

[Portland Mercury](#)

City Club Takes on Portland's Bridges

Posted by [Stefan Kamph](#) on Mon, Jul 26, 2010 at 2:29 PM



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The [City Club of Portland](#) is a local institution that allows a venue for wealthy and/or important people (and the rest of us, in theory) to commission studies of local trends and governance, and adopt recommendations for how to fix stuff that isn't looking too hot.

On Friday, July 30, the club will host [a discussion](#) (unsubtly titled "Portland's Bridges Falling Down") on whether the city's bridges should be managed by a regional authority. This is one of the recommendations of a recent [study](#) (PDF) that looked at the region's transportation infrastructure. In brief:

The report considers three categories of regional and local transportation facilities: the Willamette River bridges, regional roads and local streets, and transit. It discusses **the creation of a bridge authority affiliated with Metro** and a funding source to support the authority.

This bears an uncanny resemblance to the club's recommendation on what to do with [Forest Park](#), released in a May report. Read on after the jump.

Conclusion 1. Forest Park is regional a resource and should be owned, managed, funded, and protected by a **regional park authority**.

Recommendation 1. A regional park authority, perhaps modeled on the Minneapolis system, should be established as quickly as practicable, and Forest Park should be moved into its portfolio.

It looks like lately the City Club has been big on pushing for regional oversight of widely utilized Portland assets. But while they may want Metro to take over the bridges—and a minority report on Forest Park called for Metro to immediately take over the park—they weren't always so pro-Metro. From a 1986 report:

People generally want to simplify government, not make it more complex. Although Metro was created to replace proliferating service districts, it has not done so, and **the public generally perceives it as just another layer of government**. These people are not wrong. Metro, in fact, *is* an added layer of government.

As a solution to this redundancy, the 1986 City Club [report](#) (PDF) recommended strengthening Metro to have more clearly defined power, or creating a single "Willamette County" that would combine and absorb Metro, Tri-Met, the Urban Growth Boundary commission, and the three existing metro-area counties.