

Jim Francesconi For Multnomah County Chair

1. General Approach. The City of Portland is often named the best bicycling city in the country. At the same time, car vehicle miles traveled are increasing while traffic congestion grows. Why do you think more Portlanders don't walk, bicycle, or take transit for transportation, and what will you do to help Portland and Multnomah County become an even better city to bike in, as well as a great city to walk and take transit?

I believe that the main reasons more people aren't biking, walking or taking public transit are 1) safety; 2) time and convenience issues; and 3) lack of public education. Increased infrastructure that includes better lighting at bus stops, dedicated bike ways separated from traffic, bike lanes, cycle tracks, well-maintained side and crosswalks, and proper signage are key to safety issues. But time and convenience issues also play a key role. More public education is necessary here. If the general public knew how much biking, walking and walking to bus and Max stops add to the health of individuals and the environment, more people would be doing it. We have an obesity epidemic in this country and biking and walking are excellent sources of exercise that could reduce individual and community-wide medical costs in the long run. Also, if people knew the environmental inefficiencies of moving by individual car, they would be shocked. The actual energy expenditure devoted to moving one human being in a car is 1%; the other 99% of the energy required is used to move the vehicle. Biking and walking are true means of energy conservation, and reduce our dangerous carbon emissions. Lastly, we need a public education campaign to shift car drivers' frame of reference so that they see bicycling and bicyclists not as an interference with their car travel, but as an active commitment to reduce vehicles on the road, reduce congestion, and improve the environment for us all. As County Chair I will make it a focus to encourage the construction of walkable neighborhoods in East Portland and East County. These types of developments increase bike and foot traffic, increase public health and safety, help protect the environment and bring neighborhoods together. We need a special focus on town centers and need to implement the Metro 2040 plan for walkable neighborhoods. We, as a community, also don't provide enough public transportation in East County, which is where it is most needed. We need to be using the County for transportation dollars. The County has approximately \$700,000 for bicycle transportation. That budget amount needs to be increased. As Chair, I will leverage the power of the County, and community groups that understand the concern, to put pressure on Tri-Met to increase their service in East County. When I was the Portland City Commissioner in charge of Transportation, I was the one who made the decision to bring the MAX to East Portland instead of to Milwaukee (which is where it was going to go at the time). I did this because I understood that poverty was moving east, and that is where public transportation could provide the best use. Finally, I want to make sure that we are making it easier to commute to work. Part of this is making sure that we're creating a thriving and more concentrated environment for small businesses. I will increase the County's role in economic development and support the creation and growth of more small businesses in regional and easily accessible town centers.

2. Choices and Public Perception. Critics of bicycle, pedestrian, and transit projects often contend cyclists, pedestrians, and transit users don't pay their fair share in road taxes and other user fees. How would you make the case for allocating funds for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit projects?

Bike, pedestrian and transit users pay their share of transportation dollars. They pay the same rate of income and property tax – a portion of which goes to transportation – and many still own cars and are paying the fees that go along with that. At the same time, alternate transit users are causing far less damage to our roads and transportation infrastructure, which saves government money on maintenance.

3. State Funding for Active Transportation. HB 1700 from 1971 (ORS 366.514) requires the state set aside at least 1% of the highway fund to build bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Meanwhile, one-quarter of Oregonians (roughly a million people) are too poor, young, old or infirm to drive. Do you feel that the 1% is an adequate allotment to fulfill the safety and transportation needs of the everincreasing bicycling and pedestrian community? If not, what would you do to change it?

Not by long shot. Everyone is a pedestrian and should have access to safe streets in their neighborhoods, regardless of whether they walk, bike or drive. This is not the case in any parts of the County, especially in East Multnomah County. As Chair, I would work with the cities and state to increase the amount of resources put towards safety and alternate transportation infrastructure. We have to work for a regional bridge authority and use this money to fund safety and transportation infrastructure in the County. For instance, the Sellwood Bridge should have been partially paid for using Clackamas County dollars.

4. Traffic Safety. Traffic-related crashes are the top cause of death and injury for Oregonians aged 1 to 34. Pedestrian injuries and deaths are a serious problem in Oregon, with one serious injury a day and one death a week, encompassing 14% of traffic deaths in Oregon and 30% of deaths in Portland. Not surprisingly, most walkers and cyclists are injured or killed on busy streets. How will you improve traffic safety for walkers and bicyclists, especially for youth?

