

## **Additional Electronic Comments Submitted**

The WEC could include the population density map for West Eugene as part of looking at the dysfunctional transportation and land use of the area. When I first read through the long history of the WEP, in 2000 and 2001, it only started to make sense when I came across the population density maps -- and that the WEP was intended to fill in the wetlands with overdevelopment. Any post-WEP revision of the plans will need to look at how to interconnect the south hills, Bethel / Danebo and River Road with the commercial and industrial areas. This is one of the main focus points of the WETLANDS alternative. A corollary of the population density map is that Bus Rapid Transit makes more sense going up Highway 99 to Barger, since lots of people live in those neighborhoods and almost no one lives along West 11th. Is anyone really going to take BRT to Home Depot on Seneca to buy lumber? There also isn't room for BRT on West 18th without destroying all of the front lawns, which would be immensely unpopular. Perhaps ensuring frequent regular bus service that doesn't go up substantially in price will be enough of a challenge in the near future, since LTD ignored the warnings about Peak Oil and did not include money in its budget for \$5 / gallon diesel.

### **THINKING BEYOND THE BIG BOX:**

The City could stop approving more big box stores if you want any potential for mixed use development in West Eugene. Real "mixed use" projects do not consist of sterile townhouses next to chain stores (like the hideous project now built at Royal and Danebo). Also, approving a Lowe's next to a Home Depot, and an Office Depot next to a Staples shows that the claim about "progressive" planning in Eugene is just a myth. Hood River's moratorium on new big box stores was upheld by the Oregon Supreme Court, so you could accomplish this if you want to (David Kelly, Bonny Bettman and Betty Taylor tried to get the City Council to enact this when Torrey was Mayor, but they lacked enough votes for this.) One WEC participant told me on Thursday that he thought that the loss of these areas to big box stores wasn't so bad, since at some point these buildings might be used for other things. But waiting for the "market cycles" of recombinant architecture to shift over the coming decades is an inefficient approach -- what's wrong with being proactive so these shifts happen while we still have relatively abundant oil?

### **BAFFLED BY BOULEVARDS:**

It is also unlikely that there would be public support for spending huge amounts of money to purchase West 11th businesses through eminent domain so that the road could be widened between Seneca and Garfield to convert it into an alleged boulevard. With all of the endless talk, you could instead lobby ODOT to help pay for intersection work on West 11th between Beltline and Garfield - something that ODOT officials (some of them) have privately said the agency might have some responsibility for despite the road being under City jurisdiction. The WEP "study" spent more money between June 2001 (when Jim Torrey, Bobby Green and Randy Pape agreed that the WEP wasn't going to get built) and the ultimate "No Build" Record of Decision in March 2007 than it would cost to fix all of the major intersections on this segment of West 11th to facilitate better traffic flow. Really, is the City unable to come up with these ideas on its own?

#### CITY SUPPORT FOR \$817 MILLION IN ROAD CONSTRUCTION DURING OIL DOWNSLOPE:

The Mayor could withdraw her support for the Regional Transportation Plan, forcing a shift in transportation priorities as we approach the end of the age of oil. Voting for a long term budget of 817 million for highway expansion is not a rational response to the end of cheap oil and the start of climate change, but it does parallel her support for a new parking garage was not a rational response to Richard Heinberg's presentation in January 2006 about Peak Oil. It is not a "personal attack" to point out the difference between nice rhetoric and business as usual policies. Decades from now, looking back, few people will likely be impressed that there were lots of committee meetings as we went over the energy "cliff." New technologies such as electric cars and hydrogen fuel cells may mitigate the downslope of fossil fuels, but they can't prevent the impacts. Electric cars and fuel cells are not sources of energy, and as oil and natural gas and coal and uranium decline, we will have less available energy for massive metallurgy.

#### WHY REVIVE HALF A WEP?

The WEC, if it is truly not trying to revive part of the WEP, would stop including discussing building part of the WEP. Half of the WEP was included in the March 2008 "Design Storm" map, and an earlier, also rejected option was pushed by a WEC participant at the April 2008 meeting at the firehouse.

