

Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL) Finding Aid

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Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge the support and contributions of the following individuals who helped to organize and preserve the Metropolitan Citizens League collection. Through their efforts, the collection is now accessible to the public at large:

- Becky Shoemaker, Metro Records Officer/Archivist
- Kenneth Houck, Graduate Intern, Portland State University
- Dr. Ronald Cease, Former Board of Director President of the Metropolitan Citizens League
- Rick Gustafson, former Metro Executive Officer

Summary Information

Repository	Metro Archives and Special Collections
Creator	Kenneth Houck, Graduate Intern, Portland State University
Title	Guide to the Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL) Collection
Date [inclusive]	1962 - 1985
Extent	2.4 Linear feet of paper records.
Condition	The paper records are in very good condition.
Language	English
Abstract	The Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL) Collection represents the work and accomplishments of the Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL). As a non-profit and non-partisan organization, the MCL was founded in 1980 by concerned individuals seeking to study and review regional issues of concern relating to Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties, and to provide feedback to those agencies. The committee disbanded in 1985.

Preferred Citation

Metro Archives and Special Collections: Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL) Collection, 1962-1985

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1 - 2
Summary Collection Description	3
Box Numbers and Descriptions	4
Collection Division 1: Administration	5 - 8
Collection Subdivision 1.1: Incorporation	5
Collection Subdivision 1.2: Board of Directors.....	5
Collection Subdivision 1.3: Membership.....	6
Collection Subdivision 1.4: Meeting Records.....	6 - 7
Collection Subdivision 1.5: Meeting Management	7
Collection Subdivision 1.6: Finance and Budget	7 - 8
Collection Subdivision 1.7: Communications and Outreach	8
Collection Subdivision 1.8: General Correspondence	8
Collection Division 2: Studies, Projects, Surveys and Reports	9 - 11
Collection Subdivision 2.1: Studies	9
Collection Subdivision 2.2: Projects	9
Collection Subdivision 2.3: Surveys	10
Collection Subdivision 2.4: Reports	10 - 11

Introduction: A Brief History of the Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL)

PRECURSORS

The Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL) was founded by concerned individuals who wanted to study and review regional issues relating to Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties and to provide feedback to those agencies. Similar citizen action leagues had been founded in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota. The MCL was a dues-paying organization with a membership that focused its attention on metropolitan issues such as libraries, parks, public safety, and solid waste management. Originally called the Tri-County Citizens League (1979-1980), the organization was renamed the Metropolitan Citizens League by the time its first organizational meeting was held on November 20, 1980. The leadership of the newly formed organization included individuals who had taken part in the Portland Metropolitan Study Commission (1963-1971) and the Tri-County Local Government Commission (1975-1977). Among other things, the Portland Metropolitan Study Commission facilitated the creation of the Columbia Region Association of Governments (CRAG) and the Metropolitan Service District (MSD). The Tri-County Local Government Commission, a 65-member body, had been created to study and make recommendations for improving regional government. The efforts of this group resulted in convincing the Oregon Legislature to put a ballot measure before the voters in May 1978 to consolidate the two regional governmental agencies - CRAG and the MSD - into one central agency. The voters agreed, and the new Metropolitan Service District (later renamed Metro) – the first directly elected regional government in the nation - was created in 1979.

FORMATION

The Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL) was a non-profit and non-partisan organization whose members were comprised of citizens, business owners, and other civic leaders. Members paid different levels of dues based upon whether they were individuals, businesses, or corporate sponsors. Members elected a board of directors, who in turn, appointed a president, secretary, and treasurer. MCL members served on a variety of committees that studied and reported on regional issues. Several committee reports on regional issues were distributed to local lawmakers and the media. Similar to the City Club of Portland, the MCL hosted monthly luncheons with featured guest speakers who lectured on regional topics of interest. The organization was established and organized in late 1980 and was active through mid-1985 when it formally disbanded due to declining membership and attendance at monthly luncheons.

