Northwest Tribal nations lead on climate change

Emily Lardner

Indigenous peoples have been among the most vocal proponents of solving climate change, but their advocacy has often been marginalized. A recent conference titled Evergreen Tribes and Climate Change Conference at the Squaxin Island Tribe's Little Creek Hotel (November 8-9) made that advocacy more visible.

One hundred faculty from 20 colleges attended, many of them as part of teams committed to bringing learning back to their campuses.

A second conference, in central Washington, convened leaders from Tribes and First Nations across the US, in a “national summit,” reflecting the momentum behind the tribal nations’ climate leadership. That three-day conference engaged tribal leaders, citizens, staff, youth and collaborators in conversation about navigating the cultural, economic, and social challenges of climate change.

The Evergreen Conference was designed to introduce mostly non-native educators to the ways tribes are leading responses to climate change, including making connections to the present, in the context of the government to government relationships that characterize our state.

Presenters included leaders from eleven different tribes. These leaders provided vivid and detailed descriptions of the climate change challenges they are facing and the adaptive strategies they are using. Running through all of the sessions was the theme of tribal resilience and adaptation, reflecting the forward-looking work of the tribes.

The conference began with an overview of climate issues in eastern and western Washington presented by Tulalip leader Daryl Williams and Phil Rippet, Superintendent of the Yakama Nation’s Natural Resources Department. The keynote on the second day featured a plenary by Willie Frank III and David Troutt, Swinomish and Nisqually.

Tribes on the move

The University of Washington and Evergreen State College are collaborating with tribes on various climate-related projects on tribal land at Shuksan Water, Chehalis, Quinault and Nisqually.

Heather Price (North Seattle Community College) and Sonya Doucette (Bellevue College) described the launch of a project focused on justice and civic engagement through WA State’s community colleges, supported through a legislative budget allocation from the last session.

Steve Robinson, Legislative/Education Policy Analyst with the North-
We can't escape our future. The sum of our collective actions as humans acts as another force of nature, influencing the big physical systems that underpin the small blue, watery planet we've all come to know. We are in the process of making our own collective future. Our collective status as hostages to the future was on display at the United Nations' climate meeting, COP27. As Wired reporter Gregory Barber put it, many rich nations arrived not having made good on promises to reduce emissions. Poor nations arrived angry at past failures to put their issues on the negotiating table—particularly plans for rich polluters to pay for damage caused by climate change. COP27 ended with a high-level plan to compensate loss and damage. Al Gore announced a nonprofit climate data effort called Climate Trace. Some progress was made on agreements to cut back on methane emissions.

Useful steps towards easing human disruptions of physical systems were made through these negotiations. With the perseverance, organizing, and advocacy that was on display at COP27, our future may become more bearable. What is not negotiable is that actions today affect tomorrow—we can't escape the future.

So many critical decisions affect our climate future. We should be taking ownership of our future in reality, and in our narrative, bridging our peers and our community and our elders. Several articles talk about public ownership of the railroads, coops to transform local business, social housing to redress longstanding underrepresentation. Several articles look at the transportation sector with its huge contribution to emissions—why are our leaders talking about a major new airport? Or hiring experts to tell us we need more warehousing and trucking? Thad Curz examines the gap between Thurston County's good intentions for addressing climate and where the county is falling short. And maybe falling farther behind.

The articles about the work of tribal nations and historians engaging students, reflections on home, even highlighting why a new School Board Member makes an important difference—all these connect us to our place on earth, which is essential if we are going to make a future that is bearable for everyone. And the other critical thread that runs through this issue is about democracy—the book and the foray into Chile's experience directly—the other essential for a bearable future.

How are we to embrace our inevitable relationship with the future? One way is through dialogue. Dan Leahy has been involved in conversations with a collection of elders who have lived lives of activism across the country. Gathering on Zoom, they introduce themselves by describing their visions for our future. Dan's final advice about "what actions should be taken" is far more helpful than most anwers to that question.

The vision: A community of resistance acting as custodian for neighborhood land, housing and community spirit.

Theme for Spring: Walls

For our Spring issue, let's consider a famous line from Robert Frost's poem, Mending Walls: "Something there is that doesn't love a wall,/That wants it down." But before that line, there is much more, including this "Before I built a wall I'd ask to know: What I was walking in or walking out/And to whom I was like to give offense..." We are hoping for reflections or articles from you that in some way speak to the issue of building walls—in any context.

Deadline: February 1, 2023

Contents

Northwest tribal nations lead on climate change............. 1
Reader Alert: .............................................................................................. 3
Building a relationship between the Nisqually Tribe and North Thurston Schools .......................... 4
Discover Olympia's hidden histories .................................................. 5
Olympia school board appointment sparks panic ................. 6
Haki Farms Collective ............................................................................. 6
Petition: No major airport in Thurston County ....................... 7
Good reasons for a national rail strike ............................................ 7
Racial disparities in WA homeownership ........................................ 8
Tenant protests force developer to pay relocation assistance ... 8
REFLECTION: Home so far away...................................................... 9
Consultants will tell us how much land for warehouses........... 10
Cooper Crest: A clear cut case for community rights .......... 10
Will Thurston's climate mitigation make the difference? .. 12
Siting wireless facilities ....................................................................... 13
The gerrymandered world of US democracy ......................... 14
Splinter in the eye: Chile rejects new constitution .................. 15
Community spotlight: ........................................................................... 15
back cover
Olympia, WA. Olympia Community Solar and South Sound Solar just completed installation of a solar array at Quixote Village as part of their work to leverage solar energy as both a powerful tool for equity and a contribution to Thurston County’s renewable energy transition.

As an integral community resource for the unhoused in Olympia, Quixote Village is an ideal location for hosting solar. Construction of the solar array on Quixote Village’s 30 tiny homes and community building was completed at the end of August 2022. The Quixote Village solar project includes four solar panels across each of the thirty tiny homes and 86 panels on the community building (206 total). South Sound Solar designed and installed the 66 kilowatt system.

The installation will reduce the village’s energy bill, saving more than $551,000 over the next forty years. Savings from the solar energy will directly benefit village residents by making more resources available for mental health programs and services. The solar energy will reduce Quixote Village’s carbon footprint by 50,000 pounds of CO2 emissions, equivalent to planting 705 trees every year, or not driving 106,000 miles. Remarkably, the project’s Silfab Solar Panels were manufactured in Washington State.

This project is another example of the work that Olympia Community Solar does creating clean energy opportunities for people and organizations who thought Solar was out of reach. Olympia Community Solar developed the project and secured five grants to fund the project.

Project funding came from the Squaxin Island Tribe, the City of Olympia, Puget Sound Energy and the Tides Foundation. “The Quixote Village solar project is an example of how solar energy may be leveraged as a powerful tool for equity. Solar energy is not only a climate solution, it is a vehicle for economic justice” stated Olympia Community Solar President Mason Rolfe.

More about Quixote Village at www.quixotecommunities.org More about Olympia Community Solar at https://olywip.org South Sound Solar has been installing residential and commercial solar systems for 6 to 14 years. They are well known for their community contributions and dedication to equity.

Then this happened

…police accountability took a hit, in our March 2022 issue, WIP reported on threats to the reforms that constrained some use of force and high speed vehicle pursuits by police. After a coordinated fear campaign by law enforcement groups, the legislature rolled back key reforms. Police can once again use force “to prevent a person from fleeing” regardless of whether there is indication of a crime. Another law restores the practice of high speed vehicle pursuits. The bar against use of force – including shooting someone – is once again set low.

…the City of Olympia posted an opening for an entry-level police officer: starting salary $53,199 – $106,000. If you’re 21, have a GED and are legally able to carry a gun – you can pass a test and start getting a big paycheck. Oh, you’d like to teach? Not so fast. You’ll need a BA and Teacher Certification. Then maybe you can apply for a job paying $31,000 – $85,000/year.

