

# Tom Sincic Candidate for House District 45

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?

*It is important for Portland to become an even better biking, walking and transit city. As a Family Nurse Practitioner I have seen the rising rates of obesity first hand and the glut of costly medical tests and treatments that go with that. The serious data on this is readily available. This, along with climate change from fossil fuels, has me greatly concerned about the health of city, state, and nation. Portland and now Oregon should lead the way. As a regular biker in my community, I am one that uses many of Portland's bike routes but see places where access and safety are problems.*

*People are too much in a hurry and at times there is, in the minds of many, a weather deterrent. For many commuting distances seem so long that they believe sitting in cars is the answer. There needs to be a strong advertising message that biking, walking and transit are both fun and are the right thing to do while pointing out car congestion and pollution as the alternative. We need to have increased focus on walk and bike commutable work. There are just not enough in many parts of the district. All planning needs to consider the whole picture of transportation, parks, local businesses and schools and fees assessed accordingly. Businesses need to promote it more. Buses and Max need to have improved bike capacity. I think there needs to be an increased emphasis on youth as bikers and walkers particularly to school. These routes should be a prime focus. I think the current school district plan of busing younger kids from walk able distances needs to be re-evaluated.*

*In particular I want to be heavily involved in the planning of 82nd Ave which cuts the district in half and is a state highway. It needs to be considered about whether this road would be better off in city hands. In any case, all efforts need to be made to make this a biker, walker, transit friendly corridor.*

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?

*First, car users do not pay their fair share because the cost of pollution and global warming is not factored into the costs nor is the cost of subsidized oil. Second many bicyclists are car owners so have paid licensing fees but just don't use them. Increased use of bikes reduces road damage and the need for maintenance and expansion of roads. These projects are public good projects that improve the health of a community both physically and mentally reducing health care costs.*

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?

1. *There is a challenge here because better mileage and electric vehicles are reducing the highway fund so first I think there needs to be a way to stabilize this. A different way, other than fuel tax to pay a road usage fee, is going to be necessary so that the highway fund does not get depleted. I would also strongly encourage a look at development fees in housing projects to make sure that these fees take into consideration the need for infrastructure improvements to allow the people that live there to be able to walk or bike and take transit.*

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?

*While the corridor along Klickitat and the Alameda Ridge and the 205 route are helpful, there are just too many problem areas because the short routes along Fremont, 82nd and Sandy Blvd are not bike or transit friendly. Along 82nd particularly under the I-84 overpass there are serious problems in the District as Madison High School is just north of the transit station there. Any students or faculty coming from the South have difficulty doing this safely. 82nd Ave (Portland's most dangerous roadway and the state's responsibility) should receive focus in my district. I will work with the 82nd Improvement Coalition, the City and my partner legislator (likely Alissa Keny-Guyer), to make sure that the three Key Goals in the "82nd Avenue of Roses High Crash Safety Plan" are achieved. Yes, Zero road fatalities is the goal to have, and we need to work towards that in every area.*

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?

*I would support this and introduce it as a bill if needed. It would be a clear enhancement to bike commuting. It would instantly make more streets bike friendly without the need for extra corridor infrastructure. A media campaign should go along with this clarifying the new rule along with other rules of biking. It could be accompanied with the rights of pedestrians. Drivers should know that the rules are different and do not represent a safety hazard as bicycle stopping distances are near zero once a bike is slowed.*

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?

*I have read the CRC Facts Report presented by 1000 Friends of Oregon and posted a link at my website called "Lets build a better Columbia River Crossing" where I favor the much less expensive and more sensible alternative written there that includes keeping the current bridge with some dedicated bike lanes. As a nurse and citizen, I am concerned about the disproportionate health impacts on communities of color noted in the report. I have also made my views known on a 2/13/14 KBOO interview.*

**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?

*Yes, I would support this. School spending however must continue to take precedence in the state budget. \$300,000 is not much in the big picture. With global warming being a priority and having a serious impact across many budgets including the extreme expenses of wildfires, crops, and health care costs perhaps small portions of various budgets could be extracted to pay for this. An alternative is a foundation study or a group of environmental groups coming together to pay for it. One creative and energetic person could make some multi-sourced funding a reality.*