EVALUATION

The legacy of the Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL) in its brief five year life is mixed. During its five years of operation, the primary focus of the League's activities – monthly luncheons – were well attended. However, turnout at the luncheons began to decline, falling off sharply by early 1985. This was also true of the League's membership. Given its dependence on membership dues as a primary source of funding, the MCL progressively struggled to recruit new members and to maintain healthy membership levels. To compensate for growing gaps in revenue, leaders sought alternative sources of funding by applying for numerous grants. However, these efforts did not yield the kind of results needed to sustain funding for the organization. In addition, given that the structure of the MCL's monthly luncheon meetings resembled that of the City Club of Portland, the organization's purpose eventually suffered from a degree of redundancy. In addition, the departure of MCL founders like Ron Cease (who was elected to the Oregon House of Representatives in 1985)

had an unintended negative impact on the organization's internal leadership. Furthermore, it is questionable how much influence the MCL's studies had on policymakers, especially as the newly formed Metropolitan Service District (MSD) was able to solidify its operations as a regional government. In general, the lack of success in the areas of public interest and membership, funding, competing interests, leadership, and influence in the development of public policy contributed to the ultimate demise of the Metropolitan Citizens League.

In spite of its short history as an organization, the concept which the Metropolitan Citizens League embodied in bringing citizens together to study issues of regional concern was certainly in step with the objectives of the Metropolitan Service District (Metro). Through its sponsored activities, special studies, and published reports the Metropolitan Citizens League promoted the ideal of citizen engagement in issues of regional concern, and as such, contributed to the adoption of a regional approach to problem solving among metropolitan governments.

Summary Collection Description

This collection consists of records from the Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL). It includes documents relating to incorporation and governance; activities of the MCL Board of Directors; membership; meetings; MCL-sponsored activities; financial affairs; and communications and outreach. The collection also includes materials generated by Metropolitan Citizens League special study committees. These include studies, project files, and reports relating to topics such as libraries, land use planning, parks, public transit, public safety, and government financing.

Box Numbers and Descriptions

Below is a general list of numbers and descriptions for the boxes in which the Metropolitan Citizens League collection is contained.

<i>Box Nbr</i>	<i>Box Description</i>
COUNC0409	Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL) – Administration Records
COUNC0410	Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL) – Studies, Projects, Surveys, and Reports

Collection Divisions and Subdivisions

Collection Division 1: Administration

This collection division consists of a broad category of administrative documents which outline the organization structure and activities of the Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL). Included are records relating to incorporation, governance, membership, meetings (including meeting agendas and minutes), sponsored activities, financial planning and budgeting, and communications and public outreach (including brochures and scripts for public service announcements and press releases). Records also include correspondence and miscellaneous newspaper clippings that report on MCL business or reflect topics of interest to the organization.

1.1: Incorporation (1980 - 1982)

This collection subdivision consists of materials that describe the structure of the Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL) as a non-profit organization. It includes by-laws, addendums, and a mission statement.

<i>Box / Folder Nbr.</i>	<i>Folder Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
COUNC0409 / 1	By-laws adopted, revised, and rough drafts; template copies of by-laws from other regional groups; articles of incorporation; and photograph of members including Ron Cease	03/26/1980 to 05/01/1982
COUNC0409 / 2	Metropolitan Citizens League Mission Statement	Undated

1.2: Board of Directors (1980 - 1984)

This collection subdivision consists of Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL) Board of Directors rosters, board correspondence, and limited biographical materials about the board's early members.

<i>Box / Folder Nbr.</i>	<i>Folder Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
COUNC0409 / 3	Board of Directors roster	03/01/1983 to 06/12/1984
COUNC0409 / 4	Resignation letters from board members	02/13/1984 to 05/21/1984
COUNC0409 / 5	Board correspondence, including 1983 calendar and Board of Directors master roster for 1981	05/19/1980 to 11/12/1983
COUNC0409 / 6	Political and professional biographies for possible nomination to the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Citizens League; draft copy of the ballot	c. 1981

1.3: Membership (1980 - 1985)

This collection subdivision documents the membership activities of the Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL). Given that a primary source of funding came from membership dues, membership recruitment and renewals became a key activity of the MCL.

