

West 8th Street at Esther Short Park gets five stars on www.greatstreets.org

Vancouver's West 8th Street at Esther Short Park gets a top five-star rating in the latest website presentation of www.greatstreets.org, along with Main Street, Annapolis, Md., and A Avenue Lake Oswego.

Resuscitation of Esther Short Park on the south side of 8th Street and development of the upscale Al Angelo Company's Heritage Place on the north side were the first building blocks in a downtown revitalization project envisioned by an Identity Clark County initiative begun in 1990. The newly completed Esther Short Commons extends 8th Street's influence two additional blocks to the west. The completed north tower of Vancouvercenter adds another block of development to the east.

The concept behind Vancouver's redevelopment plan was to rejuvenate the Esther Short Park, the oldest public park in the West, dating to 1853. As recently as the early 1990s the park was cohabited by bums and Mayor **Royce Pollard**'s buddies, who frequently commingled and occasionally clashed during the mayor's Wednesday noon brown bag lunches and concerts.

The aggressive program to bring new life to downtown Vancouver was championed by the city and resulted in a downtown convention center and the Vancouver Hilton Hotel on the south side of Esther Short Park, both of which will open this summer, along with the opening of W 8th Street's rival, W 6th street, which borders the hotel and Propstra Square and the public plaza.

According to greatstreets.org, the best ideas in the project are the excellent pedestrian connections from the new housing to the park and the decision to locate ground-floor retail along the entire frontage of the blocks that face the park. Over time, this strategy will help foster a synergy between the park and neighboring blocks that solidify its role as "town square."

Other important design features are the generous sidewalk seating and nicely coordinated street fixtures, including traditional street lamps, planters and lush landscaping.

There are no bad ideas in the project, greatstreets.org says. "The project is simply a stellar example of how a mid-sized community can marshal public and private funding to revitalize its historic center."

Kimsey outlines advantages of elections conducted entirely with mail ballots

During three town hall meetings designed to explore his recommendation that all future Clark County elections be conducted by mail ballots, county Auditor **Greg Kimsey** will outline a number of advantages of this proposal.

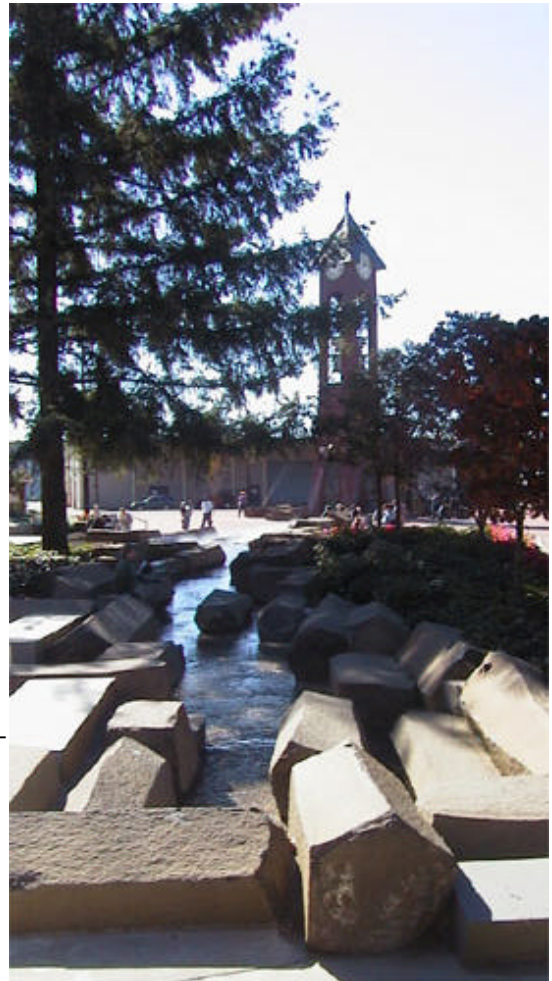
The first town hall session is at 7:30 p.m. this evening in the Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin Street.

Besides reducing the complexity of two voting systems and minimizing the likelihood of mistakes, conducting elections by mail ballots has other advantages, Kimsey says.

Eliminating polling places will almost entirely eliminate provisional ballots, which were related to several problems in the 2004 general election.

Because undeliverable mail ballots are returned to the Elections Office, it will be easier to identify people who no longer live at the addresses in the county, thus keeping the database of registered voters more accurate.

Voting by mail is at least as secure as voting at a polling place. The primary control is that the signature on every mail-in ballot is compared with the signature of the voter on the registration form held in the Auditor's of-



Esther Short Park reemerging, power and telephone lines are gone

fice. If the signature doesn't match, the ballot is set aside and not counted until the voter resolves the signature issue.

The county would avoid also spending \$300,000 for new electronic voting machines that are required to be in place at the polling places by the end of this year.

News briefs

Possible new city taxes being considered by the city's Financing Working Group will be dissected by the Vancouver City Council in a four-hour work session that begins at 4 p.m. today in City Hall. The meeting will be cablecast live on CVTV, Channel 23. ☞ An all-mail voting proposal for Clark County gets its first public airing at a town hall meeting during the first of three town hall meetings scheduled by county Auditor **Greg Kimsey** at 7:30 p.m. this evening in the Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin Street. ☞ Semi-annual Business Roundtable sponsored by the Clark County Chamber of Commerce is at 7 a.m. Tuesday, May 17, in the Red Lion Hotel at the Quay. The event is open to the public and admission is free. For further information, call **258-1181**. ☞ Clark Public Utilities' commissioners meet in regular session at 9 a.m. Tuesday, May 17. ☞ Clark County commissioners meet in regular session at 10 a.m. Tuesday, May 17. ☞ At 2 p.m. Tuesday, May 17, Clark County Commissioners are meeting to discuss assumptions being used for reconsideration of the county comprehensive plan.

Monday headlines from at home and around the world:

[Businesses' share of city taxes may be returning--Columbian, Jeffrey Mize](#)
[Russian valor saluted at Chkalov Monument--Columbian, Margaret Ellis](#)
[Sammy winners go extra mile to restore habitats--The Columbian](#)
[Tall ships arrive in Clark County next week, but won't fight--Oregonian, Bill Stewart](#)
[Renewal is evident at Mount St. Helens 25 years later--KATU, AP Rachael La Corte](#)
[Supreme Court strikes down wine shipping ban--Washington Post, Fred Barbash](#)

Monday on the air

Vancouver City Council Discusses new taxes (live)—4 p.m. CVTV
Portland Beavers at Round Rock (live)—5 p.m. KKAD
New York Yankees at Seattle Mariners (live)—7 p.m. FSN, KFXN
Fifth Annual Sammy Awards—8:30 p.m. CVTV
Is Clark County in Denial?—10 p.m. CVTV

Town Tabloids and the weather

Bill Firstenburg has good reason to smile. ☞ **Mat McCudden** took Sunday off for birthday party. ☞ **Cynthia Javernick** and **Peter Fallows** lightening up. ☞ Ron Driscoll ain't got no time. ☞ **Sean Williams** showing off **Michael Kissinger** composition. ☞ **Monday**, mostly showers, 60. **Tuesday**, more showers, 62. **Wednesday**, rain clouds dripping, 63.