

Bob Stacey

Metro Council: Seat 6



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?

My overall policy approach is to put active transportation and transit first; to make freight movement the second highest priority; and will carefully scrutinize any proposal to invest in roadway capacity expansion for cars. This approach is based on the fact that our road network is largely complete, and that accessibility and mobility can best be improved by increasing the safety and

reliability of transit and active transportation, and by decreasing our need to drive. This policy approach provides effective alternatives to congested roads while fostering quieter, cleaner, safer, more active, and more convenient neighborhoods and keeping more of our money in local circulation instead of in the economies of regions that produce cars and petroleum.

My transportation development approach will be to work for a grid-like network of "complete streets" serving our region, transforming our existing urban arterial network to accommodate cycling, walking and transit priority facilities within existing rights of way wherever possible. Streets that feature frequent, reliable transit; that safely and comfortably serve cyclists and pedestrians as well as cars; and that physically separate cars from active users should serve the entire region at a rough density of every mile (north-south as well as east-west), and more

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densely where population and the existing grid can accommodate them. To ensure equitable access to all the region for all its residents requires us to make connections by all modes easily available across the region. I think it's time for our community to stop focusing on big projects and to start better defining the kind of system, and the kind of accessibility, we want—and then judge individual projects on their contribution to that emerging system and on their cost-effectiveness in doing so.

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?

It's been a couple of years now that the Oregon Transportation Commission has been allocating all of its flexible federal project funding to active transportation and transit, recognizing that state highway fund dollars are constitutionally constrained and federal funds are often the only available transportation dollars for the non-motor-vehicle modes. Metro's policy should be the same. I appreciate that JPACT and Metro allocated a percentage of federal flexible funds to "green freight" projects; I think that allocation should continue to be part of the mix, as long as the federal dollars fund modal choices that are ineligible for "gas tax" funding.

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?

I think the Active Transportation Plan should start with a policy framework rather than a project list. We should adopt a plan that commits to connecting centers, main streets, employment areas, and parks and natural areas to the region's neighborhoods; that includes both a network of complete streets and separated trails; that establishes standards for connecting to the network with local sidewalk and path systems; and that recognizes the important transitional role that is and will be played by bike boulevards in providing a low-cost and immediate alternative to both trails and on-street protected bike tracks. There are great projects on the drawing board—the Sullivan's Gulch trail that would adjoin Metro District 6, the npGreenway trail, and others—that will attract popular attention and support. These major projects should be included. More important is ensuring that we lay out a network that will support the region's transformation to a vibrant, pedestrian friendly and convenient collection of centers and main streets serving every neighborhood.

Funding is a separate question that I address in my response to question 7 below. I don't think that conversations about funding the transportation system—or the campaigns that result from those conversations—should any longer be separated by mode. We need one region-wide discussion about how to affordably and equitably fund a complete and balanced transportation system.

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?

Metro has completed a regional High Capacity Transit Plan identifying and ranking corridors for major investments in light rail, regional streetcar, and bus rapid transit projects. The plan contains useful information, but not sufficient information to build a regional transit investment strategy for the remaining 25 years of the current Regional Transportation Plan. As I noted in my response to Question 1 above, I support a system approach to building a truly balanced transportation network based on the regional arterial grid. That includes transit. The region needs an integrated transit plan for the next 25 years, combining the priorities and projects of the High Capacity Transit Plan with less capital-intensive investments in expanded transit service on an arterial network of increasingly "complete" streets. That means developing a frequent service/"fast-bus" component and adding it to the HCT Plan, showing how—and how soon—we can build a complete network of high quality, high frequency bus service on a regional east-west, north-south grid with routes spaced a maximum of a mile apart in most areas within the UGB. The main cost of such a system will be operating cost, which will require additional sources of revenue for TriMet. This should be partially offset by farebox revenue from a significant growth in ridership resulting from the vastly increased utility and convenience of a transit grid system. I believe it is most important at this stage of the region's growth to expand the frequent service transit network to cover the entire metropolitan region, and to convert the most productive routes to high capacity mode as they





emerge and as capital resources are developed from federal and local sources.

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?

