

Nick Caleb For City Council Position 3

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 (especially your legislative district) become an even better city to bike in, as well as a great city to walk and take transit?

While Portland has been a leader in cycling, other cities like New York and Chicago are surpassing us with the kind of infrastructure they're willing to build. Portland has some great goals, but we've lacked the will to achieve them. If we're going to meet our commitment to the 2030 Bike Master plan, we're going to have to make better bike and pedestrian facilities a far bigger priority.

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?

We know people walking and riding bikes are paying more than their fair share when you look at how much space they're afforded contrasted with how much wear motorists impose on the street. We also know people who choose not to drive are still paying their taxes, and we know the gas tax is used primarily for highways and freeways, not the surface streets where people bike and walk (and where gas taxes fund a much smaller portion). Further, since as noted each bicycle on the road reduces wear and increases capacity, each gas tax and non-gas tax dollar stretches even further as car mode share reduces. I would make the case that if Portland wants to maintain its reputation as a livable city while avoiding gridlock that would otherwise be caused by increasing population growth, we need to increase funding for additional bicycling, pedestrian, and transit improvements.

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 ever-increasing bicycling and pedestrian community? If not, what would you do to change it?

No, 1% isn't enough. The funding level should reflect the desired level of mode share. I would work to ensure an increase in funding for biking and walking infrastructure. Regarding safety, an important way to increase the safety of pedestrian and bicycling modes is to increase their numbers, and effective safety improvements in a mode will further increase use of those modes, creating a snowball effect.

Ironically helmet laws or even simply helmet promotional campaigns create an appearance of unsafety and reduce mode share for cycling, causing a snowmelt effect. Instead of such mandates, actual safety

infrastructure improvements with many options to avoid risky interactions with other road users that the public can directly relate to will, however, bring out more cyclists, such as separated cycle paths, bicycle priority signals, auto diverters, and other traffic safety improvements noted in the answer to the next question.

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?

◦ 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?

I would work to continue expanding Portland's neighborhood Greenway network, and would push to lower speed limits on all neighborhood streets to 20mph. The Vision Zero plan should be more than just an idea, it should be written as law as was done by Sweden in the 1990's. Additionally, there should be a city emergency fund that would be triggered any time a person walking or biking is killed by motor vehicle collision. This fund would ideally have several million dollars ready to fix whatever infrastructure contributed to making the surrounding streets unsafe.

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?

As an avid bicyclist, I think the Idaho stop law makes sense. As they are now, most signage is designed solely for motorists. People on bikes shouldn't necessarily have to stop at such intersections. I'd support changing laws to better reflect the different modes in our streets.

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

The CRC was a terrible project, and I'm glad it's finally shutting down. The money already spent could have paid for hundreds of separate biking and walking projects. If elected, I would strongly oppose any similar auto-centric mega-project.

7. 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?

2010 SB 1059 provides a mechanism to ensure that we reinterpret a future supply of available land for urban growth into a recognition that it is quite possible to never expand our urban growth boundaries to accommodate population stresses, with potentially even a de-urbanization of intra-UGB urban-designated areas back outside of the boundaries as land more valuable as open space, nature parks, farms, orchards, and/or forests. The Willamette Valley's fertile soil should be helping to supplement gardens in the urban core. The continual paving-over of fertile soil only ensures that we must ship in more foods from outside the Valley to survive. If elected, I would promote equitable infill development with extreme sensitivity to local neighborhood input, with the most density in the urban core and around transit corridors, consistent with regional community input provided into the City's long-term plans. Portland needs to retain its single-family home character and its farming community character even many decades from now while increasing density where appropriate. This can only happen if we make it long-standing policy that local and regional decision-making together determine the makeup of the city.

I would direct the city lobbyist, with input from city residents, to lobby for such a competitive grant. State funding is filled with numerous tax expenditures from which one could fund livability efforts instead. A parking lot tax on large suburban corporate campuses where 90% or more sales are from out of state would go a long way toward funding such a grant, since two corollary goals are to gradually reduce needs for large parking lots and long distance transport.

8. 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 a legislator?

More and more people are using public transportation despite service being cut and fares going up. That's a bad trend. We should be making active transit more accessible and more affordable. While cities struggle to find new money for transit, the Federal government has plenty of cash ready for new capital projects, but not for operating costs. I would work to get more operational money for transit from state and federal agencies. PBOT also is becoming more dependent upon parking meter revenue, which is not necessarily a progressive means of funding operations, since it penalizes those unable to afford to live close-in and charges the same regardless of the ability to pay, perhaps a better source of revenue would be to apply a congestion charge (similar to London, England) to downtown-traveling vehicles in proportion to vehicle worth and rated fuel efficiency. Such a charge could be phased in by starting with those vehicles detected (via license plate scanning) entering a designated area more than 15 days per month (so as to avoid mere shoppers and tourists). As transit use would increase rapidly by such a policy, reducing the burden on operating funds, the congestion charge could be reduced or diverted to other active transportation improvements.