…but one year after it was filed, Thurston County denied a citizen petition to dissolve the Flood Control Board that manages Black Lake. But Commissioners acknowledged the need to fund a comprehensive study of lake management and Citizens for a Clean Black Lake, who asked for the dissolution, has offered to help them.

…WIP covers “stakeholder” views because consulting with those affected helps legitimate policy decisions. But when “stakeholder” really means beneficiary there’s no legitimacy dividend.

To get input on the need for a “cultural access” sales tax, Olympia staff met with individuals from 40 “stakeholder” groups, all of whom would benefit from the tax. The result? Yes to a tax because there’s “a strong need for increased financial support.”

Another example. City staff asked if it would be a good idea to expand a property tax exemption for developers. It “This said ‘stakeholders’—all but one of whom was a developer benefiting from the tax exemption.

Thank you for every person who donated

And thank you to every person who donated or shared our posts during our 2022 fund-raising campaign, you made a difference! We cherish the opportunity to show you all of the things we do here at the Estuarium and highlight our K-12 programs that not many people know about. We know our community cares about creating connections with the estuary environment and we are proud of how our place-based programs provide that opportunity to local students.

Before the pandemic we were reaching 310 students annually for both our On The Water and Estuarium Field Trips. In 2022 we have reached 889 students through On The Water and 706 through Estuarium Field and Landforms Field Trips.

With every one of our annual K-12 field trips, we have made the necessary adjustments that have allowed us to continue to deliver our STEM, environmental education curriculum, throughout every phase of this ongoing pandemic. This challenge has not stopped us from dreaming big for the future. We will continue to grow while sustaining the quality of our programs and we appreciate your support in this journey.

Now we can go into 2023 knowing that we will be ready to explore the estuary, connect with our community, and inspire change!

Tiny homes at Quixote Village get a big solar boost

Thank you from the Estuarium

An invitation to a free day on Saturday, Dec. 17

Come to the Estuarium on December 17 to discover the orcas that share the waters of the Puget Sound. You will learn the history of southern resident orcas in this area and the survival challenges they face. We have samples of marine mammal pelts and a harbor porpoise skeleton to examine while we discuss the life of an orca in these waters. There will be marine mammal themed games and prizes!

The Estuarium’s Orca Odyssey Exhibit is a traveling exhibit based on the book Orca: Shared Waters, Shared Home written by Lynnda V. Harper that was reviewed in WIP in February 2022. (This will be held for sale at the Estuarium.) Through out December and January there will be orca-centric education at the Estuarium.

This free event is open to the public at our location: 309 State Avenue NE. Masks are required, and COVID-19 protocols will be in effect.

Thank you to everyone

Are you a real stakeholder?

You’ve heard stakeholders are people directly or indirectly affected by a decision and that including a diverse group of them helps ensure those decisions have greater representation and legitimacy.

Now you’re on a stakeholder committee but the experience has you confused. Are you a real stakeholder? Find out below!

TRUE OR FALSE:

• The entity you represent benefits financially from the decision
• You’re privy to information other members aren’t
• Staff members always answer your emails
• Your suggestions are welcomed and echoed by staff
• They’re serving steak and you have a silver fork

IF YOU ANSWERED TRUE, CONGRATS - YOU’RE A REAL STEAKHOLDER! BONE-IN RIBEYE FOR YOU!

TRUE OR FALSE:

• The decision will not benefit you financially
• Your suggestions are deemed impractical, too expensive or irrelevant
• You have a feeling you’ve already missed the briefing
• They’re serving Wagner’s pancakes and you’re gluten-free

IF YOU ANSWERED TRUE, YOU’RE JUST WINDOW DRESSING! TAKE YOUR WOODEN STAKE AND MAKE A YARD SIGN [where you can finally express your views]
Margaret Thomas
Partnering with the Nisqually tribe, the North Thurston School District plans to develop a course in the traditional Lushootseed language with a goal of offering it at River Ridge High School starting in the 2023-2024 school year. According to the district, a significant number of Native American students attend River Ridge, which currently offers Native heritage courses, and monthly Lushootseed Lunchtime Enrichment.

We works in Progress correspondent Margaret Thomas met with Nisqually Tribal Chairman Willie Frank III in his office this fall to talk about Lushootseed in the schools. Excerpts from their 40-minute conversation appear below. They’ve been edited for length and clarity.

Margaret Thomas: Your grandfather was the last native speaker of Lushootseed. Are you learning the language?

Willie Frank: To hear him and his recordings has been really amazing. This is a language that’s different than anything going to take many years for me to learn it, so I’ve started the process… It’s the starting point, hoping for everybody wanting to learn it. It helps make you whole when you hear that language being spoken, especially from my grandfather.

We started with our [Tribal Council] vice chairwoman, Antonette Squall. Antonette [is a Lushootseed] teacher for the last ten years. She trained her niece and they trained four others. So now we’re building this language program. One of the cool things about it, hearing it being spoken, but also the schools being open to bring it in.

The fall of 2018, my niece came to live with my wife and I. She was going into her freshman year of high school at River Ridge in Lacey. The first day, the [then] Vice Principal [Mike Smith] came out to meet us. Never met him in my life.

He said, “Hey, Mr. Frank, I’ve been wanting to reach out to you. We’ve been wanting to work with the tribe. I just want to let you know, your niece—anything she needs.” So we had this whole conversation about the language. She was going to be our first class.

MT: Back in 2000 when I graduated, I never thought I’d be back in the schools. Here you are helping some of the teachers that taught me. It’s been good to hear their feedback. They’re like, “You’re proud of you, man. We like learning this stuff.”

Frank: Getting our kids engaged in our own history is going to be huge, and it’s challenging at times. That’s why we start so young. We start with Head Start and daycare. We got our kids down at Wa-Ha-Lut learning from kindergarten, hearing it every day. These kids practice singing and dancing and drumming before they go home. Council should probably do that every day, too.

I really believe it’s a time for our tribe to want to see what that next generation of kids to think that we’re not only casino owners… firecrackers, smoke shops, you know, I want them to really understand who we are. As the Nisqually people, our culture, our life. And, we don’t exist if we do anything else. It’s about setting the example for that next generation.

MT: Did your own experience as a Native student influence your interest in the program?

Frank: Back in 2000 when I graduated, I never thought I’d be back in the schools. Here you are helping some of the teachers that taught me. It’s been good to hear their feedback. They’re like, “You’re proud of you, man. We like learning this stuff.”

Frank: Let’s get back into it. You’re hearing it spoken, especially from my grandpa.

Frank’s dad always said is, “Being an Indian you’ve got to have a lot of patience.” And, goddamn, he was right about that.

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MT: How do Nisqually students benefit from the Native Studies program, especially learning the language?

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On October 7, several “Olympia Hidden Histories” self-guided walking tours were introduced to the public. The multimedia walking tours are a collaboration of student authors and faculty at The Evergreen State College, with the “Walls Tell Stories, Olympia” project of Art Forces and Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice.

Today’s stories of restoration with hard truths about the past

Student teams in the Evergreen class “American Frontiers: Home-lands and Borderlands” (taught by Kristina Ackley, Zoltán Grossman, and Mike Ruth) developed four walking tours that cover historic displacements—of the Indigenous (Squaxin), Chinese, and working-class communities that resided downtown, and of the oysters and salmon that inhabited the Deschutes Estuary.

The tours tell contemporary stories of cultural revitalization and ecological restoration while revealing hard truths about how Olympia’s landscape was created through the settler-colonial removal of Indigenous peoples, the race-based displacement of immigrant and working-class communities, and the destructive altering of the Deschutes Estuary. This juxtaposition shows how understanding the past is vital to planning for the future.

History in the palm of your hand

The public launch, part of Fall Arts Walk, drew about 100 people to the Olympia-Rahel Solidarity Mural to hear student authors and their research partners speak about the tours. Among the speakers were Squaxin Island Tribe Chairman Kristopher Peters, Olympia Mayor Pro Tem Clark Gilman, and Evergreen President John Carmichael. A new “Peacemaker Gallery” was opened in the adjacent Labor Temple, featuring an exhibit showcasing historical and contemporary photographs and art connecting to the history represented in the tours. During November, the gallery was open every Saturday.

