

The Journal of the Coalition for a Livable Future

## A Wake-Up Call for the Region — A Report by Myron Orfield

After three years of research and writing, nationally-acclaimed demographer and regionalist Myron Orfield has released his highly-anticipated analysis of the Portland region. "Portland Metropolitics: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability," which praises many of our community's regional efforts to address the problems of urban decay and suburban sprawl, also sounds a wake-up call. We must focus our collective problem-solving faculties and political will on creating a compact, equitable and sustainable Portland region or face the consequences of the "hollowing" metropolis — the degradation of our region's natural environment and the unraveling of our social and economic fabric.

The good news is that we have been doing things right in the Portland region. With our strong land use planning laws, compact urban growth boundary, and regional approach to addressing metropolitan challenges, we have avoided much of the decay and sprawl that have devastated older, larger cities across the country. Furthermore, Orfield views our regional government — Metro — as a national model for meaningful regional governance that has moved us closer to creating a livable future for the region.

"The Portland region faces the late 20th century with a history of impressive accomplishments, a vibrant economy, and the nation's most efficient and coordinated development practices," writes Orfield. "It is a wonderful, vital place to live. However, the future will likely represent even greater challenges that Portland must be ready to meet."

Orfield reports that while Portland is not yet exhibiting the same degree of social and economic polarization seen in regions like Chicago and Minneapolis/St. Paul, many of the same dynamics demonstrated in those areas do appear to exist in Portland. And, they appear to be getting worse, despite the region's past good efforts. The report includes data and maps that clearly show trends in our region towards concentration of poverty and fiscal disparities between jurisdictions. Moreover, those communities with the largest and fastest growing social needs also are those with the fewest and slowest growing resource bases with which to address their needs.

➤ Continued on page 8.

## Welcome to our first newsletter!

### In this issue:

In *A Wake Up Call for the Region*, Zack Semke provides an overview of a recent study by Myron Orfield of growth patterns in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area. The study, commissioned by the Coalition for a Livable Future, points to increasing poverty and a growing gap between prosperous and poor neighborhoods as warning signs of polarization and urban decay.

*Balancing the Benefits and Burdens of Growth* by Tasha Harmon. This article examines economic equity issues related to growth management, how it impacts the poor, and how Portland and other cities can improve on an already good idea. This article was originally published in the Spring 1998 issue of *Planners Network*. (Page 4.)

*Linking the Issues* by Lisa Jackson looks at the history of the Coalition for a Livable Future, the catalyst that brought a diverse group of organizations together to work on regional issues, and how those issues are connected. (Page 10.)

Minnesota  
State  
Representative  
Myron Orfield



Connections is the journal of the Coalition for a Livable Future (CLF), a network of nonprofit organizations in the Portland metropolitan region who share a commitment to just, affordable and sustainable communities. Founded in 1994, we have grown from a small group of dedicated activists to over 45 diverse member organizations, and we celebrate our 4th anniversary this November!

CLF holds regular public forums for discussion of regional livability topics. Our Steering Committee meets monthly to make decisions about budget and fund raising issues, personnel, strategic planning and interim policy issues. Coalition members are invited to join one of several working groups devoted to specific issues, including affordable housing, greenspaces and natural resources, urban design, religious organizations, economic vitality and transportation reform.

**Who's Who in the Coalition for a Livable Future...**

The following people are all active participants in the Coalition and all serve as members of CLF's Steering Committee.

- Meeky Blizzard, Director of Citizens for Sensible Transportation
- Rex Burkholder, Transportation Reform Advocate
- Ron Carley, Greenspaces Advocate
- Lenny Dee, Citizen Activist
- Tasha Harmon, Director of the Community Development Network
- Alan Hipolito, Director of Environmental Programs for the Urban League of Portland
- Mike Houck, Urban Naturalist for the Audubon Society of Portland
- Gordon Hunter, Board President of Metro Community Development Corp.
- Lisa Jackson, Assistant Coordinator for the Coalition
- Mary Kyle McCurdy, Staff Attorney for 1000 Friends of Oregon
- Robert Liberty, Executive Director of 1000 Friends of Oregon
- Marcy McInelly, Architect and Business Owner
- Britt Parrott, Affordable Housing Advocate
- Loretta Pickerell, Board Member of Citizens for Sensible Transportation
- Zack Semke, Program Coordinator for the Coalition
- Geri Washington, Community Organizer

## The Work of The Coalition for a Livable Future (CLF)

In addition to research and public education, the Coalition advocates for progressive regional policy regarding land use, transportation, housing, public investment, economic equity and the environment. CLF draws connections between growth management and social justice. We recognize that the economic and social health of one city depends on the health of its neighbors. Thus, we strive to promote "regionalism," a way of looking for the links between the 24 cities and three counties within our urban area, and beyond.

### The Benefits of Joining a Coalition

The Coalition currently consists of over 45 member organizations. By joining the Coalition, your organization is helping to create a stronger, collective voice for a just, sustainable region. A diverse membership allows us to understand each other's issues and concerns, to find common ground, to share resources and information, and to collaborate in seeking funding for our common work.

### Responsibilities as a Coalition Member

There are a variety of ways to be involved as a member of the Coalition for a Livable Future. There are no membership fees, but we do require members to agree to support our objectives (see page 15). Members may participate in any of our six working groups, as well as our monthly full Coalition and Steering Committee meetings, and other CLF events.

CLF is a network of organizations, but individuals are encouraged to participate. For a membership application, please contact Zack Semke or Lisa Jackson at 294-2889 or clf@friends.org.

*The Coalition for a Livable Future appreciates the continued support of our funders! We would like to thank and acknowledge the following:*

- The Northwest Area Foundation
- The Ford Foundation
- The Surdna Foundation
- Meyer Memorial Trust
- The James C. Penney Foundation
- The Energy Foundation
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Rose Tucker Charitable Trust
- The Ralph Smith Foundation
- The Oregon Community Foundation
- Rejuvenation, Inc.
- John Emerick

# CLF Member Profiles

## Meet Two of our Coalition Steering Committee Members



© Michael Sewell

### Mary Kyle McCurdy

Mary Kyle is a staff attorney at 1000 Friends of Oregon, where she specializes in urban growth management issues.



### Mike Houck

Mike is the Urban Naturalist at the Audubon Society of Portland. Mike chairs CLF's Natural Resources Working Group.



