

Yet, as the entire human race, its leaders and all its highest institutions around the world foresee this doomsday we have the UO pushing to spend \$200-300 million for new basketball and baseball stadiums. How about spending \$200 million on efficiency, conservation, solar and research to save the biosphere?

We have Eugene, Lane County and ODOT run by the most educated minds in the county planning to spend \$800 million on new freeway projects. No mention in their documents about the end of cheap oil or the collapse of the biosphere.

We have EWEB telling us that they must have a brand new \$85 million palace on undeveloped land in west Eugene. Is this preparing EWEB ratepayers for future shortages of water and hydroelectricity when the glaciers feeding our community are gone? What about spending \$85 million on energy conservation, efficiency and solar?

We have agencies federal (BLM, USFS) and state (ODF) again run by the most educated minds in the state pushing for the good ol' days of extraction on our publicly owned lands so that a handful benefit while ecosystems and salmon runs collapse.

What are our elected leaders doing to prepare us? And why are the media not exposing this insanity instead of covering stories about downtown or cops or politics?

*Shannon Wilson
Eugene*

BIKING UPHILL

EW readers regularly write about the joys and benefits of bicycle riding. Alan Pittman celebrates cycling and bemoans Eugene's lack of will to implement plans which encourage more trips by bicycle.

The Jan. 31 EW reported on an effort under way to open Willamette Street for periodic non-motorized Walk-N-Roll Sundays.

On streets in the Morse Ranch area of south Eugene there are a couple of hundred residents who want to be invited to the party: men, women and children who want to be able to safely bicycle on Crest Drive, Storey Boulevard and Friendly Street. Narrow traffic lanes, curvy streets and uphill grades where bikes go 5 mph and cars 27 mph currently make for few cyclists on those roads.

The council is about to pass an ordinance spending nearly \$3 million to completely rebuild those streets and yet keep the same narrow lanes and unsafe conditions for bicyclists. These streets absolutely must have a bicycle lane on the uphill traffic side throughout the project. Parks, schools and businesses on Willamette Street beckon residents who are stuck with using their cars.

Speak up for these citizens' rights. Write to or call the mayor and councilors (682-5010, mayorandcc@ci.eugene.or.us). Please ask them to include an uphill bicycle lane on all rebuilt streets in the Morse Ranch area.

*Paul Moore
Eugene*

BONNY'S DEPARTURE

I am sad to see that my wonderful City Councilor Bonny Bettman has decided

to move on. She has been a courageous champion of the people and will be missed dearly by many when she is gone. I don't know all the reasons motivating Bonny, but we can be confident that the ridiculously low salary isn't difficult to leave. Our beloved former City Councilor David Kelly moved on not so long ago because it was too hard on him financially. His replacement Alan Zelenka has not filled his shoes thus far.

Large numbers of people in Eugene have been quite dissatisfied with city politics and rightfully so, but if we want real change we need to seriously consider paying city councilors a salary somebody can live on. We expect our councilors to make some of the most vital decisions that help determine the future of our city, but we only want to pay them \$13,000 or \$14,000 annually.

Reagan-loving Republican City Councilor Mike Clark was elected [unopposed] in a ward that voted a majority for John Kerry in 2004. If we paid a reasonable wage, we probably could have drawn some progressives into that race and could now have a strong progressive majority on the council. The same case can be made for the mayor's position — lots of important difficult work but little compensation.

We are asking for more trouble as long as we continue with the status quo.

*Joshua Welch
Eugene*

OUR PARKS ARE FINE

Mark Gillem toured urban parks in Oregon and Washington to help him envision what could be done for downtown Eugene ("Priming the Pump," 1/24). But somehow he appears to have overlooked Eugene. A visit to Eugene would show him that our downtown parks are unique and valuable.

His critique of Eugene downtown parks doesn't mention the Park Blocks, site of the Saturday Market and the Tuesday Farmers' Market. There's no more vital "cultural heart of the city" than what goes on there. The children's reading court at the Public Library and the plaza at Broadway and Willamette are other public spaces that he shouldn't miss. He dismisses Skinner Butte Park as being "hidden behind a hill" when it's a short, easy walk from downtown on High Street. Although Alton Baker Park is, as he says, across the river, it's pretty close to downtown over the DeFazio Bike Bridge.

Most important, it's essential to understand the development possibilities that Eugene is working to realize. For example, the opportunities are ripe for connecting Eugene's downtown to the river and its incredible park system through development of the Courthouse District and the EWEB site.

Eugene's downtown parks and urban spaces are not perfect, but Gillem's dismissal of them shows ignorance of much of what makes downtown Eugene unique and full of possibilities. To build a better city with vital public places we have to start by looking at the outdoor spaces that we already enjoy.

*David Amundson
Eugene*

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