

Testimony of Mayor Vera Katz  
Before the Subcommittee on Science, Technology and Space, of  
The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
April 5, 2002  
Portland, Oregon

Portland is the most livable city in the country. Something we have all worked hard to achieve and of which we are immensely proud. At the same time it currently has one of the highest unemployment rates of any region in the state, and Oregon has the highest unemployment rate in the nation. Livability ultimately means nothing if talented hard-working people cannot find quality jobs.

Portland's enormous positive growth of this last quarter century has been because of its ability to respond to economic opportunities without losing its vision of being a clean city with clean industry and a highly educated workforce. We have proven our ability to perform well in supporting a wide industrial base, including the huge growth of high tech industry.

But if our region is one of the hardest hit in the nation by this recent recession, then we need to intensify economic diversification, building on our strengths while not sacrificing our commitment to quality of life.

Nothing fits this vision of our future better than building on our strengths in BioSciences, and on the nation's and world's need for the type of goods and services that can come from the critical work being done in the fields of health research and biotechnology in Portland.

As Dr. Kohler can tell you himself, the Oregon Health and Science University is a center of a wide range of research that can, if continued and successfully transferred to the private sector, have significant impact on the health of our nation and the world. It also has the potential for spawning an unlimited number of biomedical products and services that can and should be developed right here in Portland and its surrounding communities. With the talent of OHSU and our other universities such as Portland State University and Oregon State University, the synergies for practical applications of BioSciences research are limitless.

And we have a plan:

The plan involves focussed development in what we have identified as the Science and Technology Quarter in the city. Included in this area is OHSU's main campus, where it employs 10,000 people. Efforts are moving quickly to significantly expand OHSU's facilities on Marquam Hill.

Also included is the Portland State University campus, where expanded facilities for its Engineering school are critically important.

Sites exist for biomedical commercialization in several areas on the east side of the Willamette, where economic development is critical and a workforce stands ready.

The crown jewel of our plan, is the area we call North Macadam. This 130-acre site has the potential to one day be the place where businesses come and grow to take advantage of the intellectual resources of OHSU, PSU, OSU and others involved in the BioSciences. It is an ideal location, both because of its proximity to the existing and growing OHSU campus, and also because of its proximity to downtown Portland and to major transportation arteries throughout the region.

But such a visionary plan takes enormous focus and commitment, commitment of time and money. It is only going to happen if we all pull together: at the federal, state and city levels. We are talking about building a

BioSciences community, not just a technology park.

- OHSU and our other research institutions need federal dollars to aid both basic research and the resources necessary to achieve technology transfer to the private sector.
- We need resources for infrastructure required by such highly advanced industrial development: not just streets, sidewalks, water and sewers, but the best in high-speed communication links.
- We need transportation resources to continue the national leadership provided by Portland in development of clean rapid transit. Because of its geographic realities, without efficient public transit, the North Macadam area cannot succeed.
- And we need funds for protecting the environment of this beautifully situated location which has suffered from less well-informed development in the past.

Don Mazziotti, Executive Director of the Portland Development Commission will speak in greater detail about the specific needs of developing North Macadam, and of the partnerships the city is developing with the private sector to help make our vision a reality.

Making BioSciences a key part of Portland's economic future is critical to the continued vitality and livability of Portland. All of the City's institutions, private and public stand ready to work together to make this a reality, but Portland and Oregon need your help.

Thank you.