View of Portland skyline from Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge



Canoeists at Smith & Bybee Lakes



MAX Light Rail in downtown Portland



Salmon Springs Fountain in downtown Portland

*We appreciate the efforts and input we receive from our member organizations:*

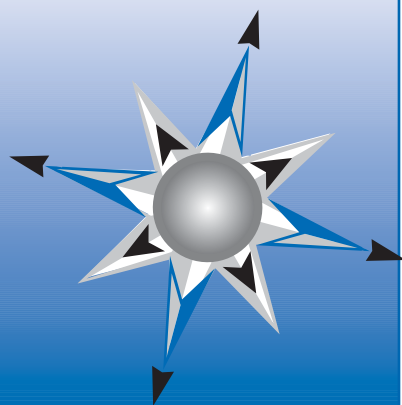
- American Institute of Architects, Portland Chapter
- American Society of Landscape Advocates
- Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates
- Audubon Society of Portland
- Bicycle Transportation Alliance
- Citizens for Sensible Transportation
- Columbia Group Sierra Club
- Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Com.
- Columbia River Region Inter-League
- Organization of the League of Women Voters
- Community Action Organization
- Community Alliance of Tenants
- Community Development Network
- Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
- Environmental Commission of the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon
- Fans of Fanno Creek
- Friends of Arnold Creek
- Friends of Goal Five
- Friends of Rock, Bronson and Willow Creeks
- Friends of Smith and Bybee Lakes
- Friends of Tryon Creek State Park
- Hillsdale Neighborhood Association
- Housing Partners, Inc.
- Jobs With Justice
- The Justice and Peace Commission of St. Ignatius Catholic Church
- Livable Oregon
- Metro Community Development Corporation
- Multnomah County Community Action Commission
- Network Behavioral Health Care, Inc.
- Northwest Housing Alternatives
- 1000 Friends of Oregon
- Oregon Council of Trout Unlimited
- Oregon Environmental Council
- Oregon Food Bank
- Oregon Housing Now Coalition
- Portland Citizens for Oregon Schools
- Portland Community Design
- Portland Housing Center
- Portland Impact
- REACH Community Development Corporation
- ROSE Community Development Corporation
- Sunnyside Methodist Church
- Tualatin Riverkeepers
- Urban League of Portland
- The Wetlands Conservancy
- Willamette Pedestrian Coalition
- Woodlawn Neighborhood Association
- XPAC

The CLF has six active working groups, made up of folks interested in a variety of livability issues. These groups meet regularly and are open to any who wish to participate! Among them are:

**The Transportation Reform Working Group** (Transformers) consists of individuals who are interested in reforming transportation throughout the Portland region. We meet the third Thursday of the month to share information and strategize about how to inform the development of good transportation policy.

**The Urban Design Working Group** This group meets regularly to talk about how design can play an important role in accommodating growth while preserving the charms and human scale of existing neighborhoods.

**The Natural Resources Working Group** This group meets regularly to affect policy that impacts water quality and fish and wildlife habitat. The Natural Resources Working Group consists of individuals who are interested in maintaining, preserving and expanding our "urban greeninfrastructure."



# Balancing the Benefits and Burdens of Growth

by Tasha Harmon,  
*Affordable housing advocate*

The Portland metropolitan area is hailed all over as the mecca of growth management, with a unique regional planning program that limits suburban sprawl and central city disinvestment. But is growth management good for low-income people? Can growth management incorporate strategies to increase equity? Our experience as advocates of affordable housing suggests that it can, but not without concerted efforts by activists.

Recent work by David Rusk, Myron Orfield, Manuel Pastor, John Powell and others lends support to growth management by demonstrating that suburban sprawl and urban disinvestment increase the isolation and challenges faced by low-income people, while reducing the overall health of the region. Others argue in favor of growth management as a less costly alternative to sprawl. They point out that sprawl increases public expenditures for new infrastructure while allowing existing infrastructure in central cities and older suburbs to disintegrate.

However, there are also costs to growth management. When we make the choice to limit the available land supply, require more parks, protect environmentally sensitive lands, and build mass transit, someone pays the price. Literally. When we improve the "livability" of a given area, we increase its desirability...and often the price of actually living there - i.e., housing. As with many neighborhood revitalization efforts, the success of growth management is too often measured by asking whether "the neighborhood" improves, without asking whether that improvement comes at the expense of low-income residents.

The Coalition for a Livable Future believes that sprawl is ultimately more costly for all of us, including the poor, than growth management done right. We would rather deal pro-actively with the challenges of growth management than abandon it altogether and allow disinvestment and sprawl. The issue, therefore, is how we redistribute the burdens and benefits of growth more fairly, and how we can use growth management strategies to reduce inequities in the region.

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## What Metro Has Done

The Portland region has taken a unique approach to growth management. In 1979, voters in the region created Metro, the only directly-elected regional government in the U.S. Metro's charter gives it broad powers to regulate land use planning throughout the three-county region, and to address what it identifies as "issues of regional concern." Metro's 2040 planning process, has, over the past nine years, engaged broad public debate and input as it developed a vision for the region's future. The results are the 2040 Growth Concept and the Regional Framework Plan, an extensive set of policies that define the shape that growth will take in the region for the next 45 years. The Regional Framework Plan, which is binding on local jurisdictions through a series of Functional Plans, calls for a compact urban form, with higher density development focused along transit corridors and in-town and regional centers; a more diverse housing stock in all communities; a diversified transportation system; and protection of greenspaces and natural resources within the urban growth boundary. Lands outside the urban growth boundary are restricted from urban

development, thus preserving our supply of farm and forest lands, as well as our beautiful recreational areas.

The Coalition feels strongly that over the long-term, progressive growth management strategies will not only increase the livability of our region, they will also increase opportunities for low-income residents. By preventing sprawl and addressing the need for more affordable housing, Metro is creating opportunities for low- and moderate-income people to live in neighborhoods *near* their jobs — and near good schools, services and healthy networks of people. Growth management done right can help the region avoid increasing areas of concentrated poverty (where 40% or more people within a given neighborhood live at or below the federal poverty level).

## Portland is Unique

Places like Chicago and Minneapolis/St. Paul have suffered from unchecked urban sprawl, where poverty concentrates in the central city and older suburbs, and jobs and wealth flee to the newer suburbs, thus creating ever-widening circles of development around a collapsing urban core. The good news is that Portland's 2040 strategies and urban growth boundary appear to be succeeding in terms of preventing the worst of the "donut effect" we see in many large cities. However, these strategies may be contributing to patterns of gentrification and rising housing prices.

In some of Portland's older neighborhoods, gentrification is causing property values to rise, leading to higher rents and housing prices. Displacement of low-income people inevitably follows. There is a great deal of redevelopment of old industrial areas into new residential neighborhoods (lofts, townhouses, and so on) largely for middle- and upper-income people without children. Housing densities in the region *are* increasing and there are more diverse housing options available for both rental and home ownership, including townhouses, smaller homes on smaller lots, apartments, etc. But these options are often not "affordable" by advocates' standards, except in some cases where they are directly subsidized.

These patterns of development appear to leave low-income people less geographically isolated than they are in many other urban regions, but still far less integrated than we would like. Portland's growth management strategies have had some positive effects on equity compared to the strategies (or lack thereof) in other areas, but the burden of growth still falls disproportionately on low-income people.