The ArcGIS StoryMaps tours seek to uncover layers of Olympia’s rich cultural and ecological history, revealing connections to the region and world. They combine narrative text with images, maps, audio, and video, bringing history to the palm of your hand. Follow the tours in the presented order, or explore them according to your own interest.

At the kickoff for the Hidden Histories Tours. Photo by Lindsey Dalthorp

Tidelands: “When the tide is out, the table is set”

(Chaiah Costa, Charity Turk, Robert O’Hanlon)
The second tour tells the story of the Olympia oyster that flourished in the tidal zone of the Deschutes Estuary mudflats, which were raised by Indigenous and Chinese harvesters. The native oyster drew settlers to Olympia (and later promoted its status as the capital city), before it was displaced by foreign oyster species.

The tour traces the town’s expansion as a center of shipping and timber processing industries that industrialized the waterfront, drawing many US immigrants and working-class workers, but polluting the water with waste that sustained oysters and salmon. The dredging of the mudflats to make way for shipping to the Port of Olympia enlarged the downtown land base through a series of land sales.

The tour concludes with a walk along Capitol Boulevard, the historic Main Street, which started as a seedy frontier boardwalk servicing sailors, lumberjacks and oystermen, and developed into a working-class community of timber mill workers and stable businesses.

Olympia’s Chinatowns: exclusion and endurance

(Adam Andres, Carlos Funk, Jonah Eadie, Tucker Morehouse)
The third tour tells the story of early Chinese immigration to the West Coast after the 1849 California Gold Rush, and how the immigrants were originally drawn to Olympia by the oyster, timber and railroad industries. Many Chinese people came from the same county in Guangdong Province.

The Chinese established laundries and restaurants, and built roads and bridges. Merchants established family associations to support their community. As downtown’s shoreline expanded, Chinese businesses were pushed from desirable to undesirable land around the tidalflats. In the 1880s, racist mobs drove Chinese out of many other Western cities, such as Seattle and Tacoma.

A mob threatened to evict Chinese from Olympia’s first Chinatown in 1866, but Thurston County Sheriff protected the Chinese community. A second Chinatown was established, with businesses forming a core community that moved by 1913. The third and final Chinatown, which became a religious nexus, was razed in 1943, but the Chinese-American presence and influence has persisted into the 21st century.

5th Avenue dam: Reflections on Capitol Lake

(Elyssa Conn, Arlo Dolen, Tristan Glaser, Avery Millard)
The fourth tour tells the story of how the Deschutes Estuary was transformed into Capitol Lake, by the 1951 construction of the 5th Avenue Dam, to impound the lake that serves as a reflecting pool for the State Capitol.

The planned impoundment was an opportunity to remove Little Holywood, a multicultural working-class community condemned by city leaders as a hazardous blight. The “shantytown” was razed beginning in 1941. With the creation of Capitol Lake, the health of the former estuary plummeted, with toxic algae blooms, invasive species and impeded salmon runs. In the 20th century, the dam became a flash point in the “fish wars” for tribal treaty rights.

Several years ago, a public campaign was mounted to remove the dam and restore the estuary. The campaign is led by restoration groups and the Squaxin Island and Nisqually tribes, and is described at tinyurl.com/capitollake2.

The 2022 walking tours are being used by Evergreen classes, a Squaxin youth group and others. The Evergreen program “Taking Back Empire” is currently developing additional tours focused on water resources and the history of the Port of Olympia, to be published in 2023.

Access the web-based tours on any device at arficons.org/hiddlenhistories

History is detectable in the landscape—if you know where to look

Discover Olympia’s hidden histories

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Stedae (Steh-Chass): People of the Water

(James Martinez, Nico Maynes, Ashes Gleason, Rono Buchanan)
The first tour tells the story of the original people of Budd Inlet, the Steh-Chass band of the Squaxin Island Tribe. It focuses on the Steh-Chass village of bascuadx’ (Busch-wutul, or “frequented by black bears”), located near the Murals. For generations, villagers harvested oysters, salmon and other natural wealth in the Deschutes Estuary, and traded with other tribes over great distances. A Steh-Chass chief signed the 1854 Treaty of Medicine Creek, but the villagers were removed from Olympia’s walled military fortifications during the 1855-6 Puget Sound War. They were forced to live on the Squaxin Island Reservation, with constricting access to fish and fresh water. Throughout the 20th century, tribal members lived in Kamhlche and around the South Puget Sound, which became a religious nexus of the Coast Salish world. They fought for treaty rights to harvest fish, and today the tribe has expanded its cultural, economic, and environmental presence back into downtown.

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The Olympia School Board unanimously agreed to appoint Talauna Reed to fill the District 2 vacancy created by the departure of another member. (Talauna Reed is the fourth person from the left. This photo from the School District website was taken during the October 29 school board meeting where Reed was sworn into office). Video and transcript of the board meeting, including interviews with candidates considered for the appointment, are posted on the district website tinyurl.com/osdsept30.

The Olympia School Board unanimously decided to appoint Talauna Reed to the board has sparked vocal ire cloaked in concern. Ms. Reed is the first African American board member and has criticized the police in the past.

People are so upset that her appointment was recently covered by Fox News. Local anger was on full display during the tense November board meeting where 30 people gave public comments, all but one regarding Ms. Reed. Angry commenters pounded fists and shook their heads while denouncing the board and expressing outrage over Ms. Reed’s past. The bashing of her beliefs, lived experiences and qualifications were stated by two speakers to be “not racism,” but concern for students.

Roaring applause after hateful comments was met with solidarity from people who actually know Ms. Reed. An Olympia Student Equity Committee member countered the fear mongering that this appointment jeopardizes student safety, by sharing that they look up to Ms. Reed as “a community organizer and inspiring woman who is doing the kind of work to help underserved people and make positive change that I want to do in my future.”

The truth, as expressed by students, alumni, parents, workers and community members at the podium, revealed that Talauna Reed is a compassionate, community-building visionary, one pursing a holistic, justice-centered approach to safety.

In a public statement, Ms. Reed shared her goal of restoration and giving children and adults hope while utilizing trauma-informed practices in order to not cause further harm. She wrote that “Safety starts from within by creating a school culture where all students, staff, and community members are treated with dignity and respect.”

The appointment of Ms. Reed has elevated the vision of a liberated world with systems of care nurturing all people are free and have their basic needs met, where safety is secured through love, empathy, and solidarity instead of legality, enforcement and surveillance.

Talauna Reed’s appointment will engage more people in cultural diversity and de-escalation training, restorative justice models, anti-racism, and trauma-informed care. In sticking to her values, she has legitimized other crucial work like mutual aid, political education, and direct democracy to build communities that provide for their own safety and wellbeing.

By reorienting us to the reality that the policeman isn’t there to create disorder. The policeman is there to preserve disorder.” That is, disorder for the working class, marginalized peoples, the poor, and those pursuing a better world, in order to maintain racial capitalism (a term acknowledging how capitalism developed as an inherently racialized system which uses differences between people (like skin color) to justify exploiting some people over others). The direct lineage between slave patrols and the police is a history that has been systematically ignored.

The opposition in response to the Olympia School Board’s decision is an important example of the way in which our system has succeeded in dividing people and stripping them of their humanity. It has instilled fear, competition and delusion to the point where they defend inhumane institutions over the wellbeing of their neighbors. As one student commented, “Many people have a hard time with change, and as it has been said, when you’re accustomed to privilege, equity feels like oppression.”

The school board’s appointment is a significant step towards necessary change. The struggle for equity just got a boost in Olympia.

