

# Dick Schouten

Washington County



**Appropriate Funding.** Results from a survey conducted in 2008 show that voters in Washington County would like a full 46% of county resources to go to projects for bicycles, pedestrians, and public transit.

A clear majority of respondents (54%) also believe that cities and the county should invest less in roads and highways and more in projects focused on transit, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation. Additionally, 59% of respondents were more likely to support funding for bicycle and pedestrian paths if they are built away from (but still connect to) major roads. The preferences of Washington County residents are clear.

What do you feel is an appropriate level of funding for bike and pedestrian infrastructure?

Currently the County's Major Street Improvement Projects (MSTIP) allocates roughly 20% of the right of way in arterials and major collector road for bike lanes and sidewalks. A tiny fraction of 1% of MSTIP

funding is allocated for "stand alone" bike and ped projects. Stand alone bike and ped projects include: expansion and improvements of Regional Trails; cycle tracks and other bike and ped improvements that are physically separate from motorized traffic; and retrofitted bike and ped facilities and safety improvements, including new sidewalks along existing streets.

The above allocation is far from satisfactory. For one: "59% of County respondents ...support funding for bicycle and pedestrian paths if they are built away from (but still connect to) major roads," so bike lanes along arterials may be using allocated MSTIP dollars, but this is not what a large majority of the public needs nor wants. Second: much more MSTIP money should be allocated for stand alone bike and ped projects. Stand alone bike and ped projects, physically separate from motorized traffic are critical if Washington County is serve the large number of



"concerned but interested" residents who would walk and particularly bike if they felt it was safe to do so.

The Washington County's voters are ahead of the County's elected leadership serving on the Washington County Coordinating Committee and the present majority of County Commissioners. If I had a third vote (preferably more) to do this, I would allocate 40 plus% of county transportation resources for bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit projects.

**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?

To repeat a part of my first answer, stand alone projects are critical if Washington County is to serve the large group of "concerned but interested" residents who would walk and particularly bike if they felt it was safe to do so.

I have been to Amsterdam and Copenhagen (with a 2008 active transportation tour sponsored by the German Marshall Fund), and of course to Portland. If the County builds cycle tracks and similar separated facilities along the County's arterials instead of bike lanes, I am confident we would see a large expansion of bicycling ridership in Washington County. Please see: <http://washingtoncountyforum.org/2009/10/21/video-biking-in-amsterdam>

I strongly support a significant expansion of Regional (multi-use) Trails and the County taking funding and operating responsibility for those parts of Regional Trails located outside of cities and special districts such as THPRD. In my District, streets like SW Blanton, Alexander and Johnson present terrific, relatively inexpensive bike boulevard opportunities. Again significant numbers of the interested but concerned would bike bike boulevards, but will never ride along roads like T.V. Hwy., Farmington Road nor 185th. We need to build a strong network of bike boulevards.

The County will also need to consider how transit (particularly rail service) can be used to leverage the potential power of bike and ped facilities; by allowing for easy and ubiquitous chaining or coupling of biking and walking trips with rail service. E.g., by installing safe and secure bike parking facilities at many more MAX stops than the Beaverton Transit Center; constructing first rate bike and ped roads of a mile or two in length that directly connect the MAX stops at Quatama, Orenco, Hawthorne Farms and FairPlex with works sites such as Intel's Jones Farm, Evergreen and Ronler Acres; etc.

**Safety.** Traffic-related crashes are the top cause of death and injury for Oregonians aged 1 to 34. In 2011, 319 Oregonians were killed in traffic crashes, including 15 cyclists. Pedestrian injuries and deaths are a serious problem in Oregon, with one serious injury a day and one death a week. In 2010, six pedestrians died in Washington County. 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?

Safety should be the highest priority of the transportation system. I also believe all legitimate users (whether ped, bicyclists, motorists etc.) should be recognized as full, co-equal users of public roads. So yes, I will commit to a Vision Zero strategy calling for zero tolerance for road fatalities and commit to developing standards and policies to reach those goals.

**Transit.** Citizens and officials both want more Trimet service in Washington County, but transit services is hard to provide in low density suburban areas with poor connectivity. With poor transit service, people are forced into cars, roads are widened, and land which could have been used for housing or business is lost to vast oceans of low-value parking. How do you address this cycle? How is Washington County going to address the need for transportation options in light of transit service cuts? What more should the city do to promote Transit Oriented Development?

