

VIVIAN
BYRD

11/24/14

Dear planning and sustainability commission,
my name is Vivian Byrd, I'm in seventh grade, and I want to improve portland. I live in southeast Portland, and I am writing this because I've noticed things that need improvement in both my neighborhood and the Portland area in general.

The thing I've noticed most about portland over the last 12 years is the housing situation, and the fact that it's not so great. When you walk along the street, you mostly don't actually see homeless families, and since our brains are wired so that if we see something that doesn't actually pose a threat to us, we ignore it, so we forget that those families exist. I know that most apartment buildings aren't all that 'pretty', but personally, I think if someone were to come to Portland, they wouldn't say: "Oh, look how ugly those apartment buildings are." No, I think they would see all the homeless people. If we were to put in just a few apartment buildings, which would not be a very big sacrifice, we can help homeless families stay healthier, happier, and warmer by making cheaper, more efficient places for people to live.

The next thing I would like you to consider is PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION. Some people can't afford a bus ride to work, school, or the grocery store, which limits their work, education, and food opportunities. Not being able to get the right food makes you more likely to get sick, or have more health problems in general. For example, there was a story on the radio about a woman and her family who lived in east portland and didn't have a car, so she had to take the bus to the store. The problem with that though, is that her ability to feed her children was not only limited by income, but by how much she could carry home. So I think there should be more bus and/or max stops more often, and the bus fare could be cheaper, so that people like her

can feed themselves and their family with the food they need in order to be healthy. As well as people being able to eat well, I think if the bus fare was more flexible by like a dollar, then more people would take the bus, which would help the planet. Even if you aren't getting the whole \$3.50, Trimet's still getting more money in the long run.

Now I know I've talked a lot about my last subject a lot, food, and not being able to afford/get to it, and it is a legit problem in East Portland, which is, as most people call it, a food desert. This means that the area is mostly void of healthy foods, stores that carry real food, farmers markets, etc. etc. etc. In the last five years, four major grocery stores have closed in East Portland, further limiting food options for East Portlanders. 40% of people living in Portland's closest grocery store is more than 1.5 miles away. I think we can fix that by putting more food pantries and farmer's markets in East Portland, because in all of Portland, there are about 50 farmer's markets, 2 of them are on the East side.

I will conclude this letter by saying please consider these options, because I think they really can change Portland for the better.

LB

Sunday November 30, 2014

Portland Planning and Sustainability

City of Portland

Portland, Or

Dear Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission:

My name is Alexander (Spud) Ward. I live in Multnomah County and have not seen the poverty that others may have. I go to Arbor School and right now we are studying and pondering our opinion on what we think Portland could improve upon. I personally have settled on three topics. Homeless care, making food less expensive and healthier, and lastly more recreational activities for the citizens of Portland.

The City of Portland should increase services for people who are homeless in Portland. Having shelter is vital to living. Imagine camping without a tent, in a cold wet city. I do not consider that camping but it is what homeless people have to endure every single night. While in a homeless shelter, this would not occur. Portland can be rainy and cold and everyone should have the luxury of painlessly sinking into a fluffy pillow and not waking up sopping wet. Without a home you also do not have a place to store belongings. Think of all the things you own, then bundle everything up into a single backpack. That to me would be utterly impossible. When you move houses, it takes trucks to transport your belongings to your new home. Homeless people move every day without trucks, cars, or houses, but maybe even more importantly, belongings.

Homeless care is a big issue, but there are many others. I think one other is the need for food. Many grocery stores do not sell healthy affordable food. Portland citizens spend a large amount of their budget on groceries. Lots of people do not have enough money to buy organic healthy food. Some Portland residents can't get enough food from grocery stores because they cannot carry enough back home. These people are not alone. Forty percent of Portland residents live over a mile away from a grocery store. Amounts spent at grocery stores may not matter as much to wealthier citizens, but for someone who is less financially stable, grocery stores consume a large percent of their budget. People need a healthy grocery store, and by lowering the cost of healthy food a small bit poorer customers will come. People in poverty only want the best prices. So, another idea would be to figure out a discount system for people who live around the poverty boundary. You could give them a discount on produce and meat, which are vital. They would benefit from it surely more than the grocery store would. If you live in poverty in Portland you may need to get 2/3 of your food from non-profit organizations. Many people do this in Northeast Portland. This illustrates that we need healthy foods in grocery stores to be less expensive. The only reason to use these non-profit organizations is that their needs are fulfilled at usual grocery stores.

Dear Planning and Sustainability Commission,

My name is Sophia Palumbis and I am thirteen years old. I live in Lake Oswego and am in seventh grade at the Arbor School of Arts and Sciences. This term we have been looking into Portland and strategizing ways we can make this city a better place and community for everyone. We have done a lot of studying about livability, schooling, the environment, and health. The biggest issues that connect back to me and that I feel are the most important, are health, and the education in public schools. I'm writing this letter to show you how I think we can help both these critical issues improve.

A healthier life leads to a better quality of life. People who are unhealthy usually don't have as much energy and confidence as others. I not only want people in our community to feel good, but when older a person's health could affect holding a job and supporting your family. Not having energy during the day can slow you down and prevent more opportunities for your-self.

Something I think Portland needs to change to help our health,

is making less expensive healthy food more accessible. Many people in poverty can't afford any healthy food. Often, the only option for people is fast food restaurants from which only offer processed unhealthy food. Many people also don't have access to grocery stores. Only 60% of Portland's households are within a half a mile of a full service grocery store. People who can't afford a car, or don't live near public transportation, don't have an easy way to get to and from grocery stores. This is something we need to change. It's not fair for people that live in food deserts, to have to walk more than a half a mile to get food for themselves and their family. A way we tried to prevent this was putting seasonal farmers markets and community gardens near places it's difficult to get food. We thought this would work, but we found only 7% of the population lives within a quarter mile of a seasonal farmer market, and only 15% of the population lives within a quarter mile of a community garden. This means that 93% and 85% of the population still don't have access to healthy food. Our top priority should be to make sure our community is healthy

and happy, and right now we aren't doing a good enough job to fulfill that priority. I think we should open more farmers markets and community gardens for people who can't afford healthy food, and try to lower the prices of healthy organic food.

Unhealthy food also encourages obesity and less fitness. Many people in poverty can't afford to live near a park or sidewalk. This makes it hard for people to get out and exercise. According to the 2010 study, 53% of our country's adults are overweight or obese. 10% of our country's teens are overweight or obese, and an additional 15% are at risk of becoming overweight or obese.

Looking at these facts, I think we need to make sure we encourage everyone to exercise more. We can do this by adding more parks, sidewalks, and organizing free public programs especially near the 27% of people who don't live near these things. For example, I think in public programs, there should be activities where people can exercise and have meetings to talk about ways to eat right. I live near a park, where many people get together to run laps around a track. These

Programs are open for everyone and it's very nice to know that I have an option in my neighborhood to go exercise with other people.