Steven Marquardt is an Olympia-based educator and organizer working to improve the lives of students, workers, the unhoused and indigenous peoples, among others. To learn more about a world without police and prisons, check out www.bleedblue.com/ and criticalresistance.org/
PETITION
If you build it they will come

More trains not more airports

[Ed note: In 2020 the Washington Legislature responded to a “forecasted shortage of capacity for commercial air passenger service, air cargo and general aviation” by setting up the Commercial Aviation Coordinating Council (CACC). The Commission recommended a single preferred location for major airport, along with ways to accommodate capacity needs at other facilities. The CCAC in September selected three locations (out of an initial 10) for further consideration: Pierce County Central, Pierce County East—and Thurston County Central (see graphic). Sue Carmings started this petition setting forth reasons the Thurston County site should not be considered as a location.]

To the WA state legislature, Governor Inslee, WSDOT, Thurston county local leaders, stakeholders and members of the community:

We the undersigned strongly oppose creation of a new major commercial airport in Thurston County. We call on the Thurston county commissioners to create consequential and enforceable land use rules to protect the community from the adverse impacts. We demand that Governor Inslee and WSDOT remove the “central Thurston greenfield” site from the Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission’s consideration for a new major airport.

The proposed central Thurston site contains 40 acres of land owned by the Nisqually Tribe and also includes parts of JBLM training areas 22 and 23. We ask that the Tribe and the Federal government prohibit the use of their land for a new commercial airport here.

The proposed site directly overlaps the McAlister Springs Geological Sensitive Area, whose well fields supply drinking water to Olympia and the Nisqually reservation.

Thurston County Central (see graphic). The CCAC’s vision of unfettered growth in regional aviation does not support Washington’s commitment to greenhouse gas reductions of 45 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.

Regarding natural resources, the proposed Thurston County Central airport site encompasses 79 acres managed by the Capitol Land Trust and important habitats: The Spurgeon Valley Preserve, the Shermer-Deschutes Preserve and the Bentley Conservation Easement.

The proposed site is directly adjacent to the Center for Natural Lands Management’s Te-noupaw Prairie Preserve, the Washington State University’s Western Bluebird Research Reserve, and the Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly.

The proposed site directly overlaps the McAlister Springs Geological Sensitive Area, whose well fields supply drinking water to Olympia and the Nisqually reservation.

Our climate correspondents

After almost three years of stymied contract negotiations, rail workers voted 99% this summer in favor of a strike. That threat was averted by the companies and submitted to binding arbitration. Good reasons for a national strike by rail workers exist.

For the shippers:

- Rail shipments and travel in today’s world should be expanding, not contracting

For the companies:

- Rail accounts for 0.5% of all greenhouse gases

While the aviation industry means dollars sign, the residents of Thurston County see noise, pollution, sprawl and congestion. We see the destruction of climate, natural resources, water and, in the south county, our rural way of life.

The Washington public at large agrees. In 2021 and 2022 surveys conducted by the CACC, the public said no to aviation expansion unless environmental impacts are mitigated.

The proposed mitigation of these impacts, such as electric planes, has been small scale and minimal. It is irresponsible to justify major aviation expansion with experimental and premature technology.

Addition another major airport to our region is not a sustainable investment in our future. The CACC’s vision of unfettered growth in regional aviation is not in the interest of the community.

The Washington Legislature, Governor Inslee, WSDOT, Thurston County local leaders and community members have a responsibility to protect the climate, the economy, and the health of our citizens.

Behind the scene:

Good reasons for a national strike by rail workers

The CACC’s vision of unfettered growth in regional aviation does not support Washington’s commitment to greenhouse gas reductions of 45 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.

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The majority of the proposed airport site lies on lands that are considered Category 1—extreme aquifer sensitivity, providing very rapid recharge with little protection from the groundwater pollutants that would be generated by a major airport.

We question the CACC’s growth predictions for the aviation industry. They are unchecked for changes in travel demand, unchecked for artificial demand, and other transportation options.

We believe that there are better alternatives like high speed rail to meet the region’s future transportation needs.

However, if the growing population of the greater Seattle area must have another major commercial airport, let that community, not ours, bear the burden of its creation.

To see the petition and signatures go to tsmarrant.com/stoptheairport

A call for public ownership

The dictates of profit have again overaken the public interest, and Railroad Workers United, a cross-craft railroad workers group is calling for public ownership of the rail system. RWU gives the reasons for this position in a Resolution of Support for Public Ownership of the Rail Roads. They call on other groups—including rail unions, the larger labor movement, environmental and social justice groups, communities and shippers to join the campaign.

RWU believes that reliance on highways, cars and trucks threatens to bankrupt and destroy towns and cities across the country and contribute to ecological disaster. Expanding rail travel is a way forward, but the privately held rail system has proven unable to rise to the challenge.

“Railroad workers are in a position to take the lead,” according to RWU Steering Committee member and passenger conductor J.P. John. “We can spearhead the drive for a rail renaissance in this country, one that is vibrant and expanding, innovative, creative and environmentally sustainable, one that can properly handle the nation’s freight and passengers in the 21st century.”

This article was a collaborative effort using data from the Surface Transportation Board, American Journal of Transportation and the RWU newsletter, among other sources. Rail workers and others who wish to be informed are invited to contact RWU at info@railroadworkersunited.org
Racial disparities in WA homeownership are greater today than in the 1960s

Washington State work group offers recommendations to address public and private sector policies that serve as barriers

A new Washington State report highlights the stark reality that black and indigenous people, and people of color (BIPOC) would need to buy more than 140,000 homes in the state to achieve a significant increase in homeownership today. The report released today is the culmination of nine months of work by the Homeownership Disparities Work Group. The work group developed 27 recommendations, twelve of which are deemed actionable in the next several years to remove housing barriers for BIPOC households in Washington.

Total of 32 stakeholders with diverse backgrounds in housing, and lending industries. They also suggested policy revisions and funding priorities across all levels of government to unlock housing supply, direct affordable homeowner assistance to BIPOC communities, and increase immediate assistance to prospective and current BIPOC homeowners.

The 12 immediate actionable recommendations are:

• Increase biennial state funding for affordable homeownership programs, including pre- and post-development costs.

• Fund a technical assistance capacity-building program to build the nonprofit organizational infrastructure to develop, facilitate, build, and steward all types of affordable homeownership programs.

• Provide technical planning assistance and resources to municipal governments to increase affordable homeownership units.

• Revise Housing Trust Fund and Housing Finance Commission programs to reduce the administrative burden on applicants.

• Increase the amount of funding available for direct assistance to homemakers and homeowners.

• Make current programs more flexible by increasing the per-household limits on existing assistance awards.

• Target homeownership assistance to the BIPOC community via historical ties to culturally specific areas.

• Provide incentives to home sellers to accept offers from purchasers using down payment assistance programs.

• Expand debt mediation and credit repair programs.

• Ensure that awareness of homeownership programs is part of licensing and education requirements for people in the real estate industry.

• Fund culturally specific organizations for outreach to increase the visibility of access to homeownership assistance programs for BIPOC communities.

• Explore policies to improve connections between BIPOC communities to ensure that interest in homeownership is understood by funders.

• Serving on the legislative work group to address the gap in BIPOC homeownership rates in Washington was a privilege, and the beginning of ending that which is unaffordable, “said work group member Michelle Preston, Ed D, CEO Habitat for Humanity of Washington State. “People from communities that have been systematically and historically excluded from opportunities have been prohibited from prosperity through lack of access to homeownership, one of the primary wealth generators in our nation. The vast representation of professional and lived experience on the work team contributed to the success in identifying solutions on many levels.”

“This report is key to starting the process of removing barriers and improving access to homeowner- ship. And, there is more work to be done. Now is the time for action. Every individual who plays a role in the housing system has work to do to achieve equity and justice for all,” said Dr. Karen A Johnson, Director of the Washington State Office of Equity.

The legislature funded the Homeownership Disparities Work Group in 2021, tasked with identifying barriers and offering recommen- dations to reduce the disparity in homeownership for Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Commerce is immediately implement- ing the recommendations that do not require legislative action. For example, to focus on and simplify administration of funding and increase the per-household investment amounts available, Com- merce consolidated management of homeownership capital, foreclo- sure fairness and manufactured mobile home relocation assistance programs into a new Homeownership Unit. Access to $25 million in funding for homeownership opportunities through a streamlined application will open in mid-October.

