CONVECTIONS VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1 SUMMER/FALL 2001

The Journal of the Coalition for a Livable Future

Campaign for a Livable Future

By Jill Fuglister, Coalition for a Livable Future



Announcing the Coalition's campaign to create communities where...

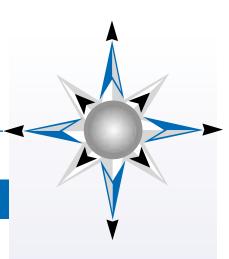
Our neighborhoods are safe, walkable, affordable and vibrant; Our transportation system accommodates people, bikes and cars; There is easy access to parks and natural areas; Wildlife flourishes and our rivers and streams are healthy; People find a mix of housing types and costs throughout the region; We all have access to fresh locally grown foods; All residents have access to decent, family-wage jobs; Citizens from all backgrounds engage in civic life.

he quality of life of residents of the Portland metropolitan region is threatened by rapid changes in the development of our communities. Regionwide, a majority of our waterways have severe water quality problems and we continue to lose open space at an accelerating rate. Our ability to accomplish everyday tasks has decreased because of congestion and limited transportation choices. Air quality grows worse, threatening community health and obscuring Portland's precious Mt. Hood views.

The region also is experiencing a growing gap between its richest and poorest citizens and communities as new wealth increasingly flows to a handful of individuals and upscale communities in the region. With housing costs rising at more than twice the rate of incomes, metro area residents spend more on housing needs and have become less food secure.

Fear of change and lack of understanding about the influence of public policy on how communities develop also threatens

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Campaign for a Livable **Future**

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Teresa Huntsinger explores making suburban communities more livable and sustainable while protecting their unique characteristics. (page 8)

Connections is the journal of the Coalition for a Livable Future (CLF), a network of nonprofit organizations in the Portland-Vancouver 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 60 diverse member organizations.

CLF holds regular public forums for discussion of regional livability topics. CLF Members meet six times a year in locations throughout the metro area to learn about and discuss current issues of interest, and make policy decisions for the Coalition. Our Board of Trustees 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, economic vitality, religious outreach, food policy, urban design and transportation reform.

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

The following people are elected members of CLF's Board of Trustees.

Ron Carley, Urban Conservationist for Audubon Society of Portland Sheara Cohen, Policy Associate for Community Development Network Lenny Dee, Citizen Activist Alan Hipólito, Citizen Activist Mike Houck, Urban Naturalist for Audubon Society of Portland Steve Johnson, Doctoral Candidate in Urban Studies at Portland State University Mary Kyle McCurdy, Staff Attorney for 1000 Friends of Oregon Marcy McInelly, Architect and Business Owner Brian Newman. Willamette Pedestrian

Brian Newman, Willamette Pedestrian Coalition

Loretta Pickerell, Citizen Activist, Friends of Goal 5

Becky Smith, Homeless Services Manager for Community Action Organization of Hillsboro

Ross Williams, Outreach Coordinator for Citizens for Sensible Transportation

CLF Staff members include:

Jill Fuglister, Program Coordinator Teresa Huntsinger, Assistant Coordinator Joey Lyons, N/NE Portland Outreach Worker

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

n addition to research and public education, the Coalition advocates for progressive regional policy regarding land use, transportation, housing, public investment, economic equity, food access 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 cities and counties within our urban area, and beyond.

The Benefits of Joining a Coalition

The Coalition currently consists of over 60 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. Members must support CLF's mission and objectives (see page 15). Members may participate in any of our working groups, as well as our full Coalition and Board of Trustees meetings, and other CLF events.

CLF Member Profiles

Meet Two Members of the Coalition's Board of Trustees



Becky Smith

Becky Smith is Homeless Services Manager for Community Action Organization in Hillsboro. She has worked with homeless families since 1991. Becky is also involved with the Housing Advocates Group in Washington County. She joined CLF's Board of Trustees in November, 2000. Becky keeps this quote by William Fuller on her desk: "For a community to be whole and healthy, it must be based on people's love and concern for each other."

Ron Carley

Ron Carley is the Urban Conservationist for Audubon Society of Portland, a founding member of CLF. Having been involved with community groups for nearly 20 years, he offers these words to live by (with a bow to Ed Abbey): "Sympathy without action is the ruination of the soul."

Ron is currently Vice President of CLF's Board of Trustees and co-chair of CLF's Natural Resources Working Group.



> Campaign, continued from front cover

our region's livability. CLF recognizes that the region will continue to change, and wants to ensure that all residents understand the changes that are occurring and have the opportunity to participate in shaping them. With the Portland/Vancouver area's population projected to grow by 14% in the next 10 years¹, tremendous stress will be placed on the region's already strained infrastructure and natural resources. This demands more than ever before that we learn how to work together, provide visionary leadership, and make choices for the common good.

In order to meet the urgent growth management needs of the region's citizens, CLF is launching a three-year strategy called the Campaign for a Livable Future. The project integrates issues of fairness and social justice with environmental protection to address problems caused by growth and past development patterns.

CLF's key initiatives of the Campaign for a Livable Future:

- Retrofitting the Suburbs—Transforming car-dependent suburbs into walkable, mixed-income communities where residents have ample access to parks and natural areas.
- 2) Renewing the Central City for All—Ensuring that inner city neighborhood revitalization efforts benefit existing residents and preserve community values.
- 3) CLF Program Integration, Capacity Development and Mobilization—To put in place the financial, technical, and development resources necessary for success, CLF is seeking funding to significantly augment its integration and coordination of collaborative action and build organizational capacity to fully meet the goals of Campaign for a Livable Future.

