

# Jeff Reardon

Oregon State Legislature: House District 48



**General Approach.** The City of Portland has often been 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 people in the Portland region don't walk, bicycle, or take transit for transportation, and what will you do to help Portland (especially your legislative district) become an even better city to bike in, as well as a great city to walk and take transit?

While the central city has built a strong bicycle and transit infrastructure, for people in east Portland and other further out areas, access to good bicycling routes and transit is much more difficult. At the same time, transit-reliant communities are pushed further and further away from the city center. We should better invest in active and alternative transportation infrastructures and programs. Over the next five years, TriMet is going to see its share of state funding

slowly wind down as the transit pass through of the business energy tax credit is phased out [sic]. I support a dedicated funding source for mass transit as well as additional resources to be spent on active transportation projects.



**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?

Most cyclists and pedestrians also own cars and thus pay user fees such as vehicle registration costs and the gas tax. These fees are their fair share for equal road access. It's more than just cyclists and pedestrians who benefit from these investments, anyway. Local businesses are benefitted by having sidewalk access to their store fronts and decreasing the number of cars on the streets means increased parking availability for those who do choose to use automotive transport.

**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?

As someone who routinely rides his bike to work, I'd love to see a greater investment of state highway funds into bicycling and active transportation infrastructure. We must also be sensitive to packaging additional investment in a way that clearly demonstrates statewide benefit. Many rural and suburban communities feel they do not directly benefit from these investments, even when the opposite may be true, and so we need to do a better job of making obvious the statewide benefits that such investments provide.

**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?

In East Portland, the biggest issue is a lack of sidewalks and safe crosswalks. We need to improve pedestrian facilities, provide better crosswalk lighting and signage and also need to increase the frequency of crosswalks across major streets. I can't count the number of times I've seen individuals sprint across Foster Road's four lanes because the nearest crosswalk is at least a half mile away. As for our youth, the safe routes to school project has done great work increasing the ability of students to safely walk and bike from home to school and back. I'd like to see an expansion of this project coupled with better pedestrian facilities near parks and schools where youth are most prevalent.

**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?

When I'm riding, I must admit, I don't always come to a complete stop at every stop sign. Bicycles move slower than cars and are easier to stop quickly than cars. The rules of the road should apply to cyclists, but in certain situations such as stop signs, they don't always make the most sense.



**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 and what would you do about its funding as a legislator?

Building a massive bridge that will encourage urban sprawl and discourage alternative transportation such as cycling and mass transit is not an acceptable solution to the traffic jam at the CRC. That said, I do believe that there needs to be some kind of solution to the current bottleneck that hampers freight traffic and increases vehicle emissions from idling. Before gaining my support, a CRC proposal has to include light rail, safe bike and pedestrian facilities (preferable removed from the freeway [sic]) and should have responsible financing mechanisms including tolls so that we don't mortgage the cost of the project on to future generations.

**Cleaner Transportation, Better Choices through Land Use.** Smart land use planning has a huge effect on how many people use transportation choices. In 2010, legislators passed Senate Bill 1059, which requires Metro to make its land use planning decisions lead to specific reductions in global warming pollution. It also requires Eugene-Springfield to plan on how it would accomplish such reductions. Would you support an effort to provide \$300,000 for a grant to do scenario planning for one of Oregon's other four Metro areas, which would be designed as a competitive pilot effort to model how Salem/Keizer, Corvallis, the Rogue Valley, or Bend could reduce their transportation pollution? If so, how would you go about finding that funding?

Too often, climate change legislation is seen as top-down and harming business. Providing funding for a competitive process that allows local control seems to be a smart way to incentivize local governments to take the lead in combating global climate change. Finding the funding for this project would be difficult, but I would lobby hard for a grant to be provided. It would make sense to ask corporate polluters to carry some of the burden for this program and I would be interested to work with stakeholders to find ways to bring in that revenue.

**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 increase or create as a legislator?

**Our state needs to provide dedicated funds for public transportation projects. Reliance on the payroll taxes, such as TriMet does, is unsustainable and causes transit agencies to take major hits at a time when demand for low-cost public transit is at its highest. We should examine the availability of lottery fund dollars as well as potential revenue increases from eliminating or diminishing redundant and unnecessary tax expenditures.**

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

As an East Portland resident and frequent cyclist, I can personally attest to the difficulties of using alternative transportation to move about my part of town. I would work with local and regional governments to develop and fund grant programs to build more sidewalks, trails and pathways that connect that outer parts of our city to transportation hubs such as transit centers and community needs such as grocery stores, parks and schools.





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

I ride my bike the five miles to work at David Douglas High School on a pretty regular basis. I must admit that I'm a bit of a fair weather cyclist, yet I enjoy the exercise and the chance to get out and clear my head after a long day of teaching.

**Past Accomplishments.** Do you have any specific accomplishments in improving the quality of life for bicycle, pedestrian and transit users in Oregon or other places?

Sometimes when my students see me on my bike on the way to class, they come up to me later, surprised that I'd brave riding on 122nd and Division. I'm always glad to show them my route and help them find safe, easy routes to bike to school or other areas in our community.

Anything to add?

I'm always proud to see three Oregon cities routinely make it on the top ten list for most bike-friendly cities. I look forward to working closely with you and other active transportation advocates such as the BTA and TriMet on building that reputation and keeping Oregon as the best state in which to be a cyclist.