#### PAY ATTENTION TO THE CITY'S OWN PRIORITIES:

The WEC could include the City's own priorities for transportation fixes such as the proposed traffic light at Fifth and Seneca, the top traffic light priority anywhere in Eugene. The money spent on direct subsidies and staff time for the WEC could have paid to install this. This light has been blocked for years because the WEP would construct an intersection at this location (and the City didn't want to build a light and then replace it once the WEP was built). If the WEP is really dead, and the City wants to make changes in West Eugene during this decade, then build the damn traffic light now (it would solve a rush hour bottleneck - although it's only congested at rush hour). It is amazing that this priority was ignored by the "Design Storm" map despite the presence of several City staff on the WEC who presumably know how to find out what City priorities are.

#### PEAK OIL IS HERE BUT WE PRETEND GROWTH WILL CONTINUE:

Most important, the WEC could factor in the fact that we have reached Peak Oil and the rising price of oil is going to massively change transportation demand and shatter economic "business as usual." Spring 2008 was the sharpest decline of car traffic measured since the Federal Highway Administration started keeping statistics. As oil availability declines these sorts of studies that ignore the underlying reality are going to be seen as even less relevant. While I doubt that most of the WEC would dare request yours truly to discuss the implications of Peak Oil upon transportation and land use policies, Eugene is fortunate to have one of the world's leading experts on Peak Oil -- Walter Youngquist, who was at the U of O Geology Department for many years and was a petroleum geologist who explored for oil all over the world. He accurately predicted in the 1990s that mid 2000's would be the Peak (by looking at oil data from the world's

main oil producing companies). His book *Geodesinies* is a bit dry, but full of amazing material. A summary of his views can be found at [www.energycrisis.org](http://www.energycrisis.org) along with many other leading experts about Peak Oil. The end of cheap oil means that "Smart Growth" is merely an illusion, since we are going to have less concentrated energy for road construction, road maintenance, bridge repair, LTD buses, trains, solar panels, wind turbines, hydrogen fuel cells and nearly everything else. Figuring out how to use the remaining oil in the wisest way possible so that we will have some useful things left over when the oil is gone is the most important challenge facing the human race.

#### PROCESS PROBLEMS:

##### EXCLUDED NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS:

The WEC could include west Eugene neighborhood groups to be part of the process. Whiteaker and Churchill - and all those in between - will be directly impacted by any policy changes that come from your process. Having more south Eugene people than west Eugene people is not a representative process. While there was someone participating about a year ago who lived west of downtown, he was not representing a neighborhood group. While people who live around Hendricks Park shouldn't be excluded, it would be good to have more voices and perspectives from west Eugene citizens. Do you think most Eugene citizens will find it acceptable that west Eugene neighborhoods are excluded from your process?

##### EXCLUDED ENVIRONMENTAL VIEWS (THOSE WHO OPPOSED A WORSE VERSION OF THE WEP):

The WEC should consider participation from environmentalists who opposed all of the West Eugene Parkway, not solely the segment between Danebo and Green Hill Roads. Mr. Zako worked with Crandall / Arambula, a Portland architecture firm, to design a WEP relocation in 2002 that would have had more devastation than what ODOT planned. Mr. Zako and Ms. O'Brien then held a press conference to promote this that received lots of publicity and lots of scorn. This alleged alternative would have had more impacts on wetlands, parklands, forests, farms and homes than what ODOT and FHWA were planning. It would be helpful to consider that their views are not representative of environmentalism, and it would be good to include perspectives that have a deeper understanding of transportation, land use and energy. Under Section 4(f) of the 1966 Transportation Act, the "use" of parkland such as the BLM properties is prohibited unless there is a "prudent and feasible" alternative to that use. However, offering a WORSE alternative does not meet this standard, one needs to ensure there is a LESS damaging alternative. While some WEC members have privately said that this pseudo-alternative was dumb, none were willing to say it in public at the time. Those environmentalists who dared to say that none of the WEP should be built were excluded from the "Osprey Report" of 2006 and have been shunned by the WEC. It is difficult to claim that environmental views are included if no one who objected to a worse version of the WEP is welcome to participate. Those who promoted a worse version of the WEP, and those who refused to challenge that worse version, sometimes claim that those who

publicly opposed this are excluded because of "personalities." However, the factual substance that the WEP opponents (who opposed all of the WEP) raised have been consistently ignored -- it is not the alleged personality issues of WEP opponents that are the reasons why those who have promoted greenwash ignore Peak Oil and other fundamentals. Yes, the energy crisis is scary to contemplate, but ignoring it (except for platitudes) merely makes it worse. It is also worth remembering that WEP opponents who objected to the draft version of Crandall Arambula were shut out of further discussions by its promoters, and probably will never be welcome at these sorts of efforts, since being right is too embarrassing. The only input that this writer was allowed to have in the Crandall Arambula report was to point out eight days before publication that the next to the last draft recommended converting the West Lawn Cemetery into a commercial development (a Bus Rapid Transit stop was planned for the WEP/Beltline intersection and transit oriented development was recommended for the wetlands surrounding the intersection). Being more concerned with credit and publicity than fact checking is a good way to make these sorts of severe mistakes.