Retrofitting the Suburbs

Portland's suburban communities are not monolithic in their environmental, social, physical, and economic needs and assets. However, what unites them is that they all are struggling with the regional goals adopted by Metro because the long-range changes it anticipates are poorly understood and quite different from the existing expectations of suburban residents. With less civic organization capacity and fewer CLF members, the suburban based CLF members and allies are less equipped to effectively engage communities in retrofitting traditional suburban development to enhance community livability.

With sustained technical assistance, outreach and organizing over the next three years, we will achieve targets for sustainable and equitable development with respect to a range of issues, including affordable housing, redevelopment, economic vitalization, environmental protection and restoration, transportation, food security and sustainability, and the protection of rural lands. Three-year targets include:

- ➤ Maximum funding allocations for non-auto transportation projects throughout the region
- ➤ 20,000 acres protected for water quality needs, open space and wildlife habitat
- ➤ 9,000 new units of affordable housing created throughout the region
- ➤ Suburban redevelopment problems resolved using traditional neighborhood design principles that are consistent with CLF's livability objectives
- ➤ 5000 citizens activated to participate in implementing strategies for sustainable and equitable development.
- ➤ Minimal urban growth boundary expansions
- ➤ Completion of a large-scale greenfield development design that meets the criteria consistent with CLF's livability objectives

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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
Better People

Bicycle Transportation Alliance Citizens for Sensible Transportation Columbia Group Sierra Club

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

Columbia River Region Inter-League Organization of the League of Women Voters

Community Action Organization Community Alliance of Tenants

Community Development Network Creative Information, Transformation, Education

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

Elders in Action
The Enterprise Foundation

Environmental Commission of the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon

Fans of Fanno Creek

Friends of Arnold Creek

Friends of Clark County

Friends of Goal Five

Friends of Rock, Bronson and Willow Creeks

Friends of Smith and Bybee Lakes Friends of Trees

Friends of Tryon Creek State Park Growing Gardens

Hillsdale Neighborhood Association

Housing Partners, Inc.
Jobs With Justice

The Justice and Peace Commission of St. Ignatius Catholic Church

Keepers of the Water Livable Oregon

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 Sustainable Agriculture Land Trust People's Food Co-op

Portland Citizens for Oregon Schools

Portland Community Land Trust Portland Housing Center

Portland Impact

REACH Community Development Corporation

ROSE Community Development Corporation

Sisters of the Road Cafe Southeast Uplift Neighborhood Program

Sustainable Communities Northwest

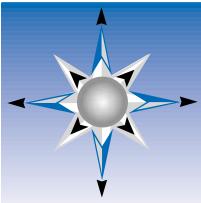
Sunnyside Methodist Church Tualatin Riverkeepers

Tualatin Valley Housing Partners

Urban League of Portland The Wetlands Conservancy

Willamette Pedestrian Coalition Willamette Riverkeeper

Woodlawn Neighborhood Association



The CLF has several working groups made up of folks interested in a variety of livability issues. Working groups guide the Coalition's activities, and they are the best way for interested individuals and organizations to get involved with CLF. Working groups are open to any who wish to participate! For more information, please contact the working group chairperson.

The Washington County Housing Advocates Group is a coalition of organizations and individuals working to promote healthy diverse communities in Washington County by stabilizing and increasing the supply of affordable and accessible housing. We strive to achieve four goals: (1) coordinating advocacy, (2) organizing communities, (3) educating the public, and (4) developing resources. We meet the first Wednesday of each month at Beaverton City Hall. For more information: Tualatin Valley Housing Partners, 503-641-5437.

The Transportation Reform **Working Group (Transformers)** consists of individuals who are interested in reforming transportation throughout the Portland region. We meet the first Wednesday of the month, from 3:30-5:00 p.m. at 1000 Friends of Oregon (534 SW 3rd Ave., 3rd floor), to share information and strategize about how to inform the development of good transportation policy. For information call Ross Williams, Citizens for Sensible Transportation 503-225-0003 or ross@cfst.org.

Solutions to Displacement

How we get from here to there

By Sheara Cohen, Community Development Network

fter several *Connections* articles and the recent media attention to concerns about displacement in the Interstate Urban Renewal Area and the West End, you might be asking yourself, "How do we get out of this mess?" I surely was when I first began grappling with the issue. The first thing I realized was that I had to understand why this is happening. Is it a new trend, or is it how our economy works? Then I could evaluate solutions. Here's what I learned.



People are displaced when rents and home costs in their area rise faster than incomes, making it unaffordable to stay in their often long-time neighborhoods. This cycle occurs repeatedly in the context of our current real estate market, and the problem is rooted in how that market is structured.

Displacement is the symptom of a housing market not balanced by social policy. Home prices and rents in our current real estate market are primarily affected by demand. As poor or working class neighborhoods become more desirable to new, wealthier, and often white investors or residents, (because of hard-won community improvements, diversity, urban flavor, or affordability) housing costs go up. The term describing this pattern of investment is

What is displacement?

It is the forced movement of people out of and away from their neighborhoods because of rising costs of housing. Displacement has historically been known to create an almost complete cultural, economic, and identity shift of a neighborhood and its residents. It moves poor, working poor, working class residents, and often people of color, immigrants and elderly out, while moving an influx of wealthier, often white residents in.



Many of Portland's historic neighborhoods are experiencing skyrocketing housing prices, which force long-time residents to move elsewhere. Our region needs to quickly adopt policies to stop the gentrification/displacement cycle and create diverse, mixed-income communities.

gentrification. The end result of gentrification is often the disappearance of the very diversity, urban flavor, and affordability newcomers sought, and the displacement of families, often people of color, who grew up there.

The flip side of this story is that of the communities before they became "hip," and of the communities where displaced families relocate. Political and economic abandonment is exactly what makes those communities affordable to the poor and working poor families who live there. Disinvestment, in fact and unfortunately, is the most available means for housing affordability in our region, and much of the country. So, rather than public policy that ensures a range of housing affordability exists alongside economic opportunity in every community, what exists instead is communities of poverty without the resources to get out less they risk another round of gentrification.