<i>Box / Folder Nbr.</i>	<i>Folder Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
COUNC0409 / 7	Membership lists and media contact lists	01/01/1984 to 12/31/1985
COUNC0409 / 8	Generic letters of introduction, requests for membership, and membership thank you letters	Undated
COUNC0409 / 9	Membership mailing lists	Undated
COUNC0409 / 10	Membership renewal receipts and check-stubs	01/01/1982 to 12/31/1985
COUNC0409 / 11	Draft of letter to prospective business leaders urging them to become contributing members of the Metropolitan Citizens League and related correspondence	05/09/1981 to 10/24/1981
COUNC0409 / 12	Membership materials relating to the organization of the Metropolitan Citizens League	10/31/1980 to 11/20/1980
COUNC0409 / 13	Membership Directory and addendum to same	06/01/1981 to 07/01/1982
COUNC0409 / 14	Correspondence concerning membership in the Metropolitan Citizens League	11/20/1980 to 12/18/1981
COUNC0409 / 15	Drafts and memos for the 1983 membership drive	01/12/1983 to 11/15/1983
COUNC0409 / 16	Membership Directory	03/01/1983 to 03/01/1983
COUNC0409 / 17	Membership prospects for 1983	04/20/1983 to 06/18/1983
COUNC0409 / 18	Membership contact lists, completed membership forms, membership prospects for 1985	01/01/1981 to 12/31/1984
COUNC0409 / 19	Membership Committee meeting minutes and correspondence	03/01/1983 to 03/01/1984

1.4: Meeting Records (1980 - 1985)

This collection subdivision consists of meeting agendas and minutes relating to the day to day operations and financial status of the Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL) as an organization. Included are records relating to special committees and the naming of committee officers and members; suggestions for monthly luncheon topics and speaker invitations; special meeting announcements; and planning for annual funding drives.

<i>Box / Folder Nbr.</i>	<i>Folder Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
COUNC0409 / 20	Board meeting agenda and minutes of the Metropolitan Citizens League Executive Committee	12/18/1983 to 02/28/1985
COUNC0409 / 21	Executive Committee meeting minutes Note to file: one page is dated 1988; probably a typographical error]	02/09/1982 to 03/9/1982

COUNC0409 / 22(a)	Metropolitan Citizens League board meeting agendas and minutes	02/19/1980 to 12/16/1980
COUNC0409 / 22(b)	Metropolitan Citizens League board meeting agendas and minutes	01/21/1981 to 12/12/1981
COUNC0409 / 22(c)	Metropolitan Citizens League board meeting agendas and minutes	01/11/1982 to 12/08/1982
COUNC0409 / 22(d)	Metropolitan Citizens League board meeting agendas and minutes	01/19/1983 to 12/14/1983
COUNC0409 / 23	Minutes and recommendation from Nomination and Membership Committees	01/21/1981 to 01/12/1983

1.5: Meeting Management (1980 - 1985)

This collection subdivision consists of documents relating to the planning of monthly luncheons by members of the Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL). Included is information about luncheon speakers, media announcements, and attendance lists.

<i>Box / Folder Nbr.</i>	<i>Folder Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
COUNC0409 / 24	Meeting announcements and attendance sheets	05/23/1984 to 06/27/1984
COUNC0409 / 25	Meeting announcements	01/01/1983 to 06/27/1984
COUNC0409 / 26	Luncheon meeting attendance list and receipts	11/28/1984 to 06/27/1984
COUNC0409 / 27	Luncheon meeting attendance lists	01/01/1982 to 12/31/1984
COUNC0409 / 28	Correspondence thanking individuals for speaking at monthly luncheons; programs for the monthly luncheons; and other miscellaneous correspondence	08/08/1981 to 03/13/1985
COUNC0409 / 29	Attendance lists for luncheons attached to agendas for several meetings; announcement of debate between candidates for the Portland City Council	11/20/1980 to 11/24/1982
COUNC0409 / 30	Duties list for monthly luncheons and general administration	c. 1983

1.6: Finance and Budget (1981 - 1984)

This collection subdivision describes the financial and budgeting activities of the Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL). Included are financial reports and budgets; grant and fundraising proposals; and donation requests to various businesses and corporations.

