METRO

Metro Councilor Oral History Interviews
Mike Burton, MSD Presiding Officer and Metro Executive Officer
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In Attendance: Mike Burton (MB), Nathaniel Sampson (NS), accompanied by Christina Capobianco.

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TRANSCRIPT

NS: Well, let's just begin with some general biographic information, personal information about yourself.

MB: Alright.

NS: Can you state your name, the council district that you represented, some characteristics about your district if you can remember that, and then other background information about yourself?

MB: Well, I'm Mike Burton and I was elected to the Metropolitan Service District as it was then called (later it changed to Metro, of course) and I represented District 12. District 12 was most of North Portland from about I-5 out to Kelly Point and then the Downtown area. So it was a big district. It was a huge district – I would say a hundred thousand people…a significant size.

I ran for the office because my background in planning goes back beyond that. I worked for Governor Straub who came in immediately after Governor McCall was in office. When McCall was in office, they passed Senate Bill 100, which was the land use planning bill. We were the first state in the Union that actually required local jurisdictions to have plans…nobody knew what that meant and nobody knew how to implement it. We were making it up as we went along. So when I joined the governor's staff he [Governor Straub] said, "Why don't you become familiar with that law and go out and talk to all the counties and the cities and tell them how its going to help them out," which was an interesting job to have to have. In fact, the first place I went to was Curry Country. I went down to the courthouse at Gold Beach and went to meet with the commission down there (which were called judges in those days). I had a state car and I parked outside. They knew I was coming. I went in and there was a crowd of people who were very curious about what the state was going to tell them about land use planning. They were pretty polite, but they made it pretty clear that they weren't interested in doing anything and when I went back out, three of the four tires of the car had been slashed. So I got the real the impression that land use planning was not going to be easy in Oregon. I didn't know anything

about planning, but I got very involved and engaged in it over that period of time. I was fascinated by the idea of coping with growth…with some deliberateness, rather than just raw…you know the west, it just kind of happened. Back at the turn of the century, not this last century but the one before…who wrote the defining document about the end of the frontier?

NS: Turner. Frederick Jackson Turner.

MB: Yeah, Turner. Turner had written (based on the 1890 census) that there were now two people per square mile, they're going to run into one another once in a while, and you have got to have rules of engagement. And the west has been the last place to do that. So we got involved in that, and the people here at Portland State [University] did a study looking at the possibility of regional governments. One of the responsibilities that I had on the governor's staff was that I was the governor's representative on the old Columbia Regional Association of Governments (CRAG), and also on the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments. So I spent most of my time going to those meetings as they put together those efforts. The regionalism in Oregon really again came out of the '60s with the National Transportation Act which was the building of the interstate system. The federal government went to the states and said, "Look, we don't want to have to deal with every Tom, Dick, and Harry jurisdiction. Why don't you put together some group thought, and we'll deal with groups and regions and we'll give them money based on how we want to do the interstate system."

So Oregon (under McCall) had formed twelve administrative districts. One of those was CRAG up here, which included Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas counties, and Clatsop County[1] at the time. That regional government was a collection of the local officials from the various jurisdictions. So there was a whole mass of them and they decided they would vote based on population. So Portland walked in with four votes in its pocket, and the smallest jurisdictions had a collective vote of one and they had to caucus to decide who was going to get to vote on that. So Portland State thought there was a better way to do it. They got some grants to try to figure out how we could better form a government around the primary questions of transportation and common systems - stuff like sewers and garbage disposal and things like that. So in the middle of that also comes down the idea of land use planning, which was an added element to it so you had this broader perspective.

So the bill was introduced to create that, and I was on the governor's staff and the governor assigned that to me to go and monitor. He said, "Oh they're trying to form this Metropolitan Service District," and I said, "Well, what do you want to do about it, governor?" He said, "Call up Neil Goldschmidt," (who was then mayor of Portland) "and see what he thinks about it." So I called up Neil and I said, "Mayor" (I'd known Neil for a long time…we were respective student body presidents, actually. I was student body president at Oregon State, and at the same time, he was student body president at the University of Oregon, and we beat 'em in football that year, so he had to grovel at my feet. Anyway, that was the last time he ever did that). I called him up and said, "Neil, what do you want to do with this MSD?" He said, "I don't care." I said, "You got any objections to it going past?" He said, "No…it's going to be kind of self-destructive anyways, and they can take care of a bunch of crap," as he put it. So back to the governor, I said, "Goldschmidt said 'fine, I'll support it." So we saw it through the legislature and it passed,

[1] CRAG included Columbia County, not Clatsop County.

including the MSD. That was just about the end of the first term for Straub, and they created a statutory regional government. The MSD was a statutory entity at the beginning.

So about that time I decided to go back and start working on my doctorate degree and get out of the fire, and I thought, "Well, what am I going to do in the meantime?" I really got interested in this regional government and I thought I'd run for that office. So that's how I came by getting into that. The focus on the Metropolitan Service District, or the Metro government, was that it would be the first elected government in the United States, so there was some interest. The Baltimore Sun and people like that came out and interviewed us. You know, "What is this weird entity and oddity going on out there?" I think it passed the voters because of two reasons. First of all, CRAG (the Columbia Regional Association of Governments), was usually the scene of a lot of nothing happening, because the small jurisdictions would come in and the state was there and the state transportation was there, and I was there as the governor's representative and it was mostly handing out money, and it was usually a fight over the federal transportation dollars. It just really wasn't working very well, and there was some sense it wasn't going to. The second thing, which I don't think people realize as much, is that all the local governments wanted it because they wanted to get equal standing with Portland. Neil Goldschmidt would walk in with his four votes in his pocket (a full-time mayor, the only full-time mayor at that time in the state... now there's actually only two - one of them is in Beaverton) with a full-time staff and all these guys had the weight over here. Portland was the focus and he'd get anything he wanted.

There was a vote when we did in the Mount Hood Freeway and they were shifting the dollars to the downtown mall over here. Vancouver, Washington was part of the SMSA[2] distribution of those dollars and they were at the table and they had to vote with us too on the CRAG system and there was a woman—her first name was Rose and I'm sorry I can't remember her last name - who was the Vancouver representative and after one of these meetings when Goldschmidt came in and did his rapid numbers things (charts up there, here's the money, we're going to do this and that and the other, and it's the greatest things since sliced bread), and everybody voted for it. Of course, I voted for it (from the governor's perspective), and everybody started to leave and Rose was sitting there across the table from me looking totally stunned. I said, "Rose, are you okay?" and she says, "You know, I think I just voted to give away 26 million dollars to the Portland side," and I said, "Yes, you did." And she says, "You know, I thought so, and I think it's okay," and I said, "Yeah" and then finally she says, "No, they're going to kill me back home." Actually, they didn't, and it wasn't that much money. But [the smaller jurisdictions] said, "This isn't right. We've all got to have one vote at the table and it should be done differently." So the local jurisdictions got behind the MSD measure and created that government. It was finally in 1978, I think, when it went out to the voters and passed, probably because it looked better than what was there before, and probably because all the local governments said, "Yeah, this would be a fairer deal for us in Gladstone, and Beaverton, and Hillsboro - being at the table equally with Portland and getting rid of that weighed vote."

Well it was pretty clear to me right away that there were two problems with it. First of all, it had twelve councilors. You never have an even number when you want to get something done. Secondly, it was vague as to what the role of the Executive Officer was. There was an Executive

[2] Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA). These areas are designated by the federal government and are areas having over 100K population with common labor and transportation links. The federal government uses this to determine how to distribute gasoline taxes, etc. In this case, Vancouver fit into the SMSA for the Portland Area.

Officer presented there, and Rick Gustafson got elected to that position[3]. I had an opponent in my district. Two opponents in fact, and I don't even remember who they were. But I won a majority in the primary (I think that's the way it went). So I think it really wasn't much of a sweat. But Rick was very active. He had been in the legislature. He was a very bright guy, and this is this brand new government and it was going to merge the old CRAG staff and the old MSD staff, and MSD was really basically just the garbage and had some line on water and sewer stuff, but mostly garbage and then the zoo. They had the zoo under there. They just sort of threw all this together. So they had to dismantle those staffs and remantle, if you would, or reconstruct a central staff, and there was a question about who was going to be predominant, the old CRAG staff or the old MSD staff.

The city of Portland owned the garbage dump at that time where all the garbage was going, and we were in the middle of trying to decide because the EPA[4] had granted an extension - a NEPA extension (a National Environmental Protection Act extension) - to the city of Portland to extend the landfill out into Smith and Bybee Lakes out in North Portland, which was my district, and I'm going, "Oh My God! It's bad enough as it is." So I was really interested in finding an alternate to that, but the city of Portland was the one who ruled that, and we were going to have to get this garbage site. So we came together before we even met. I finally suggested that all the members who had been elected get together and sort of figure out how we were going to proceed once we took office. I thought that was a good idea. A couple other people felt the same way - Cindy Banzer[5] and others.

Rick Gustafson [in the meantime] had hired two people to his staff, and the first question I had was, "Where did you get the money to hire those people?" He wasn't doing it out of his campaign. I think he did some money back and forth, but he took some money he was going to have with his staff. So there was some immediate kind of, "Wait a minute, you're taking over? The way I read the charter, the council makes the big decisions and the executive officer runs the show, based on the policies we set." Well, you can imagine, there were all kinds of political egos in there, mine included, going, "Who's going to be in charge of this fantastic new government?" – [a government] that didn't even know what it was. So we had a couple of meetings and Rick sent his staff people to them…they were very suspicious of all of us and basically said, "You know, you guys are just kind of here." We liked to have monthly meetings and it was like, "You'll be the school board and you'll kind of rubber stamp where we're going and go along." Well, a couple of us said "No, no, no. We want to get more involved in the real policy setting," and there was a split that developed in the council.

So this is when it came to the six-six split. It was literally down the line. It was six of us on one side and six of us on the other. It was sort of the pro-council strength [against] the pro-executive. Caroline Miller [6], I remember, said in one of the meetings (she was one of the ones on the pro-executive side), "No, I don't want to have to read a lot of material and do all of that. I just want to get a recommendation and approve it or disapprove it in the council meetings…I haven't got time to come to very many meetings." Versus other people who felt this was going to be a full-time job. I wasn't one of those. I thought it was a part-time thing. But there were people who

[3] Rick Gustafson served as Executive Officer of the Metropolitan Service District from 1979 to 1987.
[4] Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
[5] Cindy Banzer represented District 9 on the MSD Council, 1979 to 1984.
[6] Caroline Miller represented District 8 on the MSD Council, 1979.

literally thought this would be a full-time job, and I said, "Boy, it's a full-time job with not much pay. In fact, no pay." There was a provision that we would get like $35 a meeting up to a certain number of meetings a year, but this wasn't considered a political plum. So the debate went down to the day before we actually took office (we were going to take office on like January 2nd or some god-awful date) up at the Forestry Center and it was a howling storm. I'm surprised anybody could get up there. It was icy. It was cold. We all gathered up there to have this event. The TV stations were there, mostly because, "Well, here's the first regional government in the United States. Wow! Let's go see what they're doing." We didn't want to go out publicly - all of us sitting down and saying we now have to elect a presiding officer - and have a six-six split. So at least we were all conscious enough to say let's not go and embarrass ourselves. We met in this room that had no heat. We were all sitting in there freezing to death. All of the other people who managed to get up to this hill sat out there, and we debated the question back and forth and we literally flipped a coin. I had a quarter. I turned that quarter over to the Historical Society with an explanation on it. And I won the toss. So I very brilliantly had my first big political job as the presiding officer of the Metro Council (MSD). So we undertook the business. Well, the first order of business was really trying to figure out how to combine the staffs and the functions, which was everything from accounting systems, to so on and so forth. And Rick was supposed to take over that part of it. And the CRAG staff predominated in the thing. Rick had picked—oh my gosh, the first sort of administrative officer (I can see him in front of me, but can't think of his name) to head up the effort and put together the things we were going to do.

