

Robert Liberty

METRO COUNCIL DISTRICT 6 NEWS



METRO

PEOPLE PLACES
OPEN SPACES

Robert Liberty
represents
District 6, which
includes portions of
Northeast, Southeast
and Southwest
Portland.



Going for the green in our neighborhoods

During February, the Metro Council will be holding hearings and public forums regarding its proposed natural areas bond measure. (See related article.) As of the writing of this column, the Council had indicated its preliminary preferences on some of the important issues, including focusing most of the money on protecting water quality and wildlife, the overall amount of the bond measure (\$220 million) and setting aside 20 percent of the fund for cities and other local park providers. These are all

directions for the bond measure that I enthusiastically support. For more on the bond measure, visit www.metro-region.org/bondmeasure.

The Council is also considering the use of some of the money for grants to be used to reintroduce nature and to improve water quality in existing urban neighborhoods, especially (but not only) lower income neighborhoods and existing communities that don't have much nature in, or close to, their neighborhood. Nonprofit watershed organizations, schools, neighborhood organizations, government agencies and others could apply for matching funds through a competitive process for such purposes as:

- Stream restoration (for example, removing trash and planting native plants)
- Daylighting streams
- "Greening" streets through plantings that help clean storm runoff
- Pocket natural areas and community gardens
- Creating small natural areas on school properties and surplus public land
- Planting and protecting trees
- Combining these "renaturing" efforts with other public investments, such as in new light rail stops, new schools, trails and pedestrian paths.

These investments would need to be on public property or protected for the public's benefit (by an easement, for example).

We are still refining the Nature in Neighborhoods grant component of the bond measure, with regard to the kinds of projects that could be funded, criteria for their evaluation, the ratio of required matching funds and how much of the \$220 million we should spend on these efforts. (Suggestions have ranged from \$0 to \$44 million.)

At the upcoming forums and hearings I hope to hear from you about this idea and the bond proposal as a whole.

— *Robert Liberty*

Public forums continue on 2006 natural areas bond measure

The Metro Council is crafting a bond measure to preserve natural areas, improve water quality and protect fish and wildlife habitat. Public comment at these forums and hearings will help the council finalize the elements of the bond measure before it is referred to voters for consideration on the November 2006 ballot.

The Metro Council invites the public to learn more about the bond measure at two public forums in February:

7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 2

Tualatin Hills Nature Park "Beaver Den,"
15655 SW Millikan Blvd., Beaverton
(co-hosted by Tualatin Hills Parks and
Recreation District and Tualatin Riverkeepers)

9 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 4

Deep Creek School
15600 SE 232nd Drive, Boring

The Metro Council will also hold three public hearings in February and March to receive public testimony on the proposed bond measure:

5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23

Hillsboro Civic Center Auditorium
150 E. Main St.

2 p.m. Thursday, March 2

Damascus City Hall
19920 SE Hwy. 212

4 p.m. Thursday, March 9

Metro Regional Center
600 NE Grand Ave., Portland
(final consideration and referral vote)

Call Ken Ray at (503) 797-1508 or send e-mail to rayk@metro.dst.or.us for more information.

Housing Choices Task Force presents draft report on affordable housing

The Housing Choices Task Force (HCTF) has drafted a preliminary report that discusses affordable work force housing as a primary component of regional livability; the role of Metro, local jurisdictions and other organizations in ensuring housing choices; and the status of today's housing market. In 2000, Metro required cities to adopt affordable housing production goals and consider changes in policies and codes to support affordable housing development.

Liberty's new (?) role: shoveling manure

In January, Councilor Robert Liberty was appointed by Council President David Bragdon and confirmed by the Metro Council to serve as an ex-officio delegate to The Oregon Zoo Foundation Board, along with Councilor Brian Newman. Following Councilor Liberty's first official board meeting on Feb. 2, he will fulfill his duties by shoveling manure in the elephant yard to call attention to the zoo's new manure composting facility. By recycling the animal manure into compost, the zoo saves money by avoiding dumping fees and keeps solid waste out of the landfill. The zoo horticulture staff uses the compost in the zoo gardens. Watch for local media photos.

The Metro Council charged the Task Force with identifying courses of action for increasing the supply while decreasing the cost of affordable housing. Examples of their recommended solutions include a regional fund for housing financed by a construction excise tax and either a real estate transfer fee or a document recording fee, and an easy-to-use housing survey that would simplify the way the region reports on housing status. The HCTF also recommends that Metro convene a similar group to work with local jurisdictions through a technical assistance program.

Metro advisory committees and the State Housing Council will hear presentations of the draft report in February, and the Task Force will present its recommendations to the Metro Council in March.

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About Metro

Clean air and clean water do not stop at city limits or county lines. Neither does the need for jobs, a thriving economy and good transportation choices for people and businesses in our region. Voters have asked Metro to help with the challenges that cross those lines and affect the 25 cities and three counties in the Portland metropolitan area.

A regional approach simply makes sense when it comes to protecting open space, caring for parks, planning for the best use of land, managing garbage disposal and increasing recycling. Metro oversees world-class facilities such as the Oregon Zoo, which contributes to conservation and education, and the Oregon Convention Center, which benefits the region's economy.

Your Metro representatives

Metro Council President
David Bragdon

Metro Councilors
Rod Park, District 1
Brian Newman, District 2
Carl Hosticka, District 3
Susan McLain, District 4
Rex Burkholder, District 5
Robert Liberty, District 6

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