**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 increase or create as a legislator?

*First, we need to again look at our automobile fee structure due to shrinking gas tax revenues. We may need to shift to a minimum licensing fee and then some per mile fees. However, I think we have opportunity to stop thinking in such limited ways about funding sources. Hemp production has been legalized in this state and we are just waiting for the Federal approval to go ahead. Hopefully, this will lead to local manufacturing of hemp products and a new source of revenue. With medical marijuana already legal, recreational marijuana is not far behind. There is a billion dollar opportunity here where revenue generated can be used to create more livable communities. Restructuring our health care system to Single Payer should also result in savings that can be diverted to other needs. Transit that reduces pollution and its health impacts is a legitimate use of such funds.*

**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 underinvested neighborhoods are revitalized for their current residents? How would you improve transportation choices for low income communities and communities of color?

*I have worked in schools throughout the district. I know that as I bike east bikeways, grocery stores and parks become sparser. Amanda Fritz has just championed two new parks in the east part of the district. Getting to those parks now needs to be a continued part of the planning process. As I have said before there needs to be development fees that take into account the remaining infrastructure. I intend to engage the community in discussion. There is already the Cully Neighborhood revitalization and the East Portland Plan. Let's see what they come up with and find a way to support those communities. Let's look at the core problem of minimum wage and raise that so we can stop so often repeating the words minimum wage. Lets expand the work of those that are training young riders so biking becomes a habit and not an event. Let's make biking something that all kids just do because biking is safe and fun. This is the generational thinking that is needed to have a different future.*

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

*Since in 2011 the EPA stated that 28% of greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation, Oregon's efforts to turn back the clock to below 1990 greenhouse gas levels are going to require serious change in how we travel and goods are moved. I am not yet familiar with what portion of travel contributes to this number but we know that personal autos and light trucks are a significant portion. Car pooling is going to need to be incentivized. The federal government is going to need to be pushed to step it up. Pushing the development of high speed rail for distance travel and the movement of some goods will be necessary. We are just going to need to make telecommuting the thing to do wherever possible and walking and biking to basic needs the norm of life in sizable cities. This will be need continued advancement of a walk-bike-transit interface that is not limited by the current barriers as in this web quote from Trimet: "Bikes are allowed on MAX only if there is room, so if all designated bike spaces are full or the train is too crowded to board safely, you must wait for the next train." Once when I was trying to go from bike to bus, I waited for two buses. Neither had an empty bike rack so I called a friend to come pick me up by car.*

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

*I am currently semi-retired. Biking or walking is primary a means of local travel to groceries, post office, bank, hardware store, Timbers games (A member of the Bike Brigade). waterfront or downtown events, etc. Since I moved to Portland biking 27 years ago, biking was the primary means of travel to work: first the 5 miles to downtown, then the short trip to Grant High School, next the 7 miles to Roosevelt, and finally in the last year a bike/max combination to Gresham.*

**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 have been a member of the BTA. I look forward to being more directly involved.*

**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?"

*I will again take a focus here on the 82nd Ave as it runs through the heart of the district. I have partnered with others to make sure the plan to turn it into a modern, bike, walk and transit corridor is well underway. In addition, a high speed rail through the Willamette Valley and north to Seattle is shaping up as a reality. I will continue to push others to keep an eye on the future.*

**14. Campaign Viability.** What makes you a viable candidate for state Representative? How do you differentiate yourself from your opponent?

*I am full time campaigning without distraction. There is a core in the district that know me due to my working and volunteering in the district. I served as President of the local Northeast United Soccer Club for 5 years. I am building a good core of volunteers. I have started and will do lots of door knocking. I am a Family Nurse Practitioner.*

*The things that differentiate me are as follows: I am a nurse and have been a teacher; all aspects of my life have been very local community based; I have an environmental focus in my issues of concern; I have a record of being a courageous voice on issues; and I am a strong proponent of a single payer health system.*

**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?

*There was a time when trains and buses stopped in small towns. It is going to take lots of creative thinking to get away from the auto infrastructure of roads and parking lots that dominate the current landscape. There will need to be a paradigm shift where we ask ourselves "why do we travel?" The answers will need to be put into a matrix and solutions developed according to the matrix dictates that take into account an array of factors including necessity versus convenience and pollution issues. To me demographic equity means you do not need to go far to get the things you need. Perhaps equity means having the postal service bring more to people. A clear survey will need to be done to look at the inequities from the viewpoint of those needing and wanting to travel.*