## Emphasizing Social Justice in Housing

In 1994, when the Coalition for a Livable Future (CLF) was founded, issues of housing affordability and displacement of low-income people were not on Metro's radar screen. The founders of CLF came together to propose a series of amendments

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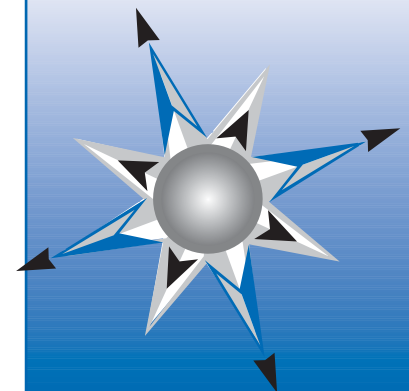
An example of good design: affordable housing units in Portland, OR

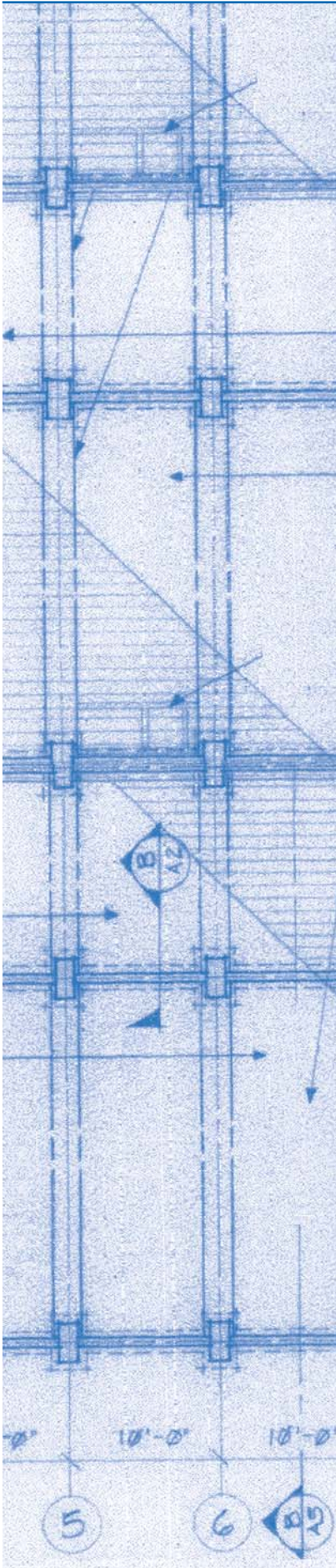
**The Religious Organization Working Group (ROWG)**  
ROWG meets regularly to work on ways to involve people of faith in shaping our communities, and to emphasize the principles of stewardship and social justice in the creation of policy throughout the Portland region. The ROWG is an inter-denominational group and welcomes diverse religious and spiritual perspectives.

**The Regional Affordable Housing Advocates (RAHA)**  
RAHA consists of individuals who are interested in the housing crisis facing the Portland region, as well as those whose lives and work are impacted by the lack of affordable housing. We meet the last Thursday of the month to share information and strategize about how to inform the development of good affordable housing policy.

**The Economic Vitality Working Group**  
This group is just beginning. We will meet regularly with people who are interested in trying to address the root causes of poverty through policy and discuss opportunities for citizen participation in local and regional governments.

*For more information contact:  
Coalition for a Livable Future  
(503) 294-2889, [clf@friends.org](mailto:clf@friends.org)*





to the 2040 growth concept. Since then, the Coalition has successfully advocated for progressive policy regarding a number of issues, including affordable housing, and equity has become much more central to discussions at Metro and among elected officials and others concerned with growth management in the local jurisdictions.

The Coalition focused its initial housing work on two issues: housing affordability; and reinvestment in existing “distressed” communities. Affordable housing became a central part of CLF’s agenda because the need was so compelling and because it was so clearly an issue that had to be addressed on the regional level. CLF was successful in persuading Metro to include stronger language regarding the importance of focusing public reinvestment in existing communities within its objectives. We also successfully advocated for establishing criteria for a “fair share” of affordable housing in each city within our urban growth boundary, so everyone shares in the responsibility of providing housing for a range of income levels. After considerable citizen input, Metro agreed to establish an affordable housing committee *and* to hire a full-time housing planner. With paid staff time and a regular forum for housing information and

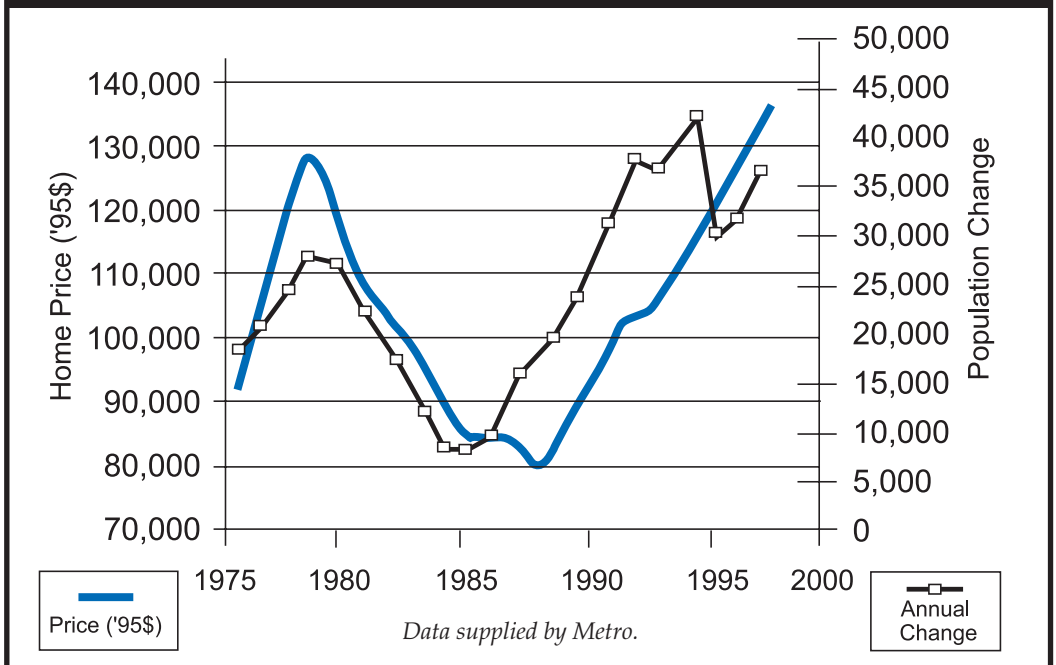
discussion, Metro is much better equipped to address the need for more affordable housing throughout our region.

