

Alissa Keny-Guyer

Oregon State Legislature: House District 46



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 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?

Portland has some of the highest rates of bicycle commuting in the country. However we can and should do better. Not only does biking and walking reduce fossil fuel use, but it also is important in controlling our escalating health care costs. In Oregon,

- Nearly 60% of Oregon adults are now either obese or overweight.

- One in four Oregon eighth graders are now overweight or obese.
- Between 1990 and 2007, the prevalence of obesity in Oregon rose 140%.
- Obesity costs Oregon at least \$781 million per year in direct medical expenses – and well over \$1 billion when one includes indirect costs such as lost productivity and co-morbidities.

While we have bikeways in some areas of HD46 (Mt Tabor, Laurelhurst) and have a great new bike path along I-205, the southern and eastern edges of HD46 – which will expand in the redistricting, have fewer bikeways and sidewalks. The state legislature needs to allow Tri-Met the flexibility to raise funds and encourage transparency while deciding the placement of bus routes.

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I will continue to be an advocate for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit. As a member of the Northwest Health Foundation Board I advocated for several grants to encourage healthier transportation options. These include the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition, Community Cycling Center, Wasco Sherman Physical Activity and Nutrition Coalition, HACO (Healthy Active Central Oregon) Initiative.

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?

The vast majority of adult bicyclists also own cars, so they pay the car registration fees that help pay for the roads even while their car stays parked. In addition, the use of public money towards biking and pedestrian infrastructure provides a return on investment through infrastructure jobs and savings on health care costs (due to increased activity, fewer accidents and better environment).

We need more transit stops in East Portland, as well as better pedestrian access across the Max lines on Burnside.

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?

The rising number of bicycle and pedestrian commuting is a demonstration of the successes of this allocation system. As I said before, we can and should do better. We should look carefully at possible expansion in this 40 year old allocation level.

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?

House District 46 is particularly dangerous for pedestrians. The six mile stretch of 82nd avenue that mostly exists in this district averages more than one pedestrian fatality every year. We need safer sidewalks and safer streets.

The recently passed legislation (2011, HB 3150) allowing cities to lower speed limits by five miles per hour for bike/pedestrian boulevards is an important step. The instance of a pedestrian or bicyclist fatality dramatically decreases when car speeds drop from 25 to 20 miles per hour.

I will draw upon research to find the most cost effective way to prevent pedestrian/biking deaths whether by poor street design or drunk driving.





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?

I understand the sentiment, given that this is a fairly simple way to make bike commuting easier and faster and thus more desirable, leading to higher rates of commuting with no infrastructure costs. I think it would be important to develop a strong campaign to inform people of the safety statistics (assuming the Idaho statistics hold true elsewhere), since it would be a shame to allow this issue to become a wedge in the "driver vs biking" debate and reduce public support for other biking projects.

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?

Something needs to be done about the Columbia Crossing. The current bicycle and pedestrian facilities on the I-5 bridges are life-threateningly inadequate. Without having studied the details of the proposed bicycle and pedestrian elements, I can't comment on their adequacy, but they will certainly constitute major improvements from the current situation. The possibility of extending light rail to Vancouver could have a transformative effect and won't happen except as part of the CRC. I also appreciate the stormwater management improvements to prevent car oil leaking into the river.

However, project opponents have raised significant questions that I would like to learn more about related to the project's traffic projections, the impact on neighborhoods adjacent to the project, the design of the various interchanges, and the traffic impacts on I-5 further south toward downtown.

Funding will be a significant obstacle. We will need to raise another gas tax to pay the state's share. Given the fight over the increase passed 3 years ago, the likelihood of another increase remains to be seen.

I like the tolling ("congestion tax") aspect of the project, not just to help pay for the bridge, but to manage transportation demand; the project gives us an opening to start the difficult conversation about how to price transportation.

To truly manage demand and pay for infrastructure and maintenance, I believe it makes sense to toll both bridges (I-5 and I-205), though I realize that is difficult politically.

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?

The past two legislative sessions have seen cuts that go far beyond slicing fat. The legislature has been cutting into bone, especially for vulnerable populations. Until Oregon increases its revenue and decreases its health care and prison costs, I cannot promise to advocate for any new spending. However national and statewide foundations (like NWHF) may fund such a pilot project.

I laud the goals of SB 1059 and further expansion of the land-use will depend on the successes of its present incarnation.





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?

Obviously transit funding is inadequate, but so is education and many basic human services. I will look into granting greater flexibility for payroll taxes to other transit systems. I will apply my experience with foundations and aggressively leverage any public money to help transit systems in any way I can.

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?

I've witnessed the disinvestment in bus travel throughout my district. While a vibrant urban core is essential for a healthy city, we must prioritize transportation options for low-income communities who often have the greatest need for transit options. More importantly, we need to continue supporting programs that support alternative methods of transportation of low-income communities like Multnomah County Youth Advisory Council, SUN School Bike Programs, and the aforementioned (and supported) Community Cycling Center.

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

Walk. Sometimes bike to a store, but typically for recreation. Typically I drive to work using a hybrid.

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?

As I have mentioned in previous answers, I have supported grants to several programs that encourage the expansion of bicycling and walking.