These cycles are affected positively or negatively by public policies. The trick is to balance the natural tendencies of the real estate market, rather than to fuel its propensity for stratifying communities.

Is displacement a new problem?

The crisis facing neighborhoods in Interstate and the process that began making inroads a decade ago in the Hawthorne and Belmont neighborhoods are not new. Geographic

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shifting of the race and class map has always been a reality in American cities, including Portland. The move of middle class and wealthier people to the suburbs in the last 50 years shows a stark example of the disinvestment that has primarily harmed poor communities of color who remained in the inner-cities.

What is new in our current patterns of gentrification and displacement is the sprawling size of and distances across cities today, and the widening income disparity that makes gentrification and displacement a critical regional planning and social justice issue. Now, as it becomes increasingly the trend for highlyeducated and financially comfortable people to move closer to city centers, those who are forced out have no choices but to locate on the affordable fringes of city or suburban development. This pattern is nowhere more obvious than in the movement of people of color and immigrant communities, renters, from inner N/NE Portland to Gresham and outer SE Portland. For these families, displacement means more time commuting, less public transportation, increased car expenses, fewer services, broken access to neighbors and churches that helped with childcare or other needed assistance, and disrupted schooling for kids, never mind the increased debt and lost savings that comes with moving.1 For most communities, like the neighborhoods of Interstate, displacement no longer means being pushed to the next neighborhood over.

Increasing income inequality also exacerbates the issue of housing affordability. When people moving into lower income neighborhoods have significantly more disposable income than existing residents, the rents or home prices they can afford to pay drive housing costs up for everyone more quickly than if they were just one income step above existing residents.

What are the solutions?

There are many options, but to strike the right balance, we need to pick ones from each of the following four general categories. And given the size of modern cities such as the Portland metropolitan region, we need to do this in all parts of the region. The end result is diverse, mixed income communities throughout the region.

1) Public Protection of Affordable Rental Housing — These solutions are not only about ensuring adequate affordable housing exists. They also shift the housing market's dynamic away from income stratification, towards community diversity.

Affordable housing as public infrastructure. Because of the nature of the real estate market, we need an adequate stock of permanently affordable housing in all neighborhoods. This should be a public expectation like roads, schools, and parks.

Renter stabilization policies. Policies that protect renters from misuse of evictions and huge rent increases are an essential part of a functional and fair housing market, just as workplace safety and equal opportunity laws are essential for workplaces.

2) More Homeownership — A home of one's own provides long term security and predictability, and builds wealth. Obviously, it's not for everyone, such as young, mobile adults, many elderly, or families who can't afford it even with the help of assistance programs.

More homeownership, especially if it's part of a land trust. Homeownership is always a more stable option than renting for those who can afford to own. Community land trust homeownership, or shared-equity homeownership, balances building community stability and individual assets. The land trust model is available to lower income households, and insulates the home from the market, so it continues to be affordable to future owners.

Criminalizing predatory lending and buying practices.² Bad mortgages lead to impossible payments and foreclosures. And the last thing a family in a crisis needs is to have someone knocking on their door offering loads of cash, but next to nothing in terms of actual value, for their home. These kinds of practices destroy family savings and community stability, promote poverty and inequality, and are unfair.

Continued on page 10.

The Religious Outreach Working Group (ROWG) seeks 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. For more information: Loretta Pickerell, Chair, 503-638-6999 or lfp@igc.apc.org.

The Natural Resources Working Group consists of individuals who are interested in maintaining, preserving and expanding our system of Greenfrastructure, which includes parks, streams, rivers and wetlands, floodplains and natural hazard lands. They work to affect policy that impacts water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and other natural resources both within and outside the Urban Growth Boundary. For information: Mike Houck or Ron Carley, Audubon Society of Portland 503-292-6855 or houckm@teleport.com.

The Food Policy Working Group meets the first Friday of the month, from 8 to 10 a.m. at Metro (600 NE Grand Ave.), to explore how to support regional farming and gardening by increasing access to regionally produced food, and protecting and initiating effective land use policies that strengthen community food security. For more information, call Jill Fuglister, 503-294-2889, or jill@clfuture.org.

The Economic Vitality Working Group identifies ways to bring about changes in regional policy, resources and strategies, which promote economic and social equity throughout the region. For more information, call Rob Bole Enterprise Foundation, 503-553-5642 or rbole@enterprisefoundation.org.

The Urban Design Working Group provides a forum for architects, planners and others interested in urban design to exchange ideas about how design can improve community livability by accommodating growth while preserving the charms and human scale of existing neighborhoods. The group contributes policy recommendations on local and regional urban design issues. For more information: Marcy McInelly, 503-827-4155 or urbswrks@teleport.com

Focus on Damascus: Greenfields to Green Community

By Brian Newman, Willamette Pedestrian Coalition

Then Metro begins the process in 2002 to examine whether and where the urban growth boundary (UGB) needs to be expanded, most observers concede that "ground zero" will be the small community of Damascus in rural Clackamas County. The Coalition for a Livable Future is committed to participating in this process to ensure that if the boundary is expanded, the area brought within the UGB is supported by appropriate infrastructure and planned in ways that are consistent with CLF's mission of creating healthy, equitable and sustainable communities.

(Disclaimer: This article will not address whether the urban growth boundary should expand in 2002 or even if Damascus is a suitable area for urbanization. CLF is committed to a tight UGB and will support expansion only when and where absolutely necessary.)