As Metro's TOD Strategic Plan makes clear, there are no readily available resources to expand this valuable program, and the federal resources we rely on are in danger in the current federal political fight over the transportation program reauthorization. The strategic plan makes several recommendations about priorities in the TOD program and potential funding strategies, and I will carefully consider those recommendations. The strategic plan makes another very important point: many of the centers and station areas that should be among the highest priority for transit oriented development have physical forms that are too hostile to pedestrian access to support mixed use, walkable development. The plan recommends prioritizing construction of sidewalks, completion of the local street network, and other infrastructure improvements in station areas and centers as important first steps before attempting to incentivize TOD in these areas. I agree. I also believe that housing developers and other mixed use developers will be increasingly interested in station areas and centers as public works improvements make those areas more appealing to pedestrian use. My first priority will be to raise resources for improvements in the public street network in TOD target areas before seeking to grow the TOD program itself.

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?

As I've noted in my answers above, I want to focus regional policy and spending on building a robust network of complete streets—which include frequent, convenient transit service—on a grid that serves the entire region. We can't serve all parts of the region with MAX, and the projects now underway or contemplated (Milwaukie MAX, Southwest Corridor HCT and a Yellow Line extension to just beyond downtown Vancouver WA) will serve only initial segments of the corridors in which they're located. They are also the only high capacity transit projects we are likely to be able to pay for between now and 2030. Therefore we need to get busy adding cheaper service sooner to the rest of the region, by improving service, travel time, and reliability of existing lines; modifying the line structure so that it more closely follows a grid pattern; and adding new lines to complete the grid at a density that ridership and resources will support. Broad coverage and direct, reliable transfers are the best way to bring convenient transit service to the entire region and thus guarantee equity in access to transit and to the vastly increased number of destinations such a transit system will connect. The key to such improvements, beyond investment in street improvements and more buses, is to fund increased transit operations. I make suggestions about additional transportation funding sources in my response to question 7.

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?

We need a vision for funding the operation, maintenance and modernization of the entire transportation system that can guide our thinking about ways and means. I subscribe to the vision of the transportation system as a public utility: self-funded by users, with users paying for basic access to the system (the utility "base rate"), for the amount they use the system (the "usage charge") and the time of use (the "peaking charge"). I'm indebted to the Oregon Global Warming Commission and Angus Duncan, its chair, for this useful and powerful analogy.

If we think of the street utility fees charged by many cities as the "access charge," it's easy to see how this can represent the payment many vocal critics want to see from cyclists and pedestrians for use of the transportation network. Today the usage charges for transportation are represented by transit fares and the gas tax or weight/mile tax on trucks; I support replacing the gas tax with a vehicle miles traveled tax. We do not yet have congestion pricing in our system to serve as the peaking charge; once we do, it can help define the value of "conservation" or changing the time or mode of travel, making our transportation investments more cost-effective.

To continue the analogy to the electrical utility model, the transportation system should use "least cost planning" to inform decisions on investing in system expansion v. managing demand, and on selecting the most efficient expansion investment. True "least cost" analysis includes sustainability and equity analysis as well as economic costs and benefits, incorporating estimates of non-monetized and even



non-quantified costs and benefits, such as a project's greenhouse gas emissions impact or its utility to low-income households or communities of color.

Ultimately, efficient management of the transportation utility will require elimination of constitutional and state legislative limits on how we raise and spend transportation dollars in this region; in the meantime, we'll need to raise enough money of both types (highway trust fund and unconstrained) to get the whole job done.

That's the framework. The problem, of course, is that we need more money now—to repair streets and bridges, to build sidewalks and bike paths, to run an expanded network of bus lines. Here are a few revenue ideas that I hope to explore in depth as a Metro councilor, bearing in mind that they should be assessed for their ability to contribute to funding the total system need, for the fairness of their impact on tax payers, and for their political viability.

1. VMT tax to replace gas tax: ensure that the per-mile rate covers the full cost of eligible system operation, maintenance, preservation, repair and replacement. Include in those categories the cost of completing bike and pedestrian facilities in the right of way. (Highway trust fund constrained.)
2. Universal street utility fee within the Metro area (about a third of Metro cities assess this fee today; Portland is not one of them). The charge is assessed on all properties based on their land use. Typical fee for a residence is \$3 to \$5 per month. (If properly designed, these fees should be unconstrained by the HTF or by limitations applicable to property taxes.)
3. Stop using the minimum "one percent for bikes" in state law as a maximum spending level, and put a larger percentage of Highway Trust Fund money into sidewalk and bike path construction.
4. Revise the capital improvement plans that form the basis for transportation system development charges on new development, to ensure that SDCs contribute to funding all planned transit and active transportation projects that will serve new development—not just streets. Either increase SDCs to cover all these non-auto projects, or revise the future projects list to make room for transit and active transportation within existing fee levels (unconstrained by HTF).

