



Community Cycling Center employee Nissy Cobb keeps up with demand, as the spring rush for repairs and supplies make it busy for the nonprofit northeast Portland bike shop, advocacy site and training center.

PHOTOS BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN/  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

# Drivers, Watch Out!

Increased awareness of safety has also led to a shift in terminology among local transportation officials.

"It's actually encouraging to me that they're not calling them accidents, that they're calling them collisions, because they see there's room to make these things preventable," says Graves.

Other bike advocates tackle traffic safety issues by promoting citizen-initiated citations when police officers determine a driver had reason to overlook cyclists, as with the recent bicyclist deaths.

Local bike lawyer Christopher Heaps looks to a PDOT study that shows a majority of Portlanders wanting to bike regularly but declining to do so primarily for safety concerns.

"If you're allowed not to yield, it's going to discourage bicycling," Heaps says. "We're going to keep issuing citations until the laws are enforced by city police."

Graves argues that too much has been made of the bike-car conflict, and Portland has enough streets for everyone to get around.

Pointing cyclists to side routes with a "bike boulevard" designation, Graves gains hope from the city's plan to hold a Sunday Parkways event on Sunday, June 22, in north Portland. The circular route would close six miles of local streets to vehicle traffic from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., linking parks and places to walk and ride bicycles safely.

"Since not everyone can live next to the Esplanade, this will bring the Esplanade to the neighborhoods," Graves says.

The activities will follow an international Toward Carfree Cities conference, which Portland will host June 16 through 20 to promote practical alternatives and transformation of urban infrastructure.

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crossings.

"The huge explosion in growth of bicyclists is a good problem for Portland to have," says Alison Hill Graves, outreach coordinator for northeast Portland's Community Cycling Center, which moved its administration to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard this month to make more room at its Alberta Street location.

The nonprofit CCC, like many private bike shops across the city, has begun drowning in popularity and often has a weeklong backlog for repairs.

Graves argues that the city is nearly through a culture shift that will cause everyone to be aware of sharing the road and will lead to the necessary infrastructure adjustments.

"In the meantime," she says, "we need to do everything we can as neighborly Portlanders, whether we're in cars or on a bike, to be constantly aware of what's ahead."

To add to this consciousness, CCC programs equip low-income commuters with free bikes complete with lights, helmet and lessons on safety.

## Bicycle Safety Classes

It's time to dust off that bike and get back on the road. People can become savvy bike riders this spring with Portland Community College and the Community Cycling Center.

Attendees will learn everything they need to know to become a master bike rider in a few short weeks. Both classes will be held at the Community Cycling Center, 1700 N.E. Alberta St.

The non-credit classes in-

clude:

**Urban Riding:** Get the knowledge and confidence to ride your bike as a commuter or longer rider. Class gives you a basic tool kit and maintenance instruction, plus safety, bike maps and more. The class will be offered from 7 to 9 p.m., Wednesdays, May 28 through June 25. Cost is \$125.?

**Women's Urban Riding:** All the information in the urban riding class, but with a focus on women's concerns. The class

will meet from 7 to 9 p.m., Wednesdays, April 23 through May 21. Cost is \$125.

For more information, contact PCC's Community Education office at 503-978-5205.

*Bicyclists pack the Eastbank Esplanade during commuting hours. The growing numbers often mean that 'Breakfast on the Bridges,' a monthly event by the biking organization Shift, runs out of supplies before 9 a.m.*



## PDC Expands Housing Effort

For minority, first-time homebuyers

Portland Development Commission support for first-time and minority homebuyers took a big leap forward last week when the PDC and the city of Portland were awarded \$20 million in bond authority from the state.

This allocation will enable PDC to create a Mortgage Credit Certificate program that will help 100 to 125 families become first-time homebuyers in Portland. The program is expected to become operational on June 1.

"This award couldn't have happened at a more critical time," said PDC executive director Bruce Warner. "The recent

tightening of the mortgage credit markets has made it more difficult for first-time homebuyers to qualify for a home loan. This program provides the needed financial assistance to help these buyers qualify."

The program allows eligible buyers to claim up to 20 percent of their first mortgage interest as a dollar-for-dollar tax credit versus a traditional tax deduction, which can increase the amount of a mortgage for which a borrower will qualify.

In order to participate, applicants must have an annual income at or below \$67,500 for a family of one or two, or \$77,625 for a family of three or more, and

purchase a home in the city with financing from PDC or a participating lender.

The participants must also be a first-time homebuyer, which the Internal Revenue Service defines as not having owned a home in the past three years.

The program continues an increased commitment to helping first-time homebuyer programs by PDC. In January, the agency added \$2.15 million to its existing \$900,000 homebuyer assistance budget and added five new urban renewal areas to the list of areas eligible for mortgage assistance.

For more information visit [pdc.us/nhp](http://pdc.us/nhp) or call a PDC loan specialist at 503-823-3400.

## Commission on New Course

continued ▲ from Front

expansion of the Lents urban-renewal area in outer-southeast Portland could generate \$130 million extra for the area over the next couple decades.

Another renewal area along Interstate Avenue foresees \$200 million in unobligated funds between 2013 and '24, but the dollars must stay along that strip. The agency is looking into the possibility of incorporating the Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard portion of the Oregon Convention Center district into the Interstate district.

"The buildings that PDC is subsidizing (along MLK) somehow aren't leasing out like we'd like, but

it's causing a lot of activity around them," Rosenbaum says.

Citing economic forces out of its control, the developers rely on owner-occupied buildings and regional partners, some of which do not yet exist, to help meet PDC's goals.

"On some of these big jobs, like South Waterfront and Pearl, there's not even one firm in Oregon that's either minority- or women-owned that could do about 40 percent of that project," Warner says.

He and Rosenbaum emphasize that their organization doesn't be-

lieve in handouts but in making smart change by building partnerships with other groups like Portland Public Schools to get affordable housing in neighborhoods that need it most by developing the leftover empty lots.

The agency executives argue that PDC's approximately 200 employees are energized to make positive changes with the help of Portland's businesses and residents.

"It's slow-moving; don't get me wrong, and what happened 20, 40 years ago is outrageous, but (PDC is in) a different place than it was 20 years ago," Warner says.

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4625 N. Trenton Street  
March 29, April 19, May 3 and May 17

For more information and screening locations, visit [www.mchealth.org/healthequity](http://www.mchealth.org/healthequity) or call 503-988-3030 Ext. 22068

PCC CASCADE

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