

• Lane County commissioners and public safety officials are brewing up another try at an **income tax** to support the Sheriff's Office, jails, drug treatment and other public safety needs, and we hear animal control will be included this time for several reasons: Animal control is a responsibility of county government, it sort of falls under public safety and it's a popular program bound to garner some votes. Adequate funding of animal control could lead to better investigation of animal abuse cases, more spaying and neutering and a no-kill policy for adoptable animals. What would make a new tax even more attractive, however, would be an increase in the share of funding that goes to crime prevention and intervention and a lower overall tax than was on the ballot last November. Another challenge facing the county in passing this tax is the double majority rule. Except in general elections, money measures require a 50 percent voter turnout in addition to a majority of votes. The 2007 state Legislature is expected to address this problem one more time, but don't hold your breath.

• So what happens now that the best laid plans have gone astray for the public-private partnership that would have built a **Whole Foods Market** on East Broadway? The commercial site near the new U.S. Courthouse is prime property, and we predict something good will eventually be built there. Whole Foods is reportedly looking at building somewhere else in Eugene on a less expensive site, but that doesn't make much sense to us. Downtown is destined to get a big influx of housing and commercial development, and city subsidies are available there and not on the outskirts. Where else would Whole Foods build? Market of Choice is already meeting the demand for gourmet food shopping in north, south and east Eugene, Trader Joe's is a hot spot in the Ferry Street Bridge area, and the chain groceries are filling in the gaps for neighborhood shopping. We love the little corner groceries downtown. Maybe all that Eugene's growing downtown population needs is just another locally owned Kiva-style store on East Broadway – sharing a building with restaurants and apartments.

• The cancellation of Whole Foods downtown puts the **proposed adjacent city parking garage** on hold, and that's fine with us. We can debate all day whether or not the garage would have been a subsidy for Whole Foods. One thing for certain: We can find a better use for the \$7 million to \$10 million earmarked for that concrete bunker. What would better serve downtown and the people of Eugene? Send your suggestions for how to better spend \$10 million to [editor@eugeneweekly.com](mailto:editor@eugeneweekly.com)

• Our cover story this week examines the **potential devastation of Measure 37 claims**, most of which are outside of urban growth boundaries. These claims violate the spirit, if not the letter, of Oregon's land use laws and directly impact our state's liveability. Meanwhile, growing pains are evident in neighborhoods in Eugene that abut forests and farmlands. Even without Measure 37 claims, we are encroaching on our urban growth boundary, and in the process residents are seeing their neighborhoods change for the worse. Quiet paths through woods and meadows are being bulldozed for expensive housing developments. We hear Churchill Area Neighbors will be meeting this week to talk about the paving over of forest land and a natural meadow at the top of Hawkins.

• Looking for a new career in sustainable energy? Become a plumber's apprentice! We hear there's a big demand for qualified solar water heating installers in the valley. We also hear Springfield and Eugene could become manufacturing centers for solar water heating systems. A lot of information on solar energy and other sustainable technology and practices can be found at the **Good Earth Home, Garden & Living Show** this weekend at the Fairgrounds. This is going to be a remarkable and fun show and we encourage everyone to check it out. Website is [www.EugeneHomeShow.com](http://www.EugeneHomeShow.com)

• People come and go at *Eugene Weekly*, as reflected in changes in the "Who You Gonna Blame?" box in the Letters section. We only write about these changes when the person leaving is well known, such Lois Wadsworth, who retired last year as our arts editor. But we're getting calls and emails asking what happened to our reporter **Kera Abraham**. We were sad to see her leave in mid-January. She was recruited by a larger alternative newsweekly in California. Kera is a rising star in environmental investigative journalism and has gained a national reputation based on her work for *EW* the past two and a half years. Don't be surprised to see her at the Eugene Celebration, Oregon Country Fair and the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference. She says she loves Eugene and plans to return as often as she can.

SLANT includes short opinion pieces, observations and rumor-chasing notes compiled by the EW staff. Heard any good rumors lately? Contact Ted Taylor at 484-0519, [editor@eugeneweekly.com](mailto:editor@eugeneweekly.com)

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



news Briefs

TEETERING ON SPRAWL

The Eugene City Council teetered on the verge of urban sprawl last week.

The council on Jan. 17 split 4-4 on whether to launch a land supply study that would be the first step toward expanding the urban growth boundary. Such an expansion is a long-sought goal of local developers and land speculators who would make a windfall turning farm and forest land into cul-de-sacs.

Mayor Kitty Piercy broke the tie vote in favor of delaying the inventory. Her vote supported the votes of Councilors Bonny Bettman, Betty Taylor, Andrea Ortiz and Alan Zelenka. Councilors Mike Clark, Jennifer Solomon, George Poling and Chris Pryor voted to speed up the survey.

At issue was whether the city update its land supply survey years before required to do so by state law. State law requires cities to periodically perform a study showing they have an adequate supply of land for housing, commercial and industrial development. Eugene's next residential land study isn't due until 2015, and the commercial and residential land studies aren't due until 2010, according to city attorney Emily Jerome.

The city estimates that it currently has a "generous surplus of commercial and industrial land," 122 and 2,404 acres respectively, and a "modest surplus," 350 acres, supply of residential land remaining.

But developers and their conservative allies on the council hotly dispute those numbers and argue that the city should do detailed continuous studies to make its land supply numbers more accurate.

"It's essential to know how current and

accurate" the land supply numbers are, argued Pryor.

But progressive councilors said constantly updating the land supply studies, which often take years to complete and adopt, would be too expensive, time consuming and unworkable and would circumvent the long established state process.

"As soon as you do a study, that one's dated," Zelenka said. The city couldn't have a totally up-to-date study "without spending an enormous amount of money."

"This would be a total shift in the way we go about looking at things," Piercy said. Cities throughout Oregon follow the state rules that it's "reasonable" to update the land studies every 20 years, she said.

A decade ago, Eugene residents overwhelmingly supported holding the urban growth boundary in city surveys, which led to the council adopting a growth management policy to "support the existing Eugene urban growth boundary by taking actions to increase density." Since 1950, Eugene's population density has declined 29 percent due to urban sprawl. — Alan Pittman

MARCH ON WASHINGTON SATURDAY

A peace march predicted to be the largest since the Iraq War began is planned for Saturday, Jan. 27, in Washington, D.C., and a contingency from Lane County is on its way there, along with confirmed groups from 30 states and 111 cities.

The purpose of the protest, organized by United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ), is to urge Congress to stand up to President Bush's war escalation plans, and to begin bringing U.S. troops home now.

MoveOn.org has called upon its 3.2 million members to join UFPJ, describing the march as potentially a "turning point for the war" comparable to how "Martin Luther King Jr.'s March on Washington in 1963 was a turning point in the fight for equality and civil rights," according to the MoveOn website.