Another issue that concerns me is public education. Without education it's very difficult to achieve a high quality of life. Without education you wouldn't be able to hold many well paying jobs and support a family. In public schools today, they don't always support all the students needs and expectations. I believe that every kid deserves the same quality and quantity of education. It's not fair to the kids if their family can't afford private school, where has great education. In Portland Public Schools, within the last few years 65-70% of students were graduating on time. This means a full 30-35% of students weren't. To me this is crazy. Everyone should be encouraging and supporting these kids to graduate. There are many things the schools can do to help this situation; Try to make the classes smaller, focus on the kids, and try to provide more resources. However, I think mostly the issue is coming from home. The homelife of these kids will influence everything about their life at school. Kids need

support, and a strong foundation to be able to learn, study, and grow.

We are trying to make our Society better for the next generation. What parents learned when they were a kid, what they feed their own children, and what they encourage their kids to do will affect their kids' lives forever. When parents don't feed their children healthy foods or encourage them to exercise, this will affect their lives now, in school, and as an adult. If parents never got a good education as a kid, how can they provide the resources and study habits it takes to exceed as a learner today? Everything we do now will shape the next generation. This is why it is so important that we help and support the health and education of people today so they can change the lives of the next generation. I strongly appreciate your time to read my letter, and I hope together we can change these issues in Portland.

Sincerely,

Sophia Palumbis

Sophia Palumbis

Dear Planning and Sustainability Commission,

Hello. My name is Aiden Kola. I live in the northern region of Portland Oregon, specifically by Peninsula Park. I go to Arbor School of Arts and Sciences, and this is actually my very first year going here. So, getting to the point: Portland is an amazing city. It is full of all sorts of parks and exercise opportunities. Even though it has many pros, there are also some difficulties in some areas of Portland that has the need to be improved. I will assess 3 of these difficulties that seem the most important to talk about.

First, I think that we, as a city, should begin by replacing gasoline-fueled cars with eco-friendly cars. Regular cars are massive pollutants, and these vehicles deal damage to nature and the world, in general. If we replace them with eco cars, our planets would last longer and stay healthier by reducing the amount of carbon cars expel. These newer cars have become similar to regular cars in many ways. As we use them more, they would get more and more improved. To advertise this merchandise, we should broadcast them on different programs on televisions, maybe offering the ability to drive in carpool lanes throughout the whole city. Also, we should try to create an article in a magazine or newspaper to demonstrate how these cars would affect the world.

The next issue I think we should work on less costly health foods. Healthy, organic meals are a major necessity for human beings, as it supplies us with vital nutrients and vitamins to survive. While those foods are necessary, junk food is another story. It has unhealthy ingredients in it such as sugar and salt, which in large quantities could damage the human body, but giving arthritis and other diseases caused by those ingredients. The unfortunate thing is that junk-food is a low costing food, which poor people or people with little money want to purchase junk foods because it costs less money to buy. What we should do is create an incentive for food producers and grocery stores to reduce prices for organic foods, and promising something like a tax break with it. While we do that, we would also ask in return for an increase in price for junk foods.

The final issue I believe we should assess are more biking and walking paths. These sources of recreation are a great way for people to get fit. In the region I live in, North Portland, there are many sidewalks and bike paths to use, and the people who are using them look very fit and healthy. Unfortunately, some neighborhoods in other regions of Portland barely (or in some cases, none) have any bike paths or sidewalks available. Without these two modes of transport, people could get seriously injured from walking or biking in unsafe areas. This could be the cause of obesity, and to solve it, I believe we should build more pathways for walkers and bikers to navigate, causing less obesity in Portland, and making all Portlanders feel safe when they are biking or walking somewhere.

These are the main problems I believe we should improve in Portland. These are necessary details in our city to focus on, as it would make Portland healthier and safer in many different ways. Without these crucial parts, like not using eco cars, Portland could become unhealthy because of pollution, and many accidents would occur, because of the low amount of bike paths and sidewalks. My question is, how can Portlanders all work together to solve this? Thanks for reading, and I hope you take my ideas into consideration.

Sincerely,

Aiden Kola

7th Grade

Arbor School of Arts and Sciences.

Dear Portland planning and sustainability commission,

There are a few things that Portland could change or improve. They all have a large impact on many people's lives.

Adding parks and especially youth activities that include exercise will really help fight obesity. Right now, around 10% of youths are obese. That percentage would drop if there were more parks and recreational activities. The reason youth activities that involve exercise is important is because if obesity is stopped early than the rate will go down. Exercising should also be a pleasant experience too because it is easier to do something if you want to do it. Also neighborhoods without parks need them.

Portland also needs better public education. For some schools the high school graduation rate is below 60-70% but is slowly improving. In 2009, 42% of third grade students passed the third grade writing benchmark and 55% of seventh graders passed the seventh grade writing benchmark. Public education is very important for everyone, even if you don't/didn't go to a public school. It matters because it keeps the economy up and people who received an education from a public school will be spending the amount of money that they receive from their work/job on other people's businesses who may or may not have gone to a public school which makes the amount received by the one spending be varied depending on how their job is which is most likely affected by their education. With better, more accessible education people can easily get a good education and people can get good living-wage jobs and the future of Portland would be better. For example:

A person who receives a good education starts a community garden using the skills that they learned in school in a place where there wasn't one currently before. The neighbors get good fresh food and they live a good life.

The same person but this time without a good education doesn't have the skills and knowledge to start a community garden and when applying for another job doesn't get the job because they didn't get an education. They then are forced in to living on the streets or to apply to a homeless shelter. Meanwhile, the people who would of gotten a community garden in there neighborhood because of the person getting a good education have a hard time getting fresh healthy food.

Education can also help people start small businesses that can provide jobs too.

Education can also break the poverty cycle. In the poverty cycle a family in poverty that doesn't have enough time and money for the parents t to reliably send their kids to school every single day the kids end up without as good of an education. Without a good education they may not get a living wage job. Without a

living wage job the cycle repeats. The most important aspect of breaking the poverty cycle is making education accessible and affordable so people don't need much to get a good education. This enables people to get an education no matter what their life situation is. To make this happen schools need to have free food and supplies and any other expense that comes their way for anyone who needs it and I have seen a really good effort on it as well.

Portland needs to not overdevelop and needs to keep the environment green. Protecting the environment will keep the air clean and will keep the environment good for people who rely on it to make a living. Keeping pollution rates down will help prevent global warming.

It also would make Portland a role-model city that could change the way that others think about being eco-friendly. Keeping Portland green also affects farms in the Portland area. If there was too much development on farmland then all of Portland farmers will not have as much good land and some may not have any at all. This would cause the prices for the food that the farms provide because without as much to sell they would have to raise prices to keep their business afloat. This would be hurting those who can barely afford it. This would not only have an affect on the people who have a hard time affording it but would also have an affect on the economy because if the people have to spend more on food then they would spend less on other things which affects other people's businesses who would have less to spend on and so on. Also the higher prices for food may push people in the direction of buying cheaper less healthy food. Another thing that needs to be changed is the idea of surrounding farms by houses and development. When houses are built surrounding a farm then the neighbors may not like the noise or smell etc about the farm and complain about it and the farmer may give up and sell the plot of land to developers instead of a farmer because they can get much more money for a property than the amount that a farmer could give for it. I hope that developers can put houses in other places to reserve the farmland for farmers.

