

# Brad Perkins

Metro Council: Seat 5



**General approach.** In 2010, Metro Council identified and adopted six desired outcomes of the region's growth management policy. One of these outcomes – Safe and Reliable Transportation – states "People have safe and reliable transportation choices that enhance their quality of life." As the Portland region is projected to grow by one million people by 2050, what is your overall approach to providing safe and reliable transportation options to the region's existing and future population?

Since my architecture studies at the University of Oregon and around the world experiences over 35 year ago, I have been involved with sustainable land use development. One of my campaign slogans is "preserve to progress" or protecting the environment as we change it. I intend as Metro Councilor to not just support the environmental initiatives but take an active role in developing transformational policies

that will interconnect systems of transportation, renewable energy, communication, housing, healthcare and education. We need to increase the densities of our town centers and decentralize electrical power generation by supporting tax incentives for residential and commercial property owners to retrofit solar power devices to their buildings. Government jurisdictions need to do their part as well by using appropriate public lands for solar, wind or geothermal electrical generation to power mass transit and electric cars. I would continue to help create new off street bike and walking trails connected to transit stops, town centers and institutions. Our Metro region should infill a great deal more before considering the expansion of our Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) for residential and commercial uses.



**Allocation of regional flexible funding.** While 75% of 2014-15 regional flexible funding - \$16.5 million out of \$23 million - was dedicated by the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) to active transportation projects, these dollars are still a very small percentage of overall funding dedicated to projects in the region that help improve conditions for bicycling and walking. As Councilor, will you support maintaining and/or increasing this percentage of dedication of regional flexible funds for active transportation projects? How will you make the case for the need to maintain or increase the percentage of dedicated funding?

Yes. As Councilor, I would advocate for more Federal and State and/or local funding for active transportation needs as well as to try to increase the 75% share of Regional Flexible funding. I would argue that even though capital expenditures available for off-street bicycle and pedestrians corridors have just recently become available, it is still proportionally small for the amount of potential users and the reduction in green house gases it will cause. We need to stop treating cyclists and pedestrians as second class citizens when it means funding and developing safer and reliable transportation systems. If we are serious about reducing Co2 levels in our biosphere we need to get serious about funding for more safe, non-polluting, bicycle and pedestrian corridors. The cost to build one mile of freeway costs at least 10 times more than it does to build one mile of exclusive corridor for non-polluting and healthy active transportation use.

**Funding and implementing active transportation projects.** Metro is embarking on an Active Transportation Plan to engage the public and partners across the region to identify the region's principal active transportation network to increase and enhance opportunities for walking, bicycling and accessing transit. The plan will include a framework for implementation and funding priorities. What specific projects do you see as being critical components of this network? As Councilor, how will you help engage the public and partners throughout the region to fund and implement active transportation projects?

The Sullivan's Gulch Trail and North Willamette Greenway Trail are critical arteries that would link major labor centers to neighborhoods and other transit systems. The rail corridor to Lake Oswego should be considered for exclusive bike and pedestrian use as well. These routes could be major commuter alternatives to the car. I would look at other active transportation projects to see what is most critical to implement and benefit the most people. I would then make sure those neighborhood organizations and other groups who would benefit most were notified and encouraged to actively support funding sources for implementation.

**Transit investment.** The Portland region has successfully implemented policies to expand transportation choices and reduce dependence on the automobile as the only way to travel. As increasing congestion and poor air quality threaten livability and the efficient movement of people and freight through the region, investment in transit (and access to transit) is critical to the continued economic vitality of the region. What criteria and project outcomes will you use to prioritize regional transit investments? Given those criteria and outcomes, are there specific regional transit investments (investments in access to transit) that you would prioritize as Councilor?

The main criteria I will use to prioritize regional transit investments will be based on: the demographics and the population size it is projected to serve; Is it connected to other transportation systems? Are there matching investment funds? Does it encourage smart growth? Is it dependent on renewable energy? Does it generate electricity and can it move people and freight faster and more efficiently? Examples of the regional transit investment would be for planning, engineering and development of a rapid transit commuter connection from a new rail station at the Rose Quarter to Vancouver, Washington and later south to Tualatin as part of a new high-speed rail corridor. All rail stations would act as hubs for inter-connecting bikeways, light rail, buses and cars.

**Promoting transit-oriented development.** Metro's Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Program has sought to implement the 2040 Growth Concept by investing in compact mixed-use projects near light rail stations, along frequent service bus corridors and in town and regional centers. Over the past decade, the TriMet system has more than doubled its number of MAX stations from 30 to 85 and increased the number of frequent bus corridors from four to 12. The TOD program's funding has not kept pace with this growth. How will you support expansion of this important program to increase strategic investment in TOD to help capture existing and future development opportunities throughout the region?

