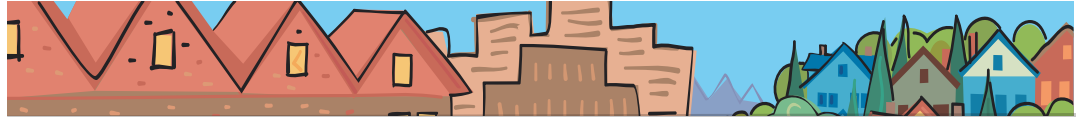


Kathryn Harrington

METRO COUNCIL DISTRICT 4 NEWS



METRO

PEOPLE PLACES
OPEN SPACES

**Kathryn Harrington
represents
District 4, which
includes Northern
Washington
County, Cornelius,
Hillsboro, Forest
Grove, Northwest
Beaverton, Aloha,
Rock Creek, Bonny
Slope, Bethany,
Raleigh Hills, West
Slope, Cedar Mill
and Cedar Hills.**



Community planning reveals infrastructure funding gap

Like me, I'm sure you've seen a lot of news coverage lately about community planning and the issues of funding the infrastructure and amenities that well-planned growth requires. As a result, I have been fielding various questions such as "Why are we at this point? Why does growth cost so much? Why does this seem familiar while also seeming different at the same time?"

I think we all agree that Washington County is a beautiful place with good jobs, a great quality of life and a healthy environment, and we want it to remain so as our population grows in the decades ahead. Our region stands out from many other parts of the country because of our past planning efforts. Community planning is an important and worthwhile endeavor, as it helps us maintain the character and quality of our lifestyle, though sometimes planning can be tiring and controversial.

Here in our county, some significant planning efforts are underway. The new community of North Bethany is being planned by Washington County, and the potential future community of South Hillsboro is being planned by the city of Hillsboro, to name just two. Though these efforts raise attention and generate excitement, it's worthwhile to remember that we've done this before in different ways – planning to convert large, formerly rural areas to urban areas, and building out emerging urban areas in need of extensive new urban infrastructure. But these new planning situations feel different than in the past. Why is that?

To my mind, what's different is that our expectations for our communities and our planning efforts have evolved and increased as we've learned more about what makes a great, livable community. At the same time, the resources to pay for the infrastructure and community amenities we crave are increasingly constrained.

Growth involves costs – it always has. There are many things we all hope we can take for granted in building healthy communities: roads, drinking water, sewers, stormwater management, schools, parks, fire departments, police, libraries, healthy streams and, not least, the kind of community design that yields attractive, enjoyable neighborhoods, great urban gathering places and the visual appeal that cements community pride.

Our population here in Washington County has grown tremendously over the last 20 years, and we each have experienced how our community (parts of it as well as the "whole") has evolved. In that time, some aspects of our growth have lagged, and now as we plan new areas, we are much more aware of the whole collection of important community amenities, and we now hope to plan them all at once. It may well be that implementation of a complete plan will proceed incrementally (as it has in the past), but right now we are thinking about it and planning it all at once. As a result, each plan may feel big, with surprisingly large cost estimates.

So what about the financing? Just as our goals for community planning have evolved, financing resources have evolved as well, generally becoming more *continued*

Community planning

continued from page 1

restricted. In the past, we counted on state grants for planning efforts, plus federal subsidies for water, sewer, roads and more. Often as much as 90 cents came from outside for every dollar needed on a project, requiring local community contributions of as little as 10 cents on the dollar. But here in Oregon, several ballot measures limiting local taxing authority have reduced our community funding options, and we are now faced with the full impact.

Financial resources to support services in existing neighborhoods, such as maintaining and replacing existing infrastructure (sewer pipes, water pipes, road surfaces, traffic lights, etc.) are limited. Planning efforts have fallen behind because of a lack of resources to pay for the work. Metro put in place a temporary regional construction excise tax program to address our immediate planning needs. But as for major project subsidies for implementing our plans, the federal well has run nearly dry because of other national commitments.

The sense that we are falling short of meeting our needs is real. Current financing methods don't cover the full costs of infrastructure. Your community leaders – including those at the county, the cities and the service districts – are working to re-evaluate existing financial resources and tools, and to explore new ones. This evaluation takes time, and patience is paramount. I want to see us keep our existing communities great and build new ones as we grow, so I'm hopeful we can find good solutions to our complex funding situation.

— Kathryn Harrington

Metro Council launches new Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grant program

The Metro Council's 2006 Natural Areas bond measure included \$15 million for grants that inspire innovative capital projects on public lands. For Metro's

new Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grant program, projects are encouraged that create or restore ecological processes to protect water quality and wildlife habitat. Since this program is funded by the bond measure, projects must qualify as capital projects. A grant handbook gives more information on project eligibility, and Metro staff is more than happy to talk with you about your project. There is no deadline for applications, and letters of interest can be submitted at any time.

Visit www.metro-region.org/naturalareas to find more information, including the handbook and application instructions. Interested groups are strongly encouraged to contact Mary Rose Navarro, Natural Areas Grants Coordinator, at (503) 797-1781 or navarrom@metro.dst.or.us.

Regional Transportation Plan open for public review

One of Metro's key regional roles is to lead the discussion on transportation planning and allocating limited funding for transportation projects. The long-range blueprint for this effort is called the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which is going through an update now. From October 15 through November 15, the public can weigh-in on the part of the plan that must fulfill federal requirements.

Several public open houses and hearings are scheduled, including one in Hillsboro on Thursday, November 8 at the Hillsboro Civic Center, 150 E. Main Street. The open house starts at 4 p.m. and the hearing at 5 p.m. For more information, visit www.metro-region.org/rtp or call (503) 797-1551.

Councilor Kathryn Harrington contact information

Address	600 NE Grand Ave. Portland, OR 97232
Phone	(503) 797-1553
Fax	(503) 797-1793
E-mail	harringtonk@metro.dst.or.us
Assistant	Linnea Nelson
Phone	(503) 797-1886
E-mail	nelsonl@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.

Your Metro representatives

Metro Council President
David Bragdon

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

Auditor
Suzanne Flynn

October 2007 dch/final
Printed on recycled paper