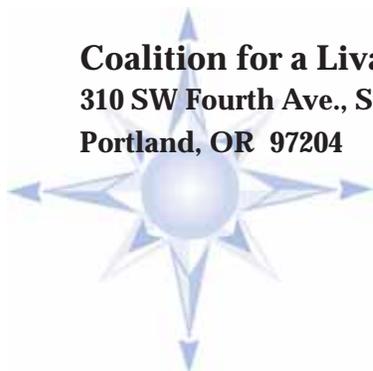
DEVELOPMENT



Our Mission

The purpose of the Coalition for a Livable Future is to protect, restore, and maintain healthy, equitable, and sustainable communities, both human and natural, for the benefit of present and future residents of the greater metropolitan region.

Coalition for a Livable Future
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