This allows Portlanders to get what they need for a living and to stay happy and healthy. It also provides opportunities for everyone to do what they want to do in life as well.

Sincerely,

Casey Pickett (NW Portland 97210)

Dear Planning and Sustainability Commission,

Hi, my name is marina Shepard. I live in NE Portland close to Irvington School. This year in Humanities we have been studying cities and how they run. Today I'm writing about what I think could be better about Portland. The issues I want to fix are homelessness, creating more walk and bike friendly places, and more healthy food for people who can't afford it.

Something I think we could make better in Portland is building safer walk and bike friendly places. I think that if there were more walk and bike friendly places, people would be encouraged to walk and bike more there would also be less pollution and less disease and it would be cheaper because people wouldn't have to pay for gas or car maintenance as much. Also, everyone would get more exercise if they walked everywhere. For example, 60% of Portland residents are obese or overweight. Maybe if they walked or biked more they could be driven to eat healthier food so that they can have more energy to get where they want to go (also they would lose weight and become healthier ☺)

My second topic is about getting healthy food to people who can't afford it. In East Portland many people don't have access to healthy food that they need. For example, 40% of Portland residents live one mile or more away from a grocery store. That makes it hard to get good food because they have to pay for gas or public transportation. Something the Portland Plan can do is add grocery stores in East Portland. I know that it might be hard because people might not go too often in the beginning because they can't afford it but it will allow people to get jobs and I think it will make a big difference in the long run.

The last issue I want to tell you about is homelessness. I hope that everyone wants to get the homeless off the street and back into society. But how to do that? If we opened more clinics for the homeless who have mental health issues, then they could return to society and get good jobs. Imagine if you were a child who was living on the streets with his/her family, you were always being looked at weirdly and being mover around by the police. That would be awful. We want to do as much as we can to get the homeless off the streets.

I think it would be awesome if more grocery stores were opened in East Portland, if more clinics were added around Portland for the homeless, and if there were more walk and bike friendly places. These issues matter because they make our city more interesting to live in and create a community that is better to live in. Thank you so much for reading this letter and I hope that you think about what I and my classmates have said.

~ Marina Shepard ☺

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marina Shepard".

Lehua Waianuhea
Arbor School of Arts and Sciences
4201 SW Borland Road
Tualatin, Oregon 97062

November 24, 2014

Dear Planning and Sustainability Commission,

My name is Lehua Waianuhea. Before I jump right in, I should probably tell you a little about myself. First of all, I am a student in the very small class of the seventh grade at Arbor School of Arts and Sciences. Arbor is a private school located in Tualatin and I assure you it is not gigantic! You also might want to know that I don't actually live in Portland, but I do live somewhat close to it. Arbor and my family have always taught me to be mindful of the natural environment. It has always been a big part of my life even though I am only thirteen. I want you to remember this because it is truly important to me and in this letter I will shed light on some of the issues I think need to be looked at in Portland to make the Portland community better as a whole. My hope is that with each little difference we make here, we will help improve the world around us.

As winter begins to creep up on us, we will want to heat our homes with our gas or oil powered heating systems. These warm us after a late day at work or an unexpected snow ball fight. They are beneficial to us, but we may pay dearly in the future because these comforting devices use fossil fuels. Fossil fuels maybe a big part of our economy, but there are also lots of down sides to using them. Fossil fuels create pollution and can make a UN healthy environment for Portlanders and our other animal friends. If the term "acid rain" means anything to you, you might just know what I'm about to say. Coal (a fossil fuel) contains sulfur and nitrogen. When coal is burned, a combination of the oxides of sulfur and nitrogen are released into the air around us. It just turns out that the combination of sulfur and nitrogen is poisonous. In addition, since oxides dissolve in rain water acid rain is just what it sounds like. Acid rain erodes buildings and creates water pollution. I am very concerned about this because air and water pollution can lead to an unhealthy environment to live in. Water pollution is evident in many of Portland's waterways. As innocent local small fish swim through our polluted waters they become contaminated. Our small friends will then continue their lives until a bigger fish decides it would be great to have a little snack and so once the small fish are consumed, the big fish will carry on with its life until it is caught by a fisherman and eventually eaten by a human. That human depending on how much the fish was contaminated he or she can get really sick including cancer. This is not a good way for anybody to end a day at the sushi bar after eating some sashimi, but in fact this is actually more gradual. You only know that you've eaten contaminated fish once you become sick. In the long run even though this is a long term of events this still happens and it isn't good for Portlanders.

As well as the natural resources around us, the food we eat affects our health. We need healthy food to live a healthy lifestyle. People who eat healthy food are more stable physically and mentally. Healthy foods are also crucial to our well-being and contain major nutrients we need to live. As you work hard to earn money at your job so that you can either feed yourself, toughs around you, or your family. Lots of less fortunate people in Portland can't afford healthy food to do as you do. This means

they probably eat less healthy food than the people who can afford it. Just so that you get an idea of how many people probably can't afford the luxury of healthy food, more than 500,000 people in Oregon live in poverty or are homeless. If that 500,000 people can't buy healthy food then they probably will be able to afford "junk food". It also seems that "junk food" is more accessible than fresh fruit and vegetables. "Junk food" is cheaper too. At the Dollar Store candy and canned food can be easily bought. The price is usually less than a dollar and if you took the time to look around the Dollar Store you would see that vegetables and fresh food would be nowhere in sight, as if you were stranded in a desert full of unnecessary items. What I'm trying to say is that Portland needs more evenly spread grocery stores that supply healthy and cheap produce.

If we are being healthier in our choices Portland also needs to make a healthier choice for its environment too. If we are more environmentally minded in the city it will set a good example for its residents. A stronger reason why we should do this is because more than half of Americans live in high levels of air pollution. This is because many people don't make eco-friendly choices. This is also because eco-friendly products such as light bulbs are generally more expensive to make and buy. If you think about it, if you went to the hardware store and saw that a 60w incandescent light bulb that cost \$1.47 and then you saw the same light bulb but it was eco friendly and cost \$12.99 you would probably choose the cheaper one because well, it's cheaper. But what you might not see is that eco-friendly products such as that light bulb could actually SAVE YOU MONEY. Eco-friendly cars on average can drive 5 miles more per gallon than regular cars which could save America about 2 million barrels of oil each day. Another way that making eco-friendly choices could save money is through using solar panels. I say this because in a single day the amount of daylight that hits the US is more than 2,500 times the amount of power that is used by the whole country in a day. As I now conclude this is a great chance and opportunity for Portland to become more advanced.