Transit oriented development funds is just one type of economic incentive to develop mixed use. Having been in the business of doing real estate and development deals since 1978, I have come to realize by experience that there needs to be more economic incentives to construct housing projects today. Besides working to increase TOD funding amounts I would work to relax code requirements for parking, height and density. I would also encourage the creation of more urban renewal districts or special economic zones to provide tax increment financing. One more incentive would be to emphasize the use of energy tax credits and or reducing service development charges for renewable energy resource development on project sites.





**Equity in the regional transportation network.** One of the desired outcomes of the region's growth management policy is to ensure the "benefits and burdens of growth and change are distributed equitably." Roughly 25% of people are too young, too poor, or too infirm to drive – more than 400,000 people in the greater Metro region. As the costs of automobile ownership become increasingly unaffordable to many in the region, the region must invest in other forms of transportation to promote equity. 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?

Economists predict that before long oil prices will increase to \$150 to \$200 per barrel so we should strive to keep bus fare prices reasonable by transitioning out of fossil fuel powered buses to electrical vehicles as soon as possible. Government and transit systems should be transitioning their car, truck and bus fleets now. Much of our existing government owned buildings and lands could be retrofitted with solar panels and wind generators to produce energy for vehicle power sources. I would also support programs to allow individuals to rent their privately owned vehicles to others. A cost per vehicle ride program for long distance travel should be available to those that are in need as well.

**Innovative funding.** The Oregon Department of Transportation, the City of Portland and other jurisdictions are experiencing significant budget shortfalls, which continue to significantly impact available dollars needed to meet existing and future transportation needs. Concurrently, Metro has had limited success in securing highly-competitive federal grant funding for regional transportation projects through the TIGER program. As Councilor, what innovative funding measures will you promote to help regional jurisdictions identify new funding to secure needed transportation dollars?

On November 15, 2011, the Oregon Rail funding Task Force approved five different funding sources for passenger and freight rail improvements totaling \$75 to \$80 million annually for the six counties between the Columbia River and Eugene. I would support the Task Force approval of the following funding sources; special district, lottery proceeds, railroad property tax relocation, telephone access fee and rail tax credit. Other funding sources worth considering are: volume of motor fuels tax, motor vehicle title increase, motor vehicle sales and use tax, passenger vehicle weight fee, fee on bulk cargo and/or container/automobile cargo moving through the Port of Portland.

**Learning from the success of other regions.** Metro has proven itself as the national model in creating a collaborative planning approach to meeting the long-term needs of its population to accommodate future regional growth. Metropolitan regions across the United States have since modeled themselves on Metro, and worked to improve upon the Portland region's successes. What successes from other regions, if any, will you promote as Councilor to help to keep Metro at the forefront of growth management and sustainability, and help improve the quality of life for the region's residents?

Most Northern European cities have strict urban growth boundaries concentrating high levels of density within certain boundaries. Country farms are just outside the growth limit. Neighborhood residents are healthier because the streets, trails and rails have been planned to encourage pedestrian, bicycle and transit use. Denser development is concentrated at the rail stops. Exclusive bike and pedestrian corridors have a high priority for development funding. By 2020 many European countries will reduce Co2 emissions by 20% from 1990 emission levels, have a 20% increase in energy efficiency and have 20% increase in the deployment of renewable energies. As Metro Councilor, I would work to make these goals possible in our region as well.

**Continued regional trail investment.** Regional trails are a key component of a complete regional transportation network, linking neighborhoods and schools to parks, employment, hospitals, shopping and other places that help meet the regular individual needs in the Portland region. They are transformative investments that significantly promote walking and bicycling, specifically for individuals who are less comfortable traveling with automobile traffic, and often provide critical connections that are not efficiently accommodated by the on-street transportation network. As Councilor, how will you support Metro's continued strategic investment in collaborations and programs to to maintain, enhance and develop the region's trail network? How will you develop and pursue funding opportunities for future projects?

As Metro Councilor, I would continue to advocate for outreach and accessing funding resources for trail planning. I have approximately six years extensive prior experience in implementing these goals as founder of the Sullivan's Gulch Corridor Trail Committee. On February 8, 2012, the Sullivan's Gulch Trail Community Advisory Committee approved the Concept Plan for eventual approval by the Portland City Council. As a member of the committee, I proposed and got unanimous approval from my fellow committee members to write a letter to the Portland Development Commission to allocate Oregon Convention Center Urban Renewal Area (OCC/URAC) funds for further planning, engineering and development of the Sullivan's Gulch and North Willamette Greenway Trails within the OCC boundaries. As Councilor, I would connect the dots to help implement the entire Metro trail network with the same passion and commitment that I have practiced thus far with the Sullivan's Gulch Trail. With help from communities and the support from other Councilors, I believe we could put together a special three county tax for regional trails to rails development. We need the help and support of private railroad companies if we are going to be successful on trail right of way access. Planning both trail and rail transportation systems together is a necessity, especially for the success of the Sullivan's' Gulch Trail. For 35 years, I have been successful at negotiating real estate deals





and facilitating sustainable developments. It will take this type of initiative and experience to negotiate with railroad companies to benefit both the private and public sectors in future active transportation corridors.