So the council sat down and I said, "Well, how are we going to proceed, because we've got a couple of big things in front of us?" We were required within a year of that time to establish an urban growth boundary for the metropolitan area. The boundaries had been set up and I actually sat in the hearings that were held in the legislature when I was on the governor's staff, on where the boundaries were going to be. That was an interesting thing because of the two proponents on the Senate and the House side. On the Senate side was a guy named Mike Ragsdale[7], who later on ran for the [MSD] council. Mike Ragsdale was in the Senate, and was looked at by most people as the up and coming Republican star on the horizon that might replace Atiyeh[8] when he went out. Curiously enough, nobody could figure out why he took so much interest. He was from Washington County. Glen Otto was the House Representative on the eastern side of the thing, and had formerly been a mayor of Troutdale. The two of them were supposed to draw the boundaries. Glen just didn't want to go out very far. "Nah, we don't want Metro out here." On the other hand, Mike made the argument to stretch the Metro boundaries really far to the west. If you look at the boundaries even as they exist today, it goes a lot further west than it does east.

Now we've added on some stuff. Glen just fell to his constituencies and he didn't really want much - you knew it wasn't going to urbanize out much that way. The boundaries on the Washington County side went out pretty far, and I went to Ragsdale and said, "You know, boy you're really taking a lot of land, and he said, "Well, the Unified Sewer District (USA)…(which is now Cleanwater Services) has got sewer pipe already laid out there." So Washington County had for some time been laying sewer lines out even into farm lands, which is some of the best farmland on the planet out there. And I said, "Okay, that makes sense, I guess (where the sewer lines are at)." So they drew these boundaries, and the next year what happened was Mike Ragsdale left the Senate and joined (I think) Norris Biggs or Trammel Crowe, and you used to

[7] Mike Ragsdale represented District 1 on the MSD Council, 1986 to 1990.
[8] Victor G. Atiyeh, 32nd Governor of Oregon, 1979 to 1987.

see his name up on every billboard out [Highway] 26: "Land for Sale - Expansion!" He made a fortune selling land or doing the brokering on the land that was out there into that newly founded Metro boundary. So I became aware at that point that what we do (because it's going to urbanize), will probably create instant millionaires. Every time you move the urban growth boundary, you move the value of the price of that land up considerably from say $10,000 and acre for farmland to $100,000 and acre for developable land, particularly if it has sewer and water to it. So I went "Oh, bingo-bongo - good lesson on how this stuff works. It follows the economy."

So anyway, we had that boundary out there and I knew we had to set some kind of an urban growth boundary within our jurisdictional bounds, and we didn't know how to do that. We had absolutely no idea. So I turned around to the certified smart planners we had around there. There were people like Andy Cotugno who still was a junior woodchuck in the group, but he's now the head of planning [At Metro]. I said, "How would you do this?" He said, "Well, I don't know. The boundary…you know, where the services are." Okay, that made sense and we actually literally took a flight over the area at night and I said, "Where are the lights and where aren't the lights? Where the lights are is probably going to urbanize, and where the lights are not, that probably is going to be rural." So we did really brilliant things like that. We ended up making these boundary decisions and got some buy off from local governments. Local governments really didn't care. I don't think in 1979 anybody really had a good idea. You've got to realize in 1979…well, in fact, I have a report I wrote. I was one of the people who wrote a report for the governor in 1977 which was the economic development report for the state or Oregon and on one of the pages (I've probably got that thing in here somewhere) like back on page 37, there was a sentence in there that said, "There is this electronic industry…which could have some potential in the metropolitan area because there are a few companies that are taking off on this," but it was just a blip on the horizon. Everything was timber, agriculture, and the different economies - fishing, tourism. And of course twenty years later, it is the predominant industry. We had no idea. So we had this massive sea change that took place without any forethought that any of us had. So we ended up drawing this boundary and we went down to the legislature. In fact, it was Cindy Banzer and I who went down. We were the ones on point to get the legislature to pass the initial boundary, which was then approved in '80 or '81, somewhere around there.

So that was one thing we had to do. So was organizing the staff to make sense of land-use planning and transportation. We had all this massive money coming in, and Atiyeh was in office by that time. He, I think without knowing what he was doing, approved the designation of Metro as the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT). That gave us the authority to distribute the federal dollars (combined with the state and local dollars), to come up with a metropolitan transportation plan. They're still doing that. The question remained, "How do we distribute all this large money into roads and so on and so forth," when in fact, about that time, Goldschmidt was beginning to push the idea of a light rail system in the Gorge. "In the Gorge" was not in the big Columbia Gorge - it was Sullivan's Gulch. Sullivan's Gulch is the highland area that goes out where then Highway 84, which is now 80, or vice-versa, I can't think of which…It's the Banfield. And you couldn't widen it – nobody can. You were creating a big traffic problem out there because they hadn't built the Mt. Hood Freeway (thank God), and so how were you going to get people from East County into Portland where all the jobs were when you can't widen the freeway? So somebody said, "Let's put this commuter train down there."

Oh, what a concept! So we had to shift money around. There was all of that stuff in transportation occurring.

Then the other thing that became a singular point of view was what Rick Gustafson and Jane Rhodes[9] wanted - to deal with the flooding in Johnson Creek. Johnson Creek is the last kind of major waterway through the metropolitan area and it flooded all the time. So Rick and Jane came up with the idea that we were going to create a local improvement district of the 3,500 households that were out there, and they were all going to chip in $100 bucks a piece and we were going to rip-raft, literally channelize, Johnson Creek. Well, I didn't know what you did back then. It made a lot of sense to me. So we undertook a series of hearings. There were 26 hearings in that area. I was the Presiding Officer and Jane Rhodes conducted [these hearings] of all the citizens out there to do this thing. It would have been the biggest local improvement district in history of the world – 3,500 households chipping in to do this thing. So those were the things that were underway.

In the meantime, Rick was trying to put together the administrative functions of the thing. We had an audit in the middle of that - a self-imposed audit. The auditors came in (I think it was Coopers-Lieband or somebody that did the audit) and said, "You've got all kind of problems." When they smushed the two accounting systems together, somewhere in there a "black-hole" was committed, as we called it, and about $800,000 was missing or wasn't there. It was a big problem. So I appointed Craig Berkman[10] to head up the finance committee. Well, he came to me (and Berkman has subsequently sort of…well, a lot of people have disgraced themselves. I hope I never disgrace myself…look all these people who came and went) and said, "This is really bad if we sign this agreement, because if you sign off on the agreement we become culpable for it." So Berkman and I refuse to sign the agreement. Gustafson rode right over the top of us in the council meeting, and they approved the thing and then of course two months later it comes out that there in fact was this huge mess and I got to stand back and say, "I didn't sign that and Berkman didn't either." So it was a problem. But it was trying to take fairly good size organizations, and cram them together. Nobody did anything nefarious; it was just stupid.

So there were some dumb things that happened. But it taught me some lessons about the relationship between councils and executive officers and things like that. So that was one thing we went through. The creation of JPACT and all of that was pretty smooth because actually there…what you're doing is you're getting money and giving it away. It was just maybe creating a way to do it, and we created a metropolitan advisory group. Local jurisdictions came and we had a vote, but the council had to approve it. So the letter that JPACT had, the way it was written, was that you had to have 100 percent write off on both sides of the house to make it work. So it was in everybody's interest to make it work, otherwise you lost the money. And that part went forward. We went down to the legislature and said here is the urban growth boundary, and we'd like to have that approved because it was a statutory group and we had to go to LCDC[11] to approve that and nobody cared. They said "fine", and that slipped through very well.

The Johnson Creek thing was not such a good deal either. Jane kept coming back to the council meetings saying, "Alright, we had our local community out there and everybody, and we had 26

[9] Jane Rhodes represented District 6 on the MSD Council, 1979 to 1982.
[10] Craig Berkman represented District 3 on the MSD Council, 1979 to 1982.
[11] Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC).

people and they all thought it was a great idea." I mean, week after week after adnauseam, and I thought, "This is the greatest thing since pancake syrup because everybody loves this program. We're going to go out and do it." It included creating an LID[12] in which we'd then assess every household like a $100 that could be Bancrofted[13] out twenty years (if you know what Bancrofting means), so that in twenty years, you've got to contribute a total of $100. What is that…$5.00 a year or something like that? So I thought, "This is slick."

Well, we were having the final hearing, but the final hearing was actually going to happen in the second year after I left office [as presiding officer]. The question was, "Burton, are you going to run for presiding officer again?" and I said, "No, I think this thing should be rotating." And Marge Kafoury[14] (who started out life with a different name and married a Kafoury) said, "I will never take political advantage of that," until she ran for office and then got elected. Marge is funny…but she became the second presiding officer. It was going to be her first meeting, and they were going to hold it out in Parkrose or somewhere out there [in East County]. We wanted to try to move the meetings around. It was one of the things on the agenda, and Jane was really excited because she thought all these people were going to come and testify about finally fixing Johnson Creek.

Well, I hadn't paid much attention other that getting Jane's stuff, but the night before (or a couple days before), I get a call from a guy from this group called Fair Share. The guy says, "You know, you've got this hearing coming and you're going to have problems with it." I said, "Problems? Why?" He said, "Everybody's opposed to it." I said, "Everybody's opposed to it? We've been getting reports back that everybody's in favor of it." He said, "Well we're Fair Share and you ought to come down and listen to us." So I pick up the phone right after that and said to Jane, "There's some group called Fair Share, and they say that they're going to blow us out of the water on this thing." Jane said, "Oh yeah, don't worry about them. They're just a little side group of citizens that's just trying to raise money for something." "Really?" I said. "Okay." So I call this guy back and said, "Jane thinks you're full of crap," or I don't think I put it quite that crudely. But I said, "I'm not too sure." He said, "Well listen, you ought to come down and listen to us." I said, "Okay, I tell you what…I'll come by and listen to you." So I went out to this meeting and they did this Saul Alinsky process of beating up on someone. I don't know if you know who Saul Alinsky is, but it's a good historical piece. It wasn't Alinsky, it was another guy who wrote a book called, *Mow-Mowing the Flack-Catchers*. That was a book about how you get past the front door if you were having trouble in America. If you can't get past the bureaucrats, that's called "Mow-Mowing" 'em, and the flack-catcher is the poor lady who sat there and trapped the flack as it came in, and that's how you got past this. Saul Alinsky had this process where he said you get everybody with a script, and you're going to beat up on whomever the bureaucrat was that walked in the door.

So I go out there and I walked in the door and all these guys and women were around in the circle with chairs, with one chair in the middle and that was going to be mine. I walked in and I

[12] Local Improvement District (LID). This is where 75% of the owners in a given area can vote to tax themselves to pay for an improvement, i.e. sidewalks, street paving, or in this case improving a creek flow.

[13] Bancrofting is a method of paying for improvements over a period of time, like a systems development charge (SDC). A System Development Charge, or SDC, is a one-time fee that all new and expanding, both residential and business, pays. SDC's are a source of funding for new infrastructure such as streets, sewage treatment, water systems, stormwater drainage, and parks.

[14] Marge Kafoury represented District 11 on the MSD Council, 1979 to 1986.

said, “What’s going on?” and was told, “Well, we’d like you to sit down. We have some questions we’d like to ask you.” And now all these people had scripts in their hands. And I said, “You’re either Mow-Mowing the Flack-catcher, and that ain’t me, or you’ve done the Saul Alinsky guy.” And they said, “Well, we do follow….” I said, “Well everybody, pull up your chairs and I’m going to pull back in the circle and I’ll be glad to answer your questions.” Well, they go through this, “Did you know that the Corp of Engineers actually has spent $41 million and that you’re going to only get …” and all these [type of] questions. I said, “This is all pretty inane, to be honest with you.” It struck me then that maybe it wasn’t even then process. I said, “Maybe the solution isn’t right…Can we talk about the solution? Do we really want to rip-rap this creek, because I’m not too sure that’s a good idea.” I’m beginning to have sort of some ideas in the back of my head about how the natural areas should remain natural, and maybe we ought to be buying this property. So here I am after a year of this, and I’m finally having an idea about it. So these guys were totally disarmed by all this and they said, “Well, this is all wrong.” I said, “How did you get involved in this?” Well, they had been going door-to-door, and they had made up a fake bill that said, “This is Not a Bill” but it said, “Your Local Government and you are now going to have your property taxes taxed $100 dollars.” I said, “Well first of all, it’s $100 over twenty years - it’s a Bancroft.” And they’d been using this going door-to-door to get funds. “Are you upset about $100 on your property?” “Yes, I am,” says Joe Citizen. “Well, tell you what, give Fair Share $2 and we’ll fight the cause for you.” So they’d give them $2, and they raised money this way.

