

## EDURA

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the draft plan to its website and sent emails to 1000 'stakeholders,' all the puzzle pieces were ready to fall into place. And during the next month, they did.

Portland State University President Wim Wiewel explained how on OPB's Think Out Loud program, May 22.

"This has now been approved by five different bodies: The Planning and Sustainability Commission, Urban Renewal Advisory Commission, County Commissioners, Portland Development Commission and Portland City Council," Wiewel said. "So five elected or appointed bodies have decided that, 'Yes this is the right investment...'"

There was only one problem. Until January, no details about the plan had been published. And until April 6 no

investment in the Education URA will nearly triple the size of the existing tax base in the region from \$608 million to \$1.7 billion in 32 years."

Even Commissioner Fritz, the lone voice on council who opposed the URA, likes the idea.

"I do think it's right for Portland; it's just not right for Portland at this time when the city is struggling to cover its budget," Fritz says. "And I question why we are deciding to spend money on new buildings when we can't pay the costs of keeping teachers and students in the classrooms we have."

The League of Women Voters has voiced another objection. The area is far from blighted, so urban renewal is the wrong tool for the job.

"Why doesn't the city just commit to helping PSU by allocating money

about the project.

"We haven't seen the mayor's final PSU proposal," Cogen told Kish. "But it's important to remember that any time an urban renewal area gets created, there's an impact on already financially strapped taxpayers. And there's an impact on the services we provide to people in need — senior citizens, people facing financial hardships involving their homes, youth programs and other critical services that aid vulnerable populations."

Testimony at the PDC's April 11 public hearing echoed these concerns.

Wendy Rahm, an Eliot Tower board member, said the PDC needed to provide more information in its outreach efforts.

"I appreciated PDC coming to give the briefing at the Elliot; it's a big tower 229 units: 400 people," she said. "However I was troubled by the fact that this briefing was used as a checkoff for PDC outreach. Many of the 56 people who attended were dismayed by the lack of detail presented, and by their questions for more specific detail going essentially unanswered. To be fair, I think our presentation was early, and therefore may be perhaps premature, but there were a lot of concerns expressed about that after the meeting."

Rahm was one of several people who asked PDC Commissioners to slow down the decision. They didn't. A public open house at PSU on April 17, concluded the outreach process. On April 24, the Planning and Sustainability Committee approved the plan. Multnomah County Commissioners approved their share of the deal on April 26. The Central City URA Evaluation Committee, which had not met since late 2010, was reconvened April 26 to learn about the new plan. They approved it that same day.

Four days later, PDC Commissioners sent the plan to city council for final approval. The council took public testimony on May 9, and voted the URA into existence on May 16.

To insiders, it was the successful conclusion of years of work. To outsiders it was a rush job. As Maurice Sendak might say, "Let the wild rumpus begin."

from the budget to the university over the next 30 years," says Aiona. "We are not arguing against the importance of investing in PSU, we're saying given the impact on other taxing jurisdictions — the schools, the county and the city — Urban Renewal is not the way to do it."

### The Last Mile

In January 2012, the PDC began to share a brochure about the Education URA with downtown groups. They met with an enthusiastic reception from the Portland Business Alliance, the private development group Greater Portland Inc., and from Lincoln High School boosters, who already had ambitious plans for the school. They met with residents of Eliot Towers condominiums, with the Downtown Neighborhood Association, the South of Market EcoDistrict Steering Committee and the Goose Hollow Foothills League.

Yet as late as February 2012, Multnomah County Chair Jeff Cogen was telling the Portland Business Journal's Matthew Kish that he had not seen a plan and had plenty of doubts

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full draft was available. So many city residents were just waking up to the idea that an Education Urban Renewal Area was more than a fantasy item on the mayor's wish list.

### What's at Stake?

The Education URA is set to invest \$169 million in diverted taxes over 28 years. It will develop 144 acres of downtown property that includes Portland State University and Lincoln High School. The county will get a new \$19 million building and Portland Public schools will get \$11 million to help renovate Lincoln High School. At the same time, local governments and schools will lose those URA taxes: the city will lose \$70 million, Multnomah County will give up \$68 million and the state schools fund would lose \$75 million.

Mayor Adams says the sacrifice is worth it because the entire region will benefit in the long term.

"The URA funds will stimulate private investment and philanthropy in PSU and the region: this will add additional capacity to the tax base in the area. It is estimated that this

## Kidneys

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African Americans had 76 percent lower odds of obtaining a kidney from a living donor. Even at the facilities that came closest to equality, African Americans were still 35 percent less likely to obtain a transplant.

There are more than 92,000 people waiting for a kidney in the United States, and over a third of those are African Americans. In 2011, there were 5,771 living donor transplants performed — the lowest rate in ten years — but only 813 of those kidneys were received by African Americans.

Neal says kidney failure is at an epidemic level in part because it is linked to the obesity epidemic. And the problem is made worse by the high cost of kidney dialysis and transplantation — the only ways for kidney patients to avoid organ failure.

It costs close to \$35,000 a year for the typical person on dialysis to obtain medical care, she said, and a transplant can cost as much as \$250,000.

"There are a lot of social justice issues in

health," Neal says. "It is a tragedy to lose people to issues that don't have to affect them, it's also enormously expensive."

Dr. Segev agreed that the disparities could be explained, at least in part, by the epi-

Kidney failure is at an epidemic level in part because it is linked to the obesity epidemic

demics of obesity, hypertension and diabetes, which are likely ruling out many potential African Americans organ donors from giving to a friend or family member. Differences in culture, education and social attitudes as well as barriers to medical care in general may also be factors.

"We need to figure out the keys to suc-

cessfully reducing disparities," Dr. Segev said. "What is it that centers do to help their patients identify living donors? How do they get live donors evaluated efficiently? And how do their patients address the many barriers to successful live donor transplantation, particularly those faced by African Americans?"

The staff of M.I.K.E., which is based at Providence St. Vincent Hospital, travels throughout the area teaching young people how to educate their families and communities on better kidney health through diet and exercise.

"The M.I.K.E. program recruits community mentors who will work with young people on a weekly basis to guide them through a curriculum, and we prepare people to be ambassadors for health," she said. "The whole idea is to start a ripple effect through education and mentorship and community outreach."

"The National Kidney Foundation's END

THE WAIT initiative is focused on reducing the wait for transplant for everyone on the waiting list," said Joseph Vassalotti, MD, the National Kidney Foundation's chief medical officer.

"First, we must make an effort to increase living donation for everyone who is eligible for kidney transplantation," he said. "Second, we have to explore different ways to reduce racial disparities in access to living donor kidney transplantation."

"Third, we need to find ways that amplify collaborative interactions between patients and transplant centers to find potential living donors," Vassalotti said. "And finally, we have to address why there is such variation between transplant centers in the U.S."

The MIKE Program holds its annual benefit dinner and auction Sept. 14 at the Multnomah Athletic Club. Find out more about their work at [www.mikeprogram.org](http://www.mikeprogram.org).

Read more about the National Kidney Foundation at [www.kidney.org](http://www.kidney.org).

## Boxing

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Juan Rogel

"My coach says I have got a chance to go to the National Guard boot camp, where he is heading in June. He's actively seeking work as a paralegal and hopeful that he will find something soon."

'I just need a chance to show my professional skills'

if I win that do another. If I keep winning those competitions I can become part of an Olympic trial. They say I have a shot."

Next up for Rogel is Air

"I haven't been finding anything as a paralegal, so I'm open to working as a receptionist or any office work," he says. "I just need a chance to show my professional skills."