These issues matter to me because we cannot make Portland better without healing our natural environment and our life style. We can do this by starting with changing our outlook towards a bright future. Thank you for taking your precious time to read this long letter and I hope I got you thinking about what can be done to change Portland for the better. Thanks again!

Sincerely,

Lehua Waiianuhea

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lehua Waiianuhea".

Dear Planning and Sustainability Commission,

Hello, My name is Max Ball. I'm 12 years old, and I live in SW Portland. I go to school at the Arbor School of Arts and Sciences, and for the last few months, we have been studying livability and Portland. I'm writing to say what I think would be some of the most beneficial changes to make in Portland.

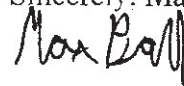
Many people in Portland are musicians, or have some musical training; and for many of those people, it can be difficult to earn a living. A very safe, fun, and easy way to get money is to go to Saturday Market and busk for an hour. Though all of the rules on busking are a matter of courtesy, I don't think that they should be laws. There is no reason for the police to be wasting time watching people busk, waiting for them to break a rule. Busking also makes people happier. Many times I have seen people who weren't in a good mood who stopped to watch me when I was busking, and they left with big smiles on their faces. Music has been proven to be very beneficial to your brain, and listening to buskers is a great way to hear music in your everyday lives. So having more buskers would create less poverty and more happiness.

Portland should have more regulations for building fast food places. Most fast food places are only looking out for the best ways to get the cheapest ingredients. This is why they are able to make a profit off of such a small amount of money. This usually results in companies buying food from farmers who feed the animals GMOs, make them stand in the same place their entire life, and other terribly inhumane practices. The farmers who do this get tons of money off of these sales, so they can keep doing what they do. Fast food places also make it easy to get really unhealthy food. This increases obesity rates, which would raise the death toll. Even though this is an extremely cheap and easy way to get food if you are in poverty, the obesity it induces lead to very expensive health problems. A solution to this would be to make healthy food cheaper. This would leave less fast food places in Portland, and would create less animal abuse and human deaths.

Portland should encourage environmentally friendly practices. For example, pressuring people to drive less, building more bike lanes and wider sidewalks, and promoting exercise. If people exercise more, the obesity rates will be lower, people will be healthier, and they will walk and bike to more places. Less driving leads to less CO₂ in the atmosphere. Every little bit helps to reduce pollution. We know this because the average temperature of the earth has been very closely linked to the CO₂ output. There are mounds of research to suggest that if we keep going at this rate, our planet will be indistinguishable from Venus. But we should and can easily stop this, for there is no reason that we should turn our planet into a literal hell on earth.

Portland is such a rich and vibrant city, and we should take as many steps as we can to sustain it. I want to thank your organization for doing what you can to make Portland a better place than it already is.

Sincerely, Max Ball



Dear Planning and Sustainability Commission,

My name is Emilio Gray and I live in Lake Oswego, right near Southwest Portland. At the Arbor School of Arts and Sciences we have been studying cities, how they are good and how they could improve. As the final part of this term, we decided to write to you about the three most important things that we think could make Portland a better city. For me, those issues are cheaper healthy food, solar energy, and public transportation.

Healthy food should be made more accessible to people on a tight budget. Since junk food is generally cheaper, it gravitates poor families towards that instead of healthy food. In an OPB broadcast I listened to, two poor families struggled to get healthy food to their kids. This should not happen. A good, healthy meal should not just be for the rich. Lowering the price of healthy food would shy people away from junk food. 53% of Portlanders are overweight thanks to junk food. Junk food also causes diabetes, and an unhealthy community means less work gets done due to physical inability, as well as people's immune systems failing. If healthy food is made cheaper, people will be healthier and live longer, creating an overall healthier city.

Another issue is that solar energy is not used much. Solar energy is important and needs to be used more frequently and to its full potential. Gasoline is an earth harming, limited resource. Solar power is an unlimited, eco-friendly form of power. Even though it emits less energy, how much of the energy we have do we actually use and not waste? People would say gas is more powerful, but it pollutes the environment and helps speed up global warming. It also clogs up marine animals' gills, suffocating them. These are just some of many negative aspects of gasoline. Solar energy is from the sun, which is

hitting the earth all the time, 24/7, and not causing any damage. In fact, the sun is the reason we exist. Portland should encourage using solar energy by generating more of it and maybe solar-powering a Tri-Met bus and see how that goes. If Portland switches to solar power, other cities might follow suit and the threat of global warming would end.

Public transportation is another important part of Portland, but I think it should be more expansive, stretching to smaller parts of the Portland area. This is because public transportation should target people and families who can't afford to own a car, people who commonly live in the parts of Portland that Tri-Met does not extend to. Bus fare is cheap, so people could easily get to work, as well as easily accessing schools, parks, and grocery stores on the other side of Portland. Also, buses get better gas mileage than cars because many people in a single bus would use less gas than many people in many cars. Sadly, 60% of Portlanders drive their own car. If Portland would just stretch out their bus routes, many people's lives would be made much simpler and less tiring.

In conclusion, there are many areas that I think Portland could improve. However, it is still a great city and I think is moving in the right direction. However, is it moving fast enough? Everyone should be doing their part to speed up the pace of Portland's improvement. If we do, then Portland will become a better city, and other cities may follow our lead.

Sincerely,



Emilio Gray

Dear Planning and sustainability
comitission,

My name is Olivia. I live
in NE Portland. In Humanities
class (sort of like social studies)
we are studying cities and what
could make them better. I am
writing this letter because I think
our city could improve some
things. The things I think our
city should work on are
less new development, affordable
living and more money for public
schools.

Portland should approach its
development in a way that doesn't
change the environment of its
neighborhoods. If we change the
environment of neighborhoods, they
will lose their character and identity.
If an old small house does not
sell, the developer tear it down and
build a big modern home that does
not fit in with its surroundings. I
think homes should reflect the
people who live there. These big
modern homes, I feel, only really
reflect on the developer. If eventually
the big modern homes are the only
homes around, the neighborhoods
will all look the same and the

buy what they can carry but the amount of groceries may not sustain the family for a week. If Portland had more affordable housing there would be less homelessness and there would be less poverty. In the neighborhoods you see a fair amount of homeless people. If you go downtown you see a mind blowing amount of homeless people. In Portland we have too many homeless people and if living was more affordable, there would be less homelessness. 30% of the people in East Portland live in poverty. The most money is spent on housing. If housing was less expensive, there would be less poverty. Also in these neighborhoods schools are also have funding problems.