5. Progressively expand the portion of the Metro region subject to metered on-street parking. Set rates to improve access to local businesses by encouraging turnover without depressing customer traffic. Earmark a significant portion of revenues to active transportation and transit improvements that serve the metered areas (unconstrained by HTF).
6. Regional excise tax on business-owned parking spaces, coupled with repeal of minimum parking requirements of local zoning codes. Allocate revenue to active transportation, transit, paratransit and rideshare projects and programs that reduce businesses' needs for parking spaces (exempt from HTF).
7. Congestion pricing of the region's major highways (revenue constrained by HTF).

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?

Smart regions borrow ideas from the competition, and Portland is a past master of this technique. In the transportation arena, here are some regions I'd look to for ideas, good examples, and important lessons:

Bike infrastructure: New York City, Vancouver BC, Copenhagen, Amsterdam.

Bus rapid transit: Ottawa, Cleveland OH, Eugene, Vancouver BC Broadway line.

TOD: Vancouver BC.

Congestion or cordon pricing: Stockholm and London (successes); New York City (political failure).

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 maintain, enhance and develop the region's trail network? How will you develop and pursue funding opportunities for future projects?

I've addressed trails in my answer to question 3. Here I'll add that I strongly support the vision of a complete regional trails system as an integral part of the Intertwine. Metro can be a partner in growing the trails system through continuing its Parks and Natural Areas bond program, which is supported by property taxes. This will require another approval by the region's voters sometime in the next five to ten years. In turn, I believe Metro will need to demonstrate to the voters that the region has figured out how to adequately fund park and trail development, operations and maintenance before asking permission to buy more land for parks and trails. We don't have that answer yet, and I'll be looking for a funding solution for parks maintenance as eagerly as I work for more sensible transportation funding.





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?

Metro and the Metro Council have no remaining role in implementing the plan devised for the CRC by the Washington and Oregon departments of Transportation. If that plan is successful, the two state legislatures will approve \$450 million each in new highway revenue and will implement tolls on the vehicles using the bridge to raise another \$1.3 billion net of collection cost; and the two states will receive \$1.3 billion more from the federal government. There will be no cost overruns, and the legislature will hold the Portland region's other transportation needs harmless of any cuts or long term spending moratorium in the process of raising money statewide for CRC. To ensure the project not fail resoundingly on opening day as traffic backs up from the Rose Quarter, ODOT and the legislature will raise another \$500 million or more for the newly proposed massive reconstruction of the Fremont Bridge to I-84 segment of I-5—again, without deferring any other state or metro-area transportation project.

Because all that is not going to happen according to plan, this project likely will come back to regional leaders, including the Metro Council, for further review and analysis. When that happens, I will seek to develop a project that uses tolling to manage the demand on I-5 to fit its existing capacity; to address the bottleneck caused by the Hayden Island interchange (and, to a lesser extent, bridge lifts) in cost effective ways, such as construction of a supplemental bridge rather than a full replacement of the existing spans; and to robustly improve transit and active transportation access across the Columbia River.

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 served as TriMet Executive Director for Planning and Policy in the late 1990s, where I had responsibility for service planning and for the Yellow Line funding strategy, among other duties. During my tenure, TriMet increased service hours and ridership on both the bus and rail systems. I have commuted from my home in southeast Portland to workplaces in downtown or the inner east side as a bus rider, cyclist or pedestrian for 33 years. I've been a member of the Bicycle Transportation Alliance for 17 years and a member of the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition (with occasional lapses) since its inception.

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

In my 2010 campaign for Metro president, I garnered 60 percent of the vote in the precincts that make up the current boundaries of Metro District 6. In the current race, I have raised more than \$100,000 (\$100,000 more than my only announced opponent) from more than 420 contributors. 275 community leaders and citizens have endorsed me. I will be working hard on grassroots outreach and door-to-door voter contact for the balance of the campaign, and my goal is to win in May.

Anything to add?

I appreciate the opportunity to comment in detail on these important issues, and I would be honored to receive the endorsement of Bike Walk Vote.