So I called Jane and I said, “I think this could be serious.” There were 26 people in that circle, plus me…there were 27 people sitting there. And I said, “I think they’re organized.” “Well, no. No problem.” I drove out to this school and the parking lot is jammed. There were 500 people there with signs and they were angry and they were going to shout us down and they had mobilized the press there. So we get up on the stage and we literally cannot hear, and poor Marge said, “My god, I can’t hear anything.” We couldn’t hear each other at the end of the table. We couldn’t hear each other talk because they were just chanting and they were yelling and there were signs saying, “Down with …” whatever we were trying to do. And there was a photograph taken, which I don’t have, but it was in the newspaper. There was a guy there in a priest frock - an Episcopalian collar and the whole bit with his thing on. And he stands up and says, “I’ll see your souls rot in hell before I’ll let you do this to my people.” And they got a picture of him, and it looks like he’s pointing at me because I’m sitting at the end of the table (because I’m not the Presiding Officer). He wasn’t really…he was pointing more at Marge. But it got so bad that we had to cancel the meeting. We couldn’t hear anything. We could not hear a word. We said, “You know, we’re going to reschedule this thing for several weeks later” and we held it down at the Memorial Coliseum in one of the out-buildings because we wanted it big enough to have enough people to have this hearing and get sort of ready for it. I ended up with a horrible cold. I mean I was so sick when I went to the meeting. I got down there, and about a thousand people showed up to this thing. I couldn’t hear anything and I thought, “Well, thank God I can’t hear any of this.” We ended up listening to them and we dropped the whole idea, to make a long story short. I also got invited by the Episcopal Bishop of Oregon to the Episcopal House (they have a house down on Military Road, which is a beautiful place). The bishop apologized to me for this priest who he said had been defrocked (by the way) and had no business wearing this outfit and was not a representative of the Episcopal Church. And I said, “Thanks”, and had tea and left.

That was an interesting little thing, but that kind of got blown out of the water. And it told me a couple things. One is that when you think you're out talking to the citizens, in fact you may not be. The 26 people who kept coming to Jane's hearing were the same 26 people, and in the meantime, you can get sandbagged by groups that will go out there and get the masses out there. I say if you want to get people's attention send them a bill. People don't care about much, unless there's something that says $100 and then they show up and start shouting.

So that was the first year that we had the council, and we were under way from there. I think after that - for the next three or four years that I was on the council - we were a lot more cautious about being inventive and creative. One of the things we had was the zoo. The zoo has been this orphan, of course, for a long time. The zoo in Portland has been around for a long, long time. It was started I think as a private enterprise and got taken over by the city and then given back to the Friends of the Zoo and then it was ultimately taken back underneath the Metropolitan Service District. It was up there getting funding, and the Friends of the Zoo had become a pretty strong force. There was a group of citizens that was supporting the zoo, put a lot of money into it, and resented the fact that here comes this upstart government that was going to take it over.

So Rick Gustafson arranged a meeting of the board and the council…and we were going to all get together. Rick had a good idea - let's all get together and have some drinks and dinner and we'll all feel better about it because there was a lot of resentment. We had it [the meeting] at Jake's, and in fact, I went down with some friends ahead of time and had a couple drinks at the bar down there, and we were waiting for all these people to come in because we didn't know what to expect. I can't remember who was with me. I think it might have been Charlie [Williamson][15] and we were all thinking, "What are we going to do with these guys?" and we all headed back and it was the coldest damned meeting I've even been in. These people wanted absolutely nothing to do with us. They thought we were just awful people for getting involved, and from our perspective, we thought, "Guess what, we got stuck with this thing called the zoo and what do you want us to do?" "Well, leave us alone and let us run it."

Part of that [the challenge] was working out what the Friends of the Zoo was going to do, and what we were going to do. Rick did a pretty good job of sorting through that. The zoo director was a guy named Warren Iliff, [16] who was just a great guy, and he sort of helped transition that. In fact, later on, we got a tax base set up for the zoo, and the only part of Metro that has a tax base is the zoo. The tax base actually isn't dedicated to the zoo, but it has always been spent on just the zoo so it gets the base of it there, and operating it was always kind of an issue. But Warren changed the zoo. It was basically a bunch of boxes with cages and he wanted to create a more natural thing. I always had trouble with zoos because I think zoos are a comment on our destruction of the wildlife really. But in reality, without having zoos, you lose some of the ability to at least look at those creatures that otherwise would be out somewhere else. So we did that.

The garbage stuff was the other part that was of interest to me because the City of Portland owned the dump and it was out in my area. I thought that it was a problem because they turned over the franchise operation of the front of the place to a private operator and they ran a gatehouse. The city had allowed them to take over this stuff. Well, the guy who ran operations for the landfill also picked up garbage, and I was getting reports from garbage haulers that this

[15] Charilie Williamson represented District 3 on the MSD Council, 1979 to 1984.
[16] Warren J. Iliff was Executive Director of the Washington Park Zoo (later called the Oregon Zoo), 1971 to 1983.

guy's trucks were allowed to bypass the weigh station. The way they come in, the truck drivers are supposed to come in and they'd charge them for how much garbage they have in the truck and they'd pay that and that was part of the fee. Well, this guy had his trucks and got to drive around that and dump for free. So I had evidence of this, and I was going to confront them about how we needed a neutral operator of that landfill up there for two reasons. I had my line of how I wanted to stop dumping in the wetlands in North Portland and find a better landfill. Secondly, I wanted to make sure that whatever was happening was done fairly and squarely on what was going on out there.

So I held a press conference. I called a press conference at the site because I wanted the city to turn it over to us. Can you imagine asking for a dump! But I thought that would be a better way for us to do it. I thought we should be doing this…it's a regional landfill, the garbage is coming in from all over the place, and there were trucks and costs coming in and there was no sensible way. No one was doing anything about recycling because I went to the council and I said, "We ought to push recycling." People looked at me like "What's that?" Well, I went down and the state had a hierarchy in dealing with solid waste…there's a hierarchy in how you should deal with it. The best thing is to not create it in the first place. So, if you look at it, recycling is not at the top of the list; it's actually third. The top of this was you ought to do everything you possibly can to not create waste in the first place. Like, why do you need to have shoes in shoe boxes? In Europe, they don't do that. They tie the laces together and they don't have shoe boxes and there's a whole priority list of things that you can get into. In those days it was pretty new. Later, I've gotten into a lot more of that stuff, and I've been doing it most of my life. The second thing on that list was reuse it. You know, if you're going to do it, don't get rid of it. The third thing is recycling, which is not quite reusing. Recycling means breaking it down into other components, and that's okay. The primary thing is not having to go through remanufacturing, Because if you go through recycling, you have to have a remanufacturing function and that in itself might be hazardous to the environment.

The first two were kind of elusive to us. You know, how do you reduce waste? How do you get people to not do it? There have been a lot of industries that rely on not doing it…you know, packaging places and this kind of stuff (a lot of jobs). So that was a little elusive to us - getting people to reuse things. There was a price to that, but the best opportunity was maybe recycling. So we had this grand, eloquent idea. I'd gotten the council to pass a resolution that we should have at least 25 percent recycling. We didn't have home recycling in those days, so I thought we could recycle out of the dump before we dumped stuff out in the pond out there (we could pull stuff out). Brilliant idea. Everyone said, "Fine, we have got to do it 25 percent." I think now we do what…80 percent or something. I used to go out to the schools in my districts and say, "Okay kids, we're going to do recycling! How many of your parents do recycling?" and one hand would go up. You go out there now and 80 or 90 percent of the kids would raise their hands. They know exactly what it is. It took a while to get there.

So anyway, I went down to Mayor Ivancie and said, "Frank, why don't you give us the dump? "Why?" [I said,] "Because it takes it off your hands." They actually had some revenue streaming from it, so they wanted money from us. I said, "Let us take it over and do it differently." "Okay, here you go." So I find out they're diddling the books out there, and I hold this press conference and I got out there, and I'm standing in front of a weigh station with all the TV cameras, and the guy who was running the outfit (his name escapes my mind right now) was running the gate. All of a sudden there's a pickup truck that comes running down the road. We're standing there and I

thought, "This son of a bitch isn't going to stop," and he slams on his brake and he slid up and I'm standing there and thought, "Okay, do I want to get run over for the sake of a good press conference? Should I stand here or jump out of the way?" He came up and I actually stepped back and he stopped about a foot away from me with all the television cameras going on. The guy jumps out and says, "What are you doing.?" This is great play. I couldn't ask for anything better. I said, "Well I understand you get to bypass this area." "Well, who said that?" I said, "I got it on film." The garbage guys were really cutthroat. They had provided me with movie footage on old 16mm reels of these trucks going by, and I said I've got it right here. I could play it for these guys. I said somebody's got to run this thing legitimately. This guy gets all flustered, gets back in, slams the door, pulls out, and practically runs over Channel 8…big headlines. So Frank [Ivancie] calls me and says, "Okay, you can take over the god-damned dump." So we made the deal. Gustafson went down and made the deal and we took over the landfill site.

Well, immediately, the first thing we're faced with is you got to find another one. So when I left Metro and went to the legislature[17], I was faced with having to figure out how to site a landfill because Metro (under the land-use laws) really couldn't do that. There was no provision for siting a landfill or anything that nobody really wanted. So what happened is you would always have it appealed - you'd have a conditional use that would get appealed and it went around the cycle. That's when I became really familiar with process about how land-use decisions were not made through the process. So I got very involved in my first session in the legislature in being able to create an exception to land-use law. Here I was, the big proponent of land-use laws, pushing an exception to that when you had to do something like site a garbage dump. Later that was used to site prisons, too. So I got a senate bill passed[18]. I had it introduced in the Senate so I could bring it over to the House. That bill was passed to allow us, in extraordinary circumstances, to declare an emergency and site a landfill. Otherwise, we'd have never gotten one signed. [Governor] Atiyeh signed the bill, and in fact, I've still got that bill. I put a provision (slipped into the bottom) that said any local governments or districts that are responsible for this can add a 50 cent per ton charge for all this garbage that was going in which would be used to help the local area with its economic development. I thought they dump a million tons of garbage, so if they put a dollar in there, it would be a million dollars a year going into a fund for the local community to offset the ill effects of having a landfill in the area…made sure it pertained to restaging areas. In restaging areas [transfer stations] - there's now one in Oregon City and one down on N.W. Front - they bring the garbage into the big housing and they sort out the garbage in there. So it would be for these kinds of facilities. That money went into the St. Johns Landfill until they shut that thing down. They still have the fund out there. I tried to get them to site the restaging areas, the recycling centers, out there and the people in St. Johns said, "No, we've had the dump long enough. We don't want it here," and I said, "You're going to lose money." So they moved it across the river, and now the Northwest Industrial area gets that money, which is too bad. But we put that thing in the provision and we got this thing sited.

So I was out of Metro when that was happening, but the bill went through the legislature (while I was down there) to allow us to site the landfill, we were about ready to find one in the metro area when along comes the folks up in Gillam County and Waste Management who said, "We'll build it out here a hundred miles up the road." I thought, "Well, that's not good, but it's dry land." We

[17] Mike Burton served on the MSD Council from 1979 to 1984. He was elected to the Legislature in 1984 where he served until January 1995.
[18] Senate Bill 662.

were pushing hard to get waste out of the system, so take what's left up there. Gillam County loved it because the landfill created the largest economy for that county. There were 1,900 people in Gillam County (I think there might be 2,000 up there now) and the landfill itself and the trucking companies that move it up and down there are the largest employer for that county. So they were happy to get that up there. We were happy to get it out of the metropolitan area. I worried about it because out of sight out of mind. My thought was you should require everybody to have a local dump within every mile – it would be smaller and then it would remind people that maybe you don't want those so you ought to stop creating waste. But that never prevailed.

So we got that sort of solved, at least part of that land stuff while I was in the legislature. The other thing while I was in the legislature was that Rena Cusma, who was then the executive (the second executive officer of the MSD after Rick Gustafson left office] came down because she wanted clarification as to the veto authority that they would have. The executive didn't the veto authority, and there was this growing and continuing problem about the relationship between the executive and the council - who gets to be in charge and who gets to decide. She thought if she had a veto authority over council actions, it would clarify that line and by gosh they'd have to think harder about what they were doing. She got into it in all kinds of ways with the council, mostly over solid waste contracts, and there was a lawsuit filed (I'll get back to that in a minute because that's kind of jumping ahead). But there was a bill in the legislature to clarify the actions and that was the time I said, "Why don't I send this thing out and give you guys a home charter?" because they didn't have a home rule charter. They were a statutory government up until that point, the difference being that a home rule charter under the constitution allows cities and counties to adopt there own taxes and their own governing laws without having to run down to the legislature every time they wanted to do something. So the revision allowed metropolitan service districts to do it, and it passed in '92. So they [the MSD] got a home rule charter, but they never clarified the question of the veto authority and the relationship between the executive and the council.