Commerce will also seek $60 million through the 2023-2025 state budget to enact more report recommendations, including seek- ing $50 million for capital home- ownership projects, 50% of which is to be awarded to organizations with documented homeownership disparities.

Additionally, the department is working with the Harriet Tubman Foundation for Safe Passage to develop a statewide plan to invest Community Reinvestment Account (CRA) funds to address racial, economic, and social disparities created by the historical design and enforcement of state and federal criminal laws and penalties for drug possession. Homeownership is one of the four areas in which CRA money will be invested to ad- dress these historic impacts. Learn more on the Commerce website.

They faced mass eviction from their homes

Tenant protests force developer to pay $26,500 in relocation assistance to families

Home in Tacoma for All is a grassroots and volunteer-led coalition that seeks sustainable and affordable housing in Tacoma and Pierce County.

More information: www.facebook.com/Tacoma4all. Tacoma Democratic Socialists of America is the local chapter of the largest socialist organization in the US, and seeks to build progressive movements for social change.

Tenants faced mass eviction from the mobile home park in Payallup slated to close in October 1st. Following protests, the owners of Timberlane Holdings, a large developer, agreed to negoti- ating table yesterday because the protests were co-orga- nized by organizing communities and tenants. The protests were co-orga- nized by Home in Tacoma for All and the largest Socialist of America announced an important victory for residents of Meridian Mobile Home Park in Payallup as they faced mass eviction from the mobile home park in Payallup slated to close in October 1st. Following protests, the owners of Timberlane Holdings, a large developer, agreed to negoti- ating table following months of organizing communities and to achieve this result.

"Tenants were successful at the negoti- ating table yesterday because of their history of direct action and protest," Home in Tacoma for All organizer Zev Cook said. "The laws were written to favor landlords, not tenants, and local politicians did nothing to stop this eviction. But we were able to leverage the power of organizing communities and to use the threat of further protests to achieve this result." Tenants and supporters demon- strated at the Puyallup City Coun- cil meeting on August 23, and the threat of a following protest on Sept. it forced it to develop a negotiating table following months of organizing communities and tenants. The protests were co-orga- nized by TacomaDSA members as part of the wider tenant rights organizing campaign, Home in Tacoma for All.

"This will set a precedent for future evictions and for relocation costs that developers must pay," Cook continued. "We are ready and willing to take up those fights."
The vistas are stunning. The Olympics to the west and the Cascades to the east, blue sky reflected in waters of the Sound, houses dotted evergreen-filled hills. The air is crisp, hints of saltiness, warmed by the sun streaming through western larch, Douglas fir, red cedar. Mt. Baker and Mt. Rainier stand regally as reminders of roiling powers deep below rich farmland. Blackberries are everywhere (invaders from England) while huckleberries seek what sunlight they can in the loamy soil under the canopies of the fir-laden foothills.

This place will be our new home. What are transplanted southerners, filled with memories of moonlight and magnolias, heat and humidity, the storied, once-defeated South, going to make of life in the Pacific Northwest with its cooler summers and long, gray winters? Will clipped-vowelled, slightly nasal voices welcome diaphanous languor, folks used to saying hi to passersby?

Our kids began the migration to the PNW (its coy acronym). In the summer of 2023, my wife and I will complete it. We’ll be strong along the majestic Puget Sound—our oldest son, the first to land there, a couple of West Seattle, our youngest son in Olympia, the middle child (our daughter) in Mt. Vernon, and my wife and I in Tacoma, where home was for them. Furthermore, Abu Dhabi is a sort of temporary place of birth. They had little connection to their families in places as near as Pakistan or as far away as the Philippines. For them, home loomed as a magnet, drawing wistful memories of moonlight and magnolias, heat and humid- ity. The place I will call home next year, with its new place to call home. More often than not, when I asked them where they were from back in the States, they told me their parents, also in the military or government, had moved around so much, they had little connection to their place of birth. They had a hard time saying where home was for them.

What is home?

In San Antonio, the neighborhood we live in is about ninety percent Hispanic, made up of immigrants and the descendents of immigrants from Mexico and Central America. When I go to land there, in West Seattle, our youngest son was transplanted southerners, filled with memories of moonlight and magnolias, heat and humidity, the storied, once-defeated South, going to make of life in the Pacific Northwest with its cooler summers and long, gray winters? Will clipped-vowelled, slightly nasal voices welcome diaphanous languor, folks used to saying hi to passersby?

Not long ago, we returned from a two-week visit with the kids. In West Seattle, we helped our son with his two-year-old daughter while his wife took a work trip to Alaska. From there we made of life in the Pacific Northwest with its cooler summers and long, gray winters? Will clipped-vowelled, slightly nasal voices welcome diaphanous languor, folks used to saying hi to passersby?

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Furthermore, Abu Dhabi is a sort of temporary place for millions of migrant workers seeking a job that will allow them to send money to their families in places as near as Pakistan or as far away as the Philippines. For them, home loomed as a magnet, drawing wistful memories of moonlight and magnolias, heat and humid- ity. The place I will call home next year, with its new place to call home. More often than not, when I asked them where they were from back in the States, they told me their parents, also in the military or government, had moved around so much, they had little connection to their place of birth. They had a hard time saying where home was for them.

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Across the US, a new economy is emerging. It transcends local markets, even stretching beyond national boundaries. You can order goods from far-off countries without leaving the house or your home. Container ships and cargo planes form a leg of the “supply chain,” but as the products get closer to their destination, trucks and trains deliver goods to logistics centers where they digest their loads into warehouses. Maybe you’ve seen these semi-trucks in rural landscapes, lined up like the dozens as machines in turn fill other trucks with cardboard boxes that will eventually arrive on your doorstep.

The new economy shows up in proposals to expand airports, or build new ones, as cargo planes crowd out passenger flights. It has also created a seemingly inextinguishable demand for more and more rural and agricultural land to be rezoned for industry and warehousing.

This race for space looms over the whole country and Thurston County is no exception.

What does this mean for Thurston County?

Although the 2019 Buildable Lands Report, Thurston County already has plenty of industrially zoned land. There are many thousands of square feet of warehouse space located in parts of Lacey and Tumwater, in Olympia around Munn Lake and Mottman Industrial Park, in Yelm and south to Grand Mound. Based on the report, this is more than double the amount needed over the next 20 years — all within the Urban Growth Boundaries of the County’s cities.

Recently, proposals by corporations such as Panattoni, NorthPoint, and UpCastle have encountered resistance from nearby communities and created a dilemma for County Commissioners — accede to development requests, or heed community concerns about impacts on climate, the environment, infrastructure and the future of agriculture.

Commissioners have responded by contracting for a new study to assess whether an adequate supply of industrial land exists in “urban growth areas” and rural Thurston County — apparently outside the Urban Growth Boundary.

An insatiable desire for warehouse land

A 2021 report says Thurston County has double the amount of industrial-zoned land needed for the next 20 years — the whole country and Thurston County is no exception.

The market takes precedence

The provisions of the RFP make it likely that the study will find a need to rezone additional land to support industrial and warehouse uses (see sidebar). Any requirement to investigate and consider community integrity and social needs is missing. For example, the RFP instructs the consultant to “include the criteria industrial developers look for when considering a project/site.” There is no reference to criteria residents or local communities look for when evaluating developments.

The Commissioners will not be using the findings about how much industrially zoned land is available to inform deliberations about how to proceed — where or even whether to consider rezones, what kind of regulations to alter and to what end, etc. Instead, they have given the consultant the task of identifying specific areas to be rezoned, along with providing changes that should be made to regulations, and proposing infrastructure investments. In short to define the policy.

