

# 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.**



### Waiting in the Anteroom of the Great Hall of Extinction

I enjoy visiting museums of natural history. Prominently featured in many of these museums are models and dioramas featuring extinct species, from the Paleozoic to the Pleistocene—from trilobites to Tyrannosaurus to Australopithecus. Natural history museums are in many ways museums of extinctions.

Now, thanks to *homo sapiens*, there are many, many species gathering in the anteroom of the Great Hall of Extinction, waiting for plastic replicas to take their places in the dioramas of life on earth, circa 2000.

This new Great Hall of Extinction will have to be pretty big to accommodate all the species: Mexican jaguars, African manatees and elephants, Alaskan polar bears, blue-throated macaws in South America, snow leopards in Asia. Fortunately, the hundreds of amphibian and insect species and other small animals and plants also facing extinction won't take up much space in the new hall.

I learned about all of the species teetering on the edge of extinction through my role as one of the Metro Council liaisons to the [Oregon Zoo](#). The Zoo invited me to attend the biennial Zoos and Aquariums Committing to Conservation conference, held in Houston this year. I observed more than 40 presentations about threatened species around the globe and the different roles played by zoos in helping to stabilize and restore these populations.

I was startled when one presenter stated that, if current trends continued for five years, North American zoos would be the single biggest source of funding for animal conservation in Africa.

Many of these projects are highly innovative efforts that integrate local economic development with species conservation, relying on local communities to help create stewardship roles that provide additional income.

The many thanks directed to our Oregon Zoo and its staff during the conference were proof of the leadership role it is playing in international conservation. The Zoo has played a prominent role in recovering species in our own region, including the California Condor (an Oregon native) as well as less dramatic species—the Oregon silverspot butterfly and western pond turtle, for example.

I enjoy natural history museums, but I prefer seeing an animal at a zoo to seeing a replica in a diorama. And when I look at the living animal in a zoo I would like to know that in some way my attendance at the zoo is helping to assure that those animals are simply representatives of the much bigger populations living in their natural habitats.

Those are some of the thoughts I will have in mind as I participate in the development of a new master plan for operations, education and exhibits at the Oregon Zoo.

— Robert Liberty

## Columbia River Crossing Update

The Columbia River Crossing Task Force is a bi-state committee charged with exploring possible solutions to congestion on the I-5 bridges over the Columbia. The staff of the Task Force has recommended confining all further study to two alternatives—no action or demolishing the existing bridges and building a new 10 to 12 lane bridge over the river (with either bus rapid transit or light rail).

No firm cost estimates for the entire project—new bridge, new ramps, transit investment, other road improvements—have been developed, but project staff give a range of \$2 to \$6 billion in direct costs.

Naturally, a project of this scale and cost is generating a lot of controversy.

On February 22, the Metro Council heard more than two hours of testimony on two resolutions (one authored by me) regarding the range of alternatives they would like the Columbia River Crossing Task Force to study. On February 27 the Task Force itself had a four-hour meeting with testimony and debate about how to proceed. As of this writing it is not clear whether there will be another alternative considered.

For more information on the Columbia Crossing debate, visit my website at [www.metro-region.org/liberty](http://www.metro-region.org/liberty).

## Portland-Milwaukie light rail project kicks into gear

Communities in the area selected light rail through an extensive public process during the South Corridor Project between 1999 and 2003. Metro will conduct an environmental analysis of the proposed light rail line beginning this spring, and will finish in summer 2008. The analysis will study design, cost, land use and travel time. A citizen committee will advise Metro throughout the analysis.

The-six-and-one-half mile alignment between Milwaukie and Portland would provide additional transportation options for fast-growing communities with high traffic congestion in north Clackamas county and southeast Portland. It would connect an estimated 20,000 daily

riders to the existing MAX system, and create access to the central eastside, south waterfront, downtown Portland, Hillsboro, Gresham and the Portland airport. Nine to ten stations and a new bridge across the Willamette River would be part of the line.

Project partners include the Oregon Department of Transportation, TriMet, Clackamas and Multnomah counties and the cities Portland, Milwaukie and Oregon City.

For more information, visit [www.metro-region.org/transportation](http://www.metro-region.org/transportation). To ask a question or share a comment, send e-mail to [trans@metro-region.org](mailto:trans@metro-region.org), or call (503) 797-1756.

## Volunteer with Councilor Liberty March 13

Metro Councilor Robert Liberty invites you to get your hands dirty and help him plant native trees and shrubs with the Lents Springwater Habitat Restoration Project from 9:00 am to noon on Tuesday, March 13.

A recent recipient of Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods grant program, this collaborative, two-year project will work to restore and enhance roughly 56,000 sq ft and improve stormwater retention, wildlife habitat and beautify this natural area. 6000 native trees and shrubs will be planted by Lents area student and adult volunteers, and you can help! Bring your own gloves and dress for the weather. Tools and training will be provided.

To participate or for more information, please contact Project Coordinator Ed Kearns at (503) 234-4947.

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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.

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March 2007 dch/final

Printed on recycled paper