

## The Register-Guard

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### Discuss livability, transportation

## Seminar will look at ways to grow while stressing walking, biking and buses

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**BY EDWARD RUSSO**

*The Register-Guard*

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People interested in how cities can redevelop while encouraging public transit, passenger rail service, bicycling and walking may want to keep Thursday morning open.

That's when John Robert Smith, president of Reconnecting America, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit group that promotes public transit, and Christopher Leinberger, an expert on downtown redevelopment, will be the featured speaker at a conference in Eugene.

"Connecting Communities" is free and open to the public, though seating is limited and reservations are required by noon Monday.

Smith is a former mayor of Meridian, Miss. He led a historic renovation of the city's train station, a \$7 million project that helped revitalize the area, according to Reconnecting America.

Leinberger, a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., is director of the graduate real estate program at the University of Michigan.

Leinberger also is the founding partner of Arcadia Land Company, a Haverford, Pa., real estate development firm.

In 2005, Leinberger wrote a paper for the Brookings Institution, "Turning Around Downtown: 12 Steps to Revitalization," as a way to return "walkable urbanism" downtown.

Among other suggestions, Leinberger said cities should embrace private-public partnerships, form downtown improvement districts, and encourage entertainment districts and rental and owner-occupied housing.

The conference aims to share ideas on how cities can grow while improving alternative forms of transportation to the automobile, Lane Transit District spokesman Andy Vobora said.

"It's about people wanting to live in a place where they can walk, bike or catch public transportation, all of the elements of development that create the quality of life that people want," he said.

After Smith and Leinberger speak, a panel will discuss how their ideas could be applied in local communities.

Leinberger and Smith will be paid a total of \$9,000 to speak at the conference.

The rest of the conference, including the continental breakfast for attendees, travel and lodging for the speakers, and advertising, will cost another \$10,000.

The conference is being funded by a variety of organizations and groups, including LTD, the Oregon Department of Transportation, 1,000 Friends of Oregon, a land use advocacy group; the University of Oregon; Live Move, a transportation and livability group at the UO; Mc-Kenzie-Willamette Medical Center and PeaceHealth Medical Group.

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### Connecting Communities

A conference on urban redevelopment and transportation

When: 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Thursday

Where: Hilton Eugene Conference Center

Register by noon Monday, e-mail: [rsvp@ltd.org](mailto:rsvp@ltd.org)

More information: 541-682-6106

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