

I go to garage sales. In case it's not apparent, I will tell you that every visible garment, except my shoes, was purchased secondhand. I believe in the good old 1970s tenet, "Reduce. Reuse. Recycle." I began my voyages as a garage "sailor" in the 1970s. One Saturday during that decade of long ago, I was "sailing" through SE Portland. One house was a remarkable treasure trove. Delighted and with bargains aplenty, I made my way to the folding table which served as the check-out. Conversation began. Why was this couple selling so many precious belongings for so little? I learned that they had been forced to leave. They were in a hurry. The sale was just a small part of many preparations to leave their home of 50 years. Why?

They had been penciled out of their longtime neighborhood. Their home and hundreds of others lie in the path of eight lanes of whizzing vehicles--the proposed Mt. Hood Freeway. The plan was to have east-to-west freeways rolled out in the SE Powell/Division neighborhoods. To the north and south, additional freeways would plow through the Sellwood and NE Prescott neighborhoods and along 20th and 52nd Avenues.

Federal funds were in place. This thing was happening.

Except, as you've probably noticed, Portland still has those sweet, tree-blessed neighborhoods. The City of Portland changed course. It used its brains and heart and traded a foul-smelling freeway for a planning prize that continues to impress the nation: lightrail. Things can change. Policies, leadership, economic viabilities, public sentiment can change and make sense for the good of residents, for our environment. Environment. I said it. Environment. It is not a dirty word. Environment. Environment. I'll keep saying it because, it's what we are, water, air, land, life. Environment! Protect it!

We can use our brains. We still have hearts. Let's use them when considering the perpetuation of fossil fuel infrastructure. No new terminals--give us energy conservation, renewable energy, and all the employment that they can bring to our city.

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