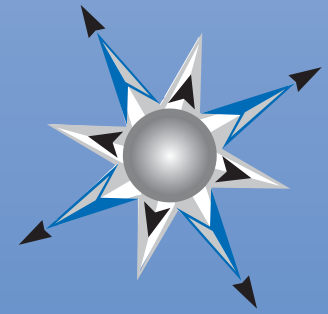
### Dispelling Some Myths

The real estate industry and others have been quick to blame growth management for raising housing prices and making housing unaffordable. But let’s consider a few facts:

- The Homebuilders Association rated Portland’s housing market as the second least affordable in the nation in 1997. They argued that the urban growth boundary (UGB) was responsible for housing price increases. The fact is, there are several U.S. cities with comparable and even higher housing prices than Portland, and none of them have UGBs. (See graph below.)
- It’s true that housing prices in the Portland region have nearly doubled in the last 10 years. Many undervalued neighborhoods have seen housing prices and rents double in the past two to three years. While Portland housing prices on average are still much lower than those in many West Coast cities, a growing affordability gap exists. This is fueled in part by the fact that during the last

## Housing Price and Population Change

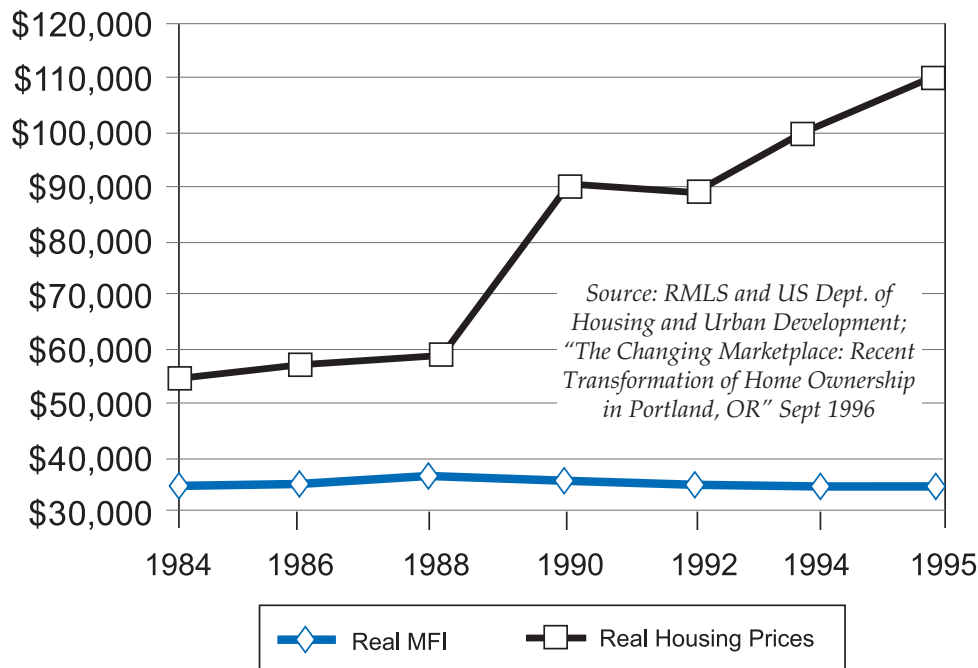




## Regional Affordable Housing Successes

In December 1997, Metro formally recognized affordable housing as “an issue of regional concern,” and it was incorporated into Metro’s Regional Framework Plan (RFP). The concept of “fair share” was mandated as an approach to helping local jurisdictions provide affordable housing throughout the region. The RFP mandates several preliminary steps that could support inclusionary zoning in the future. Metro’s policy regulating the expansion of the UGB also contains strong language about housing diversity and includes a requirement that a percentage of the housing developed on the new lands be affordable to people at or below 80% of median family income without public subsidy. The Coalition successfully advocated for an Affordable Housing Technical Advisory Committee at Metro to refine the policies in the RFP and work on additional housing affordability strategies. This committee is staffed by Metro and includes planners, advocates, homebuilders, elected officials and others. Metro also recently hired a full-time housing planner.

## Real Income vs. Real Housing Prices



decade, wages for low- and moderate-income people have not risen to reflect the economic growth in our area. (See graph above.)

In addition to criticizing the urban growth boundary, the Homebuilders Association points its finger at high system development charges (SDCs) and over-regulation as contributors to high housing prices. They cite rapidly increasing raw land prices since 1990 and argue that the way to ensure sufficient affordable housing is to expand the UGB by more than 10,000 acres, decrease regulation and SDCs, and let “the market” correct the problem. There are a number of flaws within this analysis.

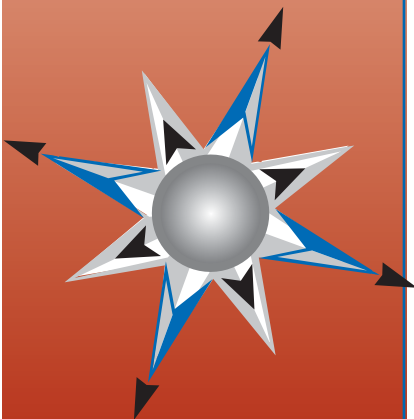
First, there is no evidence that bringing more land inside the UGB would actually bring home prices down. Data provided by Metro shows clearly that during the last rapid growth boom in the region (between 1973 and 1979) when there was still a large surplus of undeveloped land *within* the UGB, there was a housing price increase almost identical to the one we’re experiencing today. Demand for housing is what determined the going price then and now. And since real estate is a speculative venture, for-profit developers will usually charge as much as

they think people will pay for their products, regardless of what it actually costs to build them.

Second, there are many other variables that determine whether affordable housing gets built. Other factors besides land costs are involved in the housing cost equation. For example, the average house size in this region has increased by 20% in the last 15 years and street parking requirements are very different now than they were when much of Portland’s existing single family housing stock was built. Building materials, lot size, and labor all help determine the overall cost. And proximity to amenities like parks, transit, and services also play a role. Many homebuilders have recognized community resistance to housing built on smaller lots, including townhouses, row-houses, duplexes, accessory dwelling units, and multi-family housing. Banks have been reticent in lending for projects that differ much from traditional suburban subdivisions, despite strong demand for Portland’s charming, neighborhood-scale multi-family housing built along old streetcar lines (Hawthorne, Belmont, Northwest 23rd Avenue, etc.).

➤ GROWTH Continued on page 13.

“The real importance of this discussion is the realization that the metropolitan area is suffering from a series of problems that are too large for an individual city to confront alone...”



ORFIELD REPORT, continued from cover.

In other words, the seeds of metropolitan decay are present in the Portland region and threaten our collective future. Orfield reports that:

- In 1980 there were three census tracts in Portland in which more than 40% of the households lived at or below the federal poverty line. By 1990 there were 10 such tracts. Moreover, for the first time, a number of census tracts emerged in the older suburbs showing more than 20% of households in poverty.
- Between 1980 and 1990, childhood poverty increased 49% in the region's older, blue-collar suburbs. Meanwhile, the percentage of poor children declined in the wealthier suburbs with rapidly increasing property values.
- During the high growth period of 1990-94, job growth in the wealthier suburbs (notably Wilsonville and Tualatin) was five times faster than the rate of job growth in Portland and many southeastern suburbs.

So, poverty is concentrating in Portland and in the region's older, blue-collar suburbs just as investment and job growth are favoring the wealthy suburbs. Unless reversed, these trends could tear the Portland region apart like so many other North American cities.

