

# Southeast Neighbors News

*Working together to preserve the livability of our most immediate surroundings, for all the people and creatures therein, and for the generations to come.*

[www.SoutheastNeighbors.org](http://www.SoutheastNeighbors.org) May 2013

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**Annual Elections**



**General Meeting May 14**  
7-9pm at Spencer Butte Middle School

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## General Meeting with Annual Elections on May 14, 2013

Our General Meeting in May will be at a regular time and location, on May 14, 2013, the second Tuesday, from 7pm to 9pm at the Spencer Butte Middle School, 500 East 43rd Avenue.

The meeting program will include our annual Southeast Neighbors board and officer elections, a debate on the City of Eugene service fee measure, and a few timely issue reports.

Your help is needed! Volunteering to serve on the neighborhood board is a great way to get to know the people in your community, and help build an safe, livable, and connected neighborhood.

Please contact Kevin Matthews at "[matthews@artifice.com](mailto:matthews@artifice.com)", or any active board member, if you're interested in serving on the Southeast Neighbors Board.

## Southeast Neighbors Board of Directors

These volunteers are currently serving as the elected Southeast Neighbors board and officers, with the year their current term ends: Kent Anderson (2014), Alicia McGraw (2014), Pavel Gubanikhin, treasurer (2014), Kevin Matthews, president (2013), Deborah Noble (2013), Lindsay Selser, vice-president (2013), Heather Sielicki, secretary (2013).

## The Climate in Eugene

*Thoughts from Our President, by Kevin Matthews*

People in our neighborhood are concerned about climate change. Many of us have participated in our own meetings, in a wide range of local events, supported Friends of Eugene, signed petitions, written letters, and contributed to the Eugene Climate and Energy Action Plan (CEAP). Neighborhood members have also volunteered on the Committee on the Environment of the Neighborhood Leader's Council.

If we look at the stack of elected officials from here upward - Betty Taylor, Pete Sorenson, Kitty Piercy, Peter DeFazio, John Kitzhaber, Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, Barack Obama — each one of them represents the most climate-conscious electable candidate available to vote for. It's quite an amazing royal flush to have gotten elected, all in a row, all at once.

### So how are we doing?

Frankly, we are not getting the job done. The weight of evidence shows, first, that a decisive change from business as usual is required to prevent runaway climate change. And second, research has been piling up, showing that such decisive change has to happen in the next two or maybe three years, to keep relatively positive outcomes within reach.

Yet business as usual trundles along, barely perturbed.

This is why I wrote "2013: The Year of Climate Decision" for a leading national climate blog. The piece begins:

*"Either by action, or by inaction, it's most likely that the climate decision will be made this year."*

Getting back to our dream team of elected officials...



## The Climate in Eugene (editorial continued from first page)

Not only are they not getting the job done. Worse, it often seems like they are not even in the game.

What I mean is, the positions they mostly take, the statements they mostly make, the legislation they propose and work for — these things are consistently not sufficient to get the job done, even if the asks were won, one hundred percent.

It's as if we're in a football game, down by a couple of touchdowns, deep in our own end of the field, far from the goal line, and there's just over a minute left in the game. But we have the ball, so there's a chance. The coach calls a play. A short running play, followed by a short running play, followed by another.

With these tactics, the clock will run out, and we will lose. Period. There's virtually no other outcome, unless we take a different approach.

### We have to go for the big play, or we will lose.

This is today's situation with climate change. We have to change laws, policies, budgets, and priorities so that our greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. decrease by about 5% per year, every year, for the next several decades. We have to change laws, policies, budgets, and priorities now, so that we get onto that glide path in the next two or three years.

The alternative — scientifically analyzed — is to condemn our world to a thousand years of torture. Because that's at least how long it will take for the excess greenhouse gases to be absorbed by the Earth and biosphere, and for the planet to cool down again. Even then, it would be a biosphere disrupted beyond any known precedent.

So when are we going to suck it up, and throw the long pass?

### What Would Going Deep on Climate Change Look Like?

At the national level, going deep would mean abandoning President Obama's absurd "all of the above" energy policy, aimed at increasing fossil fuel development alongside renewable energy development. With about five times more proven fossil fuel reserves around the world than the atmosphere can safely absorb, continued exploration and development of new fossil fuel sources is going dangerously backwards.