<i>Box / Folder Nbr.</i>	<i>Folder Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
COUNC0409 / 31	Finance correspondence; business contact lists for fundraising drives; and internal memos.	01/01/1981 to 12/31/1984
COUNC0409 / 32	Proposed budgets for fiscal years 1982-1983 and 1983-1984	06/1/1982 to 05/31/1983

COUNC0409 / 33	Correspondence between Metropolitan Citizens League and various trusts for grant money; grant applications; corporate application requests and contributions	03/29/1983 to 05/03/1984
COUNC0409 / 34	Monthly financial reports - 1982	02/01/1982 to 6/30/1982
COUNC0409 / 35	Monthly financial reports - 1981	06/01/1981 to 03/01/1982
COUNC0409 / 36	Fundraising proposal for 1985; business directory sales information	11/20/1984 to 11/20/1984

1.7: Communications and Outreach (1976 - 1984)

This collection subdivision describes the communications and outreach activities of the Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL). Included are brochures, fact sheets, public service announcement scripts/copy, press releases, media contacts, member newsletters, and news clippings.

<i>Box / Folder Nbr.</i>	<i>Folder Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
COUNC0409 / 37	Metropolitan Citizens League fact sheet	Undated
COUNC0409 / 38	Metropolitan Citizens League brochures and working drafts; related correspondence	01/01/1981 to 12/31/1983
COUNC0409 / 39	News clippings highlighting proposed legislation regarding land use planning, economic development and the creation of the Metropolitan Citizens League	11/15/1980 to 10/21/1981
COUNC0409 / 40	Newspaper clipping regarding Metro; pamphlet from Friends of Metro urging a yes vote on 26-12; draft of General Public Involvement Plan	09/15/1980 to 04/25/1981
COUNC0409 / 41	Metropolitan Citizens League draft and final newsletters	09/01/1981 to 07/01/1984
COUNC0409 / 42	Press releases, scripts, media contact lists	06/13/1981 to 09/12/1984
COUNC0409 / 43	Copies of various articles from various publications and newspaper clippings	03/01/1976 to 09/01/1981

1.8: General Correspondence (1980 - 1985)

This collection subdivision includes correspondence from the Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL) to members of the business community and select MCL members. Of special interest is the final letter sent to members announcing the MCL's suspension of operations.

<i>Box / Folder Nbr.</i>	<i>Folder Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
COUNC0409 / 44	Correspondence to members and business contacts, including announcement of suspension of operations dated May 1, 1985	01/01/1980 to 12/31/1985

Collection Division 2: Studies, Projects, Surveys and Reports

This collection division consists of a broad category of documents outlining the research and project activities of the Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL). Included are published reports by various study committees on topics relating to public libraries, parks, land use planning, and government financing. Also included are meeting minutes and related correspondence from the committees. In addition, proposed projects topics for future study are documented.

2.1: Studies (1981 - 1984)

Projects and study committee meeting minutes.

<i>Box / Folder Nbr.</i>	<i>Folder Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
COUNC0410 / 1	Miscellaneous correspondence to committee members	08/01/1981 to 03/05/1984
COUNC0410 / 2	Metro Study Commission/Committee for Metropolitan Citizens League meeting minutes and related materials	02/19/1982 to 06/04/1982
COUNC0410 / 3	Public Safety Committee study materials	02/01/1984 to 02/01/1984
COUNC0410 / 4	Project proposals	07/16/1981 to 07/16/1981

2.2: Projects (1962 - 1985)

This collection subdivision includes materials relating to regional projects of interest to the Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL).

