

An artist's rendition of what Portland could look like by 2075 with the onset of climate change. For a different interpretation of what Portland could look like in the future, see page 8.



City looks to cash in on climate change opportunities

Making Portland the greenest place on earth may simply be a matter of time

BY GEORGE ITSTROO
NOW APPEARING NIGHTLY AT MARY'S

Portland City Council recently adopted an ordinance to study the effects of global warming to determine whether Portland should plan for a "resort like sustainable atmosphere" in 2075 — after more than 25 million people are expected to move here due to climate change.

"Coastal cities to the South will be flooded, lush farming regions in the Midwest will turn to dust, and glaciers to the north will have melted and become major seaways. Disease, border wars, and access to water will all play a role in making Portland one of the world's most premier and bustling urban hubs," says a representative with Future Town, the firm charged with the new study.

The firm's Web site bills the company as a consulting firm for the Northern Hemisphere's future, and has recently been hired by several cities in North America, including Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, and Dallas, N.D. (Pop. 234), a town that is already claiming that it will be the new Dallas, after rural and urban communities to the South stampede the current Dallas after decades of drought.

The independent firm charged with the study is being backed by global business pioneers like, "Google to find water," and Microsoft's newly formed branch, "Operating systems to keep your family alive."

Some Portland civic leaders say the new study should be taken seriously, and that local and statewide government should think twice about their goals of mass-transit, and green sustainability efforts, and focus on a

realistic plan for the future.

"The real future isn't in creating a sustainable economy for three million people, but for creating an environment to attract the next big migration West from places like Houston, Phoenix and Kansas City, which will all be completely screwed," one local venture capitalist told SR.

"Look, let's be real. We're not going to stop global warming in the region. We can't even build a bridge or house people for Christ sakes. How the hell is our government going to save the planet? Subsidizing big business with tax credits? Yeah, right. Not going to happen, my friend, let's be real. Instead of investing all this time and money planning a green and sustainable region, we should be thinking resort town. Imagine for a minute — Mt. Hood as a sand dune, Troutdale as the Lower East Side, and Sauvie Island looking out over the Pacific Ocean? There's a lot of money to be made, and in this economy, we really need to think about the businesses we're attracting. And honestly, we need to be thinking about all the Pacific Islanders whose lands will be underwater, and people to the South, who will have no water. Why not try to attract those people to Portland. It's a cash-cow, and to be frank, it's the right thing to do."

Scientists predict that by 2075, sea level rise associated with climate change could swamp popular coastal destinations, like Miami and Laguna Beach, but make Portland into a perfect oceanfront resort town. Increasingly frequent and severe droughts will devastate agricultural regions like the Midwest but make springtime in the

Northwest actually pleasant. Climate models also predict a 78 percent nationwide increase in griping about the weather — something Portland is already well accustomed to.

Mayor Adams, who has been a tireless leader for a new green economy, told media and environmental groups at a press conference after the ordinance was passed that he "was still dedicated to making Portland the greenest place on earth, but in case that didn't work out, we need an alternative."

City Commissioner Randy Leonard cast the one vote no, saying that while he also believed Portland should be looking at a back-up plan, he was just trying to get enough resources online that if the region faced a major earthquake this wouldn't all be a moot point.

Three dozen environmentalists protested the decision outside of City Hall, while several thousand Portlanders following the council hearings through live blogging online, and posted status reports to their Facebook profiles. One Facebook group, "One million strong against Mt. Hood as a Sand Dune," has already gained 11,000 members.

Spokespeople for Future Town said that like all the great tragedies in our country's past, Manifest Destiny and free market were the constants that made us great. It took killing 12 million Natives for us to pave the way for the Oregon Trail. During the Great Depression in the '30s, people moved west, they were ass out. We think, when things really start to heat up, people are going to come West again, only this time, it's going to be Northwest. We'll be ready.