A critical piece of Orfield's analysis is the assertion that these problems are not the inevitable workings of fate or the market. They are created, in part, by the structure of governance in urban regions. The fragmentation of a single economic, social and environmental region into many different governments allows newer suburbs to avoid social and fiscal responsibilities by creating zoning and other barriers to lower cost housing. Their rate base advantages and absence of social problems are attractions for new industry.

We want to ensure that government investment patterns common elsewhere don't happen here. Those patterns tend to direct infrastructure improvements to high growth, high-income areas. Wealthier suburban communities benefit from new roads and highways, new schools and new

sewer services while existing infrastructure and services in the inner city deteriorate. Coordinated approaches to regional environmental problems are frustrated by the obstacles of persuading many governments, with overlapping but partial authority, to work together.

Orfield outlines several critical remedies to these frightening trends, including sound land use planning, property tax-base sharing, and regional affordable housing to name a few. According to Orfield, the key to implementing these solutions is to adopt regional approaches and strategies through regional governance. Fortunately, we have Metro, which has the mandate and the power to bring the region's jurisdictions together to create these approaches and strategies. Thus, we have a tool that no other region has as we face the challenges outlined in "Portland Metropolitics."

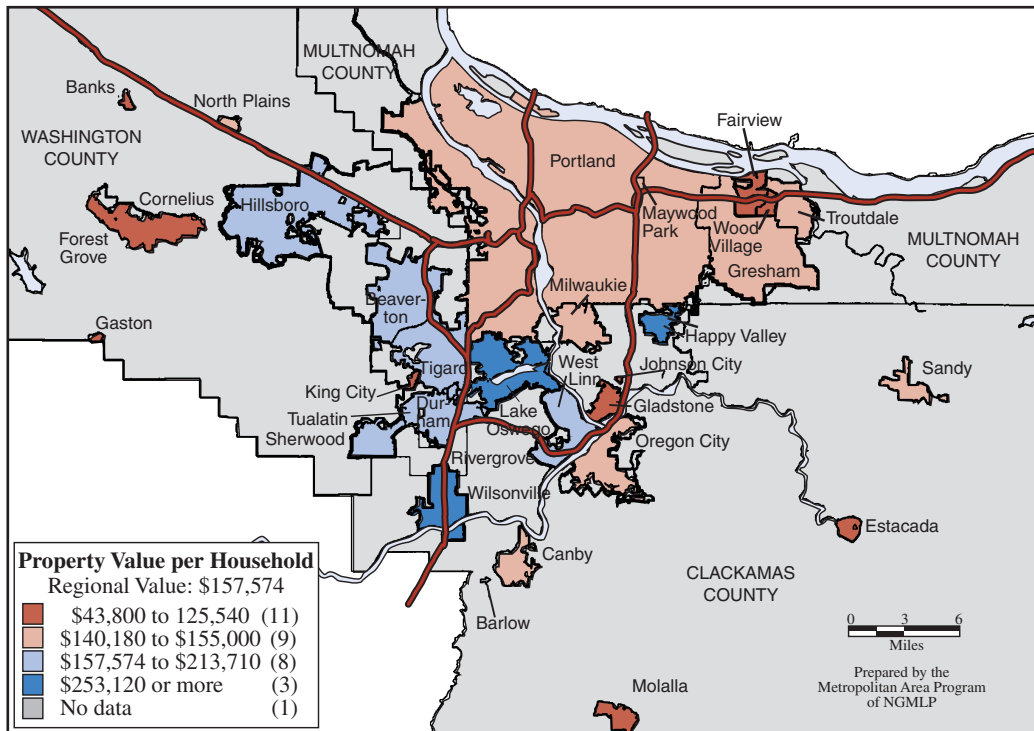
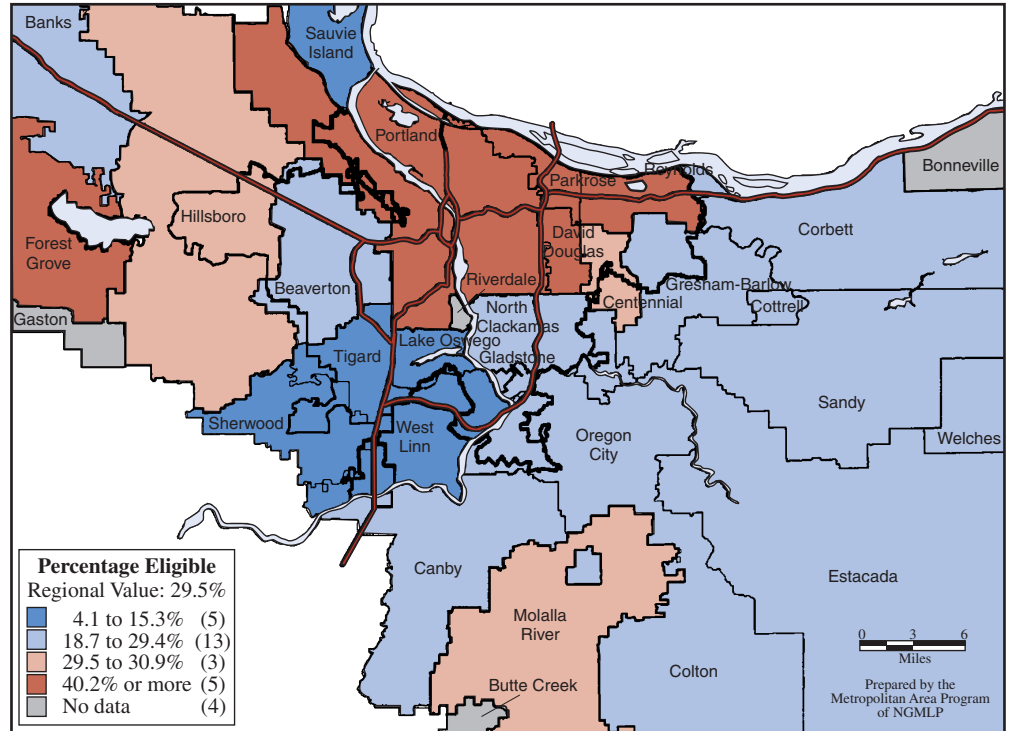
Last year, the Metro Council adopted the Regional Framework Plan, which contains far-reaching policies and mandates that will direct the region's future growth. It includes strong and innovative approaches to many important regional challenges. Unfortunately, the Plan does too little to address these trends towards polarization of income, concentrations of poverty, and fiscal and other inequities. Based on the findings in "Portland Metropolitics," the Coalition is working to promote fair share affordable housing standards, inclusionary zoning, strong protections for urban streams, and multi-modal transportation requirements. Other solutions, such as tax-base sharing and strategies to address the needs of low-income workers, have yet to make it to the regional decision-making table.

“The real importance of this discussion is the realization that the metropolitan area is suffering from a series of problems that are too large for an individual city to confront alone, that they are the same problems that have caused the decline of other urban centers, and that unless we concentrate our efforts on finding new solutions, we can expect no better outcome,” states Orfield. “Regional cooperation creates a stronger base for the development of a promising future for everyone in the region.” Through its continuing work and the release of this report, CLF hopes to help build this base of cooperation between diverse communities and interests. ✧



**Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Meals, 1997**

The percentage of students eligible for free and reduced school lunches is an important indicator of poverty, especially between census data.