Depending on the specifics provided by the consultant, there could be a massive transformation of community life in Thurston County. Those specifics will have come as a result of the consultant’s deliberations based on “professional judgment” and “expertise.” There will be no opportunity for actual deliberation by the Commissioners, members of the County Planning Commission or the public; those lives will be altered.

Tellingly, the consultant is required to provide a technical expert to appear with the findings for up to two public notice meetings with Commissioners. The Commissioners will not be able to explain the report to the public. The public will not be able to have confidence that anything they say will make a difference.

Mary Jo Dolis is an interested observer of local government. She lives in Olympia.

Public policy making without the public

“The assessment should consider existing industrial lands and uses, regulatory constraints, environmental constraints, infrastructure constraints and economic trends for future industrial demand. … The study will address these factors to develop a forecast of the region over the next 20 years. Each scenario will be accompanied by recommendations for zoning and regulatory requirements.” (from the Thurston County RFP for Assessment of Industrial Lands)

The Act established the Forest Practices Board to make rules governing timber harvests in 12 million acres of state-owned and private lands. The rules are implemented and enforced by DNR.

The Board has thirteen members, including designees from DNR, the Department of Commerce, Agriculture, Ecology, Fish and Wildlife, and eight people appointed by the Governor. These must include a County official and three representatives from the timber industry.

The current Board has a fourth member from Weyerhaeuser. The Board of Natural Resources, which series policies that guide how DNR manages state lands and resources, is also dominated by the beneficaries of timber harvests.

The timber industry is won in

It appears clear from the make-up of these boards that timber industry interests guided the development of the timber harvest rules. This makes it almost impossible for communities to challenge DNR policies.

The Pollution Control Hearings Board also has a conflict of interest that favors climate and non-climate hearing. The Attorney General’s office is obligated to defend state agencies, including DNR, even when DNR actions threaten ecosystems and people in the area, as happened at Cooper Crest. In the Cooper Crest appeal, the presiding judge of the Board was appointed by a timber industry-friendly Governor.

Cooper Crest, continued on page 13

Volunteers at the OlyEcosystems work party at Cooper Crest. Photo from OlyEcosystems Facebook page.

It matters who makes the rules

The 1974 Forest Practices Act (Act, FPA) states as part of its intent that “a viable forest products industry is of prime importance to the state’s economy” including environmental protection as “coincident with maintenance of a viable forest products industry.”

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Cooper Crest: A clear cut case for community rights

Esther Kronenberg

Instead of seeing a legacy forest while driving north on Cooper Point Road in Olympia, you now see a devastated clearcut landscape and a large sign for OlyEcosystems, the new owner. They have already begun stabilization and restoration of the property with two community work parties that began planting trees in November. Members of the community have stepped in to restore this area critical for the Green Cove Watershed, its endangered salmon and mudminnow, and the City’s own drinking water supply.

Regulations that preclude public action

But the community never had a chance to prevent the destruction in the first place. Any attempt by the County to amend or restrict interferes with logging is doomed by the procedures for obtaining a logging permit from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and by the process for appealing to the Pollution Control Hearings Board (PCHB)—no matter what the cost to the community and the ecosystem.

For Cooper Crest, appellants submitted proof that the Forest Practice Application for the logging permit contained falsehoods, and showed that DNR procedures for deleting streams from official maps had not been followed. Yet the appeal to the PCHB was summarily dismissed in September because the area was already cut. The PCHB’s refusal even to consider the evidence serves to encourage wrongdoing.

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The low-income housing complex, Evergreen Village, the largest remaining intact. Portions of this complex are on the northern border of the Triangle Subarea. "Robust analysis and public engagement" that we appreciate the efforts of Amy Buckler, the Westside neighbors in three separate Zoom discussions in January, 2022. We developed a “Land Ownership Map” of the Triangle Area and met to share this with the leadership of the three Westside neighborhood associations (SWONA, NWONA & Burbank/Eliot Association). We also requesting to review a draft of the RFP that the City intends to use to recruit a consultant for this planning effort and, to the extent possible, be part of the selection process. We wish to ensure that the term “blighted” is not used to describe portions of our Westside neighborhood. This term has been inappropriately used by previous City consultants. We want to ensure the selection of a consultant who understands and respects the Westside of Olympia.

Preparation for Engagement

Since November, 2021, we have taken several steps to prepare ourselves for this task of envisioning what a beneficial redevelopment could look like. We developed a “Land Ownership Map” of the Triangle Area and met to share this with the leadership of the three Westside neighborhood associations (SWONA, NWONA & Burbank/Eliot Association). We also requested to review a draft of the RFP that the City intends to use to recruit a consultant for this planning effort and, to the extent possible, be part of the selection process. We wish to ensure that the term “blighted” is not used to describe portions of our Westside neighborhood. This term has been inappropriately used by previous City consultants. We want to ensure the selection of a consultant who understands and respects the Westside of Olympia.

Our Preliminary Principles and Vision

A Public Orientation: Triangle Redevelopment must prioritize public space and community-oriented activity.

The current Triangle area south of Harrison is a private land mass of impervious parking lots dominated by big box stores owned by five out of state companies. Capital Mall Land, Capital MGP Company, WIG Properties, Cafaro NW Partnership and MGP Properties. Without the use of either eminent domain, easements or mandatory regulations, publicly owned such as pocket parks, bike paths, pedestrian pathways, must be accessible to all residents.

The plan must preserve Sunrise Park, a public park off of Bush Avenue NW. Expand the use of building space for services such as the existing Public Health (vaccination) Clinic and Thurston Regional Library. In addition, create more community services such as a community bike repair shop.

The Westside is in need of a Westside Community Center. One building on the periphery of the Triangle area, the你觉得是 Heartwood, could be developed into a community center. We envision the development of art and environmental learning opportunities for neighborhood children. It could also be the site for community acupuncture, yoga and other health related services.

Housing.

Existing housing must be preserved and future housing must be affordable at below market rates. There are approximately 60 single family homes on Bush and Jackson Avenues NW and three houses on 4th avenue. SW. Preservation of housing would be in line with one of the goals of the subarea plan to “reduce pressure on single family home.”

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Will Thurston’s latest climate mitigation plan make the difference?

Thad Curtz

The Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan Framework for Climate Mitigation Action for Thurston County and the Cities of Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater was finished in December 2020 (Plan, 2020 Plan, TCMP). It starts out by listing several years of previous city and county resolutions, strategies, and plans – 1990, 2000, 2009, 2010, 2013, and 2018 – all concerned with slowing global warming. Unfortunately, we spent a lot of time and energy planning in order to get to pretty much the same list of actions other West Coast cities had put into climate plans before we started. We could have looked at those and then put the time, energy and money we have spent on several intensive rounds of planning since 2011 into doing those things.

The new plan is based on actual inventories of emissions produced in Thurston County and actual targets (a 45% reduction from 2015 levels of those emissions by 2030, and an 85% reduction by 2050). It focuses on what local governments can do, relying on consultant estimates of how much each of 71 identified strategies and actions would contribute to reaching the targets. It’s been adopted by Thurston County, Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater. All except Lacey have declared climate emergencies.

Despite improvements, we’re not on track to meet targets

Our most recent report, for 2021, shows a 4% decrease in our inventoried emissions since 2015, and an impressive 18% decrease in per capita emissions. (However, in 2019, total emissions were up 13% from 2015, and per capita emissions were up 6.5%. Some of the significant decreases in the last two years were due to changes during the Covid pandemic. It isn’t clear if they will last.) We still need another 41% reduction from 2015 to reach our 2030 target. The longer we wait to make the changes we need, the more rushed and difficult and expensive the process will be.

The inventory also doesn’t count everything

It’s a rough approximation, at best. It only covers about half our emissions, the ones produced inside the county. It doesn’t count emissions in other places associated with providing the food we eat, the stuff we buy, or most services like health care or the Internet. (These are also the ones it’s hard for local politicians to change, reducing them mostly depends on our personal choices.)