TriMet analysis tells us a good network of sidewalks that directly connect to attractive, well-built and comfortable transit stops is the key to growing transit ridership in Washington County. We can then address the above cycle of increased car use, by budgeting far more for retrofitted sidewalk and bike facilities that connect and greatly leverage the value of both transit and bike and ped facilities; and budgeting more for transportation facilities that directly serve town and regional centers and transit corridors including rail, high frequency bus and future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines.



**Innovation & Leadership.** In what ways can Washington County learn from other forward thinking suburban regions, and how do you see the County being a national leader in the realm of active transportation?

Pictures speak a thousand words. Please see the pictures and text found at: [www.hembrowcyclingholidays.com/photos.html](http://www.hembrowcyclingholidays.com/photos.html) This web site shows the way for Washington County. Washington County can learn a great deal from forward thinking, suburban places such as Assen, Netherlands.

If this County does what Assen, Netherlands has done (which includes the action steps/answers laid out in this questionnaire), Washington County will be a national leader in the realm of active transportation. Washington County would be among the first (if not the first) suburban place in America with highly used, cost-effective and hugely popular active transportation facilities.

**Retrofits.** The existing land uses, zoning, and transportation network in Washington County encourages automobile dependency. In what ways can the suburban setting of Washington County be retrofitted to allow for biking, walking, and transit options?

I propose that we build many more sidewalks in places currently lacking sidewalks; retrofit the sidewalks and current bike lanes along arterials and using that right-of-way to build cycle track facilities that physically separate bicyclists from pedestrians and both from motorists; and direct far more public funding for regional and town centers. I helped provide funding for the following new sidewalk project in Aloha: [http://www.oregonlive.com/aloha/index.ssf/2012/02/washington\\_county\\_wins\\_communi.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/aloha/index.ssf/2012/02/washington_county_wins_communi.html). But beyond securing one time Federal funding this County must allocate far more of its own resources for bike and ped projects on a planned and on-going basis.

We also need to minimize the amount of land we add into the urban growth boundaries, and do the political work that needs to be done to enable and create County Service Districts for urban, unincorporated Washington County. These Districts could do the kind of fine-grain urban land use and transportation planning (including design review) to better integrate land use and transportation for improved livability, greater safety, better public health and cleaner and quieter communities.

**Urban Growth.** A 2009 Metro report issued by Chief Executive Officer Michael Jordan advocated protecting the urban growth boundary, saying, “we should accommodate most of our population growth in our existing communities rather than by adding large amounts of farm and forest land to the boundary at the edge of the region.” While the report recommended a range of 15,000 to 29,000 acres for the entire region’s urban reserves, Washington County pushed for 34,000 acres, or an area 11 times the size of the City of Forest Grove. Environmental groups like Save Helvatia have criticized the County for listening to neither logic nor locals. Moving forward, what would you do to promote vibrant town centers with short trips that can be walked or biked, rather than auto-dependant sprawl onto former farmlands? Will you oppose future UGB expansions, and if not, why?

By minimizing the amount of urban reserves that goes into our Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB) and taking the actions I outline elsewhere in this questionnaire this County will indeed “promote vibrant town centers with short trips that can be walked or biked, rather than auto-dependant sprawl ...” There is no need for further UGB expansions in the near future (5–10 years).

**Health.** The Oregon Health Authority awarded Washington County funding for a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) which will “provide valuable information to decision makers as the county updates its Transportation Plan’s active transportation policies and develops a strategy for prioritizing bicycle and pedestrian improvements”. How would you use health impact information to help make transportation planning and investment decisions?

I would make health impact information a significant part of the County’s criteria for transportation funding priorities, and as well: greenhouse, other toxic gases and fine particulate reduction, safety, noise reduction, better and more directly implemented land use goals such as Metro 2040, cost effectiveness, improving public health and transit synergy.



**Performance Based Spending.** In 2006, Washington County had 32 days, more than any other Oregon county, during which the air quality was unhealthy due to fine particulate matter. Many intersections and roadways, including TV Highway Corridor currently under study, are increasingly congested and unsafe. As poor air quality, increasing congestion, and a high number of crashes threaten livability and the efficient movement of people and freight through and within the county, what criteria and project outcomes will you use to prioritize transportation investments? How will you make sure that transportation priorities support Oregon's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals?