So those were two of the things that I was involved with, plus the continuing stuff about looking at urban growth boundaries. Then I decided I'd leave the legislature, and actually Rena was going to run for labor commissioner and I thought, "Well I'm going to run for her position," because I had the continuing interest in it. I got into that race in 1994 and got elected to the executive officer position in 1995, at which time they also adopted a new charter. That charter went into effect in 1995 and changed the council. Somewhere along the road they got it to thirteen and the realized that was a lot of people. So they took it back down to seven in the charter. The charter provided that the primary function of Metro was to do planning, and that it had to provide for the funding of that planning without giving us any source of revenue to do it. We could also take on other services, but the primary function was the planning function. I thought, "Wow! This is cool. That's what I want to do." And by the way, you got the zoo, and the convention center, and the garbage stuff and parks and a couple other things along the way. Those were services provided. So we had these kind of dual roles and I came in as the executive and I thought, "Okay," and I went through the election. It was a four-way primary and I just barely missed getting a majority. I had to have a run-off against Bonnie Hayes, and I won that and went in as the executive in 1995 full of all kinds of grandiose ideas.

The first thing that I ran into was a lawsuit. The council had sued Rena when she was the executive, and the lawsuit was still pending because it was between the executive officer, whoever that was, and the council, whoever they were. They hired an attorney, and in turn, Rena

had hired an attorney and the two attorneys had managed by that time to spend about $150,000 of public money suing each other or whatever was going on. The fight was over this: there were huge, huge amounts of money running through the solid waste system.

[End Tape 1, Side 1]

They had a contract with Waste Management and it was huge…I mean, we're talking a couple hundred million dollars a year. So there is big money in garbage when you think about it, and Metro was the controlling element. They had given themselves control over all this. Well, you had two types [of garbage services]. You had commercial hauling and you had private hauling. In Portland today, we still have like 26 separate franchise guys. It's really, you know, not very efficient. The city doesn't run them. They are private for household pickup; for commercial, it's an open system. Anyone can go in and compete. So Waste Management comes in, and basically it was getting to the point where there were three garbage companies in the world - Waste Management, another company that has changed its name, and a big French company - and they literally had gobbled up everybody else. So they kind of called the shots. Rena tried to get them to bring down the rates because they had managed to get the rates to $70 or $80 a ton, which was way out of site. She had the idea of bringing the rates down and trying to put the money into creating better recycling opportunities, which was a good idea. So she managed somehow to get Waste Management to reduce the rate (I don't know how she did it). She sent it to the council, and the council (all thirteen of them then) were bumbling over it. I never was there when they had the thirteen of 'em, but I gather that it was pretty much of a zoo. There were just all kinds of problems, and personalities got in the way. There was a guy named Jon Kvistad[19], who was just an obstructionist guy. He got into this thing with Rena and he's the one that convinced the council to go ahead and file a lawsuit. What happened was they somehow couldn't make a decision on a contract, so Rena decided and went to her legal council, Dan Cooper (who is still legal council over there) and said, "Do I have the authority to sign this contract, because I'm not increasing the cost," because it was clear that you couldn't obligate the Metro government over a certain amount of money without council approval. She said, "What I'm actually doing is reducing the cost, not increasing it." So they'd been playing this thing for a year. Waste Management was about to withdraw their deal. It gave them the ability to run transfer stations (or something like that), as well. There was a quid pro quo in there, but it actually reduced the cost. So Cooper's opinion was, "You can't raise the rates, but you can lower them." Rena unilaterally signed the contract and this Kvistad guy (and a couple other people), goes nuts. So he goes in and said, "Let's sue her…she can't do that." So they proceeded to do this lawsuit.

I waltzed into office about this time with this new council of seven, and there were couple of carry-overs. Most of them were carry-overs, including this Jon Kvistad guy. Rena said, "Well, you're going to have this lawsuit. She had hired Jake Tanner as her attorney, so I called up Jake, (I've known him for years - he used to be on the Supreme Court). I said "Jake," (he's a wily old attorney) "What's going on?" He says, "What do you want to have go on." That's a good attorney. If you go to an attorney and say, "What does the law say?" a good attorney will say, "What do you want it to say? How do you want it to come out?" and "I'll figure out a way to get you there." I said, "I'd like to resolve this thing. It's stupid. Let's end the contract. I don't care, end the lawsuit and figure out some way to move on from here." Well he said, "The right way to do this would be to take a bill into the council and create the Legal Office as your attorney of

[19] Jon Kvistad represented District 2 (1993 to 1994) and District 3 (1995 to 2000) on the Metro Council.

fact. Instead of just a legal office over here, you'd set it up like the Attorney General or Legislative Council, which meant that that attorney's opinion was the prevailing one until somebody overrode it, which meant you created a sort of independent office that you could both go to and rely on. That's what you didn't have before. You should have had some legal office to go to." I said, "Great! I'll do that."

So I go down to the presiding officer [of the Metro Council], who was a woman named Ruth McFarland[20], who had gotten elected sort of by default because Patricia McCaig[21] (there were all these people who came in later on but Patricia McCaig got in there) had been Barbara Roberts' chief of staff. They called her the "Princess of Darkness" and she was coming in and she was going to sweep the world away and fix all this. [She was] a brilliant person, but was absolutely totally inept at dealing with people. One of the most inept people I've ever met in my life. She continues to be that way (I hope you guys will interview her). She still does a lot of political stuff. She runs campaigns. She ran the Metro bond measure and has been amazingly successful at that. But she's absolutely inept. She and one of the other persons, [Councilor] Susan McLain,[22] got into an immediate fight over this thing. It was like a catfight. I hate to use that term, but that's the only way to describe this thing. The council, which was separate and had separate staff from my staff (which I thought was stupid), actually ended up hiring a mediator to try and get the two of them to talk to each other. It got that bad. All this squabbling was going on in that group and nobody could get a majority to become the presiding officer out of this seven. So Ruth ends up [as presiding officer]. Ruth was a former state senator - a nice lady from out in East County, pretty bright but needed to be stroked all the time. The best way to help was just compliment her. Ruth is kind of a large person, so I said, "Okay, you're the presiding officer. Let's meet once a week, at least." She said, "Great! You can take me to lunch." Her favorite restaurant was a Chinese restaurant up on Broadway. We go up there the first time, sit down, and everybody in there knew Ruth. "Oh, Miss McFarland." (Dr. McFarland, I should say. She taught out at Mount Hood Community College. Bright woman. She ran for Congress once and lost). So we sat down and the first thing she does is she reaches down in her purse and rips out one of these alligator chains. Now come on. It's a metal chain with two alligator clips on the end of them that you get in a dentist's office. You know…she whips it over her neck and gets the napkin and pulls it up and clips it to the thing to fit out over her rather ample chest, and it just covered her a little bit. And that's how she proceeds to eat, and she inevitably messed every one of those things up. Something - you know chow mein or a spring roll or something - would dribble all over that napkin. We had these meetings and I always had an agenda. "These are really important things we need to get resolved," I'd say. She would sit there and listen to me and munch away, and then take off on how somebody had pissed her off on the council or how it was going. We never got any business done. I went to lunch with her for a full year, every week, for almost a year, and never got a lick [done]. In fact, toward the end of the year, I'd just go and say "Well..." We went to that same damned Chinese restaurant - kept that thing floating. I think they've torn it down…I hope they burned it down by now! It always smelled like pork fat in that place.

[20] Ruth McFarland represented District 7 (1989 to 1994) and District 1 (1995 to 1998) on the Metro Council.
[21] Patricia McCaig represented District 7 on the Metro Council, 1995 to 1998.
[22] Susan McLain represented District 4 on the Metro Council from 1991 to 2006.

Anyway, so I wasn't getting anywhere with this, and Ruth fired a fellow named Don Carlson,[23] a fellow who you guys ought to interview because he was one of these people who came out of the old CRAG, and probably was one of the more savvy people around as far as administration goes. But she didn't like him. And I said, "What?" She said to me, "I want you to fire him." "Well, he doesn't work for me, Ruth," I said. "What have you got against Don?" She said, "Well, he's a white male," and I said, "So am I." "Well, yeah, but, you know, I kinda have to put up with you. He's the one on the staff." I said, 'Say that again." "He's a white male and he acts like one around me and I don't have to put up with that," and I said, "Well, I don't think that's a good cause to fire anybody, but I guess he's sort of an at will employee so you can do that." She said, "Well, what should I do about that?" I said, "Just fire him. Tell him he's gone." "Well, I can't do that. I'm not going to do that," she said. I said, "Well, you know," you do have access to the attorney, and you could probably ask Dan to do that if you don't want to do your own dirty work." That's literally what I said to her. She said, "Well, that's a good idea." So, by God, she goes back and gets Dan Cooper and tells Dan, "You gotta fire Don." Dan came to me and he said, "Did you know about this?" I said, "Yeah, let me tell you what the conversation was," and "I'm sorry about that" and he said, "Well, goll…Don's a long-timer," and I said, "Well look, go try and talk her out of it." I had a couple people on the council I knew and I went to them and said, "I don't think that's smart," and they went to Ruth and she said "No" and so Don left. They fired him, or he was "let go" and she hired her campaign person. I can't remember her name now, but she absolutely knew squat about anything. She came in and was make chief of staff of the council and proceeded within a year to practically butcher everything that ever happened.

So there was this year that went by that nothing happened. I had my directors. Rena Cusma had given me all of her resignation letters from everybody that worked for her - all of them - and said you can accept them or not (I still have them somewhere, I put them in a drawer) and said, "I'm not going to do that unless someday I have a cause to do it." The Solid Waste director was retiring, so I had to replace him, and I had gotten a lot of bad vibes from people about the Zoo Director, Sherry Sheng.[24] In fact, the union was really after her…didn't like her. A lot of the people didn't like her. But other than that, I thought, "I'm going to wait and see how things go." So I was learning how to work with these people and part of the advice I got was whatever you do, don't make us have to go before the council. All of them did not want to go testify in front of the council. I said, "Why?" "Because they eat us alive. They just beat us up out there. It's no good at all." Okay. So I did all of that. The executive officer used to sit on the council. Rena used to sit up on the dais with them, and I said, "What's the point of that? You're not part of the council. You can't say anything. I'm not going to sit up there with them. I'll come in, make my presentations and have my staff behind me." So I started trying to run it more like you would a regulate chamber kind of function.

So anyway, to make a long story short, I did get the counsel office set up (the legal counsel office) and that resolved the lawsuit thing after we'd spent all that god-damned money. That's about all that I managed to do in that first year. The other thing that I managed to do that first year was I said we gotta take on the whole planning thing – 2040 [Growth Concept].[25] That actually was done before I got into office. They had this 2040 Concept Plan, and after they did

[23] Don Carlson served as Deputy Executive Officer under Rick Gustafson.
[24] Y. Sherry Sheng was the Director of the Washington Park Zoo (later named the Oregon Zoo) from 1988 to 1997.
[25] Metro's 2040 Growth Concept was adopted by the Metro Council December 2005.

the concept plan, they had the Vision Plan.[26] I said, "Gee, you should have done it the other way around, I think." So I got the vision stuff and got that approved, and the thing that I did there was they had this huge, huge complicated vision document. I said, "Get that sucker down to about two pages so everybody can read it. What's the point in having a vision if nobody can find out what it is? So it literally ended up being, I think, capsulated into a sentence and that was, "We want a place where every child could walk to the library and you could see Mount Hood." It's sort of like we wanted clean air, we wanted kid safety, we wanted local services and that sort of summary. Now it's a little bit longer than that, but they kind of got a good vision, I think. Then we had 2040, and it's all of this stuff. I said, "Okay, what about it?" Everybody on the staff said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Well, what are you supposed to do with this thing? I've got plans up the ying-yang that don't go anywhere. We need to actually operationalize this thing."

NS: What is 2040?