Located just two miles from the eastern edge of the UGB at the intersection of Sunnyside Road and State Highway 212, Damascus is currently home to approximately 4,500 residents. Characterized by large-lot rural residential lands, small-scale nursery operations, and forested buttes, the Damascus area is a hodge-podge of uses that will defy convenient assembly into a coherent community of neighborhoods, employment centers and natural areas. The area also has poor transportation access to the rest of the region. Besides Sunnyside Road and Highway 212, Foster Road and 172nd Avenue are the only major arterials that serve the area.

Despite these limitations, two major factors have coalesced to direct future UGB expansions towards Damascus. First, because Multnomah



The small community of Damascus is a likely candidate for future expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary. The Coalition hopes to initiate an independent planning process in Damascus that will be a model for creating a sustainable, inclusive community.

and Washington Counties are constrained by both topography and high-quality farmland, the region is looking to the "exception lands" of Clackamas County for future urban growth. State land use policy requires that lands that are not zoned for farming and forestry be looked to first for UGB expansions, a policy CLF supports. Second, the County is trying to find new lands for industrial and commercial uses in order to increase its employment base and reduce the need for residents to commute to jobs across the region. It has identified Damascus as a likely area to accommodate these activities.

With funding from the State of Oregon, Clackamas County is currently undertaking the Damascus Concept Planning Study to develop potential land use scenarios and model transportation impacts within a 4,300-acre study area. The study will produce four scenarios that vary the location and intensity of different land uses and range from large employment centers with high-tech campuses to more residential scenarios that effectively replicate the suburban form of neighboring Happy Valley. While the study will not produce a conventional land use plan for the area, the results will inform the UGB expansion deliberations that begin next year.

Currently, each of the study scenarios assumes the construction of the Sunrise Freeway, a controversial limited-access facility that will ultimately connect I-205 to State Highway 26 paralleling the existing Hwy. 212. The four-lane freeway is to be built in four phases. Phase one, which will extend from I-205 to Rock Creek at the edge of the existing UGB, is projected to cost as much as \$180 million. The County is now trying to obtain funding to begin preliminary engineering of the freeway.

These studies and what ultimately happens in the Damascus area are of critical importance to the Coalition for a number of reasons. First, the quality of the planning process will determine whether the area becomes a model for how the region can grow sustainably and equitably or evolves into conventional suburban sprawl that is visually and functionally indistinguishable from the existing built form of suburban Clackamas County. The latter scenario is obviously the path of least resistance and is unfortunately likely to happen without intervention from the advocacy community.

Second, it is not just the environment that is at stake. Few realize that the census tracts surrounding Happy

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Valley have become the most affluent area in the region, surpassing the West Hills of Portland, Dunthorpe, and Lake Oswego in household income. This phenomenon raises troubling issues for those of us concerned about housing affordability and income diversity in our communities. Without intervention, the Damascus area has the potential of becoming another exclusive community that fails to provide real opportunities for families already priced out of the real estate market.

Finally, any planning related to UGB expansion must also consider "down stream" impacts to the livability of existing neighborhoods. Depending on the scenarios now being examined in the Damascus study, an urbanized Damascus could include 18,000 jobs or as many as 26,000 residents. The impact of these jobs and households on our existing roads, buses, schools, parks and emergency services must be examined. Any new development must come with the funding mechanisms to accommodate anticipated impacts rather than forcing existing communities to subsidize growth.

The Coalition for a Livable Future is hoping to initiate an independent planning process that will address these issues while incorporating CLF principles of housing affordability, transportation alternatives, green infrastructure and development, the protection of natural areas and wildlife habitat, economic vitality, good urban design, and continued access to high quality locally grown food. The following points outline how these principles should be accommodated in the Damascus planning efforts.

Affordable Housing

The Coalition believes that affordable housing should be provided not just in every community, but on every block. Using zoning codes or housing styles to segregate people by income contributes to exclusive and dysfunctional communities. As our region grows, we must ensure that housing choices are provided in all neighborhoods so families have housing opportunities wherever they choose to live. This is especially important in newly urbanized areas, such as Damascus, that are planned for significant employment growth.

Residents need to have the option of living close to their jobs so they aren't forced to commute long distances and contribute to additional congestion in the communities they travel through.

Clackamas County should utilize all of the tools available to ensure housing choice. Some of these include inclusionary zoning that mandates a diversity of housing sizes and types; working with existing stakeholders such as Northwest Housing Alternatives and the Clackamas Community Land Trust to develop a plan for affordable housing before any lands are urbanized; developing new funding sources to purchase land and develop below-market housing; and providing incentives to developers to do the same.

Transportation Alternatives

As mentioned earlier, a key component of the current Damascus study is the Sunrise Freeway. CLF has grave concerns about relying on a new freeway as the primary means of addressing the transportation needs of the area. Other alternatives should be examined including a multi-modal boulevard with bike lanes, sidewalks and "green" storm drainage. The boulevard would serve the new urbanized areas and not connect to Hwy. 26. Furthermore, new neighborhoods should be served by an interconnected street grid that disperses traffic rather than a cul-de-sac model that funnels all cars on to a few congested arterials.

Any Damascus plan should also include significant transit service that coincides with the area's growth. This planning should be done now and the right-of-way preserved for a future transit facility, whether it is a bus way or light rail extension from the Milwaukie/Town Center area. The plan should provide service for internal circulation as well as connections to the region.

Green Infrastructure and Development

The region has a real opportunity to pioneer green infrastructure and development in Damascus. This area has the potential to be a case-test for these concepts, including the *Green Street Design Manual* now being developed by Metro. Where possible, natural drainage,

bio-swales, soft shoulders and permeable surfacing should be used to keep stormwater from being channeled into concrete culverts and dumped into area creeks and rivers¹. Allowing the earth to filter run-off will regulate high and low water flows and protect endangered fish from toxins and even benign substances that can build-up and hurt wildlife. Furthermore, developers should be given incentives to incorporate recycled materials, methods of energy conservation and low-impact development practices when they construct new buildings.