**Property Value Per Household, 1996**

This map illustrates the fiscal disparities between Portland and some of the older suburbs and what Orfield calls “the favored quarter” or southwest part of the region.

If you would like to order a copy of Myron Orfield’s report, please see the order form on page 15 of this newsletter.

# Linking the Issues

What do transportation reform, protection of greenspaces, affordable housing, economic equity and urban design have in common?

A lot, if you believe what local advocates, and elected officials, are saying...

## How We Started

In November of 1994, Myron Orfield visited Portland to present his findings on growth trends across the country. Orfield, State Representative from Minnesota, had researched several major U.S. cities and found a recurring pattern of sprawl and urban decay.

As cities grow, they tend to expand outward in suburban developments, which often are costly to taxpayers and the environment. These new developments require new infrastructure in the way of roads, sewers, schools and services, and they pave over valuable natural resources including farm and forest lands. They also tend to lure people and businesses away from the central city with the promise of new houses, better social services and fewer social problems. As families and industry abandon the central city, the city itself declines. There are fewer resources available to those who are left behind, and a self-reinforcing cycle of growing poverty begins. Even with strategies like "enterprise zones," which are designed to focus attention and money back into central city neighborhoods, these areas often become increasingly isolated by income and race. Suburban sprawl is directly linked to urban decay.

Myron's 'story' opened the eyes of several local activists who might not have otherwise found common ground.

People whose interests included affordable housing, protection of natural resources, land use, transportation reform and economic justice came together and founded the Coalition for a Livable Future. The original members of the Coalition crafted a detailed set of principles to guide their work, and they saw the opportunity to carry out their goals at a regional level. They set their sights on Metro, our elected regional government, as a vehicle for progressive policy that could ultimately improve the quality of life and "livability" of the entire Portland area, including the suburban cities of Gresham, Beaverton, Hillsboro and others. This focus on "regionalism" and the Coalition's integration of diverse issues are what make it a unique, ground-breaking organization.

Founded in 1994 as the *Coalition for a Livable Future* — by 1000 Friends of Oregon, the Urban League of Portland, the Community Development Network, the Audubon Society of Portland, Bicycle Transportation Alliance and Sensible Transportation Options for People — the group's goal was to offer real, working solutions to some of Portland's problems. The Coalition wasted no time in submitting 15 pages of policy recommendations to the Metro Council, two thirds of which were quickly adopted as part of a policy document outlining goals and objectives for the region! That initial success inspired the group to move forward. We have grown in the last four years to over 40 members, and we have become

a respected and influential player in the arena of regional planning. As the diversity and experience of our membership grows, our effectiveness increases as well.

## Our Vision

The picture painted by Myron Orfield's presentation was that Portland could be next in the chain of cities to succumb to the pitfalls of sprawl and decay. We might become the next Minneapolis/St. Paul (Myron's home town), or the next Detroit, with huge gaps between wealthy and poor neighborhoods, and concentrated poverty spiraling out of control. The activists who heard his warning realized that they each had an interest in preventing that kind of scenario. Environmentalists didn't want to see sprawl literally paving over the wetlands and greenspaces at the edge of the city. Transportation advocates wanted to get away from low-density, or spread-out development that was only accessible by car. Community activists concerned with living wage jobs didn't want to see businesses lured away from the central city to the suburbs (where they are hard to reach by public transit). Affordable housing advocates wanted low and moderate-income people to have the choice of living near their jobs, near good schools and other community assets, not isolated from the rest of the region. They all began to see the connections between their work as activists for specific causes.



CLF activists pack the hearing room at Metro Council.

The original members of the Coalition joined forces for a number of reasons:

- to educate themselves about each other's work;
- to brainstorm a holistic approach to urban planning;
- to increase their ability to influence public policy, and;
- to raise money for people to carry out their vision.

The vision is somewhat of a return to pre-World War II era, human scale planning—where public transit outpaced the automobile, and parks, sidewalks and other common spaces were standard issue for neighborhoods. Neighborhoods were often home to people with different backgrounds and income levels. Apartments were often built above shops and businesses, providing benefits for both shopkeepers and residents: residents provided the customer base necessary to keep the shops open, and the businesses provided basic items and services for residents right in their neighborhoods.

The Coalition promotes its vision for a healthy and equitable region through a combination of policy work, public outreach and research.

## Partnerships Make it Work

Partnerships make the efforts of CLF work — partnerships between member organizations, with outside groups who share our ideals, and with elected officials and planners. Many advocates within the Coalition have years of expertise in their chosen issue areas. It is this very expertise, plus a strong sense of mutual trust and respect, that allows us to work together to craft common policy and promote integrated solutions. Perhaps one of the greatest strengths of the Coalition for a Livable Future has been the ability to build bridges between issues that have historically been separate or even pitted against each other. The advocacy work done around affordable housing for the Regional Framework Plan was an excellent example of this collaboration.

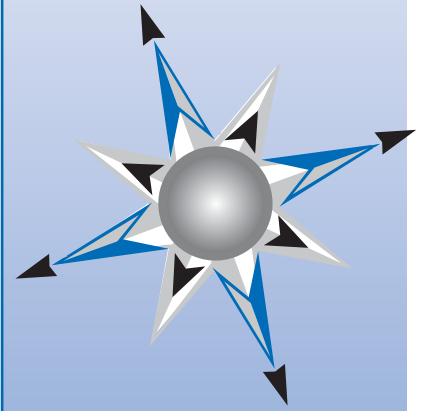
In the fall of 1997, public hearings were held at Metro to discuss, among other things, regional affordable housing policy. Coalition members testifying in support of strong housing policies spoke from a range of personal and professional backgrounds. Deb Lippoldt, of Oregon Food Bank, noted that high housing costs mean people have less money to spend on food, which directly impacts her work. Mike Houck, a well-respected advocate for natural resources and the environment, pointed out that housing and greenspaces are both necessary pieces of the livability puzzle. Equally compelling were the personal stories of people who were struggling to make ends meet for themselves and their families. Thanks to this broad-based and integrated testimony, the Coalition persuaded Metro to adopt progressive housing policies that otherwise wouldn't have had a chance.

As the members of CLF began to look, they found many such connections:

- Land use activists and social justice advocates *both* have reason to support a compact urban growth boundary because it redirects investment back into the central city.
- Transportation reformers and affordable housing advocates *both* have reason to support good public transit because it enables low-income people to travel without having to own and maintain a car.
- Affordable housing advocates and environmentalists and transportation reformers *all* have reason to support a regional fair share of affordable housing because it means shorter trips between home and work, leading to less demand for new roads and less air and water pollution from automobiles.
- Environmentalists and land use activists *both* have reason to support ample greenspaces within our urban area because parks and natural areas become more important to communities as densities increase.