**The Columbia River Crossing mega-project.** The Columbia River Crossing (CRC) is mainly a freeway expansion project. As the most expensive project in the region's history, it is a 100-year regional investment that will provide only nominally-improved access and conditions for bicycling and walking. Will you, as Councilor, vote in opposition to this project until it becomes consistent with the six (Council-adopted) desired outcomes of the region's growth management policy? How will you work to make the project consistent with the region's vision?

Yes. The current plans for the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) cannot be modified to be consistent with the region's vision. The CRC has become the 800 pound, \$3.6 billion albatross that Oregon and Washington Highway engineers have designed and now are trying to sell for funding. The problem is everyone fears the economic damage that we will be burdened with when you add the interest costs for bonding the tolls and lost resources for other needed transportation projects in Oregon. With seismic upgrades to the existing six lane I-5 bridges will make them last for another 50 to 100 years. We should supplement the existing I-5 bridges by building a new multi-modal bridge west of the existing 1908 freight bridge. While the CRC Project Manager cannot state that their version of a new bridge will remove congestion, a new multi-modal bridge, 1.2 miles west can guarantee to remove congestion because it will be more convenient for motorists and truckers accessing the Port of Portland, Port of Vancouver, North Portland and West Vancouver on a new four lane bridge with a lower deck, 100 feet above the Columbia River, for four rail tracks. Two rail tracks would supplement the existing freight rail bridge and corridor. The other two tracks would be used for an exclusive rail corridor for high-speed rail and a seven minute rapid transit commuter service between Vancouver, Washington and the Rose Quarter. The park and ride system would be another pressure release valve to remove congestion off of the existing I-5 corridor. Improvements would be made to the relatively flat I-5 bridges for bicyclists and pedestrian trail connections. The advantages to developing a multi-modal bridge 1.2 miles west

of I-5 are numerous. No buying of property, no displacement of businesses, no tolls, faster commuter rail service, no traffic delays during construction, a greener solution, use of existing rail corridor for extended commuter and long distance connections and interchange improvements to the Rose Quarter, Columbia Boulevard, Marine Drive, Hayden Island, 4th Plain Blvd and 78th for a lower cost of \$1.5 to 1.8 billion. Best of all, this new artery would be eligible for a range of funding resources. The logical approach would be to appeal to the Federal Highway Administration Oregon and Washington tax payers that the users of the transportation system would help pay for it; "Shared use, Shared cost". Capital costs for construction should be shared initially by using high-speed rail funds as well as investments by Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad companies. The other option would be for the private rail companies and the operators of the commuter rapid transit system to pay a lease or user fee just as Amtrak pays the freight rail companies today. For more information go to [www.cascadiahighspeedrail.org](http://www.cascadiahighspeedrail.org)

**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?

My accomplishments in the field of transportation are as follow:

- West University Neighbors Association, Co/Founder
- Portland Streetcar Eastside Alignment Committee
- Portland Business Alliance Transportation Committee
- Sandy Boulevard Community Advisory Committee
- Sullivan's Gulch Corridor Trail Committee, Founder
- Sullivan's Gulch Trail Community Advisory Committee
- Irvington Community Association Land use Chair
- Cascadia High Speed Rail Advocates, Founder



brad perkins



**Campaign viability.** What makes you a viable candidate for Metro Council?

I have diverse experience in business and in numerous community organizations for the past 35 years. I have a committed team of individuals who are willing to work hard on the campaign as they share the same vision and priorities for change as me. Running a successful fundraising operation is like running a successful business; both require detailed planning in order to succeed. With a fund raising plan in place we plan to move our agenda forward to win in progressive north, northeast, northwest and downtown Portland. Once elected, I look forward to working with other members of the Metro Council to bring about many active transportation goals.

**Anything to add?**

Preserving the environment while creating sustainable jobs has been my lifetime commitment. I have learned that the key to achieving excellence and real progress is to work together as a collaborative team by optimizing the value and diverse skills of individuals. Connecting the dots to develop a project or goal and guide it to success is my passion and focus. I have helped to create and support sustainable jobs related to design, historic preservation, building relocation, real estate development and good food nutrition by owning and operating three small businesses and founding and directing a number of non-profits. I also have extensive civic engagement in land use planning, transportation, housing, community development, and meeting the social needs of children and families. Our future is dependent on improving our ability to network systems of transportation, housing, education, communication, renewable energy and natural resources to help reduce the abundant pollution and waste we create.