

Greetings from the Publisher, Winter 2019

Welcome back to Metroscape!

What makes a city livable? In this issue, author Liza Morehead highlights changes afoot in riverfront parks along the Columbia, Willamette, and Sandy Rivers. In September 2018, the City of Vancouver opened Waterfront Park on the Columbia River, part of a high-density, mixed-use urban redevelopment project. At thirty-two acres, Waterfront Park is a small part of the more than 736 acres of riverfront parkland in Multnomah, Clackamas, and Clark counties. Activating riverfront spaces is essential for improving the region's livability.

Our cover story looks at Hillsboro, Sandy, and other municipalities investing in broadband internet to improve internet accessibility. Data from the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) show that, although more than three-quarters of Americans have internet access, accessibility is lower for older individuals, persons of color, and individuals of lower socioeconomic status. For example, just 52 percent of individuals residing in households earning less than \$25,000 have internet access. Eavan Moore raises an important policy question: are local governments ready to institutionalize the internet as a public utility?

This issue's Atlas illustrates how light imaging, detection, and ranging—“LiDAR” for short—is an essential form of mapping technology. As Justin Sherrill explains, LiDAR data are being

used to advance climate change research, study and predict landslides, and measure and assess the health of urban tree canopies across the region.

In an interview with several farmers from Gales Creek, Oregon, a small hamlet in rural Washington County, Nathan Williams explores land-use, zoning, and economic issues critical for farmland preservation. As local journalist and interviewee Chas Hundley notes, “in order to afford working on the land, you also have to have a day job.”

Living adjacent to the Cascadia Subduction Zone means we are at increased risk for earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, lahars, and other natural hazards. Portland State planning students Sabina Roan and Jaye Cromwell explore how local emergency management officials are integrating equity into disaster preparedness planning.

Finally, we explore the local dynamics of life expectancy. Between 1990 and 2016, life expectancy increased by more than three years in Oregon (76.3 to 79.5 years) and Washington (76.8 to 80.2 years), according to an April 2018 study in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

As always, if you have ideas or comments about issues that you'd like us to explore or how we can better serve our regional partners, reach out to us at ims@pdx.edu. Many thanks!

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