

Thuy Tran

Oregon State Legislature: House District 47



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?

My district still contains countless unpaved streets, streets with no sidewalks and irregular bus service that just got reduced again in the last round of cuts by Tri-Met. It is a top priority of mine to invest in infrastructure that makes our communities safer and more livable, including bike access and public transportation. My district abuts the Gateway Transit Center, which serves my district well but inconvenient and in places unsafe to bike or walk to access.

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?

I think funding should be allocated with more equity to use. Cyclists, pedestrians and transit riders may not pay the same taxes however the societal good of these forms should be considered. Since, cyclists, pedestrians and transit riders don't pollute and ease congestion. As a society we should fund these forms adequately because they are such a large part of the solution to our traffic woes.



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?

1% sounds perfectly adequate for 1971 when cycling in Oregon was largely recreational. In 2012 when nearly 10% of Portlanders commute by bike, we should reconsider this number. I'm not sure if there is a magic number at the state level given the different streets they [sic] maintain. A priority should be making sure local transportation budgets for bicycles and pedestrians are increased.

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?

As the mother of 3 school aged children, I worry about their safety and ability to walk and bike around our neighborhood. We can work to make walking and biking safer in Portland by finishing sidewalks, adding street lighting, increasing well lit crosswalks where intersections don't exist and more. I am committed to working with groups like yours to improve pedestrian and walker safety.

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?

At first glance it sounds like a good bill, as long as it prioritizes riders and pedestrians safety when or if the law is passed.

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?

I think the I-5 bridge over the Columbia needs to be replaced. Having read the various reports in the media and beyond, I find myself hard pressed to support the current proposal. As I've mentioned, there are countless unpaved areas in my district and many other traffic safety concerns. With the CRC it feels like we are replacing our Chevy with a Porsche while ignoring a crumbling foundation on our house. Maybe we should work on the house and buy a slightly newer Chevy. Or a bus pass.

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?

I think as a state we need to rethink how we're funding what we're funding. We can't keep doing the same things over and over again just because we've always done them. I don't know what if anything could be cut, but in order to fund this project, we should strive to find alternatives [sic] solutions. While I think I would be supportive of this funding, I'll need to learn a lot more and of course need to understand if we can do this planning in a less costly fashion.

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?

If bus service is being cut and fares increased, one can only assume that transit funding is inadequate. Whenever the gas tax is considered for a hike, even so little as a penny, the public takes great displeasure. Meanwhile, the price of gas has nearly doubled in less than 20 years and the public at large pays more for everything as a result yet there is no outcry. If the state were to consider a fare increase of just a few cents, we could afford to fix our streets, sidewalks and pay for a system of transit that as a region we can be proud of.

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?

My district includes the largest portion of Portland's "eastern edge" of any other and I am distinctly aware of the issues that exist. Meanwhile, and I pointed this out earlier in the questionnaire, bus service just got cut in our district yet there was no community uprising. 33% of the residents of House District 47 identify ourselves as minorities. I don't have a shred of concern about a streetcar to Lake Oswego, but also cannot imagine how this can be a priority for any elected official when East Portlanders spend hours walking unsafely and bussing to and from work.

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

I am a proud and happy mother of three, a business owner and very active in my community. My day consists of going from being an Optometric Physician to piano practice for one of my children and Girl Scouts for another. The next day is similarly as busy. While I regularly take runs through various parts of my neighborhood, the pace of my life and being a mom means I commute daily with my car. I have my children take the yellow school bus instead having me drive them. In 2010, while training for the Race of the Roses, half-marathon, I ran from 135th and NE Halsey to 45th and NE Sandy instead of driving my car. I also carpool to the Portland Air National Guard base with my fellow airmen, however I would run home after my drill day (from the airport 60th and NE Cornfoot Road to 135th and Halsey).





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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?

Please see below.

Anything to add?

Thank you for the opportunity to be considered for your endorsement. I am a political newcomer and proud of my longstanding community involvement. I've been active in the Vietnamese community, my children's schools, The Lion's Club and serve as Major in the Oregon Air National Guard. I'm excited to take my service to the next level and learn so much more about these issues and more.