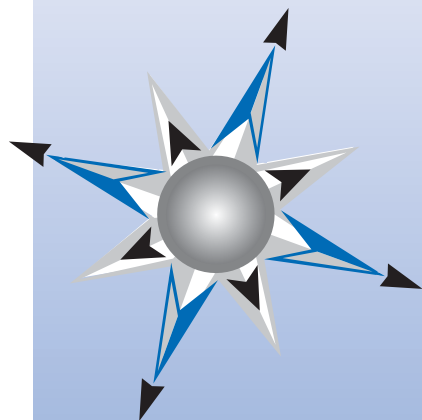
These communities form the foundation of the Coalition's work. Because we recognize our common cause, we can work together effectively to improve the region's future.

➤ Continued on page 12.



## Sprawl and Decay Are Linked

The city of Detroit now has multiple rings of suburbs surrounding a depressed downtown. One former resident tells the story of how, as a child, he used to walk to work with his father, from their home in Detroit to the local General Motors plant. 40 years later, his father drives an hour and a half to get to his job at the same GM plant, which has moved to a more prosperous outlying suburb.



## Looking Ahead

Since December 1997, when the Metro Council adopted its Regional Framework Plan (RFP) — a blueprint for how our region will grow over the next 40 years — the Coalition has begun to turn its focus outward, to the cities and communities within our urban area. These are the real life testing grounds for the policies contained in the RFP. Some of the policies that the Coalition has supported include:

- establishing a “fair share” of affordable housing within each jurisdiction, so that all parts of the region share the responsibility for housing low and moderate-income citizens;
- restricting development in floodplains and providing ‘buffer zones’ of 50-200 feet along streams and other waterways;
- promoting transportation choices through Metro’s Regional Transportation Plan;
- ... and others related to monitoring the economic health of our region, maintaining our compact urban growth boundary and promoting innovative urban design.

Some of these ideas were controversial and took a concerted effort by the Coalition and its community partners to convince the Metro Council that they were necessary. Thanks to all those who attended hearings, wrote letters, testified or otherwise supported this effort, important and innovative policies were approved. It’s now up to Portland and its surrounding cities to incorporate these policies into their growth plans. We may see similar battles waged at the local level between officials and citizens over how to define their roles in providing affordable housing, protecting greenspaces, and meeting other requirements of Metro’s mandates. The Coalition will serve as a resource, supporting local communities in implementing and putting these policies to work. We want to share the concept of “regionalism,” a way of seeing the links between the 24 cities within our urban growth boundary, and charting a path to a livable future for the entire metropolitan area. And with the help of forward-thinking citizens and planners, we hope to preserve our unique quality of life...even as we grow. ✧

Celebrating at CLF’s  
2nd anniversary party,  
November 1996.

## The Message is Spreading

Portland City Commissioner, Erik Sten recently spoke out for affordable housing funding by publicly challenging the City to match the amount of funds dedicated to light rail expansion. In his statement, he highlighted the fact that *both* public transportation and affordable housing are necessary for a healthy community.



From left to right: Britt Parrott, Bob Stacey, Tom Christ and Mary Kyle McCurdy.

Affordable housing units in Washington County, Oregon



➤ GROWTH continued from page 7.

## Using Policies to Our Advantage

So, growth management shouldn't bear all the blame for our lack of affordable housing; in fact, used effectively, it can help us address the problem. The Coalition believes that increased demand, weak regulations and desire for profit have forced housing prices and rents up. Our solution is to encourage Metro and local governments to make pro-active housing affordability strategies a central part of the growth management strategies for the region. To this end, we have supported the kinds of zoning changes Metro is mandating, pushed for more local and state funding for subsidized housing, and worked to strengthen the nonprofit housing sector. We have proposed adoption of a variety of regulatory tools to facilitate affordable housing development, including:

- Inclusionary Zoning — A percentage of the housing units in any project above a given size should be affordable to people of moderate incomes without public subsidy.
- Replacement Ordinance — This would require the replacement of affordable housing lost to demolition or conversion.
- Condo Conversion Ordinance — This would regulate conversion of affordable rental housing to ownership, providing protection for tenants and the rapidly shrinking supply of affordable rental units.
- Permanent Affordability in Exchange for Public Subsidy — Property owners receiving public subsidies for housing units must agree to maintain affordability for the lifetime of the units.
- Government Investment Tax — This measure would capture a significant percentage of the increase in land values that occurs due to government regulation (i.e., bringing new parcels into the UGB) or investment.
- Speculation Tax — Penalties on rapid resale of properties for high profit without major improvements made to those properties.

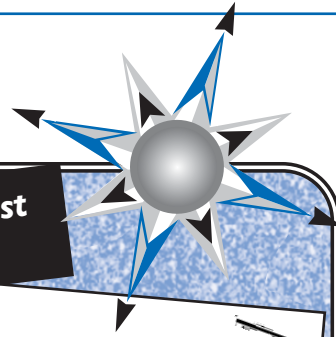
## Struggles Ahead

The progress we have made so far is encouraging, and we hope to build on it. However, it remains to be seen whether the public will support the growth management policies Metro is promoting, including those related to affordable housing. While popular opinion seems to be in favor of maintaining a compact urban form, many people have serious qualms about the increase in density needed to achieve it. And there has been a major backlash among some local jurisdictions against Metro's stance on affordable housing.

External pressures add to the hurdles we must jump. Oregon has passed two regressive property-tax limitation measures in the past four years. These severely restrict local government funding for important infrastructure and services. Major fiscal inequities still exist between cities in our region; some are thriving while others struggle. Funding for public schools, which educate 90% of school-age children in Portland, has been significantly cut. Recent mandatory sentencing measures are forcing the state to increase its spending on new prisons, leaving less in the budget for other valuable programs. Tax-base sharing programs could help address many of these problems, but they will be difficult to design without a total overhaul of our tax system first.

Growth management *can* play a positive role in addressing the needs of low- and moderate-income people. But it requires vigilance. As the struggle moves forward, we need to be constantly asking ourselves what it will take to create a truly progressive growth management program. We need to listen to those who often don't attend public hearings and meetings because of work responsibilities, health problems or childcare and transportation costs. We must empower ourselves and our neighbors to speak about our vision for a fair, sustainable, inclusive community. And, we must constantly look for new tools and approaches for addressing equity issues as part of our growth management strategies. ✧

# CLF Notes Community Bulletin Board



## CLF Joins In Legal Action to Protect Title 3

After three years of hard work to successfully pass Title 3 (to protect floodplains and water quality) the Coalition and many of its members are now working to preserve Title 3 against a challenge by the Metropolitan Homebuilders and others at Oregon's Land Use Board of Appeals. Audubon Society of Portland is taking a lead role in the intervention and 1000 Friends of Oregon is providing pro bono legal assistance. Other CLF member organizations joining in the intervention are the Tualatin Riverkeepers, Cedar Mill Creek Watershed Watch, Friends of Kellogg & Mt Scott Creeks, Friends of Rock, Bronson & Willow Creeks, Friends of Arnold Creek, Friends of Goal 5 and eight individuals intervening on behalf of Metro and Title 3.

