

Next Meeting:  
 Noon - 4 p.m.  
 Sat, July 15  
 Franklin Park

# Northwest Neighborhood

Summer 2006



## Picnic in the Park, Candidate Panel and Beyond!

Your Northwest Neighborhood Association has meeting dates for our next three get-togethers.

**Saturday, July 15.** Our annual summer picnic always draws a good crowd to Franklin park, even when we have a few sprinkles! Jennifer Vail is organizing the event, promising fun, prizes and more than a few surprises! (article on page 3)

**Thursday, October 12.** For our autumn meeting, we will facilitate a panel of candidates for a variety of city, county and state races. By that date, the County Elections Board will have both certified the results of the primary election and gotten ballots to us all.

**Thursday, January 25, 2007.** With the new year, we will wrap up our exploration of emergency preparedness by looking at pandemics. What have state and local organizations done toward this end? What do we need to do for our households, exposure to contagion and how it all fits in with other kinds of preparedness. We will also hear from speakers about developing a Neighborhood Watch program and the collar-free dog park.

## Rail Bridge, Port Expansion Plans Yield Clues for NW Neighbors

by Tom Knappenberger

Slowly but inexorably, like freight trains below the bluff, two important transportation projects are lumbering forward, sure to affect transportation and our lives in Northwest Vancouver. Because they both involve local roads and BNSF's mainline tracks, it's easy to confuse them. I attended public meetings this spring for each and report their status as follows.



The Vancouver Rail Project would add two new rail lines to bypass the Vancouver rail yards below us, speeding passenger and freight traffic. The new tracks necessitate a vehicle-pedestrian bridge taking 39th St. up and over the rail tracks. The project was debated between 1999 and 2003, when the decision was made. Construction on the overpass begins next summer and will close 39th Street for up to two years. Construction is also expected to impact Cherry and Olive streets. (See Fact Sheet on page 6.)

The Columbia Gateway Project would double the size of Vancouver's Port, developing land north of the current Port and south of the Flushing Channel, expanding rail along the Columbia River, extending 26th Ave from the port to Fruit Valley Road near 78th St. and making it a two-lane road with a middle turn lane. Much of the increased Port vehicular traffic will be the new employees -- as many as 5,000 -- on there way to and from work.

Only about 20 percent of the current freight traffic is by truck and the rest by rail. This is not expected to change once the project is completed.

So it's the commuters who will most certainly affect traffic through and around the NW Neighborhood. About 73 percent of current Port vehicle traffic now uses Mill Plain with 20 percent traveling Fourth Plain. If 26th Ave is extended to near 39th St., the new overpass might lure more Port traffic (commuters and trucks) to use 39th. If instead 26th Ave is extended to Whitney, truck traffic could very well travel 78th to and from I-5. Here the lure would be the fact that there are only two signals between Lakeshore and the interstate.



As you might expect, West Hazel Dell neighbors are nervous about increased traffic on 78th Street if 26th Avenue is extended to Whitney. Lincoln neighbors are nervous about increased traffic on 39th St. (see Gateway, page 3)