MB: Oh, I'm sorry. Somewhere along the road somebody said we ought to have a twenty year plan. In fact, we out to have a forty-year plan. In fact, we ought to have a fifty year plan. So somewhere in the 1990's they stated looking at a long horizon. What was the concept we wanted for what the Portland metropolitan area would look like? They went through a whole bunch of stuff. They had meetings and they had hearings and they had mailings, and they got Starbucks into it. I mean they were handing out DVDs or videos at Starbucks saying, "Give us your answers back.." They got 1,700 responses. It was a pretty good effort. Then they came up with this concept. They said, "Well, you didn't want tow - we wanted to go up instead of out (I mean that's oversimplifying it), and that we would encourage mass transit instead of cars…pretty good ideas, but it was just a bunch of ideas. So I got Andy Cotugno, who was then Director of Transportation Planning, and he had a guy working for him who was a planner. Andy's kind of a transportation guy. He's an expert at transportation, and I said, "I want to emphasize the land use components and I want to take this 2040 process and I'd like you to come back to me in two weeks with a hundred ways to implement." They said, "A hundred ways?" I said, "Yeah, I want to know how to do that. Here's all this. Now, tell me how we can do it. What can we actually do? Can we shut down streams, get rid of bridges, blow up the…I don't know, whatever it is, tell me how we can implement that stuff." Then I told my attorney, "And do it legally," because there's state land use laws we had to follow. I mean…we were not a creature all to ourselves. We had to follow state land laws.

So they went off and they came back with a hundred ways to implement it. I said, "Okay, now take and drop that down to about ten - either the ten most important things or a consolidation of those hundred into ten so that I can actually start talking to local governments about what they're going to have to do." They came up with the functional plans. I think it ended up having nine elements to it. Then I said, "I'm going to go to the council with that and say here's what we need to do, and by the way, some of these are complying with state law like Goal 5 which is taking care of natural areas and riparian areas and implement that. So we're going to go with a growth concept and we're going to look at this.'" So I managed to get that done and also created a land use department. Instead of one planning thing, I separated transportation and land use simply to get the land use stuff highlighted, and then I said, "Later on, we'll probably bring it back together." The guy who was in charge of that (gosh, I'm drawing another blank here)…I said,

[26] Metro's Future Vision Report was adopted by the Metro Council in 1995.

"I need you to do this, and I'm going to give you three years to put it in place." He said, "I'll give you three years and then I'm probably going to leave."

And he gave me three years, and we started implementing it. We were having a great time. This was 1995-1999. The economy was growing…everything was going like crazy. Population was increasing 2.8 percent a year, which is way too much. We were out there doing all kinds of things. I got invited to go to Paris, to Berlin, to Vienna, to Moscow, and to every city in Canada where I gave talks about all of this great stuff we were doing. I was going all over the world talking about this unique thing that Portland had about planning together - regional planning held together and I could stand up and say if you think planning is bad or some sort of communist plan, look at our economy. We're going like crazy! It had nothing to do with the planning part of it, but I didn't say anything to anybody. We were trumpeting the new industries coming in, we got light rail, we were building it over there, we were expanding out [to] the airport, and we were doing all kinds of great things. It was a hot time and it was really good. It was a perfect time to be there and everybody just thought we were the greatest thing since sliced bread. Local governments began to grumble about this. They said wait a minute, you're running right over the top of us. We need to have a bigger role in this thing and I realized that we set the policies, but we didn't have to implement it. The implementation is local - it's the local cities and governments.

So I started going out and talking more to the cities and governments and I said, "Okay, what do you guys want to do here?" I started hearing back, "Well, you're pushing us too hard on this." Washington County, for instance. Portland was a non-player. Portland always thought of itself as the 800 lb. gorilla, which they are. "Yeah, we'll comply," but they didn't care about anybody else, and Vera Katz was the mayor then and she didn't care much about the local jurisdictions out there. Washington County started complaining about this saying, "Wait a minute, this is where all the economy is growing out here and you're ignoring us and we've got to do this Goal 5 stuff…Well, what is that all about?" I said, "Well, it's protecting natural areas and quarters along rivers and beds to keep the flow natural. Why don't you map it for me? Let's map it." Metro's got one of the best GIS systems in the world - they can map anything. I said, "Show me where the tree levels are; show me where the water is; show me where the banks are that you're talking about. Put them on a map and bring them to me." So, god, a couple months later they came in and they rolled out a map that was as big as this wall. We're talking 8ft. by 12 ft. They pinned it up and it was beautiful. It had all these colors and things, and these areas running out there, except right in the middle of it was this great big white thing that looked to me like a pork chop (it was shaped like a pork chop). I said, "What's the white pork chop?" They said, "That's Portland," and I said, "Are you going to fill that in later?" They said, "No. There's nothing there." "What do you mean there's nothing there?" I asked. "Well, there isn't." In a hundred and fifty years, Portland, the city that works, has managed to pave over, fill in, and cover every single natural water area there is, except Johnson Creek [laughs] and the Slough. The only green natural area is Forest Park. But you look at the rest of this town…Eeks! There's nothing left.

One hundred years ago that's what you did. "Oh, that damn streams in the wrong place, let's fill it in, let's divert it, let's cover it over, let's cull it." You've got underground water things around here, but most of this has been filled in. All of the natural areas were cut down to build houses. All the forest is gone. So, there's the big white pork chop and basically Washington County and all these guys are saying, "Look, Portland got to do it, why can't we?" "Because we aren't going

to do that that way any more." So I looked at all these great riparian areas running off the Metro boundary and I said, "We've got to stop planning the way that we're doing it." Our planning under state law required us to have enough land supply for twenty years, and do that every five years. I said, "That's planning at the edge. That's stupid." Because you're out there doing this, and then you're ignoring the fact that this is connected somehow with the rest of the planning. So I said, "Let's plan the whole thing," and my attorney friend Dan said "Boss, you've got constitutional problems." I said, "What?" He said, "That's way beyond your jurisdictional boundaries." Shit! "Well, let's just go ahead and plan everything right out to the Metro boundaries," and Dan said, "Boss, you've got a statutory problem there." And I said, "What's that?" He said, "By law, you can only do every five years enough for twenty." I said, "That's really dumb." Here I am…I've been in this business and I'm thinking, "This is really stupid." So I started pushing the larger concept. I wrote articles in the paper. I went to the council and said, "Let's do the whole thing. We're not doing this right. We've got to actually start tying all this together. We're going to save land." So I went in for the next boundary sort, and I put in twenty-six thousand acres. Andy [Cotugno] and I knew all those guys were going nuts. I want as much land as you can possibly justify. Oh man.

So I took in the entire Damascus area down there and everybody said, "What are you taking in Damascus?" and I said, "Sooner or later, there's going to be development down there. Let's get ahead of it." Everybody said, "It'll take twenty years to get the infrastructure down there," and I said, "It took twenty years to get to Beaverton, but they didn't plan it and Beaverton's a mess. It's a great big long mall. So let's don't do that out there. Let's take the whole area, create some jurisdictional sets down there and start building villages," because I didn't want freeways running through the goddamned thing. I want decent road access, and we've got to create some jobs, so let's do that. Everybody said I was crazy and people still say I'm crazy, and probably the people out in Damascus think I'm crazy, even though they do have a city out there now. But the idea was to get ahead of the game (and not react) and not to get the edge, but to get out and do large planning. So my last couple of years in office was really spent trying to push that idea and I got some pretty good response to that, I think. I don't know what they're doing now. Measure 37 came and kind of screwed up everything. So I didn't have Measure 37 to deal with, which has the restrictions on you have to allow everybody to do whatever the hell they want on their land or pay them not to do it.

The other thing that happened was in solid waste. To go back to where I was going in the first place, I called the guy from Waste Management that was running the local thing in my office and around, and said, "You know what, we're paying you way too much to run this stuff." He said, "Well, we have a contract," and I said, "Well, I want to change the contract." He said, "Think the Blazers will win tonight," and I said, "No, I'm serious about this." He said, "I think they will, they've got this…." He wasn't going to talk to me. He said, "I've got a business deal. I'm not going to change this." I was very frustrated and I turned and said, "You know, you see that garbage can over there? That trash can. I want to get the waste down so low that all you're going to get is that and that's going to cut...." He said, "Yeah, right." So I started on this rip. I said, "I want every incentive you can possibly think of to get waste out of the stream. I want to divert stuff, I want to get these transfer stations and resort these things." By the way, the other day a guy got caught, I don't know if you saw it in the paper - one of the big guys in this got caught because they were cheating on the numbers because the way it works, if you pull the waste out, you get a reduced rate. You know, people cheat on anything. It irritates me.

But we managed to start making an impact, and they actually came back and said, "Okay." Actually it was two things. They wanted to get the trucking contract, too. I said, "I will never give you that contract," because we had a twenty-year with John Grey and Company and I said, "You ain't gonna ever get that contract as long as I'm alive. Not 'til you bring those rates down." So we came in and they went from $70 down to $55 or $50 per ton, which was a huge savings. You know, in fact, I made the headlines in the Waste Management newspaper. There's actually a newspaper for garbage haulers or something like that. "Burton Brings Waste Management to Its Knees." It wasn't quite that good, but I felt good. I still have that headline somewhere. So we changed that contract, got those dollars down and gave them an opportunity to bid on the trucking, which they didn't get anyway. [laughs] So I don't know who's doing that right now, but that was a major change. We saved a hundred million dollars in that process, and it gave the council the opportunity to shift those rates to do something else with them, which was to pay for parks.

The parks that we had were inherited from Multnomah County.[27] When Metro was put into place in the first place, they asked for parks. Actually, Multnomah County was trying to get rid of some of their functions, so they said, "Oh take the parks." So the parks shifted over, and when I first got into office, they hadn't finalized that, so I went down to the county and my people said "What are we talking about taking over these parks? Where's the money?" Well, there was about a million dollars in reserve, and then a few dollars that came in off the people who used to use the big parks out at Blue Lake, and of the governmental income that came from that (one of those was a golf course, Glendoveer), and we got a pretty good chunk of money off of that. But it wasn't enough to operate the parks. We were going to go and put in a regional park. I said, "We ought to buy more land before it's all gone." They had taken a shot at that before and it failed. So I said, "Let's put a new bond measure out."[28] So we put a $135 million bond measure out, and we'll tried to go with friendly groups and find all these people that wanted to save this little creek and these little waterways and all these other things around here. We put it on the ballot and it passed, which was the first one in the country that had passed like that. We got the $135 million dollar and we ended up buying like 8,000 acres, which is better than we'd thought.

So we then had to administer those [purchased areas] in addition to the other parks. I wanted to free up some of the garbage money to allow them to take a piece of that to put back into parks. I had to go around and talk my head of at the newspapers to get them to understand. They said, "Why are you using garbage money to operate parks?" I said, "Because it's the only source of money we have." We had no other. I said, "Other than the zoo base, we had no other money." Well, they were really worried about that. "Why don't you go out and create your own tax?" I said, "Have you tried to do that in this environment?" So they went along and the newspaper endorsed that [effort]…and we sort of took care of that. They're still in that problem, even with this measure that just passed [Measure 26-80][29], they still don't have enough operational money to run all the parks that they've got. So you've got a bunch of land, but you've got it locked up because you can't do anything on it. Which is okay, but they should make some of them more accessible.

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[27] The parks were transferred from Multnomah County to Metro in 1993.

[28] Metro Bond Measure 26-26 authorized Metro to issue $135.6 million dollars in general obligation bonds in order to "preserve open space for parks, trails and wildlife…[and] protect fish."

[29] Metro Bond Measure 26-80 [November 2006] authorized Metro to issue $$227.4 million dollars in general obligation bonds in order to purchase of natural areas throughout the region, along with a limited number of capital improvement projects in local parks and neighborhoods.

The other thing was the zoo. Sherry Sheng was highly thought of on the outside and poorly thought of on the inside. Her staff just thought she was awful. There was still the Friends of the Zoo, although they had become more of an advisory sort of thing, headed by a guy named Don Frisbee, who I knew and who used to be the President of PacifiCorp, and a couple other people on that thing. I went to them and I said, "Okay, I think there's a problem. What do you guys think?" "Well, there's a little rift going on." So, I finally made a decision that I thought we'd be better if we moved Sherry Sheng along. So I called her and said, "You know what, this ain't working." She'd been there about two years. She was shocked. I said, "I need to get somebody in to create a better zoo presence and this other stuff."