**I would make greenhouse gas emission reduction a significant criteria for transportation funding priorities among others. (Also please see my immediately prior response for a list of some of the other necessary transportation funding criteria.)**

**Business & Freight Partnerships.** Too often the freight and business leadership in Washington County neglects to see just how strongly their interests are aligned with the needs of people on foot, on bike, or on transit. When people stop driving alone and begin to carpool, use transit, bike, and walk for work, errands, and pleasure, space on our streets is freed up for those commuters and freight drivers who most need it.

In what ways will you make the case to the freight and business community that supporting active transportation is in their interests? How can the business community play a role in ensuring employees have transportation options? In what ways can the County promote private/public partnerships to address transportation needs?

I agree with the first paragraph of the above 10th question. Supporting active transportation is in the freight and business communities' self interest. The Amsterdam Chamber of Commerce came to the same conclusion years ago! In the Fall of 2009, Mr. Pieter Waagenmaker, with the Amsterdam Chamber and years in the freight business asserted (and proved) that the freight and bicycling communities should be close political allies before a large lunch audience in Beaverton. Jonathan Schlueter, Executive Director for the Westside Economic Alliance attended that lunch as well. That message and supporting evidence needs to be repeated and often.

Its important to remember the Netherlands has a strong economy driven in significant part by large freight-driven import/export trade. For more on that subject and many other bicycling issues, please see: <http://www.fietsberaad.nl/index.cfm?lang=en> This site is a portal in to the Fietsberaad or Bicycle Council, a Dutch think tank studying bicycling issues.

Organizations such as the Westside Transportation Alliance (WTA) and a new organization called Get Around are ways for employers to ensure that their employees have more transportation options. WTA is a private/public partnership, I serve on its Board of Directors.

**Past Active Transportation Accomplishments.** Do you have any specific accomplishments improving biking, walking and transit in Oregon or other places?

I have raised active transportation as an issue and brought it before the public of this County like no other public official in Washington County.

I played a major role in the public's purchase of the Summer Creek Property in Tigard, protecting a significant segment of the Fanno Creek Greenway Trail easement. I lobbied successfully for the County's "Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Prioritization Project" and County's expanded "Bikeway Design Toolkit". For more details, please visit: [www.co.washington.or.us/bikeandped](http://www.co.washington.or.us/bikeandped)

WES would likely not have been built if I had not been re-elected to the County Board of Commission in 2004. In that year I defeated a major WES critic, former State Senator Eileen Qutub.

After much discussions (with my colleagues on the Board) I forged a majority of the Commissioners to make bike and ped fully eligible for any part of the 170 million dollars estimated to be available under the proposed MSTIP 3d.

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

Much depends on whether I have a working majority on the County Board of Commissioners. With a working majority this County can go a long ways towards implementing much if not all of the actions outlined in my answers to this questionnaire.

Without a working majority, progress will be slower but I do believe we can see a significant increase in the number of active transportation facilities built in Washington County, including cycle tracks as well as a clear road map of what we do need to do when we allocate more active transportation funding. If re-elected I will make sure that happens.

I will be playing a significant role to make full funding possible for a high capacity transit facility to serve the SW Barbour/99W corridor and perhaps a combination cycle track/BRT along T.V. Highway.

dick schouten



**Campaign Viability.** What makes you a viable candidate?

I am the incumbent office holder and have successfully defeated a number of challengers since I was first elected in 2000. I am running a strong re-election campaign. Please see [www.SupportSchouten.com](http://www.SupportSchouten.com) I will shortly send you an electronic copy of my door to door piece by a separate e-mail attachment. I am walking door to door and we will soon begin large canvassing efforts.

**Anything to add?**

You can download "Bicycling and Walking in the United States - 2012 - Benchmarking Report" at: [http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/index.php/site/memberservices/2012\\_benchmarking\\_report/](http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/index.php/site/memberservices/2012_benchmarking_report/)

The bottom line for this lengthy report (242 pages, 24 MB) is " ...that increasing bicycling and walking are goals ...clearly in the public interest."