The quality of Portland Public schools should improve. Some Public schools have enough money to support their programs. It is not fair that some public schools have more money than others. The schools with less money some times have to cut music and art programs so they can afford other classes even though those programs are important. I feel like all public

Dear Planning and Sustainability Commission,

My name is Mia Simmons and I am twelve years old. I am in 7th grade at Arbor School and I live in Lake Oswego, but I lived in Amsterdam for two years. In class, I have been studying civilizations, cities and what is needed to build a strong community. Having lived in two countries and traveling to many others, I've seen many different people and cultures. These experiences have contributed to my thoughts about what we can do to build and strengthen Portland. I have focused my thinking on the aesthetics, the education/job opportunities and the culture in Portland. I took the best of my life in Europe and the best of my life in Lake Oswego to find the three things I find the most important.

Improving the appearance and cleanliness of Portland will excel the city as a whole. Attracting tourists to Portland and representing the atmosphere that tourists and future residents *want* to visit creates a positive reputation. The culture of Portland would be set as friendly, welcoming and solid and will contribute to the making of an improved Portland by the year 2035. Having pristine streets around Portland by reducing waste and litter will fulfill these needs in Portland. We, as a community, can also reduce homelessness and poverty. This will do two things for our community; it will help the lives of homeless and the impoverished people and when streets are clean, people are happy about where they live. Offering more services to the homeless and the impoverished such as fundraisers, healthy food drives and shelters will bring the community together to support the needful. Motivating disadvantaged people will help strengthen their lives and if people who live on the streets have the opportunity to become fully educated which can lead to a better income, they will be motivated to take charge of the one life they have. This leads me to my second point.

Imagine if you were homeless. Maybe you're sick, cold or scraping by. You try to take every opportunity, every chance you get to survive, but all you really want deep down inside is a break. A chance to start over. A new life. Imagine if you lived in poverty. You are grateful for all that you have, but what you really want deep down inside is for your kids to eat good food, live in a solid home and for them to get a solid education so they can get a good job. People with a high school diploma have an income 40% greater than people without one. Slightly less than 50% of the students in many public schools in Portland don't graduate on time. I strongly believe that there should be more job opportunities with solid incomes for the health and happiness of families, and stronger educational opportunities for students. Everyone deserves a chance to live in a strong future and children who go to schools that focus on deep learning are lead to higher incomes. This is because the more educated you are, the more work opportunities are given to you because intelligent people strengthen companies.

School environments provide emotional and social opportunities in addition to academics. The reality of social life can be experienced through student interactions. This will help the students maintain jobs as adults. In the end, job opportunities allow adults to thrive and support their children academically so they have the ability to find job opportunities on their own.

Capturing international culture in one city is captivating and appealing. Cultural diversity and flavor in the city is an important aspect. Representing international traditions and creating traditions of our own is engaging to locals and is a fascinating idea. Offering more recreational opportunities to the city encourages people to get outdoors and could also reduce health problems in Portland. Public art, festivals, international people and even things such as busking (street artists/performers) will add thrill and something to look forward to if focus and effort is put into it. The beauty in culture is really amusing and allows Portland to bond as a community and become stronger.

I appreciate your time and consideration on my thoughts about strengthening Portland; I hope after my letter you now see a different perspective on the importance of those three ideas. I feel very strongly about these topics and I hope that you now do, too. Picture the lives that could be changed and the community engagement people will have when Portland is improved. Imagine how strong Portland will be if we reduce homelessness and clean our streets, broaden our cultural diversity and increase education job opportunities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mia Simmons". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a small flourish at the end.

Mia Simmons

Dear Planning and Sustainability Commission

My name is Anne Brod and I am a 12 year old girl who lives in SE Portland OR. I attend Arbor School of Arts and Science. This semester we have been studying what makes a good city, we started with the first civilization but now we have moved onto more modern times for example Portland. We have talked about the issues of Portland and what is great. We have also talked about what could be better. Personally I think Portland is the best city ever. I have come up with 3 ways it could be better:

One of the ways Portland could be better would be to have more K-8 Portland public schools. Even though I don't go to a public school, I think they are very important. Why I think this issue matters is because children are the future of our century. If kids don't have a good education at an early age that could affect the rest of their lives. The brain is most absorbant before the age 23. So it is important to have a good K-8 schools. There are so many reasons this issue matters, but this is one that stands out to me. If a child is raised in poverty that doesn't mean they are going to spend the rest of their life in poverty. They should get to live whatever life they want to if they have a good education they can!

One of the other things that Portland can improve on is homeless resors:s I think matters because some homeless people are homeless because they have a shortage of money or are going through rough patch. Some homeless even choose to be homeless.

My family went on a homeless immersion day and I talked to a lot of people who said they even chose to be homeless because it required less money to live. Lots of people also told me that it's hard to live this way without a house not just because

of the money issue, but also because of the police bullying them and trying to move their temporary homes.

One other thing I believe in very strongly is the fact that East portland has been forgotten. I think this is a matter because East portland is where the less expensive living is. But there is not enough basic needs, like parks and local grocery stores. 50% of portlanders is not within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of a park. With such bad access to healthy food in that area people can get unhealthy or even obese. Another basic need is public transportation. Transportation is important because 50% of portland don't live within 1 mile from a grocery store but public transportation could help with that so people can get places to support their family or just to support themselves. Even though I am only 12. I think the issues are extremely important for the future of portland. I hope you consider them.

Sincerely Anne Brod

Dear the planning and sustainability commission,
my name is Peter Carroll and I live in North East Portland, in the Beaumont-wilshire area (although technically we are on the border but in the Rose city park neighborhood. But I don't spend time in the Rose city Park neighborhood because it's not super safe because of the lack of sidewalks and, there are not enough parks there). These issues are important because they can help Portland citizens be more healthy and active. These issues will also affect obesity rates, and these issues also matter to me. So take that into consideration as you read some options I have suggested for changes for Portland.

Portland must ensure that low income residents have easy and affordable access to healthy food. There are not many Portlanders who are able to get to or afford healthy food. It is true that 40% of Portland residence live a mile or more away from a fresh grocery store, (not a corner store). Imagine if you lived a mile away from a grocery store, and you didn't own a car because you are in poverty. Could you imagine how hard and painful that would be? Also there are 24 farmers markets in Portland only two of which are in East Portland, where fast food joints, obesity, and unhealthy corner stores thrive. Is Portland encouraging unhealthy eating in east Portland? If residents don't have a car and don't have any farmers markets or healthy corner stores, then do they have much of a choice? We should have more farmers markets for easier and healthier choices and access for residents in East Portland.

There should be healthier food for people who can't afford it because it will lower levels of obesity and other health problems. How that can happen is because if we give residence in poverty healthy options, they will want those options instead of eating unhealthy food. It's incredibly unfair that residence in poverty are likely to eat affordable food, which is unhealthy, and get obese. And, obesity can lead to heart attacks, diabetes, and numerous other health problems, and those diseases can lead to death at a very young age. It's unjust that that could easily happen to you if you're in poverty. Also, if people are obese and getting those diseases, there is a higher cost for health care Portland could be using the money they are using on health care for other needs, like homelessness or pollution.

