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Interview with Dan McFarling, AORTA, 2010 (audio)

Dan McFarling

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PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW INDEX

INTERVIEWEE: Dan McFarling

Interviewer: Andrew

Date: 12/1/2010

Location of Interview: Union Station Portland Oregon

Research Assistant: NA

Interview Series: SUSTAINING NORTHWEST LANDSCAPES & COMMUNITIES

Recording Equipment: DIGITAL RECORDER (WINDOWS MEDIA AUDIO FILE) WITH AN
EXTERNAL, OMNIDIRECTIONAL MICROPHONE

Time	Notes
:34	Background information
1:24	Education
	Oregon State University Degree in Biological Sciences
	Joined Navy 4 years in hospital core
	Portland State degree in public health
2:12	How did you get involved in your current work?
	Inherited from father who was a civil engineer
3:06	Father sparked interest to volunteer in AORTA
	Major vessel that transports the blood of life
3:53	Can you define sustainability?
	Not use up limited natural resources at a greater rate than they are being produced
	Stop spending our children's future
4:45	How do you gage your progress towards sustainability?
	Rail is inherently efficient in terms of land, energy, labor, environmental degradation
6:20	All other modes of transportation rely on public contributions
7:25	Railways so efficient they dominate other forms of transportation

8:00	Railways too powerful attracted Greed
8:30	Regulations impeded development

Time	Notes
9:15	Railway land grants
	Land grants are not an absolute gift reduced 40% less than road builders
11:00	Railways rely on private investors
11:30	Railways are all private so when economic downturn they have to cut back costs
	Sell short lines and downsize
12:36	Road system gets subsidized by government
	Road system expanded railway system contracted
13:34	Railways had regulated speed
14:50	Railways cannot compete with government
15:00	Far cheaper to buy a truck competition with railroads
15:25	Railroads focus on heavier bulkier transportation
15:45	A steel wheel rolling on a steel rail requires 1/10 the energy of a rubber tire to overcome friction
16:20	Describe a typical work day or week?
18:00	Induced traffic
18:30	Peak oil passed
	Current reserves consume more energy then they produce and its only getting more expensive
20:00	Bridge lifts and swing spans
	New lift span would make river craft travel more feasible
	Small amount of money 2/3 years
22:25	I-5 bridge
	Newer then most bridges in Oregon
	Cost could potentially double
24:45	Freeway ramps
	Keep local traffic off of Freeways
25:50	Why? Big project, not sustainable

26:50	New high speed Rail Bridge
28:11	Reduce trip time
	Increase minimum speeds bridge is pinch point
28:50	Rail bridges less expensive one line is the same as seven lanes of traffic
30:00	History of AORTA
	Responsible for light rail
31:34	Lobbied for Amtrak Pioneer
32:12	One of AORTA's proudest moments
33:34	Took developers to court to maintain Union Station
35:00	Negotiated for 5 th and 6 th track
36:15	What is your understanding for Oregon's plans of high speed rail development?
	Current head of ODOT has no background in rail
38:45	ODOT pushing for Oregon electric line
39:30	UP burned by Oregon
40:00	Rail office thinks UP is difficult to work with
40:50	Tracks must be straight to support high speed rail
43:00	Many locations unsuitable for high speed rail
44:45	Acquisition of land needed potential for lawsuits
46:00	Oregon would have to finance PTC
48:10	Union Station's roof is being repaired
49:24	What is needed is a new bridge over the Columbia for high speed rail
50:00	You need to walk before you can run
50:50	People use transit services when can use it effectively
51:22	Effective transportation system needs to go where people need to go and it needs to be free
52:00	Comparison between highways and railways
52:30	Just because a bus line isn't being used doesn't mean it isn't necessary. Its insurance
53:45	Why does high speed rail have a foot hold in other countries?
54:40	Injuries less common on railways ex. Japanese railway
56:15	Railways safer then highways

	Highways kill more people than wars
57:23	Understanding why Middle Easterners are angry at America
58:45	Why is the American rail system behind other nations?
	Oil lobbyist too powerful
1:00	Surcharge added to all modes of transportation to pay for WWII
	All taxes subsequently removed except rail
1:02	Production infrastructure didn't exist for railway system
1:03:45	Highways subsidized by federal government. State governments take advantage
1:04:45	For every registered vehicle there are 8 to 10 parking spaces in Portland Metro
	Waste not sustainable
1:05:45	Highway system inefficient
1:06:40	Tax cars to subsidize respiratory disease would be 40-45 cents a gallon
1:07	Until the cost of driving reflects the true cost of driving people will continue to die
1:08	Trains would save lives
1:08:30	Middle Eastern wars to protect oil interests
1:09:20	Saudi Arabians growing rich off of US because we rely on oil
1:11:00	Triple trailers
	Why not four or five trailers? Why not rail? Not more efficient
1:13	What needs to be done to increase the awareness of high speed rail?
	We need to increase the awareness rail
1:13:45	Is high speed rail cost effective?
1:14	We are AORTA because we want to see a healthy and prosperous society
	A system that doesn't kill us or maim us or sprawl
1:15	Farmlands should be used as food
	Value the land we have the air that we breathe and the water we drink
1:15:45	What are AORTA's persistent challenges?
1:16	Lack of people's knowledge on transportation issues
	How has transportation evolved
1:16:33	How transportation economics are distorted
1:19	We are using tools that are not suited for the task at hand
1:21:15	When you build a roadway you eliminate property tax base