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“In these are our estimates of strategy metric reductions associated with aggressive deployment of all 71 TCMP Assessed Actions. As-

The pace of emissions reduction matters

Framing a climate plan in terms of getting or not getting to a particular level of emissions by a particular year is simple, but somewhat misleading. It suggests that getting to a certain point in 2030 or 2050 is all that matters. In fact, any reductions we make will reduce our chances of ending up with increasingly unmanageable problems to some extent. Our cumulative emissions are what matters as far as global warming is concerned. Reaching the targets is a shorthand way of talking about that, but it assumes that getting to the targets will involve steady reductions in emissions along the way, so our cumulative emissions will drop in the process. If we did not reduce our annual emissions between now and 2049, and then magically reduced them by 65% the next year, we’d reach the target, but we’d have put almost as many tons of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere as if we did nothing. Doing something somehow produces a bigger reduction in cumulative emissions, and a bigger contribution to slowing global warming, than doing the same thing later. How much our elected officials and the rest of us are actually willing to do this time around remains to be seen.

Thad Curtz has been volunteering for local climate groups since retiring from the Evergreen faculty. His website about resources for acting on our climate mitigation plan is at www.climateitnowbox.info.

(1) According to the consultants’ report, “Sequestration is not technically a strategy metric in the Scenario Analysis Tool, but the user dashboard allows input of net sequestration estimates for 2030 and 2050, respectively. We are offering values of 155,000 tCO2e and 300,000 tCO2e for the two years based on afforestation of 8% of Thurston County’s land area (about 37,000 acres) and conversion of about 30% of Thurston County’s agricultural land from conventional to regenerative agriculture. (The estimated reductions from changing agriculture are less than 1% of those from new trees, and I don’t think anyone has any idea about how we might plant 37,000 acres of trees.)” (1)

Fortunately, the Legislature has taken several steps aimed at reducing emissions since the Plan was adopted. They established a cap and invest program, passed a clean fuels bill, and required performance standards for existing buildings. These could take us a lot of the way toward the gap now assigned to “sequestration.”
Where to site wireless facilities in Thurston County

Commissioners send pro-industry 5G code for public comment without addressing citizen stakeholder claims

Lori Lively

When Thurston County’s Board of County Commissioners created a stakeholder committee to provide additional input on zoning changes to rural wireless facilities, hopes were high among the private citizenry in the region. The most and most conservative decisions would be made to protect public health and property values.

After their recommendations were either ignored or otherwise overruled at the BoCC meeting on the topic in October, citizen participants now wonder why measures they advocated were not addressed. Were they too inconvenient, too costly, or too likely to result in litigation?

In addition to citizen members, the committee is comprised of two planning commissioners, an attorney for Verizon Wireless, a lobbyist for AT&T, and two wireless consultants, both attorneys from the same firm retained by the county.

The citizen stakeholders made over 40 recommendations, including specific suggestions for height restrictions on 5G towers, buffer zones from sensitive properties, noise limits and limits to groupings of towers that increase signal strength. Of those, 22 were presented to the planning board as high-priority items. Three recommendations were made by industry representatives on the committee. All the recommendations, stakeholder and industry, were written to comply with federal law and FCC guidelines, which are open to interpretation by regional governing bodies.

Planning board members, who had been tasked with studying the proposed zoning changes and making recommendations to the County Commissioners (BoCC), requested additional information from staff on the 22 items. They were told by PUD that the bulk of the recommendations would require consideration by the BoCC, not the planning board.

The Planning Commission could include an advisory in their recommendations to the BoCC, but were told they would not be able to discuss proposals to the draft wireless code related to the bulk of citizen recommendations. Specifically, anything that resulted in increased staff time, use of the right-of-way for wireless facilities— or anything requiring legal consideration—would not be up for discussion by the Planning Commission. Suggestions by several Thurston County Planning Commissioners were also ignored, prompting them to submit a Minority Report outlining their disagreements with the majority response.

Concerns of the citizen stakeholder members and several planning commissioners include:

- Lack of setbacks from a home (wireless facilities can be as close as 10’ to residential dwellings)
- Lack of notice (homeowners usually receive no notice except for a sign at the site three days before installation, even if it’s in the front yard of their dwelling)
- No required safety testing for compliance with FCC radiation limits
- No ability to comment on the majority of facility installations

The wireless facilities guidelines included an advisory forowej the interpretation of FCC rules and which of those rules actually comply with federal law. Stakeholders say the county staff’s unwillingness to adequately consider or convey their proposals is due to its reliance on advice from the group’s industry representatives.

As one citizen stakeholder commented, “Many of the things the staff doesn’t want to include have to do with conflict whatever with FCC rules or federal law, they just mean a bit more work or process change for staff, like allowing public comment on all facility installations, requiring applicants to give notice to nearby residents, or doing radiation testing.”

At the October meeting, Tye Menser, vice chair of the BoCC, referenced recent code changes implemented in Langley, Washington, as proof that more equitable approaches to rural wireless facilities and private agendas are possible. That code was written by one of the county’s top wireless attorneys, Andrew Campanelli, who the citizen stakeholders also consulted in drafting their recommendations.

Privately, citizen stakeholders are wondering whether the staff’s actions have more to do with avoiding a lawsuit by powerful wireless companies who might challenge their efforts and could cost the county legal fees, than doing what is right for the community or technically required.

Lawsuits from the industry can only result in an order of compliance, no fines or other penalties are allowed. However, lawsuits from community members could result in significant fines. The county’s primary responsibility is the protection of its citizens, not the avoidance of nuisance lawsuits from industry,” a member told WIP. After the October wireless work session, citizen stakeholder members were at a loss to elaborate on their concerns.

At a subsequent BOCC work session on November 9, the staff presented information regarding the wireless code and claimed the Langley code was largely inconsistent with federal law. Menser asked several questions about the board’s latitude with the code, but fell without an answer. Ultimately, two of the three Commissioners agreed it would be better move ahead with a public hearing, with Commissioner Menster abstaining. A public hearing date will be set at a later meeting.

To view the recommendation from the citizens on the wireless stakeholder committee as well as the draft code, go to https://www.thurstonwireless.com/
The gerrymandered world of US democracy

Emily Lardner

One of the pleasures of reading detective novels is getting to know the setting. Sara Paretsky’s detective series, which features V.I.Warshawski, exposes new sides of Chicago. The same is true with Cara Black’s series, featuring Aimee Leduc, which is set in Paris. Writers like Paretsky and Black blend something close to investigative journalism with first-rate sleuthing, resulting in consistently terrific reads.

David Pepper, former elected official and chair of the Ohio Democratic Party, is not quite as skilled a fiction writer as Paretsky or Black. But he is good, and his topics are timely. The protagonist for Pepper’s political thrillers is investigative reporter Jack Sharpe. In The Voter File, for example, Sharpe discovers that the “voter files”—the files kept by both political parties on all voters—have been tampered with in order to throw local elections.

Pepper’s non-fiction book, Laboratories of Autocracy: A Wake-up Call From Behind the Lines, is first rate. It reads more easily than his political thrillers is investigative novels, and the plot, as it were, is level, a number of states currently are in the midst of this exposé on what in the future might be called “Mapmaker, Mapmaker, Make Me a Map,” Ira Glass tells us. Now my choices as a voter are determined. I recognize the near total domination of a two party system, which stands in contrast to the multi-party democracies around the globe. I need to wonder who determined that I would vote District 27, or Congressional District 9? It’s going to be hard. In this election, in battleground states, youth turnout was up to around 31%. Election deniers lost races for key state offices in every closely contested state.

The episode on This American Life called “Mapmaker, Mapmaker, Make Me a Map,” Ira Glass tells us. When you vote for young voters was around 20% in previous midterms, in this election, in battleground states, turnout was up to around 31%. Election deniers lost races for key state offices in every closely contested state.

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The monsters of transitional times

The most dangerous times on an airplane are take-off and landing. These are transitional times between two conditions that are not clearly defined. In the first case, the mass of the plane is yet to be airborne, and in the second case, a mass that is elevated in the atmosphere needs to come down.

