

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.**



The Infill Next Door

In January we heard the chainsaw bite into the trunk of the tall Douglas Fir on the empty lot bordering ours to the west. My partner drew the blinds, muttering about the loss of good bird habitat. In two hours, the tree was gone. The next day a bulldozer began excavating the basement of a new house.

Infill had arrived next door.

A new house is being built on a 4,000 square foot lot that had been our neighbor's side-yard for the last 60 years.

It seemed only fair that I should experience infill at close quarters for two reasons: Infill has been the subject of controversy across much of the Metro Council district I represent (southeast and southwest and a bit of northeast Portland), and because, in part, it is the result of regional and local policies that I support.

I joined my neighbors in wandering by to talk to the very polite, slightly nervous man standing in the mud with a set of plans in his hands. He had bought the property and was building the new house on speculation.

The neighbors, although saddened by the loss of the tree and open space, were gracious. They understood the new house meant another house wasn't being built on farmland or on land needed to keep water clean for salmon. The new house might bring another child to the street to play basketball with their children and help keep the local schools open.

The new house also shows that our area is moving in the opposite direction from those metropolitan regions where inner-city neighborhoods are being abandoned. Urban decay no longer seems to be the fate in store for inner Southeast Portland as it was a generation ago when the Mt. Hood Freeway was planned.

The builder took pains to reassure me the house—done in a Craftsman revival style—would be a handsome addition to the neighborhood. I told him it wasn't my place to pick the architectural style for my neighbors' home but admitted that the design looked very nice. With a rueful smile I added that I hoped our modest house next door wouldn't depress his sale price too much. He chuckled and then offered to help tidy up the landscaping that separates our two lots.

Not all the residents of District 6 are so lucky with the infill next door. Some of it, especially in the neighborhoods east of I-205, brings only blank walls, asphalt parking lots, crowded schools and more traffic. It may be more affordable than the house next to mine will be, but it is still too expensive for many families. We need to do more to balance the burdens of infill with community improvements and thoughtful design.

All of these reflections about the infill next door make me wonder what might happen on the other small vacant parcel that borders us to the north.

Would it be possible to build a house with a small rental unit affordable to a renter of more modest means? Is there a way of designing the new house and apartment that *continued*

The Infill Next Door

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saves most of the greenspace for birds and absorbs rainwater? Would a sustainable design complement the neighborhood's appearance? Could all of this be done on a realistic budget?

These are big questions about how to build infill that the owners of that parcel should carefully consider. And someday we will.

— Robert Liberty

Metro Council co-hosts 2007 economic development speaker series

The Metro Economic Development Speaker Series offers the region's residents and business leaders some new thinking about the region's economy, market dynamics affecting our global competitiveness and the strategies required to position our region for success. This year's series is presented in partnership with Portland State University's School of Business Administration and the Oregon Environmental Council.

Global Green Services: Oregon's Competitive Advantage in the Global Economy

7:30 a.m. Tuesday, April 24

Multnomah Athletic Club, 1849 SW Salmon, Portland

To register: www.oeonline.org/business/businessforum or call (503) 222-1963 ext. 100.

Robert Yaro: Quality of Life: Creating a Globally Competitive Regional Economy

7:45 a.m. Thursday, May 31

Multnomah Athletic Club, 1849 SW Salmon, Portland

Continental breakfast at 7:15 a.m. Free; reservations required, register at www.foundation.pdx.edu/busbriefings or call (503) 725-4763.

Robert Puentes, Fellow, Metropolitan Policy, The Brookings Institution

7:30 a.m. Wednesday, June 20

Location and details to be announced.

Foster-Woodstock Sidewalks, NE/SE Bikeway funded by Metro Council

The Metro Council recently approved a set of transportation improvements and programs as part of the 2008 Metropolitan Transportation

Improvement Program (MTIP). The MTIP projects for 2008-11 include a bike trail from Northeast Killingsworth to SE Woodstock in Portland and pedestrian improvements for SE Foster and Woodstock roads west of the Lents Town Center. For a full project list or to learn more about the projects, visit www.metro-region.org and search for "transportation priorities process 2008-11."

Portland to Milwaukie light rail open house Monday April 9 at OMSI

On Monday, April 9, from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. Metro will host an open house at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) to present and discuss design options for the Milwaukie to Portland light rail project. The six-and-one-half mile line would include up to ten stations and a new bridge across the Willamette River. OMSI is located at 1945 SE Water Avenue. Take TriMet bus lines 4, 6, 10, and 14. For more information, contact Phillip Kennedy-Wong at Metro: (503) 797-1755 or www.metro-region.org/transportation.

Columbia River Crossing update

Shortly before this newsletter was sent, the Columbia River Crossing Task Force directed its staff to prepare a third alternative for analysis along with the option of doing nothing or building a \$2 to \$6 billion new mega-freeway bridge (with related transit and road improvements and demolition of the existing I-5 bridges.) Councilor Liberty has been an advocate for another alternative that is "cheaper, smarter and greener" than the new mega-bridge. For more details, go to www.columbiarivercrossing.org.

Councilor Robert Liberty contact information

Address	600 NE Grand Ave. Portland, OR 97232
Phone	(503) 797-1552
Fax	(503) 797-1793
E-mail	libertyr@metro.dst.or.us
Assistant	Amelia Porterfield
Phone	(503) 797-1543
E-mail	porterfielda@metro.dst.or.us
Web	www.metro-region.org

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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