At the state level, going deep would mean abandoning the sprawl-and-traffic-feeding, budget-busting Columbia River Crossing mega-bridge project. It would mean protecting the large carbon sequestration capacity of western Oregon's intact native forests, instead of promoting privatization of public lands to open them wide for rapid logging, even while so many raw logs from Oregon are being shipped straight to China.

And our very laudable statewide greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets, passed in 2007, to achieve greenhouse gas levels 10% less than 1990 levels by 2020, and to achieve greenhouse gas levels 75% below 1990 levels by 2050, should finally be made regulatory, not just aspirational.

It might hurt a bit! And that could be worth it, to help prevent runaway climate change. But more likely, making Oregon targets count would spur new prosperity, through economies of efficiency and growth of the green economy.

### Envisioning Eugene's Climate Change Response

At the local level in Eugene, despite the strength of community opinion at the grassroots and neighborhood level, we are in much the same situation. Even in Eugene, the coaches are still just calling short, easy running plays on climate change, while we watch the clock tick down.

An official view of our recent progress can be found in the City's newly released [2013 Community Climate Energy and Action Plan Progress Report](#).

What could we do differently in Eugene? As a cornerstone, and to help organize the rest of our efforts, we really need to immediately address the Eugene CEAP, updating it so the actions listed in the plan will actually add up to meet the emissions reductions goals. Based on a quantitative analysis I previously published online, the current plan is not even close.

There are also some obvious specific things to do in Eugene, right away.

- Require that EWEB restore its residential energy efficiency support program, and raise the value of EWEB's solar feed-in tariff to match peak rates.
- Stop our pending UGB expansions, which will increase driving, by correcting the most regressive housing mix in the Willamette Valley.
- Calibrate and improve efforts to build mixed-use density with quality in current commercial areas.
- Stop the EWEB Riverfront plan with its 120 foot tall buildings, and no Willamette River restoration. Is that density with quality?
- Make the Eugene City Hall update a shining example of constructive reuse, tearing up the City's backward RFP that says "make as much new as feasible."
- Implement Army Corps of Engineers plans for restoration of Amazon Creek, Eugene's dominant watershed & south Eugene's green heart, including the specific ACOE recommendation to protect the Amazon Headwaters Keystone. Science shows that both rainfall and landslides are likely to increase with climate change.

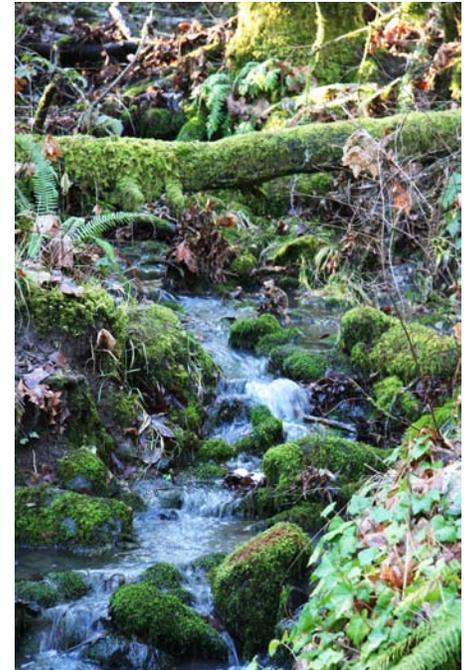
What we need is real planning for real change, without changing what's best, in order to preserve

what's best and build more efficiently forward.

These are tough times, for many of us, to be sure. But if we don't make decisive change now, and step aside from business as usual around energy and planning, and consumption... things are going to get bad. Very bad.

As Joe Romm, a leading U.S. climate communicator [wrote on April 24](#), on the occasion of NASA climate scientist James Hansen receiving the Ridenhour Courage Prize, with a harsh bit of accuracy:

*"To save this spineless world from itself, supplying the truth isn't enough. You need to supply the spine, too."*



## DEERBROOK PUD LUBA APPEAL

As we reported in the February 2013 edition of the Southeast Neighbors News, the current land use application to develop the Deerbrook PUD in the Amazon Headwaters Keystone area, an area which Southeast Neighbors has long sought to protect, was denied by the Hearings Official in September, 2012.

That formal decision by the Hearings Official was reversed by a 4 to 3 vote of the volunteer Eugene Planning Commission. In other words, the Planning Commission approved the development.

The board of Southeast neighbors voted unanimously in January, 2013 to appeal the Planning Commission approval to the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA). The opening brief on our behalf was filed on April 29, 2013 in Salem, and the LUBA court process is continuing.