Protection of Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitat

At least three major salmon carrying streams, the Clackamas River, Rock Creek and Richardson Creek, run through or adjacent to the Damascus planning area. Large riparian management areas must be included to protect water quality and fish and wildlife habitat along these waterways and their tributaries. Efforts must also be taken to set aside large amounts of other natural areas, including the uplands of forested buttes that are home to many bird, amphibian and mammal species.

Whenever areas are brought within the UGB, we should be planning the region's next Forest Park – a natural area in excess of 4,000 acres. This land should be purchased now before it is brought within the UGB and the value increases or is impossible to assemble due to development pressures. Also, in addition to natural areas, planning must be done to ensure developed community parks with recreation facilities are included in each new neighborhood.

Economic Vitality

Currently, about 60% of Clackamas
County residents commute out of the
county for work. Therefore, it is essential
that we do not plan for another bedroom
community, but rather plan to ensure a
good balance between the new residences
and new job opportunities in any
Damascus plan. Equally important will
be efforts to create living wage jobs and
employment opportunities for current
and future workers in the community.

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Retrofitting the Suburbs

By Teresa Huntsinger, Coalition for a Livable Future

ity dwellers sometimes think of "the burbs" as a vast wasteland of 1950's style strip malls and cookie-cutter subdivisions. But there is great diversity in the Portland area's suburban towns. Hillsboro, Wilsonville, Beaverton, Lake Oswego, Sherwood, Oregon City, Milwaukie, Gresham, and even our sister city Vancouver... each of these place names conjures up a different image of local style and history. The challenge of the "Retrofitting the Suburbs" initiative of the Campaign for a Livable Future is to protect and enhance the unique qualities that residents of these communities hold dear, while adding amenities and redeveloping some areas to make the suburbs more livable and sustainable.

Suburban Myths

To retrofit the suburbs, we must first understand them. This means looking at the suburbs for what they really are today, rather than relying on commonly held stereotypes and myths about suburbia. While suburbs are typically perceived as havens for white, upper middle-class families, in reality they are much more diverse than that. The suburbs are home to a growing number of newly arrived immigrants, singlefamily households, empty-nesters, and people who work in low-wage jobs. This means that suburbs today must provide a diversity of housing types—for families and single people at a multitude of income levels-and social services.

The stereotypical concept of suburbs as bedroom communities for people who work in Portland is losing its accuracy. Portland's suburbs are now major employment centers that are destinations for workers coming from around the region—including the city. Suburb to suburb trips have now become a large part of the region's transportation needs, but the system is designed to move

people from the suburbs to Portland and back. Providing a park and ride may get suburbanites to work in downtown Portland, but it does little if the closest they can get to their

employer is another park and ride with no pedestrian access or transit connections to their destination. Our suburban freeways often have rush-hour traffic because they are the only practical means for people to get to and from work.

The suburbs have many desirable qualities, which is why about half of the metro region's population chooses to live there. Many people choose the suburbs because they want a bigger home and yard, they can find housing that is more affordable, they want a quiet setting away from the city, or their families are longtime residents of suburban communities. While some suburban residents work close to home, many trade off long commute times to live there. Transportation costs can become a significant portion of household budgets for suburban families.

The Auto Addiction

In addition to giving up their time and money for an auto-dependent lifestyle, suburban residents may also be sacrificing their health. In many suburban communities, schools, jobs, shopping, and essential services are not located close to home, or to one another. The average Portland metro suburban family makes 11 car trips per weekday, just to conduct the activities of everyday life.² Because suburban residents must drive in a car to run errands that their urban counterparts would take care of on foot or by bike, they get less incidental exercise. The



Many suburban neighborhoods, like this one dominated by its garages and driveways, are designed for cars, not people.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) now recommends making the suburbs more pedestrian friendly to help prevent obesity, which is reaching epidemic levels in the U.S. In the October 27, 1999 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association, Doctors William Dietz and Jeffrey Koplan of the CDC write, "Automobile trips that can be safely replaced by walking or bicycling offer the first target for increased physical activity in communities... Reliance on physical activity as an alternative to car use is less likely to occur in many cities and towns unless they are designed or retrofitted to permit walking or bicycling. The location of schools, work sites, and shopping areas near residential areas will require substantial changes in community or regional design."

These problems cannot be solved simply by adding bike lanes and sidewalks. The typical suburban development pattern isolates residential, retail, industrial and commercial office space. By mixing these development types in a way that enhances them all (which will require zoning code updates), people will have convenient access to most of the things they need.

The suburban development patterns that contribute to a sedentary lifestyle also negatively impact the environment, lead to residents feeling disconnected from their community, and make it nearly impossible to survive without owning a car. These dysfunctional suburban-style patterns can be found in the region's suburban towns, and also in many parts of Portland. Just like some areas of the central city that badly need redevelopment, some areas in the suburbs need to be retrofitted to improve livability, public health, and the environment. Such improvements could include: sidewalks, bicycle lanes and improved transit access; front porches, recessed garages and neighborhood squares; a mix of housing types and income levels; shopping areas, schools and employment centers located close to residential areas; community gardens and farmers markets: better stormwater management, ample parks and open spaces, and protection of streams and other natural areas.

