

Architects Eric Gunderson, Mark Gillem and Art Paz at City Club



• We learned a lot at the kick-off for the **Franklin Corridor Study** events last Friday and Saturday (see news briefs last week), and we encourage everyone to get up to speed on this project and make comments at www.franklincorridor.org. This is one of those rare community initiatives that everyone – liberal, conservative, young, old, rich, poor – can get behind, and it has the added advantage of including Eugene, Glenwood, Springfield and the UO. Eric Gunderson is one of the architects providing leadership in this study, and he said last Friday at City Club that he hopes that a “more informed citizenry comes out of this and brings stronger ideas to the discussion around the issues that come up.” He urged participants to “let your inner architect out” and “celebrate ourselves and our best and boldest ideas.” The all-day Saturday design workshop was well attended, and participants shared ideas about public-private partnerships, open space and access along the river, transportation issues and opportunities, environmental and aesthetic concerns and how other cities have used public input to improve their riverfront development. One of the drawbacks to such studies is that they tend to end up as a three-ring binder gathering dust on a shelf. This project, thanks to an interactive website, is intended to be a “living document” that planners, developers, students and civic activists can use for decades to come.

• Last week in Slant we talked about the continuing strong resistance to McKenzie-Willamette building a major medical center far north of Eugene’s population center. Since then we’ve heard about www.permatopia.com/wetlands/hospital.html where local pundit Mark Robinowitz shows four potential hospital sites analyzed and compared in terms of flood risk, transportation, population access, legal constraints, the need for construction subsidies, and even the likely views from hospital rooms. His favorite? “The ideal location for Eugene’s new hospital is 2nd and Garfield, which is relatively central for Eugene’s population,” he writes. The site’s worth a gander.

• **School board races are coming up** May 15, and a bunch of positions will be on the ballot. Some folks are already starting their campaigns, and the filing period began this week. Rob Spooner of Florence, a critic of the LCC administration, looks like he’s jockeying again for the LCC Board after losing to Paul Holman in May 2005. Holman’s not up for reelection for two more years, so Spooner’s only shot would be for one of the at-large positions currently held by Roger Hall (on the board since 1991), and Michael Rose (on board since 1999). Both Hall and Rose have terms that expire in June, and both would be tough to unseat if they decide to run again. Looks like Jay Bozievich will be stepping down in June after four years. He’s moved out of the northern district Zone 2 to Elmira (Holman’s zone), so he can’t run for reelection unless it’s for an at-large position. Will he run for the Legislature in 2008 instead? Bozievich tells us he’s taking a break from the “public limelight” for a while and has no ambitions for the future other than working on transportation issues in the county.

• **Bush’s skill in budgeting** mirrors his skill in foreign affairs, and it’s up to Congress to reign him in. He has this idiotic idea that he can balance the budget *and* cut taxes. What would a typical Lane County household look like under Bush’s budgeting mindset? Well, credit card bills would exceed disposable income, so everything would be mortgaged to the max. The kids’ college fund would be raided to pay for the new Hummer in the driveway. Childcare and preschool tuition would be skipped in order to buy a closet full of guns and bullets. Medical care? No money for that; it all goes into the electrified chainlink fence and meat for the pit bulls. Gotta keep the neighbors out, unless they are willing to do yard work for \$3 an hour. In the end, this household can forget about retirement in dignity. It’s work until you die.

• Speaking of Bush and the budget, Oregonians in Congress are fighting to restore funding for the **Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act**, the old O&C county payments program that Lane and other counties with large tracts of federal lands depend on for basic services. Bush would like to cut the funding in half and sell off some federal lands to pay for it. This attitude is nothing new. Conservative county commissioners in our part of the state have been eyeing the O&C checkerboard for years and would love to sell federal lands so they can be accessed with roads, then clearcut and sprayed with herbicides. These are valuable resource lands that need to remain under public ownership to protect watersheds and habitat.

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

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

THE RIGHT WING NOISE MACHINE

WITH THE NEXT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION A MERE TWO YEARS AWAY, IT’S CLEARLY TIME FOR ANOTHER LOOK AT...

STEP 1: WILD ALLEGATIONS ABOUT DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE APPEAR ON FRINGE WEBSITE. ACCORDING TO RIGHTWINGNUTCASE-DOT-COM, BARACK OBAMA MIGHT ACTUALLY BE A BRAINWASHED AL QAEDA KILLING MACHINE!

HOW ALARMING! I CERTAINLY WOULDN’T FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH HIM IN THE WHITE HOUSE!

STEP 2: FOX “NEWS” JUMPS IN. IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL OPINION, IS IT AT LEAST POSSIBLE THAT BARACK OBAMA IS A MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE WHO COULD BE ACTIVATED BY OSAMA BIN LADEN AT ANY MOMENT?