Our attorneys are doing a great job with this difficult and important case. To find out how you can help, please visit:

<http://www.saveamazonheadwaters.org>

# Two Perspectives on City of Eugene Measure 20-211

## YES ON MEASURE 20-211

by Chris Wig and Steve Coatsworth, Eugene Cares

Eugene Cares is a coalition of citizens, local businesses and community groups. We believe that passing Measure 20-211—the proposed Eugene City Service Fee—is essential to the conscience and vitality of our community.

In these hard economic times, our community has made difficult but necessary sacrifices, tightening its fiscal belt by \$24 million and 100 jobs. Eugene has faced tough times and made tough choices to keep our fiscal house in order. The Eugene City Fee is the last resort—not the first.

The fee—which is capped at \$10 a month per household and \$30 a month for non-residential properties—safeguards basic homeless and mental health services, preserves essential fire department and public safety functions, and retains institutions that attract growth in our community.

Funds collected from the proposed fee are exclusively allocated to institutions and services that protect our most vulnerable and benefit Eugene's working families. Its passage prevents staff reductions in the police and fire departments, the elimination of Bethel and Sheldon library branches, the removal of critical mental health services and the closure of Sheldon Pool. In-line with our commitment to protect working families, the measure includes special provisions for low-income households. If you don't think your family can afford the fee, chances are you will be exempt.

On May 21, we will determine whether Eugene continues to care for its most vulnerable citizens. We will save or kill Bethel and Sheldon branch libraries. We will either maintain or reduce our force of first responders at Whiteaker Fire Station. We will vote to shore up some dollars or shutter Sheldon Pool.

For more information, or to get involved, please visit [www.eugenecares.org](http://www.eugenecares.org).

## NO ON MEASURE 20-211

by David Monk and Bonny Bettman McCornack, Citizens for Truth, Justice, and the American Way

Unlike most folks, the city's revenue has grown throughout the recession. Even so, they have put a regressive, permanent, flat tax on the ballot.

It would cost each household \$120, and business \$360 every year. Mansion dwellers would pay the same as pensioners in apartments. A small business pays the same as Wal-Mart, and a local business would pay for home and business, \$480 a year. The proposed fee would raise \$14.4 million annually to fill an alleged "\$6 million budget gap."

Like you, we value the services threatened by city cuts, but council has proposed funding those services for ONE YEAR ONLY. After 2014, fee revenue could be reassigned to a vast array of different purposes at the will of the current or future council.

The money is there to fund the services. The city habitually underestimates expected tax revenue by \$4-6 million. That money can fund services. Instead, the city diverts it to subsidies for private developers, a slush fund for a new city hall, padding department budgets, and salary increases for administrators. They also maintain year-end General Fund balances more than what is needed for a safe cushion. In 2011 it was \$47 million, in 2012, \$43 million, more than enough to fill the alleged "gap."

Council is required to review the fee in 5 years, but only the voters can terminate it—it's permanent. The low-income assistance program's parameters are omitted from the law—leaving whatever program council approves vulnerable to change by future councils.

Should low-income and working families be forced to pay more while rich developers do not pay at all? Should low-priority activities be funded at the expense of sacrificing essential services? Urge city leadership to fund essential services first—and vote NO on 20-211.

[www.votencityfee.org](http://www.votencityfee.org)

## PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS THE 30TH AVENUE CROSSING NEAR CAMAS RIDGE ELEMENTARY

A meeting to discuss pedestrian crossings of 30th Avenue from Harris Street to University Street in south Eugene is scheduled for Thursday, May 23rd at 6:00 pm in the Cafeteria at Camas Ridge Elementary School located at 1150 East 29th Avenue in Eugene.

The purpose of the meeting will be to share existing conditions information such as traffic volume and speed data and to solicit community opinions about current crossing conditions. Based on the outcome of this meeting and the evaluation of traffic data a second meeting to discuss

possible infrastructure changes may be scheduled.

For more information, please contact Reed Dunbar, Transportation Planner, at [reed.c.dunbar@ci.eugene.or.us](mailto:reed.c.dunbar@ci.eugene.or.us) or 541-682-5727.



This is the official newsletter of Southeast Neighbors. Newsletters are published and mailed courtesy of the City of Eugene.

Newsletters are produced by neighborhood volunteers and are free to residents and businesses of the neighborhood.

Space is available for letters to the editor and editorial comments from neighbors. All signed letters will be published as space permits.

Editorials express the author's views, not the position of the Neighborhood Association, the City's elected officials, or City staff.