Statistically, these two times are more dangerous than any other part of the flight because in both instances, according to a Boeing research report, pilots have less time to react to problems and “they are on or close to the ground and moving quickly.”

Similarly, in human societies, transitional times are both critical and precarious. Social contradictions become more acute, and political reality becomes more hazardous and more difficult to read. Because a clear resolution has not yet come into being, there is always the possibility that something may go wrong. In the words of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci: “The old world is dying, and the new world struggles to be born. Now is the time of monsters.”

In modern times, perhaps no other country has experienced the tension between the old and the new, and the conflict at the center of these social transitions, as Chile. Contrast the victory in 1970 of democratically elected socialist Marxist Salvador Allende with the 16-year regime of fascist and neo-liberalism under Pinochet that began in 1973.

Pinochet’s regime ended by referendum in 1988 but Chile’s political life was shaped by a constitution that maintained the political and economic framework developed during the Pinochet regime. This situation ultimately led to huge popular protests in 2019-20 against the cost of living, inequality, and privatization of the national economy.

In 2021, leftist candidate 35-year old Gabriel Boric was elected president by an overwhelming 61% of the voters. Then, in 2022, to the surprise of many, 67% of voters rejected a new constitution meant to bring radical change and final, formal end to the Pinochet era.

The dangers of transitional times

How can we explain this reversal in public opinion? Following Gramsci, we could rightly say that the old Chile is dying but the new Chile still struggles to be born. This transitional process has made possible the “revival of Pinochet” and other monsters, as noted by the new Colombian president Gustavo Petro. Without any doubt, the rejection of the New Constitution represents a significant defeat for the Chilean left, and for progressive people and Marxists around the world.

Within this context, it is worth remembering that a month before the referendum a group of over two-hundred world leaders and well-known figures, among them Noam Chomsky and Jeremy Corbyn, former leader of the Labour Party and current member of the British Parliament, wrote an open letter to the Chilean people asking them to approve the New Constitution.

According to them, the new charter outlined the path needed to address the crises faced by most societies around the world, e.g. protecting the rights of nature, reducing social inequality, promoting gender equity, and providing access to abortion. The New Constitution stipulated the rights to health, education, universal free education at all levels, better retirement plans, and access to housing and water. It also protects the rights of indigenous peoples and, given their presence, recognizes its multi-national character of the state.

The monsters of capitalist reason

The motto on the current Chilean coat of arms, established in 1920, reads ominous: “By Reason or By Force.” It is well known that in any given society, generally those who have the monopoly of force end up imposing their reason. Chile is no exception. Throughout its history as a nation, beginning in the early 1800s, the social classes in control of the economic, political, and military force have indeed imposed their will and modes of thinking upon the population.

The most infamous example was the coup d’état in 1973 against Salvador Allende, jointly sponsored by the Chilean military, the conservative parties, the church, the military and the CIA. The coup took place against Allende’s September 11 and left more than 4000 dead or missing, and forced hundreds of thousands into exile.

Needless to say, here in the US, we don’t hear much about that particular September 11 in which our government played the role of the terrorist by participating in the planning of the attack to the “Presidential Palace” (La Moneda), as well as in acts of torture, murder and “disappearance.”

Christopher Hitchens’ 2001 book, “The Trial of Henry Kissinger,” describes how these criminal actions were justified by our government as being in alignment with the interests of the US foreign policy and US corporations in Chile at the time (ITF, Philip Morris, and the Chase Manhattan Bank). In other words, the rationality of capital prevailed by force of American diplomacy, confirming the Spanish painter Francisco de Goya’s 1797 observaria that “the dreams of reason can produce monsters.”

Mistakes of the Chilean Left

During a recent visit to Latin America, I had the opportunity to talk to numerous Marxists and left-wing militants for whom political engagement has been a central component of their lives. Although they hold a variety of political positions within the spectrum of the Marxist left, their opinions converged in one single point: Boric’s government overestimated the popular support for his administration based on the results of the election that brought him to the presidency.

This in turn generated a somewhat delusional “political over-confidence” which lead them to organize the process approving the new constitution in a bureaucratic fashion. It was supposed that “by reason” rather than through a “grass-roots” movement that would have reflected and amplified the desire of the masses.

This separation from the masses was aggravated by timid policies during the first months of the new administration which showed no immediate commitment to popular social aspirations. More damaging, the “by reason" of this constitution was an understimulation of the power of the political and ideological arsenal of the Chilean right and its allies abroad. They unleashed a vicious political warfare through a powerful media campaign based on misinformation, fake news, propaganda of social uncertainty, and fear. Some of these tactics used by the American right and the Republican Party and their Brazilian teammate, Jair Bolsonaro, may suggest just the opposite.

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Fascism does have a future, but so does Socialism and the possibility of a better world. What delusional “political over-confidence” lead them to organize the process approving the new constitution in a bureaucratic fashion, rather than through a “grass-roots” movement that would have reflected and amplified the desire of the masses?

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Community Spotlight

Cougars Theater at CHS

Dec. 1-3 and 6-10, at 7 pm. “The Game’s Afoot” – a Christmas mystery! Tickets $8 - $10 on line or at the door. 2707 Conger Ave, NW, Olympia. Next, look for CHS “Dramafors” Feb 8-11, 2023, showcasing student one-act plays.

String & Shadow Puppet Theater


Center for Responsible Forestry

Dec. 10, 1:30 – 3:30 pm. Legacy Forest Summit: Watersheds and Ecoregions, Olympia Center, 222 Columbia St., NW. Register www.c4rf/legacy-forest-summit

Rosie’s Place

Drop-in Mon – Fri., from 12-3, lunch, movie, hang-out. Ages 12-24

Overnight stay from 9pm – 8.30 am. Ages 18-24. Connect for food, shower vouchers, clothing, shelter, counseling, medical care, hygiene supplies, and more

LOTT Treatment Plant (!)

Dec 10, 10-4pm. From deep underground to high mountain peaks, look to water and how it moves around the world. Water-inspired crafts and games all day. After a 1 pm talk, discover how wastewater is cleaned. You must be 10 or older and wear sturdy closed shoes.

Traditions Fair Trade Cafe and Events

Dec. 16, 7-9:30 pm. The Lowest Pair, dual banjos concert with indie folk performers Kendal Winter & Palmer T Lee. Call 360-705-2819 for tickets and dinner reservations.

Brotherhood Lounge


TOGETHER

Consider participating as a short-term host for high school students in N. Thurston and Tumwater Schools. The program matches unaccompanied students with host homes to help high school students experiencing housing instability. The program offers wrap-around support and guidance, with the goal of helping students pursue educational goals, develop, and strengthen life skills, and eventually graduate from the program into stable independent housing. For more information email TLathrop@WAtogether.org.

Have an item for Community Spotlight?

Send a brief who,what,where,when, why & how about your program or event to olywip@gmail.com (as far in advance as possible) with links to more information. We will sometimes feature items on our Facebook and Instagram pages when we receive them after we go to press or they take place after the deadline.

South Sound Progressive Alliance

Dec. 17, 5 – 7 pm. Join this public meeting to learn about SSPA organizing principles, debate the midterms and look ahead to 2023. Everyone welcome. For Zoom link and location go to www.southsalish.org


Olympia Lamplighters

Dec. 22, 6 – 8 pm. Figure drawing class with live models – Thursdays every week. Must be over 18 for the class. Check for more information and activities at www.oly-lamplighters.com

Orca Books

Jan 8, 2023, 5 pm. “The American Surveillance State,” David Price will talk about how US government agencies target dissenters for surveillance. There will be lots of time for a Q&A. Orca Books Cooperative, 35 S 5th Avenue SE, Olympia.

Olympia Poetry Network, featured poet and open mic every third Wednesday at this favorite spot for poetry and conversation. Sign up at 5:30, or just come by. 45th & Water Street, downtown Olympia.