Public awareness campaigns are a powerful tool that can be utilized through Multnomah County for public issues like safety.

- Traffic speed is the leading factor in crashes (even above alcohol), and one of the largest contributors to whether a crash is fatal. Is safety the highest priority of the transportation system? If so (or if not) what policy and implications does that have, especially when it comes to slowing cars and protecting vulnerable roadway users? Will you commit to a Vision Zero strategy calling for zero tolerance for road fatalities and commit to developing standards and policies to reach those goals?

First, we need to identify the problem spots in traffic flow. Barbur Boulevard is a great example of a bike death trap. Nine percent of Portland road fatalities in 2013 happened at a single intersection, Barbur and Miles. We need to increase law enforcement for lower speed limits in areas where speeding puts pedestrians and cyclists at risk. Ultimately though, we have to separate the bikes completely from the more heavily trafficked roads and arterials, with dedicated cycle routes and pathways.

5. Sensible Traffic Laws. For over 30 years, Idaho has had a law allowing cyclists to treat stop signs as yield signs, and come to a rolling stop instead of a complete stop (out of understanding of the laws of physics and the excessive use of stop signs on neighborhood streets). Over those last 30 years, Idaho police departments

have seen no increase in safety problems, and have provided testimony in favor of the law. The Oregon legislature has considered passing a similar law in Oregon, but has failed to. What are your views on such a proposal?

This law makes sense based on the conditions of the road. But the key is to look to follow the common rules of the road. If there are cars in the flow of traffic, then bicycle riders need to obey stop signs just as other vehicles in the flow of traffic do. Bikes have vehicle rights and riders need to obey the law. However, there should be discretion exercised by law enforcement to consider those common rules of the road and to weigh the conditions at the time of travel.

6. CRC Highway Mega-project. There has been a lot of pressure to build the most expensive public works project in the region's history, the five-mile long highway project known as the Columbia River Crossing. Despite being a multi-billion dollar project, bicycle and pedestrian facilities involved are substandard, including an under-highway mile-long path, a five-block corkscrew detour into Vancouver, and a mostly minimum-width-allowed 16-foot path width, all for a facility designed to serve the next 100 years. The project is diverting billions of dollars from other regional priorities to build an expansion that won't solve congestion. What are your views on the mega-project?

I supported the two state solution. I believe that we need a new bridge, and that one is coming, so I want it to be well thought out, and include alternate transportation including light rail, pedestrian and bike. I do not support an Oregon only solution. Like the Sellwood Bridge – which Clackamas County should have paid half of – I think it would be unfair to the people of Multnomah County to have just Oregonians pay for it. It is also doubtful that tolling agreements could be enforced just by Oregon on Washington commuters.

7. Transit funding. Transit systems throughout the state continue to struggle to make ends meet, especially in their quest for operating funds. In response, often service is cut while fares are increased. While the payroll tax cap was increased in 2009, it only increased for some cities. If you think public transit funding is inadequate, what sources of funds would you work to increase or create as County Chair?

What we need is a modest increase in the payroll tax in order to help fund Tri-Met, especially bus service in East Portland and to and from employment centers to get people to work. Funds from this could be dedicated to increase alternate transportation in the region, especially bus service in East County. Bus service in East County is woefully inadequate for the demands, and as County Chair I would work with Tri-Met to make sure that those who need the County's services, also have easy access to public transportation.

8. Transportation Equity. Recent census data show nearly 10,000 people of color, mostly African Americans, have moved from Portland's city core to the city's eastern edges over the past ten years. East Portland has much sparser sidewalks and bikeways, grocery stores and parks, and less access to transit. How would you ensure these increasingly diverse and historically under-invested neighborhoods

are revitalized for their current residents? How would you improve transportation choices for low income communities and communities of color?

Projects need to be prioritized on equity and distribution, not just the areas that have the historical connections and vocal advocates. Much of the problem stems from the fact that smaller cities have much lower tax bases. There are cities in Multnomah County that have trouble paying for basic public safety, like police and fire, because income is so low. In areas such as these, the County needs to play a bigger role in finding the resources needed to improve transportation infrastructure such as sidewalks, signals and crosswalks, as well as support them in increasing public transportation. I've already met with the head of Tri-Met and brought him together with SEIU to talk about how to increase bus service in East County.