9. 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?

Portlanders living east of 82nd ave receive only 3% of the city's transportation funding. That needs to change. I'd fight to ensure greater priority is given to these areas so kids can safely walk and bike to school and for recreation. As a matter of policy, city transportation funding should be more geographically equitable and, further, directed more by neighborhood input.

Much funding comes from property taxes rather than income taxes. Property taxes are only partially progressive. To increase equity in funding, a city income tax that would apply to suburban commuters as well that exempted everybody making below the median income, with a corresponding reduction of property taxes (equal in total to the amount that would be raised by those inside the city in income tax) would help make city funding more income-based while creating more revenue from those that tax our local roads the most -- suburban commuters who make more than the median income. As this approach has an equity purpose, these funds should be earmarked to fund equity-enhancing access to transit, from sidewalks to extending feeder bus routes. Transit availability to our most under-invested communities also increases their opportunities for better work, leading to increases in overall income and more tax revenue coming in, improving the overall condition of the economy. Equitable transit

availability simply helps break people out of poverty. Automobile costs are extremely high and only going higher; and the profits on auto payments and purchases are often exported out of the area. That is a lot of income that would be better spent supporting the local economy, which they would with improved transit access.

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

I would support Oregon and Portland's carbon reduction goals by increasing access to active transit, walking, and biking options through the policy proposals already mentioned.

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

I commute mainly by bicycle, and drive infrequently.

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've worked with many cycling and transit advocates to encourage better streets for people.

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?"

Portland is currently at 6% bike mode share. There's no reason we couldn't double that in 5 years if we have the courage to make it a priority. There will always be media outlets that will deride this progress, but we need to be more afraid of inaction than criticism. I'm willing to talk about the benefits of riding a bike and walking outside of just the 'safety' framework. If Portland is lauded as a great place to walk and bike, let's be proud of that and let's keep improving.

14. Campaign Viability. What makes you a viable candidate for [City Commissioner]? How do you differentiate yourself from your opponent?

I'd likely be the only person on the council:

** riding a bike to work.*

** living east of Cesar E Chavez Blvd.*

** renting housing.*

** under 50 years old.*

** educated in Portland or Oregon universities.*

** running an entirely grassroots campaign without major self-funding.*

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?

We need to be able to fund service in order to prevent cuts. We spend a lot of money on administrative salaries for transit agencies. If we're talking about cutting service, maybe it's time to talk about cutting other costs instead. Further, using other funding mechanisms discussed elsewhere, we should work toward making mass transit fully funded progressively without needing any gate charge. This could be phased in near otherwise underfunded areas, such as those without paved roads. Big decisions should also, one must not forget, take input from the affected populations to see what they would want in their transit system. Convincing Metro to take on TriMet or creating a separate regionally- or proportionally-elected democratic board for TriMet instead of an appointed one might be one way to improve input, but if those are too difficult politically, the City may be able to make its ongoing funding contributions contingent upon effective responsiveness to local and rider feedback.

16. Project Funding. Federally funded improvements, such as the 50s bikeway & SW Vermont projects, are often delayed months or even years because the contract bids come in over budget. What will you do as commissioner to help ensure Portland finishes these projects in a timely manner?

Budget-mismatches most likely occur in the shadows of the bright light of transparency. The planning phase needs to have realistic feedback from contractors and the public on true market prices so that the proper grants and expectations can be laid in advance. To avoid the ups and downs of contractor competition it may make sense to directly hire and manage a continuous operation of city employees dedicated to bicycle, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure improvements, rather than having to depend on fluctuations in the private market.

17. Future Improvements. What is your preferred option for future improvements to the 20s bikeway? Would you support removing street parking to connect bike lanes on Foster with bike lanes on 52 ave in SE?

Yes, I would support this. The importance of improving the streets for all users needs to come before using the street as a place to store a parked car.

18. PBA and PBOT. Will you work to convince the Portland Business Alliance to sign off on a plan for a per-month street fee to improve local transportation? If not, why, and what will you do to increase funds for the Bureau of Transportation?

Having seen the PBA block several smart projects, I am committed to moving forward with solutions with or without the approval of the Portland Business Alliance.