Portland also must ensure that there are more parks to encourage outside activity, and more sidewalks to create a safer outdoor environment. It is true that the majority of Portlanders live a half-mile or more away from a developed park. If you want to go to a park, but it is far away from you, does that encourage you to be active? I would want more parts so so my friends and I don't have to bike across busy streets and go super far to play sports in a developed Park. I live in Northeast Portland, and the closest developed Park is about a mile away from me. If there was a developed park really close

to me, then I would be more active and so would my neighbors.

There should be more sidewalks to create a safer environment. For example, if someone wants to go somewhere and there are no sidewalks, that someone will either: just stay home, or drive. If there are more developed sidewalks, then people would walk more and be more active. It's true that in east Portland, 40% of busy streets have partial or no sidewalks. That's where more than 40% of traffic accidents happen. If more people walk or bike there will be less pollution.

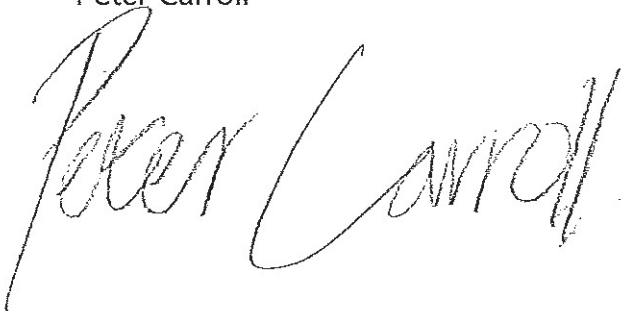
There are lots of obese citizens in neighborhoods like East Portland where there are no sidewalks or close parks. That means obese citizens can't exercise or be active. Wouldn't it be easier to help lower obesity levels by just adding more sidewalks or parks?

Another thing Portland could do to create a healthier city is to lower the pollution in the air and water. This is important because if you're breathing in polluted air or drinking polluted water, there is a higher likelihood of you getting ill. And, if people get ill, more money will be spent on healthcare. Why don't they use that money on lowering pollution levels? Also, nobody wants to inhale or drink polluted water and air. And, if the air's polluted, Portland will have a really hard time trying to get people to be active and outside.

Pollution can also kill or plant life, and that can damage our food supply and eco system. That can lead to lots of starvation and deaths. Also when many things become polluted, the food we eat becomes polluted, and then we become toxic. We must lower and work to get rid of pollution.

Thank you for reading my letter. I hope you found these changes I suggest reasonable. (Do you think these changes will affect the city?) I believe that any small problem that is fixed will improve the city. (It is incredibly important to get people outside and healthy. Do you believe that too?) Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,
Peter Carroll

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter Carroll". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Dear Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission,
My name is Sarah Hall. I'm a seventh grader at The Arbor School of Arts and Sciences and I live in Tualatin, Oregon. In our fall semester we have been studying what makes a city successful, going all the way back to the first civilization, Mesopotamia. In these past weeks we have been learning about health, safety, food and energy in Portland. We then let students comment on what we think is going well and what could be better. All of these activities have helped me learn about Portland and lead me to write this letter. And find that the three most important things to me are making produce more affordable, music and art classes for people in poverty and more public art.

Portland needs to make fresh produce more affordable and accessible. Ten percent of our county's teens and fifty-three percent of adults are overweight or obese, and I think that part of this is because people can't afford fresh produce. If produce was more affordable, people would be more willing to eat healthy and those rates could go down. On an OBP broadcast I heard about a single parent living in a one room apartment with two kids, he wanted to provide his kids with healthy, fresh food but couldn't afford it. How do you think you would feel in his position? Also, in Portland there are lots of food deserts, which are where there are almost no grocery stores. If people don't have access to food, even if they could afford it, then they would have to resort to the closest option, which will most likely be unhealthy, processed fast food. So if Portland makes fresh produce more affordable and accessible, we would become a healthier city.

Portland would also benefit from more historical public art. Adding more public art would make Portland more attractive and help people learn about Portland. Our city should be attractive because our residents should want to be here and enjoy walking around Portland. Portland is also known as a creative, artsy city and I don't always see a lot of public art, but if there were, it would feel more friendly and attractive. I also don't feel like I know a lot about Portland historically, and having historical art could help citizens learn about the city we live in. For example the Japanese American historical plaza has a series of stones dedicated to the memory of those who were deported to inland interment camps during World War II. The stones help remind and teach people about what happened to Japanese-American citizens during World War II and if Portland puts up more historic public art, our citizens would benefit greatly.

Portland should provide affordable music and art classes because many art and music classes are being cut from schools. There are many studies that show how art and music are good for the brain and that skills gained from art and music can transfer to other realms of a person's life. And having extra classes provided would keep kids doing what they love, and help kids discover their love of art and music. Providing more classes would also get kids out and about and meeting new people from other school districts. There are many talented people that live in Portland that can't do what they enjoy because of their financial state and that's not right. Imagine you're a struggling parent and you see your child drawing every moment of the day and they ask to go to an art camp/class. You look at the program and it would help develop your child's skills and bring her/him joy. But you can't afford it, how do you think you would feel telling your child? If Portland added more affordable art and music classes it would keep people in Portland doing what they love.

This letter really matters to me, because even though I don't live in Portland, I spend a lot of time there and these changes could be a good influence on everyone/thing around us. Thank you so much for reading this letter, and I hope it helps make Portland a better place.

Sincerely, Sarah Hall

Dear Planning and Sustainability Commission,

There are many things I appreciate about Portland, but there are some things that need to change. I was born here and I live here but I am currently going to Arbor School of Arts and Sciences in Tualatin as a 7th grader. In class we have been studying cities. We looked at ancient civilizations and what makes a city successful. Now we are looking at modern cities. We have brainstormed, discussed, and read about different issues that Portland is facing. Two issues that really concern me are high school graduation rates and excessive driving.

One issue I find important is public high school graduation rates: only 61% of the students who attend Portland public schools graduate on time. That means 39 out of every 100 students don't graduate on time. I'm a middle school student living in North Portland and my neighborhood school is Jefferson High School. The on-time graduation rate at this school is 67%. That needs to improve. In addition, student test scores are abysmally low: 34% of Jefferson's 11th graders are not meeting reading standards; 49% are not meeting math; 52% are not meeting writing standards; 78% are not meeting science standards. While I might have the chance to go to a better performing private high school, my friends who live in my neighborhood might not have that option. Going to a high school with poor graduation rates and low level academic performance will affect their college and career options.

It is hard to get a good paying job without a high school diploma. People with a high school diploma earn about 40% more than people who don't have one. When a person earns less income it has a negative effect on not only the individual, but on the community as a whole. This happens because with low income you pay less in taxes and have less to spend at local businesses. This is bad for the economy.

High performing schools provide more opportunities for the community. People want to live places where their kids have opportunities. If more people come to Portland, they can contribute to the community and economy. Also, if we have good schools, businesses will have more qualified local employees. They will be able to grow and expand. Otherwise, businesses might have to move away in search of qualified employees.

