

Southwest SUN School program funding threatened

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

The SUN School programs at three southwest schools (Jackson, Robert Gray and Markham) have been under attack this budget season and, at press time, their survival was still not assured.

The program provides for activities after school, as well as day camps, classes and special activities during the summer. Most are for the school's children, but some are for the whole family.

They are available to all students for free regardless of income. Some of the summer camps and classes charge nominal fees, but there are scholarships available for those less able to pay.

The program is available in 64 Multnomah County schools. It is run by Multnomah County, but the City provides funding for 11 of the SUNs, including two of the three in southwest: Jackson and Robert Gray middle schools.

The third, at Markham Elementary School (K-5), is funded directly by the County.

The Portland Bureau of Parks, which provides the City's funding share, proposed cuts as part of its draft budget.

Rather than dilute the quality of the program overall, it proposed to close three schools, including Jackson and Robert Gray.

There are 200 students enrolled in the Jackson program, and 205 at Robert Gray. After extensive debate the Park Bureau has decided to allocate \$72,000 to Jackson's 2012-2013 budget, close to last year's level of \$75,000.

However, the Park Bureau is still considering cutting its allocation to Robert Gray, which constitutes one-quarter of that program's budget, and this could lead to a total de-funding.

As Southwest Neighborhood, Inc. Schools Committee chair Will Fuller put it, this program is "still at risk."

To some people, during really tough economic times when budget cuts need to be made, there is some logic in targeting southwest SUN Schools.

Because the program is free to all students, including those whose families could easily afford to pay for them, some see them as a boondoggle.

Further, there is a perception that southwest is a rich area that doesn't need such programs. Commissioner Nick Fish may be one of them.

At a recent hearing, when an East Portland resident lamented the potential loss of a SUN School, Fish said that Council would try to protect areas of "high poverty" from such cuts.

Fuller does not see things this way. SUN programs do have components that are related to academic subjects, but also offer a broad range of activities that most children can relate to, he told *The Post*.

That SUN is open to all is a virtue, Fuller said; if it were only for the poor you would have the "contrast effect" of demonstrating that those who participate "are different from their peers."

"Southwest is relatively wealthy, but there are pockets of poverty," Fuller said, and these are likely to increase in the future.

For example, the Stephens Creek Crossing housing project in Hillsdale will be home to twice the number of low-income families as Hillsdale Ter-

race, which it will replace.

The children of such families may find themselves as a minority that is looked down upon; SUN Schools help to bridge the divide, Fuller said.

Further, participants receive a free meal; for some children, this may be a

major part of their nutrition for the day.

"In other parts of town, Sun Schools are just one of many programs that serve low-income children," Fuller said. "Here, because of our demographics, SUN Schools are just about all such children have."

New \$230 million Sellwood Bridge faces access issues; 800 trees to be removed along Macadam Avenue

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

Last month the Sellwood Bridge Stakeholders Advisory Committee received the welcome news that the \$230 million replacement bridge is now fully funded. They also discussed some new issues, this time on the west side.

Multnomah County Commissioner Deborah Kafoury told the Committee that the state legislature had allocated \$5 million toward the project, filling a gap that occurred when Clackamas County voters rejected a vehicle registration surtax to help fund the project.

"I'm really happy we were able to secure \$5 million from the legislature," Kafoury said. "I was not sure we'd be able to do this without Clackamas County. But this is the number one priority for many people, some of who do not even live in this community. Now we have a fully funded project."

Mike Pullen, public information officer for Multnomah County, later qualified this assertion slightly.

The County does have funds pledged equally to the estimated cost of the project, he said, but at press time they had not yet signed a contract with a contractor to construct the new Sellwood Bridge at the agreed-upon price.

Through much of the planning process the focus has been on the east side; last month it shifted to the west side.

The new bridge access will require the removal of 800 trees on the west side of Southwest Macadam Avenue, project manager Ian Cannon said.

Pullen later said that most of the trees removed are "not very healthy and covered with ivy," and 1500 new native trees that will provide a healthier native habitat will eventually replace them.

The access will also cut off the existing driveway to the Macadam Bay houseboat moorage. The County had

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Water work impacts more SW streets

Throughout the months of May and June, the **Portland Water Bureau's** work to install a new water supply pipeline moves to sections of **SW Hooker St., SW Water Ave., SW Baker St. and SW Caruthers St.** before connecting back to SW Naito Pkwy.

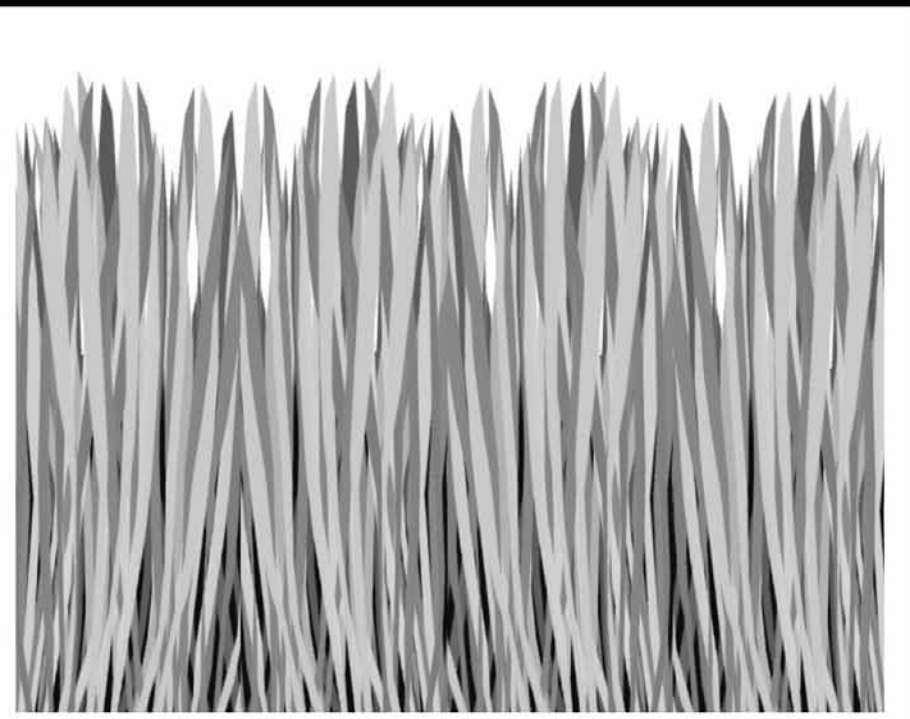
Crews still have a little more work on **SW Naito Pkwy.** On **May 12 through May 14** – during daylight hours – work in the intersection of **SW Market St.** will connect the new pipe to an existing pipeline. Work hours will be from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM on the weekend. And, if necessary, on Monday, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

On **May 15**, and if necessary, **May 16** – working at night, – crews will install permanent asphalt on sections of road surfaces damaged by the pipe work. Crews will work from 8:00 PM to 6:00 AM.

Flaggers and traffic cones will direct motorists past the work zone. Some streets may be closed for Local Access Only, and street parking restricted. Delays should be expected. Motorists are encouraged to find alternate routes.



2007 work on SW Naito Pkwy at SW Clay St.



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