

# Robert Liberty

METRO COUNCIL DISTRICT 6 NEWS | November 2008

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



## Is North "Up"?

I invited a contingent of Portland neighborhood activists, members of neighborhood business associations and planners from the Portland Bureau of Planning to join me in a weekend visit to downtown Bellevue, Washington, and neighborhood commercial areas in Vancouver, British Columbia.

During a beautiful fall weekend, we saw examples of how our neighbors to the north have grown up, instead of out (i.e. replaced sprawl with more dense development). We saw:

- A Safeway store sharing a neighborhood shopping street with specialty greengrocers, bakeries, a gas station, medical and veterinary clinics, a hardware store, barber shops and hair salons, clothing and toy stores, banks, a pub, a library, law and insurance offices, restaurants, dry cleaners and dozens of other businesses--with two or three stories of housing above and along just three blocks.
- A row of big older homes, with front lawns, sheltered under a canopy of trees on a quiet street that, on closer inspection, turned out to be three and four-plexes (both remodeled homes and built new).
- How effective trees and other landscaping are in offsetting and softening taller buildings and more business intensive areas.
- How downtown Bellevue, formerly nothing more than a regional mall surrounded by parking lots and one and two story buildings, has been transformed into a lively downtown with 30 and 40 story residential towers, office towers, beautifully landscaped sidewalks, and a 20-acre park.
- A busy Costco store at the base of a 25 story residential tower in downtown Vancouver.
- How even small lots could be redeveloped and used: a 15-foot wide pharmacy doing business on a neighborhood shopping street, and underground parking being built on a lot not much bigger than 10,000 square feet.

We saw things we liked, things we didn't like, and other things about which we were just plain curious. Planners and developers from these communities helped us understand how these changes came about, the challenges they met and the challenges ahead.

The conversations we had in our vans on the way to and from Vancouver also helped us understand each other's perspective on how our own region should grow, and led to brainstorming new ways of balancing the costs and benefits of growing up instead of out.

Some of the other participants on this field trip offered their observations about lessons they learned:

"The mixed-use corridors were artfully blended into the landscape and the neighborhood small businesses seemed to be thriving due to the density nearby. I really liked the 'open space' requirement where each dwelling unit needs to have an open and enclosed balcony or deck, and I really liked the landscaping between the sidewalks and the buildings.

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I was most impressed by the development review process which is more flexible and allows much more dialogue with the existing neighbors, and more local input into the final design than we typically have in Portland.” – Marianne Fitzgerald, Chair, Transportation Committee, Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc.

“I find seeing is believing. The trip to Bellevue and Vancouver was an eye opening view of how development can be managed to benefit both the developer and the citizens of the city.” – Don Baack, Chair of Hillsdale Neighborhood Association and Southwest Trails

“I was most impressed with the creativity in basic design elements that dramatically enhance quality of life and encourage density of use. I found the following specifically applicable and important in planning for the future of my neighborhood: smaller multi-use facilities incorporating underground parking; and creative re-design of existing residences to support multifamily use, and the needs of residents seeking to stay in the neighborhood but no longer capable of or desiring to maintain large homes.

Both Vancouver and Bellevue have done extremely impressive jobs of working with developers (especially in high rise communities) to assure green space and public amenities are included--the use of landscaping on sidewalks and playgrounds for children were particularly notable. Also, I was very impressed with the talent, passion, and commitment of the city employees and neighborhood leaders that I had the great pleasure of meeting.” – Jim Stutts, Hillsdale

– Robert Liberty

## Stop illegal dumping in your neighborhood – call Metro’s RID Patrol

Did you know that Metro cleans up more than 1,500 illegal dumpsites throughout the region each year? Illegal dumping of household garbage, old tires, hazardous waste and other refuse threatens human health, wildlife and the environment. Metro’s Report Illegal Dumping (RID) Patrol partners with local government agencies, law enforcement and community members to ensure that illegal dumpsites on public land are quickly cleaned up and investigated.

RID Patrol operates two trucks, staffed by correctional officers and inmate cleanup crews, to pick up garbage dumped on public lands.

Investigating officers will try to locate the owner of the trash and track down the illegal hauler. Depending on the situation, the owners of the trash may be fined or cited, along with the hauler who dumped illegally. Fines are issued to cover the cost of cleaning up and properly managing waste from dumpsites.

Metro’s RID Patrol can provide tools to prevent illegal dumping and help keep your neighborhood clean and green. For more information, call Metro Recycling at 503-234-3000, send e-mail to [ridpatrol@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:ridpatrol@oregonmetro.gov) or visit [www.oregonmetro.gov/ridpatrol](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/ridpatrol).

In unincorporated Washington County, please call 503-846-8609. If you would like more information about how the RID Patrol can work with your community organization to prevent illegal dumping call Tiffany Gates at 503-797-1867.

## Grant workshops offered by Metro helps communities invite nature into neighborhoods

Find out more about grant programs, and learn about the projects that are receiving grant funding from Metro by visiting [www.oregonmetro.gov/grants](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/grants).

### Nature in Neighborhoods Grants Workshop II—Project Review

Saturday, Nov. 15  
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Metro Regional Center  
600 NE Grand Ave., Portland

To RSVP for this workshops contact Mary Rose Navarro, at 503-797-1781 or e-mail [maryrose.navarro@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:maryrose.navarro@oregonmetro.gov) or Janelle Geddes at 503-797-1550 or e-mail [janelle.geddes@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:janelle.geddes@oregonmetro.gov).

## 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

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David Bragdon

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Carl Hosticka, District 3  
Kathryn Harrington, District 4  
Rex Burkholder, District 5  
Robert Liberty, District 6

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