## Welcome Our Newest Staff Members

### Meet Geraline (Geri) Washington

I have lived in Portland, Oregon for 37 years. I completed my grade school education at Alameda Grade School and graduated from Grant High School. I then enrolled at Mt. Hood Community College, and have continued my education at OSU, PCC and PSU. I raised, as a single parent, three beautiful, now young adults - the youngest will graduate from Cleveland High School in 1999. My love and devotion to youth has given me the opportunity to enjoy and share in the growth of my three grandchildren (a five year old and a set of twins, age two).

I have first-hand knowledge of how hard it is to work for a living and maintain a household. My work experience includes working at an early age in the berry fields of Oregon, as well as harvesting nuts and beans, contributing to Oregon's economic development. As an adult, my work experience has included many different avenues, from trade export to union organizing. Community development and its growth seems to play a major part in my life. My life direction has led me to become, over the last 15 years, an active member of my church choir, as well as a Sunday School teacher. I have also been actively involved with community organizations, including the Portland Rainbow Coalition, Jobs with Justice, The National Organizer Alliance, The Women's Project, The Black United Front, The New Party, The Oregon Black Legislative Round Table, The Oregon Tradeswomen Network, The Urban League of Portland and the PTA.

As a 'team member' of the Coalition, I see that through the joint efforts of work with CLF and the Urban League of Portland, my dreams of making a better world for the future can now truly be fulfilled.

### New Members

The Coalition welcomes 3 new member organizations! On October 5, 1998 we voted in the following groups:

- The Justice and Peace Commission of St. Ignatius Catholic Church
- Columbia Group Sierra Club
- Oregon Council of Trout Unlimited

## CALENDAR EVENTS

### November, December

#### **Wild In The City Greenspaces Field Trips**

This field trip series explores a variety of regional Greenspaces on foot, by canoe and by bicycle. Pre-registration (with \$5 fee) is required for all trips by calling 823-5132 at the Portland Park Bureau.

Friends of Clark County and the Associated Students of Clark College are co-sponsoring a series of educational forums focused on growth management:

#### November 7, Saturday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

"Growth Management and Our Children: How Can Smart Growth Ensure a Quality Future for Our Children and Community"

#### December 8, Tuesday, 7 - 9 p.m.

"Growth Management and Housing: How Can Smart Growth Ensure Affordable and Quality Housing for All"

Please call Friends of Clark County at (360) 695-5570 or contact them by email at focc@teleport.com for details.

### Meet Britt Parrott

I have lived in Portland for a little over 3 years and recently completed a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning at Portland State University. I grew up near Nashville, Tennessee, in a small town that is now a suburb of Nashville.

I have also lived in Southern California, Chicago, downstate Illinois, and Minneapolis. In Chicago, I worked at a suburban bookstore in an upscale suburban community where I could not afford to live.

My main goals as the affordable housing advocate for the Coalition are to help people make the connections between affordable housing, transportation, workforce development, and growth management; help establish a stable regional and/or statewide funding source for affordable housing; and to help prevent the further loss of affordable housing within the region.

To order a copy of Myron Orfield's analysis of growth patterns in the Portland region, please fill out this form and mail to: **The Coalition for a Livable Future, 534 SW 3rd Ave., Suite 300, Portland, Oregon, 97204 - or call (503) 294-2889.**

## *"Portland Metropolitcs: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability"*

Executive Summary.....\$ 2

Full Report.....\$ 15

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Please make checks payable to **1000 Friends of Oregon.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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## OUR OBJECTIVES

### **1. Protecting, maintaining and restoring the social and economic health of our urban, suburban, and rural communities, especially the distressed parts of the region;**

- (a) Preventing displacement of low and moderate income residents and people of color as neighborhoods improve;
- (b) Assuring easy and equitable access to employment and affordable housing throughout the region;
- (c) Promoting the preservation and development of housing affordable to low and moderate income residents throughout the region;
- (d) Protecting, maintaining and encouraging the development of living wage jobs, small businesses, and community-based and sustainable economic development throughout the region;
- (e) Reversing the polarization of income and raising income and opportunities for the region's low-income residents;
- (f) Preserving and enhancing a high quality public education system for all parts of the region and all residents;

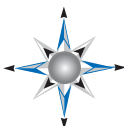
### **2. Developing a more sustainable relationship between human residents and the ecosystems of this region;**

- (a) Reducing consumption (particularly of non-renewable resources), pollution, and waste;
- (b) Changing the patterns of urban expansion from low-density suburban sprawl, which relies on the automobile and wastes valuable farm and forest lands and other natural resources, to more compact neighborhoods with a mix of uses conveniently served by public transportation;
- (c) Expanding transportation options, including reducing dependency on automobiles and vehicle miles traveled per capita and increasing transit, bike and walking opportunities throughout the region;
- (d) Protecting, restoring and maintaining healthy watersheds, fish and wildlife and their habitats, greenspaces, and other natural resources within and outside urban growth boundaries;
- (e) Ensuring that the built and natural environment are integrated in a sustainable manner that supports neighborhood livability and protects wetlands, streams, water quality, air quality and the natural landscape and recognizes that both natural resources and humans are part of the urban ecosystem;
- (f) Addressing past, present and future issues of environmental equity including: the siting and clean up of polluting industries and waste disposal sites, remediation of toxic waste sites and water pollution, and the distribution of neighborhood parks, trails, and greenspaces;

### **3. Assuring the fair distribution of tax burdens and government investment within the region;**

### **4. Promoting a diverse and tolerant society;**

### **5. Increasing public understanding of these regional growth management issues, developing effective democratic discourse, and promoting broader citizen participation in decision-making regarding growth in our region.**



Connections is the Journal of the Coalition for a Livable Future. Contact us at (503) 294-2889 or [clf@friends.org](mailto:clf@friends.org)

Editor: Lisa Jackson

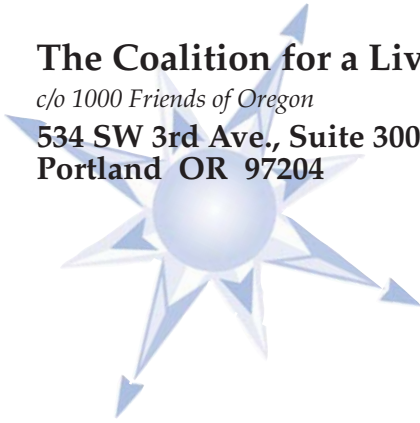
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c/o 1000 Friends of Oregon

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## *Become Involved in the Coalition for a Livable Future*



### Our Mission

The purpose of the Coalition for a Livable Future is to protect, restore, and maintain healthy, equitable, and sustainable communities, both human and natural, for the benefit of present and future residents of the greater metropolitan region.

Please send information about :

New Membership

Making a Donation

Volunteering

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I want to subscribe to CLF's e-mail list to receive information about events and opportunities related to our region's livability.

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