[www.greenwasheugene.com/crandall.html](http://www.greenwasheugene.com/crandall.html) includes a map and a short history EAST OR WEST? Ironically, in the 1980s, some merely opposed the WEP east of Beltline, since that area was then thought to be the most significant ecological assets, and those people largely ignored the impacts west of Beltline. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the official concern was reversed, with agencies expressing concern for the natural areas west of Beltline while ignoring the impacts east of Beltline. Since building half of the WEP would be twice as illegal due to federal laws prohibiting "segmentation" of these types of projects, the WEC would be wise to stop wasting public money to convene meetings and draw maps that include building half of the highway.

#### PLEASE PROVE ME WRONG!

I predicted at the start of this process that "half a WEP" would be put on the table by some WEP supporters and some who claim to be environmentalists. Please, prove me wrong by removing any further consideration for piecemealing the parkway. The way to guarantee that the WEP is completely over is to ensure that the ODOT properties purchased for the WEP west of Bailey Hill Road are converted into conservation parks.

#### CENSORSHIP OF MENTIONING OF THE WETLANDS ALTERNATIVE:

The WEC could acknowledge the existence of the WETLANDS alternative to the WEP, which includes many suggestions for a balanced transportation, land use and energy conservation alternative. It is offensive that your paid consultants have written reports for the City (in 2006 and 2007) that pretend to discuss the history and issues while censoring any mention of the WETLANDS alternative. If the consultants and the WEC thought that WETLANDS was stupid and irrelevant, then this censorship would be reasonable. However, one of the Osprey Group partners told this writer that WETLANDS was put together very well -- when he interviewed me for my views as part of the initial discussions that led to WEC. And the main private citizen who is responsible for the WEC -- Mary O'Brien -- told me in early 2006 that parts of WETLANDS were "brilliant" -- so it is probably not disagreement with the substance that is responsible for this censorship. Unfortunately, I was only interviewed after

considerable pressure was applied to Mayor Piercy to stop the exclusiveness (no one who objected to Crandall / Arambula's BS pseudo alternative was invited to contribute) and only after Osprey had already completed their report. Claiming to be inclusive while excluding key voices merely encourages cynicism and fuels resentment.

#### BEFORE - OR AFTER - THE ELECTION?

The WEC could have at least an interim progress report in time for the Mayoral election runoff. Only offering a report after the election is evasion and cowardice. If the runoff is really about two different visions, then some substance needs to be provided to the voters, even if it is preliminary. Merely offering a very long list of a mix of good ideas and nonsense (the "Design Storm" of March 2008) is not helpful. As some have said more eloquently than I, there is no shortage of good ideas that have percolated for decades - what is lacking is political will to implement them. Pretending that we need more and more committees to figure out what to do merely ensures that nothing gets done.

#### OIL PRICES HAVE DOUBLED DURING WEC MEETINGS, BUT NO RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS?

The price of oil has roughly doubled during the tenure of the WEC, so some short term efforts would be needed if you really want to address the energy crisis and its impacts on transportation and land use. It would not be a surprise if global issues far beyond Eugene disrupted oil supplies or suddenly made energy more expensive -- and since there is not any petroleum in Oregon, we need to be prepared to handle these disruptions, both short term and permanent. So far, nothing in the WEC's reports seems to acknowledge these realities. Note that while the response to Peak Oil and the response to climate change are similar, Peak Oil implies that the era of economic "growth" is ending (since merely having technological substitutes is unlikely to mitigate the downslope of fossil fuels). And the way we are going to reduce carbon emissions is the oil and natural gas (and soon, coal) will be less and less abundant. Voluntary simplicity would have been nice, but now it's more likely to be cost and availability problems that reduce our "carbon footprints" since sensible efforts to mitigate these problems have been systemically blocked for decades and many well intentioned liberals have declined to push strongly for needed shifts.