

## REAL ISSUES

What a relief to have the election cycle end. Now the *EW*'s letters column can return to real issues instead of boosting candidates. D.H. Bucher wants to repel wealthy Californians from entering our state. Keep Eugene weird! And let's hold onto our homeless. They aren't messing things up by voting to raise taxes for infrastructure.

Arlen Markus has spotted the secret control of the Koch coal barons right here in our river city at KLCC. I haven't heard Tennessee Ernie Ford's famous coal miner song "Sixteen Tons" played on the folksong shows "Friends & Neighbors" and "Front Porch" lately. Dan Plaster and Kobi Lucas must be stuffing their pockets with that Koch cash.

Edward Newland alerts us to "mother cows" thanking us if we just switch to "delicious, healthful, cruelty-free nut or soy-based milk, cheese, yogurt and ice cream." Though he doesn't seem to notice that almond farms use an extraordinary amount of water in drought-stricken California and Midwestern soybean fields

murder huge numbers of field mice when plowed.

Of course we could go protest at City Hall ... but wait! There isn't one anymore. All those cronies are probably dining on ossobuco at Marché with California almond farmers while laying plans to change EWEB to coal fuel.

Let's march on Marché!

Chuck Kleinhans  
Eugene

## HEALTHY FORESTS

As a science teacher, mother, forestland owner, organic orchardist and farmer, I have concerns for how our forests are managed. Notifying parents of children that may be affected by toxic spray is certainly a good start — I think we need and can do more.

If lumber companies notifying neighboring properties of exact dates (as opposed to the 12-month window announcement currently practiced) for aerial spraying of clearcut areas, would this notification address adjacent properties,

including crops, pets and farm animals such as livestock or bees? Would a person be able to move these things on the appointed day?

Even if they could do this at a moment's notice, then what about the fish in the neighboring watersheds? Miniscule parts per million of herbicide chemicals can disrupt a salmon's ability to migrate to their spawning grounds?

The federal government made laws to govern use of its forests in 1976. I used to be a botany tech for BLM Medford district in the late 1980s. I had the privilege to join a timber cruising crew for a few weeks to survey timber stands as well as monitor other crews whose job it was to reduce competition for the desired Douglas fir tree stand by handcutting.

In fact, as I learned from BLM foresters, BLM's own research teams had accumulated data that mixed forests were healthier than monocrop stands.

Why does Oregon allow these practices for state and private timberlands? It doesn't make sense. Why does the Oregon Forestry Practices Act allow industries

to aerial spray known toxic substances anywhere near or in an area of children, animals, food crops and other species?

Let's work on the larger picture to make Oregon a leader with sane, healthy and responsible forest practices.

Antonia Blum  
Walton

## INNOVATION HUB

I support the Innovation Hub proposal component of the urban renewal projects currently being considered for downtown. An Innovation Hub downtown in the old LCC building is key to the success of our emerging innovation district by providing affordable workspace to the many small businesses in the core of downtown.

CodeChops Coworking Space opened five years ago in the Broadway Commerce Center with this same goal. As rents increase in the downtown core, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain low desk fees for our remote workers, freelancers and small businesses that have chosen to make Eugene their home and place of business.

## VIEWPOINT BY ALVIN URQUHART

## All Vision, No Follow Through

THE CITY OF EUGENE NEEDS PUBLIC, LONG-RANGE PLANNING

With heated discussions about rezoning in South Eugene, disputes about Kesey Square, confusion about what offices should be in the proposed City Hall and questions about the placing of an expanded farmers market, it has become obvious that planning in Eugene is not functioning well.

Instead of considered decisions based on well-established and officially adopted planning documents, issues such as those mentioned above are brought forward for official action by City Manager Jon Ruiz, Mayor Kitty Piercy or a member of the City Council on an *ad hoc* basis.

Long-range plans, which should provide context for these issues, have not been discussed in official hearings nor adopted by the City Council. It is simply not enough to base decisions about these issues on draft plans or on proposals from specially interested parties.

Let me illustrate the problems of not adopting long-range plans by reference to the Special Zoning regulations for the South Willamette Street Area. They were justified on the bases of the Draft Envision Eugene Plan and the Draft South Willamette Street Concept Plan. Neither has been adopted by the City Council nor discussed in formal public hearings before the council, although both plans have been in progress for more than five years.

Many, maybe even most, of the ideas in these plans may be excellent; however, they are not officially adopted policies of the elected city officials of Eugene and deserve to be discussed in public hearings before being used as a basis for council action.

The rezoning process of the South Willamette

Street area should not have been brought before the City Council because it does not even follow the implementation section of the Draft South Willamette Concept Plan, which states that a new "single family options (SFO) zone" should first be adopted and then a "special action plan," (SAP) including such things as rezoning, would follow.

But the South Willamette Concept Plan was not publicly discussed, let alone adopted, and its implementation strategies were ignored. I can only ask, "Why did the city manager or mayor even allow the rezoning issue to be placed on the agenda?"

The result of not discussing, modifying and adopting these plans has resulted in unnecessary great neighborhood unrest and general mistrust of city officials.

The Planning Department and the Planning Commission did their job in presenting the city manager with a plan for the South Willamette Area. However, their plan was merely "presented" to the City Council, which did not feel the need to hold hearings and adopt the plan. Nor did the city manager suggest its adoption.

Without being adopted, the plan has no teeth, and city business went on without the benefit of a long-term plan for the area. A deliberative process was avoided and the city continued to do business as usual — *ad hoc* discussions of individual issues as they arise without the context of adopted long-term plans.

Similarly, the plans for a new City Hall lack the context of longer-term planning in that both the degree of earthquake readiness and the presence of councilors' offices only became apparent years after the decision to destroy the old City Hall was made.

Likewise, not having an existing plan for the core

of the downtown — including Kesey Square, a farmers market and the Park Blocks and other open space improvements — except as part of consideration for continuing the use of an Urban Renewal District shows the lack of adequate longer-term planning in the city.

Over the years, I can't count the number of "vision" statements the city has made without adequate plans for their implementation. Visions must be accompanied by long-range implementation plans.

Not having adopted long-term plans means that 1) citizens are left out of the planning process at crucial moments; 2) the city manager and the mayor may disregard even existing, proposed long-range plans in setting the City Council agenda and 3) short-term decisions about land usage lack well thought out contexts.

Can the core of Eugene stand the loss of more public buildings — the Federal Courthouse, the Eugene Police Department, the Municipal Courts, the major hospital, possibly the post office — the scattering of city and other public functions, and be made even uglier by such projects as the 13th and Olive Street student housing, let alone the disruption of neighborhoods?

As long as the mayor and part-time city councilors do not have a direct responsibility of managing the city, long-range planning for social, economic and land-use will remain in the hands of the city manager, who is unelected. And at present, the city manager largely ignores even the long-term planning proposals of the Planning Commission and Planning Department.

*Alvin Urquhart has lived in Eugene since 1960 and has followed long-term planning in both the city and the university for most of the past 50 years. He is a retired professor of geography and former director of the environmental studies program at the University of Oregon.*