<i>Box / Folder Nbr.</i>	<i>Folder Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
COUNC0410 / 5	Correspondence regarding HB 2038 and 2477	02/21/1985 to 02/22/1985
COUNC0410 / 6	Original and copies of the 1984 volunteer project questionnaire	02/01/1984
COUNC0410 / 7	Tri-County Citizens League (forerunner of the Metropolitan Citizens League) assessment of possible projects and changes to Metro	03/04/1980 to 03/04/1980
COUNC0410 / 8	Clackamas County easements relating to Metro's Johnson Creek Project (below SE 82 nd Avenue); Metro pamphlet outlining the project	circa 1980
COUNC0410 / 9	Note card contacts, lot numbers and easements, map and block numbers relating to Metro's Johnson Creek Project	Undated
COUNC0410 / 10(a)	Easement deeds for Johnson Creek Water Control District	01/01/1962 to 12/31/1963
COUNC0410 / 10(b)	Easement deeds for Johnson Creek Water Control District	01/01/1962 to 12/31/1963

2.3: Surveys (1983 - 1984)

This collection subdivision describes activities related to the Metropolitan Citizens League's (MCL) ongoing effort to solicit public input on regional issues such as land use planning, public safety, public facilities, transportation, utilities and infrastructure, governmental review and oversight, social services, economics, and the environment. Survey recipients were asked to rank these services in order of personal importance. Included are draft and final surveys that were mailed to targeted audiences.

<i>Box / Folder Nbr.</i>	<i>Folder Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
COUNC0410 / 11	Survey sheets, drafts, and volunteer forms	01/01/1984 to 12/31/1984
COUNC0410 / 12	Completed Issues Survey; contact list for 1981 Oregon Legislative Assembly, and federal representatives	Undated
COUNC0410 / 13	Completed issue surveys for 1983	06/13/1983 to 12/12/1983

2.4: Reports (1981 - 1985)

This collection subdivision describes the activities of to Metropolitan Citizens League (MCL) special committees. These committees conducted studies on a variety of metropolitan issues, including regional parks, land use planning, libraries, and public financing. The reports were published and distributed to various political and business leaders, citizen groups and individuals, and the media.

<i>Box / Folder Nbr.</i>	<i>Folder Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
COUNC0410 / 14	Local Government Finance Committee reports and related correspondence; press releases; committee recommendations regarding realignment of Metro districts	04/01/1981 to 11/16/1984
COUNC0410 / 15	Land Use Task Force meeting minutes, reports, and related correspondence	01/07/1981 to 12/23/1981
COUNC0410 / 16	Land Use Task Force meeting minutes, reports, and related correspondence	01/19/1982 to 11/17/1982
COUNC0410 / 17	<i>Regional Parks Report</i> , related study materials, and script for promotional spot about the Metropolitan Citizens League's position on parks	07/02/1983 to 08/01/1984
COUNC0410 / 18	Library Committee meeting minutes and correspondence	07/26/1983 to 12/12/1983
COUNC0410 / 19	Library Systems Committee meeting minutes for; <i>Library Report</i> (rough draft of study); and related correspondence	01/18/1984 to 03/06/1985
COUNC0410 / 20	Newspaper clippings related to library study	03/22/1983 to 09/08/1983
COUNC0410 / 21	Publications: <i>Proposal To Establish A Metropolitan Study Commission</i> and <i>Final Report of the Special Metro Committee by the Metropolitan Citizens League</i>	06/22/1981 to 12/15/1982
COUNC0410 / 22	<i>Parks Committee Report</i> , directory, and related materials	07/02/1983 to 08/01/1984

COUNC0410 / 23	Education Committee reports, correspondence, memos, and press releases	11/16/1982 to 07/22/1983
COUNC0410 / 24	<i>Transportation Committee Report</i> , informational brochures, and related materials regarding MAX light rail	05/14/1981 to 06/13/1983