SPEAKING AS AN EXPERT, I DON’T SEE WHY NOT!

EXPERT: BARACK PROBABLY A TERRORIST

STEP 3: ALLEGATIONS ARE REPEATED IN OTHER NEWS MEDIA, WHERE THEY MAY OR MAY NOT BE ADEQUATELY REFUTED. THE M.S.M. SAYS THE OBAMA STORY WAS POORLY SOURCED!

WELL, YOU CAN’T TRUST THEM!

THEY’D LIKE NOTHING BETTER THAN TO SEE A BRAINWASHED AL QAEDA KILLING MACHINE IN THE OVAL OFFICE!

STEP 4: TALK RADIO HOSTS FIND NEW ANGLES TO EXTEND LIFE OF STORY. WHETHER OR NOT OBAMA REALLY IS A TOOL OF AL QAEDA, WHAT I’D LIKE TO KNOW IS--

--DID HILLARY CLINTON LEAK THIS STORY?

THE ONE ABOUT OBAMA BEING A TOOL OF AL QAEDA, THAT IS.

WE’LL BE RIGHT BACK WITH YOUR CALLS!

STEP 5: WILD ALLEGATIONS ABOUT ANOTHER DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE APPEAR ON FRINGE WEBSITE... ACCORDING TO RIGHTWINGWHACKJOB-DOT-COM, HILLARY CLINTON IS SO DELUSIONAL, SHE’S GOING AROUND TELLING PEOPLE THAT BARACK OBAMA IS ACTUALLY--GET THIS--A BRAINWASHED AL QAEDA KILLING MACHINE!

HOW ALARMING! I CERTAINLY WOULDN’T FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH HER IN THE WHITE HOUSE!

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news Briefs

SMITH VOTES FOR IRAQ WAR

After the Democrats took Congress in November, sweeping out a bunch of pro-war Republicans, Oregon’s Republican Sen. Gordon Smith flip-flopped on his long, solid support for the Iraq War and criticized it as “criminal” and “absurd.”

The anti-war statements got a lot of press here and nationally for Smith, who will have to face Oregon’s angry anti-war voters in 2008. But when it came down to actually voting, Smith is still solidly behind President Bush’s war.

On Nov. 5 Smith stood with a near solid wall of Republicans to block debate on a long-awaited Senate resolution opposing Bush’s plan to escalate the war with an additional 21,500 U.S. soldiers.



Gordon Smith

Democratic activist Steve Novick wrote in *Willamette Week* Jan. 21 that Smith’s “transparently political contortions” on Iraq and conservative split from Oregon on other issues have made him a “ripe target for defeat,” despite

his hefty campaign war chest and supportive coverage from mainstream media.

The resolution Smith voted to block would have been nonbinding. Growing numbers of anti-war activists are calling for Congress to cut funding for the war to stop Bush. Oregon’s Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden voted against the war but last year refused to sign a pledge to cut funding. Wyden vowed to “never, ever vote” against funding for the Iraq War when confronted by protesters at the Eugene City Club.

Like Wyden, local Rep. Peter DeFazio also has opposed the war, but has been criticized by some anti-war activists for not working to cut funding for it.

But the political tide may be shifting for anti-war but pro-war-funding politicians. Democratic presidential candidate John Edwards is circulating an online petition calling for Congress to “act now to block funding of Bush’s escalation of the war.”

BRT CHEAP COMPARED TO FREEWAYS

LTD has been getting a lot of public abuse lately for its new bus rapid transit link from Eugene to Springfield, called EmX. The critics yell: \$24 million for cutting 6 minutes of transit time!

But the EmX compares favorably with road projects. The \$130 million West Eugene Parkway’s (WEP) purpose was to cut congestion on West 11th to reduce travel time. But the WEP’s environmental impact statement projected that congestion would increase 73 percent on 11th with the freeway and that the road would spur more urban sprawl.

The Beltline-I-5 interchange project now under way will cost upwards of \$100 million. The massive project promises a multi-level spaghetti intersection but no reductions in travel time.

Leading transportation researchers, such as at the Texas Transportation Institute and Surface Transportation Policy Project, have long noted that big freeway projects like the WEP and I-5 interchange actually increase travel times by inducing more highway-oriented urban sprawl. PeaceHealth moved thousands of employees from downtown Eugene to the Gateway area in anticipation of the massive interchange project.

But transportation researchers and the experience of other cities have shown that the frequent, reliable service of dedicated-route transit systems like EmX promote non-car oriented development, reduce driving and, as car congestion inevitably increases, become an even more attractive alternative.

— Alan Pittman

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