10. Health. How will you make sure that transportation priorities support Oregon's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals?

We need to help execute the City and Multnomah County Climate Action Plan. 40% of carbon emissions are caused by transportation, primarily cars. Biking, walkable neighborhoods, and public transit are the best ways to execute this. This Action Plan should factor heavily in the decision-making about funding of future transportation projects and why we have to work towards a carbon tax.

11. Personal Example and Understanding. How do you currently travel around town, and how do you commute to work?

I am an infrequent but increasing bike commuter. But I'm under the tutelage of my nephew who is a bike-only commuter and I'm getting better. I use public transportation or walk extensively for my downtown and home neighborhood transportation.

12. Past active transportation accomplishments. What are your specific accomplishments in helping improve conditions for bicycling, walking and accessing transit in Portland region, or other places?

I completed the Eastbank Esplanade park and transportation corridor connecting East to West and North to South, giving greater access to the Willamette River and destinations from north to south along the Willamette for walkers, joggers, bicyclists and nature lovers. I leveraged for PSU more than \$37 million in additional funding to build an urban plaza, urban center and transportation hub connected with the Transit Mall for bus and streetcar linkages. I was the Portland Commissioner in charge of PDOT for only two years, but in that time – as mentioned in question #1 above – I redirected light rail from Milwaukee to East Portland because I understood that as poverty moved east, our transportation infrastructure needed to as well. As County Chair, I would continue to fight for increased alternate transportation infrastructure in East County and East Portland, because that is where there is greater need.

13. Vision. Five years from now, what will you say when asked, "Over the past five years, what has the State accomplished with regard to transportation and what was your influence on that?"

After 5 years, I want the County to have played a lead role in creating more walkable neighborhoods

and main streets and amenities in East County. I want the County to have played a role in developing more bus service in East County needed by poor people; I want far more dedicated bikeways to have been developed. I also want to be able to say that East County has as robust a public transportation system as Portland, and to say that I was a driving force behind getting Tri-Met and the state to fund it.

14. Campaign Viability. What makes you a viable candidate for County Chair? How do you differentiate yourself from you opponent?

There are about 404,000 registered voters in Multnomah County and if 40% cast ballots in the May election, then 161,000 people will cast ballots. I will need 50% or about 80,501 votes to win. In previous races, I received over 100,000 votes in each race – three times when running for office -- significantly more than any of my opponents have ever received. I have received many key endorsements, including AFSCME Local 88 – the frontline employees of Multnomah County. But most importantly, my message of giving people the ability to lift themselves out of poverty is what voters want to hear.

15. Transportation Network. The reach of expensive, high-capacity transit investments is typically limited to corridors and town centers. At the same time, the bus system that feeds into the high capacity system is experiencing significant service cuts. What is your strategy for developing true geographic and demographic equity in the region's transportation network?

This is key for me. We have to get increased bus service – and other public transportation to the people who need it. That means East County. One of my first meetings as Chair will be with Tri-Met to discuss how we can increase bus service in East County, and I will continue to work with them throughout my term to make sure it happens. The increase in the payroll tax must be tied to geographic and demographic equity. I have already met with Tri-Met and the unions to talk about focusing on these needs; I didn't wait to be County Chair to do this.

16. Infrastructure. Given the strong support among county residents for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, what kind of infrastructure improvements would you like to see? What are your thoughts on bicycle lanes on arterials, cycle tracks, bike boulevards, as well as pedestrian facilities like sidewalks and crossings, and multi-use paths?

Safety is my number one concern. That means building a safe environment for multi modal usage not just bikes. Our network needs to connect across usages; we cannot have a sidewalk or bike way to nowhere. We need more dedicated non-pedestrian, non-vehicle bicycle paths. Neighborhood greenways are a great way to slow down streets, build community and allow for efficient navigation. I would like to see these greenways incorporated across the County especially in disenfranchised areas. Pedestrian facilities are a major concern especially in East County and must be funded in an equitable manner.

17. Is there anything else you would like to add?

I am running for County Chair because the gap between rich and poor keeps growing and the County is the best place to address that inequity. Insufficient alternative transportation infrastructure in parts of the County where it's most needed only serve to further the divide between rich and poor. I would be honored to have your endorsement and to work with you to complete bicycling, pedestrian and transit infrastructure, especially in East County.