Improving Portland schools is not the only way to make Portland a better place to live. Did you know that 66% of the people in Portland drive alone? That's way too much driving. Driving damages the environment. It uses up large quantities of fossil fuel that is an irreplaceable resource. It's going to run out at some point so we can't just use it thoughtlessly. If we want to live on this Earth we need to be more careful about sustainability. I have thought of two ways that we can reduce driving in order to help cut down on the amount of fossil fuel we use.

One way to reduce driving is to create more walking and biking paths. If people walk and bike more they will drive less. Having pretty paths will make the community a more pleasant place to live. The paths will also encourage people to walk and bike more. Fewer than half the people in Portland exercise the recommended amount and Portland's rate of chronic disease is rising. Putting in walking and biking paths will help peoples' health and make the community more pleasant to live in as well as improving energy sustainability.

Another way to reduce driving would be to expand the max. There is a max stop really close to my house and I know from experience that it is a great resource to have. If there is a max stop near their house, people won't feel like they need to drive. They might not even need a car. When I went to Europe the fact that you could walk on the streets because there weren't very many cars was one of my favorite parts. Less cars and driving will mean less pollution. Expanding the max will also provide transportation for people who cannot afford cars. People with low incomes will

Dear PDX Plan,

My name is Gordon lam and I am 13 years old. I go to the Arbor School of Art and Sciences and I live in Lake Oswego. For the better part of this school year, my class has been studying the pros and cons of the city of Portland. I am writing to the Portland Plan because I saw some issues in the Portland community that I thought should be fixed. The three things that I think are crucial to a good society are affordabe housing, so that people can have support and stability, affordable and healthy food for good nutrition and so that there is less obesity, and lastly, my most important point, better education opportunities for children. Going on to my first point, education opportunities.

Education is important because without it you may not be able to get a job or make good decisions. Right now, only 61 percent of portland public school highschool students graduate on time. I think that if you greatly improve this number, then it will make it so children can start on a good note/better future.some ways that you can improve the graduationrate is better funding so that teachers can get the resources that they nee dto help struggling studentsor get tutoring programsin portland public schools for kids whose famalies cannot afford tutors. This is important because if you do not get a good education when you are younger. It could be harder to geta good education when you are older. For example, say you did not have the education level to got to college. later on, when you are an adault and you want to get an education, you may not have the time or money to do so because you have kids or a full time job. One more thing is that if you do not have a good education, you may not be abl to get a high paying or rewarding job.this could become problematic if you have a big family or have housing expenses that need do be paid . if you do not have an eduvation, and you do not have the ability to get a job, that will be an ultimate problem. One more thing is that if you do not have an education, you will not be able to make as many educated decisions. For example,if you are voting,you may not know who and what to vote for because you do not know what is going on but if you went to school,you could learn more about current events and politics. In other words, if you do not have an education, you may not be informed enough to be able to think through your decisions. Basically what I am saying is that if you do not have an education, you are starting out your life at a disadvantage. Moving on to my next point, healthy affordable food.

If there is no healthy food like fruits and vegetables for famalies who cannot afford expensive foods, they will have to buy less expensive non healthy foods like processed foods. You could say that this could cause obesity or people being overweight. Another situation could be that ther eare no grocery stores with fresh produce in certain portland neighborhoods. This area would be called a food desert. Right now, East of 82nd street in Portland, there is a food desert. There is no fresh produce around for miles and because this is a pretty low income part of town most people do not have cars. This would also mean that people have to walk or bike miles and miles just to get to a grocery store not to mention thay have to carry very heavy grocerys back to their house.if there are no fruits and vegetables in a childs normal diet, then they will have to grow up with bad nutrition habits because of the unhealthy foods that they have to eat. I think that one way the Portland Plan could solve this problem could be to insentivize stores that sell fresh produce to have a store in a food desert. These insentives could be anywhere from lowe taxes to giving the stores a little bit of money at the end of each year because they are not making as much money as they would be making in other locations. Now I have already said this

Dear Portland plan,

My name is Malcolm. I go to Arbor School of Arts and Sciences. I live in northeast Portland. For the past weeks we've been studying modern cities and discussing the issues we think are important. The two issues I focused on were film-making and public transportation.

Portland should do more to provide film and art programs for its citizens. We need to spend more money on the arts. Portland spends 3.2 million dollars on film and arts programs. That's enough to buy a super nice mansion in Forest Park, a really nice RV and another mansion. We spend more money on fast food than on the arts. I can see why some people think art is pointless. One time I saw a broken spoon at an arts museum. But for some people, art making and play making and film making is how they make their money, or it's the one thing they're good at. Another thing that I think would be really cool is a FREE! public gym for the arts, which would contain lots of different areas for people to work on their passion: for instance, a recording studio for voiceovers and singing; a green screen; and other stuff. If we spend more money on the arts, that could help people find jobs as an actor, a movie director, an artist, a drama teacher or an acting coach. It could also spark youth activities. Spending money on the arts could really improve Portland.

Not all public transportation goes where people need to go. Many people in Portland cannot afford a car due to insurance, gas and car payments. I thought of an idea like Car-to-Go, called Rent-A-Car. I know you can rent a car at Enterprise and stuff, but who wants to do all that paperwork. You should lower the price of Car-To-Go, and put more Car-To-Gos in Portland. A ton people are getting pushed out to East Portland because the housing is cheaper. However East Portland has about two grocery stores that are very far away from their housing and they have to walk very far to get home, carrying bags of foods. And since they don't have a car, that limits the amount of groceries they can get. So you should put more Car-2-Gos in East Portland.

So to conclude, please take these issues into consideration. And thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Malcolm Terry

Dear Portland Plan People,

My name is Hastin and I live in West Linn. I have been studying cities in general, but now I am focusing on Portland. Portland is a very good city, but things could be improved. I have picked what I think are the two most important issues. I chose pollution and GMOs because not only do they impact Portland but they impact the whole world. I also have a section on green energy after the pollution section. I hope you will see these issues differently after you have read this because I sure did.

Pollution is bad for your health. The polluted air gets into your lungs and into your blood stream. Sadly, you can't see it until it becomes a deadly grayish white fog. In certain parts of China people have to wear face masks so they can breathe because the air is poisonous from pollution. It burns holes in the ozone, our only protection from the sun's deadly radiations and small meteors which would burn up in the atmosphere. Pollution increases global warming killing plants and animals resulting in exponential increase in CO₂ levels in the air, which would take thousands of years to fix and by then we would probably be extinct or of this planet. Please help stop it before it is too late. Even though Portland making an attempt to decrease pollution wouldn't make the biggest impact on the world, everything counts.

Portland should invest in green energy to help save the planet. Fossil fuels won't last forever. Gasoline used to be really cheap but then they started to run out. Prices went up so you are lucky if you can buy gasoline at \$3.00 a gallon. Before you know it the price will be above \$5.00 a gallon. Electricity prices will also go up. Portland is next to two rivers so let us use them to their full extent! Make wind farms while you can! Make solar stacks and solar panels! Think about the future and not just today. There are millions things you could do to fight pollution. Stop the usage of coal. It is either our lungs or our gadgets. Which would you prefer?