How in the world do we turn sprawling developments and strip malls into vibrant, complete communities? We already have a brushstroke vision of what our region could look like in the Region 2040 Growth Concept. It calls for regional centers and town centers that would be cohesive suburban communities connected by transportation corridors. The region's highest density development will center around the transportation corridors and in regional and local centers. We should encourage local governments to help regional centers and town centers meet their potential to become whole communities. The infill and redevelopment that takes place in these areas offers great potential for creative neighborhood development. In order to ensure that redevelopment

Front porches, safe sidewalks, a mix of housing types and costs, and convenient access to parks, stores and restaurants help make a neighborhood a community.

maintains the individual identities of suburban communities, their residents must be closely involved in making community development decisions. To this end, Washington and Clackamas Counties have both engaged their residents in visioning processes to identify the things they like about their communities, and the things they would like to see improve. Issues that were frequently raised in both visioning processes include: improving transportation, both roads and transit; protecting rural communities from sprawl; building a stronger sense of community connection and increasing cultural activities; providing affordable housing close to employment and transportation centers; providing adequate parks and open space, especially as density increases; supporting a quality education system; and building a diverse, strong economy.

Promising Examples

The work of modifying an existing community to better serve the needs of its residents presents a great challenge. However, there are some examples from around the U.S. and Canada that we can look to for guidance. In California's Silicon Valley, the city of Mountain View replaced a dead mall with a community containing a mix of stores, homes and parks. The high-quality design of "The Commons" allowed all the units to sell more than two years ahead of schedule. The city of Etobicoke, a suburb of Toronto, spent six years transforming a typical suburban strip mall into a vibrant main street. The six-lane road with angled parking bays on either side was reorganized to allow for wider sidewalks, bike lanes,

> and parallel parking on one side of the street. The retrofitted streetscape is still functional for motorists, and can also be used by pedestrians and cyclists. A plan to convert a low-density commercial development with underused parking lots on the main street into apartment buildings with street-level commercial spaces, a day care and a mini-park is currently going through the planning review process. A critical component

of making the retrofit successful was an intensive public consultation process, including public meetings, working groups, and a design competition.

There are also some examples of promising new suburban development here in the Portland area. The New Urbanist³ style communities of Orenco Station and Fairview Village include a mix of housing types, pedestrian-friendly design, and convenient access to restaurants, parks, services, shopping, and transit. But both of these suburban villages were built on previously undeveloped greenfields, so they didn't have to adapt already existing buildings and infrastructure. While these developments deserve kudos for design that fosters community and reduces automobile dependence, Fairview Village's treatment of natural resources could be improved upon, and Orenco Station does not provide any housing affordable to people who earn less than 60% of median family income.

In addition, there is a positive effort in Washington County to put a commuter train on an existing rail line to help commuters travel between Wilsonville and Beaverton without getting stuck in freeway traffic. The County is currently seeking state funding for the project. CLF members are supporting this effort, and working to ensure the project is complemented by improvements that will make areas around the stations accessible for commuter rail users and pedestrians.

We are optimistic that our region will expand upon these efforts and continue to serve as a national leader in developing creative solutions for making existing communities more livable and sustainable. We can do so by building upon our tradition of citizen involvement and carrying forth our region's pioneering spirit in the new frontier: suburbia. <>>

For more information about Washington and Clackamas County Visioning, visit: www.vision-west.org www.co.clackamas.or.us/community/

³ New Urbanism is a movement in urban design to create diverse, walkable neighborhoods.

Photo courtesy of Holt & Haugh, Inc

¹ Based on 2000 Census Data for Oregon Cities, available at the Portland State University Population Research Center.

² 1994 Metro Household Activity Survey. Numbers for Washington, Clackamas and Clark Counties adjusted for underreporting.

> **Displacement,** continued from page 5.

3) Redistributing Resources —

This is the main anecdote to a system that naturally polarizes resources, and an essential means for raising the funds necessary to ensure public needs are met.

Speculation or Land Inflation Taxes.

Those who profit from owning property in gentrifying neighborhoods receive an un-earned windfall as a result of other people's actions. They should be taxed accordingly to pay the costs of keeping some housing affordable.

Linkage Fees or Housing Replacement.

When developers request zoning changes that allow them greater commercial development flexibility and profits, housing affordability and/or availability can diminish. Our governments need to grant these requests based on the condition that the developers help pay the cost of maintaining needed housing assets. Citizens must expect fees in exchange, to preserve housing and its affordability, or replacement by the developer of the housing lost because of projects allowed under new zoning rules.

Inclusionary Zoning. Housing developers build for the highest market available. Why build for someone who has little to spend, when you can make a bigger profit selling to the big spenders? Inclusionary zoning requires developers to include affordable housing in the mix, since they have the profits that can subsidize a portion of what the community needs. We must insist that development meets the needs of the community, not just the developers need to profit. This is no different than creating laws that ensure that loggers leave some trees for the rest of us.

4) Living Wages —

Minimum wages, the poverty line, and income assistance programs all have slipped behind in adjustments since the late 60s. This is a huge factor impacting housing affordability, reduced leisure time, and reduced access to health care, education, and much more.

Getting from displacement to diversity, equity, and stability

Achieving change will not be easy. All of these solutions take an extraordinary amount of political guts and will. Fortunately, that is something that all of us have access to. Getting our decision makers to make the right decisions for Portland, for Interstate or the West End, will require as many of us as possible to demand an end to displacement and solutions to the housing system.

Displacement prevention is the foundation of CLF's "Renewing the City for All" initiative. The effort to improve access to jobs by improving public transportation becomes meaningless when the communities these improvements were intended to serve have moved. In partnership with member organizations, CLF achieved dedication of funds for an Equity and Racial Impact Statement in Interstate. This effort, combined with long time Interstate residents' demands for no displacement, has shaped the language surrounding urban renewal investment in the area. Turning this language into a spending and policy-making reality is the mission ahead of us.



Speculative real estate buyers exacerbate the problem of rapid housing cost increases. Those who profit from such practices should be taxed to pay the costs of keeping some housing affordable.

Clear estimates of how many families are at risk for displacement in Interstate are not available. However, we do know that in 1996, about 4500 households in the current urban renewal boundaries were spending more than they could afford on housing. Over 2000 of those spent more than half their income on housing expenses. Most of these were renters.3 How severe these residents' situations are now, and how many of them are actually still in Interstate is not yet documented. CLF and its members are actively working to organize these renters and allies to win policies that will stop more displacement, and that may help prevent it in other areas. We need all the help we can get, so get involved.