So she left and I went out and hired Tony Vecchio, who is now still the Zoo Director. He came in from Rhode Island and I particularly wanted somebody who would emphasize the educational aspect of the zoo, which Sherry didn't want to do. She didn't really care too much about education, and Tony pushed that side of it, so we got that kind of going in a new way. The staff is happier up there, the elephants are happier, the animals are happier - everybody's happier! I'm still not sure if I like zoos, to be honest with you, but it works. We had all these events up there and dah, dah, dah—it's sort of a happy place to be. Well that was fine.

The other thing that we had was the Convention Center and the Expo Center. Well, the Convention Center had been built before I got there. That was actually under the city…Bud Clark had done that piece, and the people that were running that said, "We need to expand it because we're outsized by the competitors." The other thing we got from Multnomah County was the Expo Center, only it didn't look at all like it does right now. There were a bunch of barns out there that were falling down. The most complaints I had in my first year in office were from people – women - who hated the bathrooms out there. I'd get these calls saying, "Clean up these bathrooms." I mean they were just these cement troughs. It was awful. So I say, "Let's figure out a way." Well, serendipitously, Intel was involved with bringing in the Smithsonian. They had taken all the stuff out of the Smithsonian one year, and it traveled around the country. They wanted to site it in Portland. Intel was a major [partner] national thing in that. They said, "We'll come to Portland, [but] we need 150,000 square feet of unobstructed space to do this thing right." The word was around that we were trying to do something with the Expo Center, so Intel comes up and says we'll float you a zero-coupon bond to help you build it if you'll go build it. It was $15 million dollars and I think they gave us the first four up front. I said, "Okay, we'll take it and amateurize the rest and we'll do a revenue [bond] without having to go out for a vote because it's a revenue bond," and we put that package together. We tore down the first set of barns and we built the first one and we build the second one out there, which was a little bit of a risk. At least in preview sites, and I think they've producing something successful.

Then they wanted to go out to the voters and ask for an expansion of the Convention Center, which was going to be $80 million. I said, "You ain't going to pass an $80 million bond measure by the voters out here, but you know, council, if you want to do that, okay." Well, I think there were about two of us that ended up actually supporting that thing and everybody else got out of town! Well of course, the election came and I knew it was going to go down. So I went to the hoteliers and said you guys are the guys that benefit mostly from this, and this thing's going to fail. So I want to up your hotel taxes and we'll use that [the revenue] to expand the Convention Center. I got an agreement from Hal Poland who was the President of the association at that

time, and who owns the Sheraton out at the airport and a couple other things, and he said, "Okay!"

So then, right after the thing went down, I started making the deal to go out and find a way to buy it. [Mayor] Vera Katz and the City of Portland got interested. Vera wanted a baseball team in town. They owned Piggy Park, which is now PGE Park. [Metro] used to run it for them. But the city owned it…they were running it. She wanted to turn it into a major baseball thing. So she wanted a piece of this hotel tax at the same time. So I get a call from Hal Poland saying the City of Portland wants to get in on this deal. I said, "Well okay, they've got a better bond rating that we do, so we can get a better interest rate. Let's all go down and talk to Vera." So I go down and I walk into her office - this was an interesting little thing. In fact a couple of us went down there and it was supposed to be a brown bag. My assistant, Nancy Goss-Duran (who is now the governor's assistant) said it's a brown bag. I said, "Okay great, should I take a lunch?" She said, "No, I called over there they said they'll have something there for you." So we get in this room and Steve Janick who was an attorney in town representing this effort to put the baseball team in town was there (Vera was in Council with Rod Monroe, Metro Councilor). I said, "Steve, what's this all about?" "Well, I better wait until Vera gets here." So we chatted a while. We were just sitting there. It's noon. Vera comes in, sits down and says, "Okay, I'm sorry boys to keep you waiting." She always called everybody "boys." A couple of minutes later an assistant came in the side door and puts a napkin in front of her, a cloth napkin, and puts down a plate of fruit, cottage cheese, a glass of water, and some cookies or something like that. She proceeds to eat and we're all sitting there. I didn't mind, it was a little mix-up, but what was interesting - and this is what I'll never forget about that meeting—she had an apricot on that plate and this is like May and I love apricots and I kept looking at that apricot, and I finally reached over and took it and ate it. She says, "Oh, did you guys want something to eat?" I thought, "No, that's okay." But here's the deal…she had put together a whole set of things she wanted out of this tax, including extending Fareless Square all the way over to the Lloyd Center, which was okay with me. But it also would have made one bond measure which would have paid for what they were going to do to improve the stadium as well as the Expo thing. I said, "Whoah. These gotta be two separate measures. If that thing fails, I don't want to get our dollars dragged back from us because you guys are going to take it back from us, and I'm not sure the hoteliers care very much about that [baseball stadium]. They're really interested in people coming in for the conventions. "Okay," she said, "Whatever you want to do." So Steve Janick said, "Okay, we'll do two separate measures." So we did two separate measures, two separate issues. We put the bond measure together on a revenue bond, based on the taxes that were coming in from that. We expanded the Convention Center, and the history of course of PGE Park is we still don't have a baseball deal in town. We spent a lot of money over there, and I still don't think they have made a good deal yet. So thank God I had the foresight, which was based on having that apricot, which probably gave me enough sugar to make me think I don't want to go into this deal with her on that stadium over there!

So little things like that would happen. You never know how things are going to go. But what else? What are the components that we did? Probably a lot things I can't think of, but I think the main thing for me as Executive Officer was, I pushed on Governor Kitzahber and then Kulongowski when he came into office, to start looking at land-use planning on a much larger scale. Everybody would say, "Yes, yes, yes," and nobody would do anything about it. I went down and tried to get a bill introduced in the legislature and it never went anywhere. I tried to get Kitzhaber to get us in and he didn't. Now I know John really well and he just said, "Yeah we

should do that," but nothing happened. As a result of that this [Measure] 37. I don't know if we could have prevented [Measure] 37, but we sure could have gone a long way to prevent that from happening. Now they're of course having a committee, which oddly enough is called the Big Look, which I've sent some information down to from time to time. So we're in a different era in looking at land-use planning, but I was there at the best possible time. I mean, we were growing [and] we had lots of opportunities to do things, and everybody thought planning was the cat's meow.

NS: Well, it seems like your service at Metro spans much of this current incarnation…

MB: Yeah, and even before that.

NS: So, can you identify some of the main targets and things you hoped to achieve, and maybe analyze successes and disappointments in meeting those to provide an idea about how successful Metro has been overall in identifying its chief concerns?

MB: Well, I think the current charter, the 1995 charter - well actually that's not the current one because the other thing I did of course, was when I left office, I eliminated my office - the executive officer. That was the other thing that I realized as I was going through. What wasn't working is you've had this council over here which is separate and an executive officer over here, and the argument was who got to lead. I used to say, "You elect leaders and you appoint managers." So I got elected. I'm a leader. I'm going to be out there in front and the council really resented that. I had to back way off of that because there's a natural tendency, I think, for the press and the public to say, "Who's the chief guy?" and that's me, so that's who they went to. The first couple years in there, Ruth and those people, when she wasn't eating her spring rolls, would complain to me that the media never came to her [as presiding officer of the Metro Council]. In fact, I went to the reporter that covered that thing [the Metro Council] (boy it must have been a great assignment) and I said, "Do me a favor, would you go get some reports from Ruth." I literally told him, and he said "She never says anything worthwhile." Actually, he said, "You're always very colorful," and I said, "No, no, no, go talk to her please." He tried, it didn't… I mean it was that kind of stuff that was unfortunate. It was just kind of a rift. They [the Council] had their staff and we understood their staff was growing, and at budget time, they'd try to take staff away from me. My PR person, our Media Relations person, was just super. They were so jealous of her that they were going to eliminate her position and move it to the Council and she quit. She said, "I'm not working for those dodos." (I think she's now the public affairs director for Providence or something). She was really great and that was a loss. I then I started watching and I thought this is really stupid. This should really be reorganized. I said, "You've got duplicate staff. This should all be your staff. I mean my finance staff is yours, my attorney….I fixed the attorney thing, can't we fix the rest of this. Ugh!"

So I finally decided that the best way to do it was to simply create more of a city manager council kind of government and get away from the executive. So the proposal was to in fact reduce the council by one, get rid of the executive officer position, and have the executive officer become a presiding officer, so that that leader of the group could actually sit in on the council discussions and set policy and then hire a Chief Operating Officer (a COO) to manage the day-to-day stuff. I don' know if it's working. It takes a while for those kind of things to get into place, but I think it's better than it used to be. They don't have as many public squabbles at

least. Maybe it just got a little bit duller up there. I think some public debate is good. Some of it's good. Some of it gets pretty petty. So that was something else I did.

In order to get that past, Jon Kvistad, who was the guy who was so jealous of everything I did (he was jealous of everybody), said "Oh you're doing that…I know what you're doing. You're going to eliminate your office so you'd be able to run for this new office and extend yourself." He thought that I proposed this because there's term limits on executives of two terms. I had absolutely no interest in it. In fact, I was so ready to be out of there by that time. I said, "No, I'm going to teach at Portland State part-time or full-time. I'm going to be getting out of here." I had already started talking to guys over here [Portland State University] about a faculty appointment. So I wrote in there, literally in that measure, that I could not succeed myself. I mean I actually had to put that in there, which was stupid. Then I said, "Well let's do the same for you guys." They didn't put it in.

Now to get back to that. To me, the 1995 charter, which is again in the current charter, says that the primary purpose of Metro is to do planning…that's what's unique about it. There isn't any other government in the country that I know of that as an elected government has that single responsibly of doing planning. To me, planning is important because it gives you an opportunity to get ahead of the curve, to look ahead, and figure out where you're going and be deliberate about it, rather than sort of happenstance about it. It says in there [the charter] that the council will provide the resources to do that [planning]. Of course, you don't make money by planning, so you've got that conundrum in there and it's always been the problem. How do you pay for what you need? You need a world's premier planning staff. You want the best possible people, the best resources, the best technology to make those decisions that you're got to, and you have to pay for that somehow. So if you don't have a revenue stream, you don't have a tax base to do that. You have to take it off of the revenue streams you have which, for the most part, was garbage and some of the other functions that we had. So you're taking away money from those functions. And we had this annual dance - you know, we had a $400 million budget and 1,900 employees when I started there and seven directors of these various things, and I said, "Okay, we're going to do cost allocations." In other words, "You're a planner and you need $3 million this year to do your stuff, and you're the garbage guy and you're making 260 and your net on this is five and a half. I'm taking three to give to her because I need to do this." And they would go "What? I can't…then how am I going to get the recycling programs?" I said, "Okay, well let's negotiate." It was a very bloody, deliberate, and actually healthy process because everybody knew exactly what was being spent on what and how it worked. You went through this process that helped you hone what your priorities were and things like that.

So I think that was successful in getting the focus on the planning stuff. The services are important, but the charter says that's what you do and I think that's what makes it, because anybody can run a zoo, anybody can run a garbage system really, anybody can run parks - I mean any level of governing. You think of a million ways to do that, and all that's great and they are regional…yada, yada. But planning good stuff - thinking ahead - is really important. I was there at a time when we were having the fastest growth the state had ever experienced. It was a pot boiling, and we were just the cauldron trying to figure out how to do it at that time. You look back on it and say there are some things I would have done completely differently, and it took me a while, as I mentioned, to go like "Oops, we're just doing the edge and not the whole thing." But we were successful, I think, in getting the public to understand the importance of that generally, and I think that was very important. We did improve a lot of facilities. We upgraded

the Expo Center tremendously along with the Convention Center. The Zoo was improved. The parks were expanded. I have eight thousand acres out there that I can say I had something to do with [in terms of] putting that in public hands. That's a good legacy. If I had a legacy, it would be probably the best part of it, plus the planning concept, which is in there. So I left office thinking I succeeded in doing what I wanted to do. I hope the public felt the same way about it. I think generally they did, if they cared, and a lot of times people don't care about that stuff. So those were the successes I had. I think you also wanted to know about the failures.

NS: Sure.