GMOs could save the planet or destroy it. For example, one mistake could create some form of poison, but GMOs could be mass produced and end starvation. Do you want to take the risk? Portland should fund the testing of GMOs and find out if they are truly safe. Don't find out the hard way. Edge on the side of caution and be safe.

I hope you see why these things matter. Portland can be a role model for other cities, states, and even whole countries trying to save the planet and all the wonderful things on it. Portland could start a revolution.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Sincerely,

Hastin Kapoor

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hastin".

November 29, 2014

Dear Portland plan,

My name is Stella and I am 12 years old. I go to Arbor School of Arts and Sciences in Tualatin, OR. In our Humanities class we are looking into the community and city life in Portland. This leads to me writing a letter to you. I will get to show my three biggest issues in the Portland area and hopefully I can make you think they are important. I live in NE Portland, which is a great community and there are lots of new buildings and healthy markets around me. I moved to Portland from Brooklyn, NY, which is very different from Portland. I loved the move to Oregon, but I noticed some things that Portland could improve on. I also hope you realized that those issues below are very important to me, but more importantly, I hope they are important to you. I hope that Portland can become a better community, have good safety, friendly neighborhoods and a sustainable lifestyle.

Cities are all created differently. Everyone has their own way of making a city run. No way of running a city is perfect, although some things can be close to perfect while other problems can't. Even if our city changes things for the better and makes a difference in our life, it doesn't mean our city has no problems. To me, making a city run takes time, effort and patience. Nobody hasn't made a

Alcohol is very similar to drugs except alcohol was invented for pleasure and happiness, but I have seen people in Portland (such as downtown Portland) drinking or taking a drug that makes them walk around kind of dazed and a little zombie-looking. I think this is bad because the person, who has done something bad and ruined a little part of their life, now has what could become an addiction. And that would be very sad. And it is also a very dangerous hazard for people around them, because anybody could be scared of that kind of person and that would make them scared in their community. It can make them sad about the place they live in. Myself personally, I don't want anybody to have a fear in their life because if something like that can be stopped it can save a person's life and create better living conditions for everybody. But one of the good things is I have never seen somebody under 21 drinking alcohol in Portland. I am very glad about that because I think if teenagers started drinking alcohol it could be very unsafe and unhealthy. I don't really know what Portland is doing to stop this or help or do anything at all, but compared to what I saw when I lived in New York, I see a big reduction in drugs and alcohol in Oregon compared to New York. I hope Portland can become more drug and alcohol free because it makes people healthier, creates a healthier environment, a good community, a safe city, and a happy place to live.

Buttes storm water soaks into the ground, flows over or runs off into streams. During those heavy storms it can increase runoff water from roofs and streets and other hard surfaces can increase the risk of storm bank erosion, landslides, and flooding. This could cause things to become dangerous. Luckily, Portlanders are trying to create biking, walking and more fuel-efficient car and other things so we can reduce the risk of pollution, global warming and carbon used fuel products.

Have you ever seen a really big house that towered over the rest and seemed like it should never have been there? I think you may have seen a house like that in your life. But now think about two homeless people. They live under a busy bridge and all they have is a shopping cart that was left out at the store. Now go back to the really big house. That house costs a really big amount of money, but the person who owns that house could buy a medium or regular sized house without selling their big one. This means the two homeless people living under the bridge could rent the rich house for themselves or the two homeless people could split the house like an apartment. Sadly, there are still homeless people who cannot pay for a home. I wish this could be solved because everybody should have their own place to live and I don't think anybody should be homeless for any reason.

Dear Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability:

My name is Celeste and I am in seventh grade at Arbor School. I live in Tualatin, Oregon and Lake Oswego, Oregon. We have been studying cities and what could be better. I think that all people should be able to go to a hospital, we should have a healthier environment, and there should be more places for recreation. Portland should plant more trees because trees give us oxygen. Trees give animals and people food. Factories should make less pollution. Pollution affects animal populations. Portland should make rules and find other ways to help factories make less pollution.

People who can't afford to go to hospitals can't get the help they need. They should be able to go to a hospital anyway. If you break your arm and you don't have enough money you can't get a cast. If people don't get the medical care they need, they will end up with worse problems.

If you have small medical problem it's just going to turn into a bigger medical problem if you don't get help. The bigger problem the bigger the bill.

People should be able to go outside and get some fresh air and oxygen. Going outside makes you healthier and happier. Some people in Portland have a hard time getting to a park. People need more places to go. If kids have more places to go after school, they are more likely to stay out of trouble. Also, being outside will make them healthier and happier.

You can help by making more parks and playgrounds. You could make sure that everybody gets to go to a hospital. If the City of Portland does these things then we will have a healthier and happier community in Portland.

Sincerely,

Celeste Williams

Dear Planning and Sustainability Commission,

I am writing to you for a school project where we took a look at how Portland is right now and envision how it could be improved. The three main things I will be focusing on in this letter are public education, homeless needs, and alternate power/fuel sources.

Portland's public schools are far from perfect. About 60% of public high school students are finishing on time. That leaves nearly 40% to repeat years, drop out, or just plain take longer than usual. Public schools are funded mainly by the state government. That means they are also a reflection of how much time and effort the state government puts into public schools. Right now it doesn't seem like the government is putting in much time or effort at all. The government better step up their game if they want to reap the benefits of a well-educated society. For instance, if art and music get cut, it will most likely lead to less artists and musicians. Also, some kids in public schools (especially in the poorer neighborhoods) may be going through some rough times. Art and music are good ways to get bad emotions out. Finally, kids who don't finish high school most likely won't get into college or earn a college degree. That means less adults going out in the world with the ideas and know-how to invent and create.

It is just plain inhumane to leave people on the street to beg for food and money. People make mistakes. Just because their mistake was on the large enough scale that it left them homeless doesn't mean they don't deserve a second chance. I have seen a man with a sign reading, "even compost helps." That is not right. No human being should be reduced to begging for compost. I have also seen a woman and child at the side of the road, a bag holding their few possessions. The child could have been no older than nine. No matter what his mother or father did, he does not deserve his childhood, maybe even most or all of his life on the streets. We have a lot of services of services for the homeless. But not all homeless are seeking out the help they need. Is there some way to make shelters more attractive? Is it their pride that stops them from seeking out attention? I don't know but the sooner we find out, the sooner we can help.

Despite our cycling semi-fame, Portland is still struggling with a fierce dependence on fossil fuel. We all know it won't last forever, especially at this rate. We have plenty of promising alternatives. We've got solar power, tidal power, I've even heard that some people are developing a way to turn coffee byproducts into fuel! Imagine your car running on the fuel you do! We have tons of options and the more we work at them, the better the options get.

In conclusion, I believe Portland and living in Portland would be greatly