¹ For more background on the social effects of displacement, get a copy of CLF's report, Displacement: The Dismantling of a Community. See the back cover for an order form. ² Predatory lenders take advantage of a borrower's inexperience, lack of information, or poor credit, providing them sub-standard loans that they can't afford, with interest rates higher than necessary. Predatory buying (or flipping) is the purchase and quick resale of properties at huge mark-ups, using false documents or grossly inaccurate appraisals. ³ Figures are from PDC's Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area Base Data and Trends and the American Community Survey.

Ending Displacement in Interstate

Organizations: If you belong to or work for an organization that wants to lend its support to an alliance fighting for a number of these strategies, contact Dana at Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT) at 503-460-9702.

University Students: If you are interested in helping to research anti-displacement policies, please contact Sheara at Community Development Network (CDN) at 503-335-9884.

Individuals

- People to people: You can be trained to reach out to families at risk for displacement—to learn about their situation, offer resources, and help get them involved in organizing for solutions. Call Hop at CAT, 503-460-9702.
- Speaking up: If you like voicing your concerns in public processes, but need some help knowing where they are and what is going on, contact Sheara at CDN at 503-335-9884.

> Campaign, continued from page 3.

Renewing the Central City for All

Gentrification and displacement are two of the most pressing and complex challenges facing central city residents today. The past decade has seen housing values increase by over 100%, while income levels have remained stagnant. This is causing lower income people, especially renters, to lose their homes. The destructive results of this housing displacement are significant for the community, but especially harm our most vulnerable community members—the elderly, disabled, low-income families, and renters. Many of the displaced are moving to older suburban communities where there are fewer services, less public transportation, and poorer housing.

The N. Interstate Light Rail and Urban Renewal Area Project (URA) presents a unique opportunity to address gentrification and displacement and to support development of the next segment of our region's light rail system. The City of Portland estimates that approximately \$500 million in private and public investments will result from recent designation of the future light rail corridor as an urban renewal area. If we are to take full advantage of this, CLF members must participate and facilitate participation of residents to achieve the following results in the next three years:

- Strategies adopted that will result in significantly more quality, affordable housing units in the district after the 20 year urban renewal period ends than there are today
- Strategies adopted that will prevent displacement of existing residents and businesses
- Completed light rail station area designs that the community helped create and supports
- Job training and job opportunities for local residents
- Improved access to healthy and affordable food sources for low-income residents of the urban renewal district
- Extension of light rail to Vancouver, Washington and reduction of traffic and other I-5 impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods while providing improvements to the transportation system
- 2000 citizens mobilized to impact the light rail and urban renewal planning processes
- Greater community capacity to impact future regional planning decision-making

CLF Program Integration, Capacity Development and Mobilization

CLF, through the key initiatives associated with Campaign for a Livable Future, is on the threshold of being able to dramatically improve its direct impact on the future health and livability of the region. It is CLF's goal to improve significantly the quality of life of the 1.8 million residents of the Portland metropolitan region. To achieve this, CLF must sustain and augment coordination of its 60 non-profit members to carry out the campaign's key initiatives. This will include organizing members across issues for collaborative action designed to achieve campaign goals, and overseeing and evaluating all aspects of the campaign. Without the essential coordination and integration provided by central staff, the Coalition would cease to be an effective vehicle to improve regional livability and the campaign would not succeed. \Leftrightarrow

¹Office of Economic Analysis, Salem, Oregon, 2001.

Damascus, continued from page 7.

Good Urban Design

Examples of thoughtful urban design are abundant in our region including First Addition in Lake Oswego and Sellwood to newer examples such as Orenco Station and Fairview Village. A well-designed community is walkable and includes a mix of uses from civic spaces and parks to neighborhood-serving retail. All neighborhoods should be served by transit. Design standards, such as requiring parking to be located behind buildings instead of in front, can create a friendlier, more walkable environment. These rather simple design components should be planned from the beginning in any areas that are brought within the urban growth boundary, such as Damascus.

Food Access and Food Sustainability

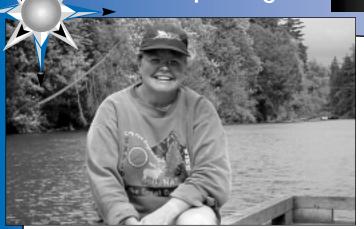
Planners have only recently begun to acknowledge and take action to correct the notable absence of the food system from the planning field. Any Damascus plan should be at the forefront of this new movement by addressing food access problems and strengthening local food systems.

Addressing food access and sustainability means ensuring that residents have opportunities to shop for or grow healthy and affordable food within their neighborhood. Among strategies that may be considered are development of local food business and appropriate supermarket infrastructure when planning for industry; creating shopper transit, community gardens, rooftop gardens, edible landscaping, school gardens, and farmers' markets; limiting traditional yardscapes in favor of urban food parks and gardens that provide chemical-free recreation areas through incentives and bonuses; and inclusion of community/apartment/container gardens as part of affordable housing.

These principles, if incorporated into the design of Damascus or any area brought within the UGB, will ensure that our region grows in a way that is healthy, equitable and sustainable. CLF hopes to lead this effort in Damascus and is working with 1,000 Friends of Oregon to outline a planning process and obtain funding for this effort. We hope to announce a new initiative that focuses on Damascus this fall. Please call CLF for more information.

¹A bio-swale uses vegetation and landscaping to retain and filter stormwater. A soft shoulder is a street shoulder made of a permeable surface such as gravel, which allows water to filter into the ground.