MB: Well, I think for me the failures were not being able to get the state to change its planning process to modernize it [to meet] the needs of today. I tried to do that. I didn't try hard enough obviously, because it didn't happen. I mean I should have done something more, which would have potentially deflected [Measure] 37. So now we're playing catch-up ball instead. So my own concept of planning ahead failed. I have to accept that. Anyway, it wasn't my fault, but I was somebody who knew what the problem was and didn't do enough about it to get everybody's attention. So I regret very much not having been able to do that.
I [also] wish we were doing more waste reduction. That's the other thing. We did a lot of recycling and we said, "Wow, we're out there doing all this stuff," and we never really got to the point of trying to get to some ideas (like the Europeans who are really good at this reducing waste). You know it's like if you buy a TV set in Germany, when it breaks you have to take it back to them and they have to deal with it. That's not exactly waste reduction but it has a lot to do with packaging.

The other thing is transportation. We managed to…we wanted to extend the line down at I-205 South through Milwaukie. We spent a lot of time on that. It got blown out of the water by some folks down there who thought we were a communist organization with Black Hawk helicopters coming in. They managed to get the mayor of Milwaukie recalled over that thing because of where the line was going to go. So I said, "Let's run the line somewhere else and stop offending people. and we'll figure out a way. There's an economic value to this." So they literally had this little community down there that just said, "No!" So I said, "Okay, we're not going to do that." My staff came and said, "Oh, you can't not do that." I said, "No. They said no. Let's go for the alternative." "What's that?" I said, "Build a freeway down there. I want you to design a road that'll give me the capacity to take the cars that will be on that road because we can't build light rail down there." I went to the JPACT and I said, "I want to start moving money into Clackamas County to build a road down there." "Where will the road be?" "Well, right down the same place the light rail was going to go, but it'll be bigger and more intrusive."

So we started doing that. We planned for two years, and I used to go to all the council meetings down in Milwaukie with a new mayor and a new council down there and the Clackamas County Commissioner and everybody who was involved in that, and I said, "Here's where we're coming. We're coming at ya. We're gonna build you the best god-damned road in the Willamette." "Well, where's it going to be?" "Well here it is." [Gasps] So they finally came back- they literally came back- the same group that had blown us out of water a few years earlier. In fact Andy Cotugno called me and he said, "We've got a delegation here from Milwaukie." "Really? Well, who's that" "Well, so-and-so and so-and-so and so-and-so." And I said, "Those assholes?" That was actually what I thought. Although I had a feeling they would come back. So I said fine, and they came in and said, "We'd like to have you put the light rail up

on the agenda." I said, "Over my dead body. You guys blew this thing out of the water. You didn't want it. You beat up my staff. You said nasty things in the press about Metro and everything else. I ain't going there." I refused to bring it up and I said, "You're not going to find anybody on this council who is going to do it either." I didn't know that. "Well…Now I will, however, entertain the idea if you guys will hold a press conference. You call in all the media and you say that you want to have the light rail down there, and that you would like to have Metro consider that." They did, and now we're going to be building that line down there finally. I mean we'd lost three or four years of funding to do this stuff because of those people. So it was funny to pull a bluff. I really was. I bluffed through the whole thing. I had no idea what was going to go on. God, the last thing I wanted to do was build a road down there. I didn't want to do that, but I had to do something about it, and I didn't know if these guys would come back. I didn't do this to pull them back in, but I kept getting signals that they didn't like what was happening, and I said, "Well, let's go to the public." So I had public meetings. I remember going out there one time to about a hundred and fifty people, which is a big crowd down there. I had my guys put maps up of where the highway was going to go and everybody's going, "What? Oh that's going to destroy…." "Oh really? Really? Gee, talk to your mayor." So people started doing that, so that was kind of one little neat interesting success.

The other failure was that we didn't go across the river, and that wasn't us, it was them. But the problem was that we pitched it that Portland light rail was going to come to Vancouver. Well, wongo bongo, people in Vancouver don't want Portland to have a light rail over there. However, I thought Royce Pollard who was the mayor, still is the mayor over there, and he wanted light rail over there. I said, "What you ought to do is say that Vancouver needs to build a light rail and you need to build it from Vancouver up to State Road 500 over there, take it over and have it come down I-205 and connect down to the airport because most of your people are using that system to get to the airport. Then if you build that…Gosh, we may as well go ahead and run it across the river to connect." So that's kind of what they're pursuing over there, but we failed to do that. A vote over it failed. I should have paid more attention…should have been more involved. You know we were in the heyday of having it all work so well over here that we thought it would work over there and didn't pay attention to that. So that's a failure that didn't happen and that'll happen someday and it needs to happen. You know, we go to Expo Center and it's pointing right at those guys, but they need to do their own light rail - get it set up, get it going and we'll connect. Now the thing we could do actually that would help them is that we could jointly do the funding because that would help bring down their costs over there. So there are things that we could do to do that. So that's kind of pending out there.

The other thing is we spent billions of dollars on roads while I was in office and nobody ever…we were once accused, "All you're doing is spending money on light rail." Yes, but we also had to spend money on roads because that money came in and it was dedicated to roads. So we spent federal and state money on all kinds of roads. Roads are extremely expensive. The [Highway] 26 expansion, for instance, was on the books when I got into office and they just finished it because they had to build up. They had to save over several funding cycles to get enough money to do it. But all we are doing is building to capacity. I'd started looking at maybe having dedicated truck lanes and move 'em east. Maybe you ought to take the freight trains out of downtown and move them east and connect over to those highways and stage your timing for people to move on roads, put in tolls, and put in more incentives to people not to drive. A little bit of that went on, but that's a huge issue that I don't think we ever…that I never felt comfortable we got at, and I don't think we've had at it yet. So as much public transit as we were

building…most of it was on the east side, not enough of it was on the west side. The one little thing that came in one day was Richard Brandman (who was my light rail guy) came in and said, "Guess what?" I said, "What?" and he said, "They want to build a commuter train from Wilsonville to Beaverton."

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]

So he [Richard Brandman] came in and said they wanted to build a commuter train. [on an existing heavy rail line] I said, "Geez, this'll get traffic off of I-5 and get people from Wilsonville directly into the high-tech areas and it'll connect to light rail." Well, my guys did a preliminary look at that and they said, "Well, this ain't going to have a whole lot of ridership on it," and I said, "You know, if you can get anybody in Washington County to talk about anything but roads, go for it." So just a couple weeks ago, Senator Smith came down with a big announcement. They got this money and here they got the Washington County commissioners and the mayor of Beaverton [Rod Drake] and they're all together and this is the greatest thing since sliced bread. I'd say we've achieve something there, because we got people in Washington County to talk about something other than roads. God knows how successful that thing will be, but I hope it's reasonably successful.

The problem over there is that Portland, if you look at it, is this great big white pork chop that had the convenience of being able to be laid out in a grid system. You can go to the east side and go up and down this way. It makes it great for buses. You get up here in these hills and it makes it harder. You get over on that side where two things have happened. The terrain is different. It's like this [hilly] and secondly, they built a lot of cul-de-sacs. It's hard to drive a bus through a cul-de-sac. You know you don't want to turn around. So the bus service can't be that good over there. Light rail works reasonably well, but there's a difference in the transportation mode. So what can you do in an area that is very car oriented, like Washington County is. Well, you may not be able to do much, but what we can do is try to get more people over here to use bikes, walk, pedal, buses, and all that other stuff. That helps at least relieve some of the traffic problems, but those are continuous and ongoing and they're going to be major problems for us.

I think Metro is doing a reasonably good job of trying to do as much about that as they possibly can, but really it's about changing attitudes. It's changing people's minds about it. It also means that we're developing a lot of high rises (for instance, in the Pearl District). If you look, there's a huge difference. I've spent a lot of time up in Canada. The mayor of Vancouver at the time was Michael Harcourt and [he was] later on the premier of British Columbia. I got to know him… great guy. He really is the one who developed most of downtown - got the development functions going for downtown [Vancouver] British Columbia. Now there's a huge difference between the American attitude towards government and the Canadian attitude. The difference is that we had a revolution and they didn't. In our revolution, our system of government was set up in 1789 with a purpose - the whole Bill of Rights is to keep the government at bay. So we have this sort of this perception that government is the bad guy… it shows up all the time. "No government. We don't want it, you know. Government can't do it. We shouldn't…." Up there [in Canada], they evolve their society with government…[the government] is very much involved in helping them do it and they sort of look at government as, "Okay, let's go solve problems." So when they started building downtown Vancouver, the first thing that Harcourt said was, "We're not going to have the freeways come into the town any more." Well, if you go to Vancouver right now, you run out of freeway right at the edge of town, and they do not build

any more roads down there. So they started building up around it. But they had development downtown. If you look at what they're doing and you look at that development that we've got in the Pearl, there's one huge difference - no kids here. They [the Canadians] build communities down there. They've got day care centers. They've got schools. They've got community functions. They've got parks right inside of there. We don't do that. We're building basically places for people to come in and have a great weekend and drive out to their jobs somewhere else. If they've got kids, they're going to have to take them to these little tiny parks down there. So we missed the community building concept of particularly trying to connect people with their jobs close by.

So now what we've done is Portland has reversed itself. It seems to me like Portland has become the bedroom community. It used to be that Washington County was. People came here for the jobs and now there's as many people going out there for the jobs and going both ways. So we need to do a better job of connecting jobs. I'm worried about Portland not creating enough jobs of substance. We've got the industrial sanctuary over in northeast, which is disappearing and the council, the city council this time, said they purposely wanted to turn it into more service-oriented functions. I said, "Those are $11 an hour jobs and you're kicking out $18-20 jobs." And where are they going? They're going out to the perimeters and places like that. Plus, they never wanted to put a truck access into North [Portland], because everybody hates the freeway over there. I do, too. The freeway is on the east side to accommodate the railroads. Back in the sixties when they built that freeway [I-84], it was built to make sure you didn't mess up the rail yards down there. Well, that was a mistake made forty years ago. I don't know if it can be corrected or not, but the last thing you want to do is chase away those jobs that were down there, which they've done because nobody wanted to give the trucks that needed to come in and out of there access down that way. Truck movement is becoming very expensive. In LA and Santa Barbara, for instance, it is cheaper to fly freight from Santa Barbara to LA than it is to truck it. So we've got to start coming to grips with what are some of the cost implications of the stuff that we're doing around here. And I don't know if we've looked at that enough.

That's one of my things, I admit, that I don't know what's going on over there right now about that, but for me, in the time I was in office, we didn't do enough of that. We didn't look at…we didn't get the freight cost. We didn't look at how we could find alternate routes for that. We didn't really. Well, I did. I used to yell like crazy. I used to go to Vera Katz (who I've known for years when she was mayor), and I'd say, "You know, what are you doing? You've got to start talking about your industrial sanctions for getting jobs over there." She'd, you know, sort of munch on her carrots or her apricots, or whatever it was at the time (she always seemed to be eating when I talked to her) and basically ignore that. I'd say, "You're losing jobs out there." "Oh well. You know, we're going to create a creative class and we're going to do all that stuff," and I say, "Yeah, that's great, but there ain't that many jobs in the creative class. I mean it's great, but how many cartoonists do you need or whatever it is." At some point it's making stuff and researching stuff, and you ought to be building research facilities out on Delta Park instead of Targets, or whatever the hell they've got out there. [They] just never took me seriously. Well, I don't know…they took me seriously, but it was probably because I had an instinct and didn't have enough back up to it.

John Fregonese - the guy who was the land use planner [at Metro] who stayed with me for three years and is now at Cal-Thorpe Fregonese in town here - does planning in Brazil and Paris and all kinds of stuff and they're really famous. He was really one of the most brilliant planners and

conceptual people around, and I was really lucky to have him in there for the three years that I had him. He used to outline for me the dangers of not doing holistic planning, and that's the wrong term, but you know, that the economic aspect of this has to be [considered] and a lot of land-use, in fact didn't take in the economy of it. The transportation didn't take up the aspect, "What's the impact on jobs and the economy?" You should do that, and so I pushed on that. Now Metro's kind of getting into to trying to do some, but I said, "It's not economic planning. Planning is an economic function." The whole time I was in the legislature I never figured out why the state had a department of economic development. What we should be doing is… agriculture, forestry, fishing, all this stuff we're doing is economic development. What we should be doing is finding out within those sectors what they need to help them do their business effectively, and hopefully, substainably. Rather than have a separate department that goes out and runs all over the country trying to get people to bring in their fig factories here or something like that - I don't know how useful that is. Instead, focus on going to the existing businesses that we have and finding what they need to do to be successful and sustainable.