In the spotlight... Sue Marshall, Tualatin Riverkeepers



f Y ue Marshall first got involved with the Tualatin Riverkeepers seven years ago when the group was a small band of people who organized an annual paddle trip on the Tualatin River. The paddle trip organizers had a vision of what the organization could become—the protector of the river—and Sue used her organizational development skills to help them get there. Sue, who is also a mother of three children, started out as a volunteer and has now become Tualatin Riverkeepers' Executive Director.

Today the organization engages people at the community level in a number of ways, from paddling and enjoying the environment to increasing stewardship of the river.

The Tualatin Riverkeepers provide trips and tours, publish a Paddler's Guide, and are working on a Tualatin wildlife viewing guide that is expected to be out next spring. They also engage the community in stewardship activities including river clean-up, riparian restoration, citizen monitoring and advocacy on policy issues that impact the natural resources of the watershed.

Tualatin Riverkeepers joined CLF in the Coalition's first year. Sue participates in the Natural Resources Working Group, and she says being a part of CLF makes Tualatin Riverkeepers more effective and strengthens their ability to participate in public policies impacting the Tualatin Basin. The Tualatin Basin has a wealth of natural resources, and increased attention is being given to protecting its natural resources permanently. This year the Riverkeepers and Audubon Society of Portland have joined forces in a "City to the Sea" campaign focused on natural resource protection of the Tillamook and Tualatin basins that integrates the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act and regional land use planning.

For more information about Tualatin Riverkeepers call 503-590-5813, or visit www.tualatinriverkeepers.org. To find out more about CLF's Natural Resources Working Group, contact Mike Houck at Audubon Society of Portland, 503-292-6855, ext 111.

How You Can Get Involved

The Coalition for a Livable Future is a network of organizations, but individuals can participate, too. Please contact Jill Fuglister or Teresa Huntsinger at 503-294-2889 or info@clfuture.org. You may also visit our website for more information at www.clfuture.org.

Join the Coalition for a Livable Future

While only organizations can be voting members of the Coalition, individuals play a very important role as our advisors and supporters.

You can participate in one or more of the following working groups: food policy; natural resources; urban design; religious outreach; economic vitality; and transportation reform. Please call 503-294-2889 to get connected.

Join our mailing list to receive Connections, the Coalition's biannual journal, and invitations to our educational forums.

To keep up to date you can subscribe to the clfinfo electronic mail listserve, a weekly digest of Coalition activities and announcements. Just send your email address to info@clfuture.org.

Financial contributions will help the Coalition continue to coordinate the regional advocacy and education work of our non-profit members. Please make checks payable to the Coalition for a Livable Future. For your convenience, a remit envelope is included in this journal.

A note from the President...

Dear Friends.

ram pleased to introduce CLF's Campaign for a Livable Future in this issue of "Connections." As you know by now, the campaign is CLF's strategy to implement policies for socially and economically equitable and environmentally sustainable development in the Portland metropolitan region. To achieve the campaign's objectives, nearly \$500,000 must be invested in the expansion of CLF's work over the next three years.

I encourage you to become a part of the movement to build a more livable and sustainable community. You can do this by making a contribution to the campaign as a Friend of CLF, or by becoming a member of our Sustainers Circle by donating \$500 or more. An investment in the Coalition for a Livable Future leverages the knowledge, expertise, and resources of 60 organizations dedicated to protecting the quality of life of the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan region.

I have been actively involved in CLF since we first created it in 1994. I know the value of CLF to its members and the region as a whole. Our campaign will build on our past work to help protect and improve the quality of life for everyone in the region. That is why I personally have made a three year financial commitment to CLF's campaign, and continue to be actively involved in the work. I hope you will join me in supporting this important effort.

Sincerely,

Mary Lyle Mcandy Mary Kyle McCurdy

Staff Attorney, 1000 Friends of Oregon

President. CLF Board of Trustees

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

Community Initiatives Program of the Bureau of Housing and Community Development

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The William G. Gilmore Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation

Phileo Foundation

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The Herbert A. Templeton Foundation



We would also like to thank current and recent volunteers!

Marj Cannon Lynn Dodson

Diane Kahl Molly Littlejohn

Steve Gertsch Jeff Holiman

Michael Litt

Special thanks We would like to thank the individuals who contributed to CLF in the last six months.

Sustainers Circle (\$500+)

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Continued on page 14.

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Special Thanks, continued from p.13.

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-CLF Notes



The Coalition welcomes **Better People** our newest member organization!



VISIT CLF'S WEB PAGE!

www.clfuture.org

The site includes an updated calendar of events, information about our working groups, links to member organizations, and our publications.

You are invited to subscribe to the clfinfo electronic mail list.

The clfinfo list is moderated by CLF staff. Most weeks you will receive one email message that is a compilation of action alerts and announcements from CLF members. To subscribe, send email to:

info@clfuture.org





CLF Wish List

In-kind donations to the Coalition for a Livable Future are tax-deductible and warmly welcomed! We are in need of:

Easel

Slide projector Overhead projector Laptop computer Water cooler

Please contact Jill or Teresa at 503-294-2889 if you can help us with donation or discounts on any of these items.

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.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

- 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 cleanup 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 info@clfuture.org

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Coalition for a Livable Future Publications	
	Portland Metropolitics: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability Myron Orfield's analysis of growth patterns in the Portland region. The full report includes 24 full-color maps. (Published 1998) Executive Summary\$2.00 Full Report\$15.00
	Displacement: The Dismantling of a Community An in-depth study of the social effects of rising housing costs. The report consists of three sections: an Atlas of Affordability, showing changes that have taken place between 1990 and 1996; a set of interviews with people directly affected by displacement; and examples of effective tools that communities nationwide have developed to fight displacement. (Published 1999) Executive SummaryFree Full Report\$6.00 Downloadable at www.clfuture.org
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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.

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