So we approached economic development like it was a thing. It's not a thing. It's all the stuff that we do. This university is about economic development. Hell, we generate about a billion [dollars] worth of economy for the city (or for the region) here annually. We've got three thousand employees here. We've got ideas that come out of here. We've got students that go out and end up being contributors in the community. So there's a huge economic engine here. So higher education is an economic factor. You don't need a department of economic development to come in and say, "Well we ought to have education because it's good for the economy." No, we're already doing that anyway. Sorry. Give me half the salaries that they're spending down in the department of economic development, give it to the university to hire researchers, and I'll make you more money that the state would ever make in about five years. That's got nothing to do with what you want to talk to me about, so I'll stop.

NS: Looking back on all your years connected with Metro, have you seen a lot of changes in the vision, emphases, or the functioning and efficiency within the council?

MB: Yeah, I think there were probably sort of three stages. One was that earliest time when nobody had a clue what we were doing and we were sort of trying to figure it out. Because we didn't have a home-rule charter, it was really statutory and we were kind of fumbling around. Rick Gustafson was a pretty strong leader (executive) on that, so he did a lot of things to get that together. That was one piece. Then the next piece was kind of a middle piece, I guess, which started when they finally got a home-rule charter. 1992 is when the next charter was [passed], but it didn't go into effect until 1995. There was this whole period where they went from twelve councilors to thirteen. The council was stretching out and being much more assertive than the previous council. Rena Cusma was the executive.[30] That second council ended up practically killing each other. So that was the second phase, and I think they probably didn't do much, quite frankly. The first group did a lot because it was new. They were getting in place and we did some stuff. The second group came in and just kind of sat around and didn't know what to do, and didn't have a charter and fought with each other. That's my view. That's a very generalized scope.

[30] Rena Cusma served as Executive Officer of Metro from 1987 to 1994.

In 1995, with the new charter going into effect, it reduced the number of councilors and we were in a high-growth period of time. We had the necessity to do the land-use planning and we shifted the emphasis very much to land-use planning. Early on, other than the urban growth boundaries (I mentioned we flew over the area and got it approved), land use planning was this after thought. That was 1978-1980. From 1980-1990, Oregon was in the toilet. We had the worst recession on the planet. There was a recession nationally, but actually, there were less people in Oregon in 1985 than there was in 1984. People left because there were no jobs. The Reagan administration raised the interest rates. The interest rates in 1980 were in 15-20 % and of course, the thing that is most affected by interest rates is housing. So nobody buys houses, which means nobody needed wood, and where does the wood come from? Wood came from Oregon. Then the spotted owl and everything else came in, so the timber industry crashed. Well that was most of our jobs. Agriculture in the country kept going, but we had nothing else. There was no high-tech in those days to back us up.

So we were going out in search of some new thing. So during the '80s and up until '93 or '94, there wasn't anything to do. Well, Intel moved here during that period of time because there was cheap land, cheap water, and cheap labor, which was what they needed. They liked the idea that you could have some certainty in the land use plan. Well, it was all that cheap land up here. You could buy a house out here - three-story, brand-new, modern, great house, $60,000. So all of a sudden everybody goes, "Whoah, there's all that cheap land." Then we started saying, "Let's go out and encourage the high-tech industry," which, by the way, I think by 1998 or so, employment in the electronics sector outpaced employment in the wood-product sector. So there was a rubicon - a big, huge, sea change - that occurred in the metropolitan area and probably affected the rest of Oregon because of that shift in the economy from a natural resources state (which we still are), to this overburdening growth that occurred in high-tech. So everybody comes to Oregon. You know, there're these great jobs. It changed the population. A lot of very smart people came in. Already educated people came here and wanted to find a place for their kids to get educated, and we had demand.

So we suddenly filled up the urban growth boundary. From 1995-2000, roughly (my first term in office), I would guess that the population increased about 200,000 or something like that in the metropolitan area. All of a sudden, where there was an abundance of very cheap land and very cheap housing, the prices started going up and the land started filling up and we were building 3,500 to 4,000 square foot behemoths (I never could figure out what people did in those big houses except play with their toys). We went from average lot sizes of like 1,700 square feet. or less in 1990, to the average house size going up to 3,600 or 3,700 square feet. So we were not only building a lot, but building great big things. Everybody wanted a yard around them, but guess what…we were running out of land. So the pressure on land use by 1995 was much greater than it had been during the whole previous time of Metro. That's why I went and said, "Now that we got that great concept plan, we gotta put it in place. We gotta do something about this, but we've also got to emphasis it. So I created the Land Use Department that I put Fregonese in charge of, separating it [the function] from transportation (subsequently, I think they're back together now in the one unit, which makes some sense), as we had to emphasize that. I had to go out and say this is a big deal.

My election in 1995 revolved around the urban growth issue - how far were we going to move the urban growth boundary. My answer to that was I didn't have a clue. It was dependent on what we really wanted to do with the land. The 2040 stuff was there, and we had to implement it.

I spent $350,000 getting elected, which was a huge amount of money. The Metro district I ran in is three times the size of a congressional district. I had to get people in Clackamas County and Washington County - the constituency is huge. You're talking a million and a half people. So those issues coming on shifted what Metro was doing, [that is] much more to land use planning while keeping the transportation [considerations]. I used to say, "You make a transportation decision, you made a land-use decision. You make a land-use decision, you made a transportation decision. So we gotta connect those two and beat that drum." I think, at least during the time from 1995 to 2003 when I was in office [as executive officer), that was the dominant question. Now what's happened is this shift. Measure 37 came in and I think Metro was looking for something else to do.

NS: What do you see as that emphasis before 1995?

MB: Garbage, zoos, service functions, spending the money that came in on roads, and to some extent, trying to put the light rail stuff in. You know, there was some light rail activity going on. The first light rail we built on the west side was in 1986. I was in the legislature at that time, and we were planning the west side one, so that was definitely going on and Metro was the lead on that. Metro set up the district planning and then TriMet took it on and got the glory for opening the roads. But Metro did all the hard work on that stuff. The planners found the routes, and did all the hearings and got the local public [input] into that. So they were doing a lot of that. You know, the east side light rail, the Max, originally was built to relieve traffic. What we discovered was people wanted to live next to it, so economic development started occurring. So when we built the west side, we changed. They flew me out there and they said, "This is where the route's going to go," and I said, "Well, there's nobody out here," and they said, "That's right." I said, "That's good because that's where we want people to go. We want to start building around these corridors where we'll have transportation instead of them scattered all over the place without transportation.

So Orenco Station and all these things started getting built around here and then what was supposed to be Nike Woods, [an area] Phil Knight screwed us on, was to be built along there, so you could have housing and jobs close by with access into that light rail station. So it became an economic driver, so that was certainly in place before this took place. But the emphasis on that was accelerated because of the land being filled up. A lot of this stuff was done - fighting with each other, suing each other, trying to figure out what the zoo was doing, putting together some recreational facilities and stuff like that. I don't think too much went on other than the light rail. That's not to demean anybody over there. I just don't think the emphasis was there. Now they're kind of into this. They've taken Goal 5 as a mandatory function and dropped it as a voluntary one (they call it "Nature in the Neighborhoods" or something, which is cute). We'll see how that works. They have to do a lot more work with local governments. [Measure] 37 is a bear to 'em, so they all kind of shy way from it, I think, over there. They've got this new parks bill measure just passed, so that'll be an exciting thing for them to do. But the land-use thing is nowhere near as intense as it was when I was able to do things without the problem.

NS: Back in '78, '79 when the current incarnation of Metro begins, the merging of the two previous groups, do you see it as something new, something innovative?

MB: No. I think what was new was the concept of electing people to run that government. Across the country there was like 300 or 400 councils of government, they call them.

NS: Had they all been appointed?

MB: Yeah, most councils of governments across the country were made up of elected officials. There were mayors or county commissioners who came together. The incentive was that there was some federal money that was thrown in for highways, so they would get together, and they did some other services and developed over the years. The Mid-Willamette Valley Council actually got into some social services at one time. So it was a way to collectively share. If they were really good, they would all be able to share their revenue sources, as well as their jurisdictional things to accomplish a common goal. The evidence of that is that when you start talking about different jurisdictions, you come to the conclusion that the road doesn't end at the city limits, it goes somewhere. So it's in my best interest to talk to you because my road is going to run up to where you are, and we ought to make this make sense. A little of that went on, in the sense that we were on all the time. There was a lot of that going on. In fact, there was a book called *The Terrible Thirteen-Thirteen*, which was published out of Chicago by some guys…I don't know - the Posse Comitatus or something, that thought all of this "councils of government" stuff was a plot to eventually turn us over to the United Nations. It was just this far-fetched idea. They particularly feared…you know, the Constitution doesn't set up councils of government (it doesn't set up counties either). In fact, the constitution doesn't even set up a democracy. The constitution sets up a republic. But these guys are out there. So there's this sort of this fear of those sort of things, but it was reasonably successful in the metropolitan area here, enough to sort of say, "Well, we do need something like that, but we really ought to have it elected."

So the unique thing about it was we were going to directly elect that government to do it. That is still unique. I think we're still the only one. I think the closest we've come to that is Minneapolis. There, the governor appoints all those people, including the executive and they keep going back and forth whether it should be elected or not. I've been on Minnesota Public Broadcasting eight years in a row. NPR up there would call up and say, "We've got an issue up here to elect the council. What's your view?" One year I'd say, "You should do it" and the next I'd say, "Don't do it." I've probably had more contradictory viewpoints on that public radio station just because by the time I got through, I didn't know about the best way to do it. It works pretty good here, but that is unique. That was innovative.

The other thing is that throwing in the ability to have services that they would have control over. That's somewhat innovative to give a regional body authority over solid waste. That's not done very many places. There are garbage metropolitan districts that do just garbage, but you sort of put it in as a mix, and that was innovative. I don't know if it was smart to do, but what it does allow you to do (if you start mixing all those regional services) is if you can begin to blend your dollars [and] resources from that, then you can actually emphasize anything that you want to. If garbage is making a lot of money, which it does, you can take a chunk of that and try to get people to recycle and reduce and that stuff. But you can also maybe run a park with it without having to add any additional taxes. So that's kind of innovative, but you know, the elected aspect is the thing that is the most unique, I think.

NS: Looking more at your service personally, what have you taken away from your time with Metro?

MB: Oh, God, less hair! Probably a set of ulcers. Well, actually, I learned a lot. Maybe that took place over a longer period of time, but I think that particularly while I was in the council originally, I learned a lot right away. You know, that was the first elected office I held and I found out that people have got their own agendas. So how do you get people to work together? I didn't figure it out. I still haven't particularly figured it out, but I have some idea how to do it and one of those things is to read Lincoln. Have you ever read Lincoln's cabinet notes?

NS: No.

MB: The guy's a master. He would take Seward, who was his Secretary of State, I think, and Seward really wanted to be president (most of Lincoln's cabinet people wanted to be president and didn't like Lincoln), but Lincoln picked some good people, he thought and Lincoln had this thing about going in at one cabinet meeting bringing up a subject. He'd say, "Well maybe we ought to think about buying Alaska," or whatever it was—that was later on…but emancipation. "We ought to emancipate the slaves." "Oh, my god! No, no no." He'd come back the next week and say, "You know, Secretary Seward your idea about emancipation is a pretty good one. I've been thinking about it and I think I can buy into it if we do…." Of course Seward's over there, "Oh, it was my idea." Well he was opposed to it the week before. He had an incredible ability to take himself out of having to be the person in charge.

So I learned that to get the most done, you just back off and say, "Hey, there's some ideas out there. Let's give it to you. Let me help you. How do I make it successful?" because I get what I want, which is the deed. I don't have to have the glory. I mean, you kind of want that, but it doesn't come to anything if you don't get it done. So one of the things I learned over a period of time was to deal with people in a different way, like backing off and saying, "Okay, I'm gonna empower you to do what you want to do." I mean, that was one of the reasons I did away with my office, to give you guys [Metro Councilors] the authority. You guys are the policy setting ones. You need to have the ability to do that. So let's get rid of this function thing, where you're constantly fighting with somebody else who you see as the star out there and make you all stars. I mean that was the penultimate aspect.

So over that long period of time, and because that had to do with the regional nature, the other thing was understanding that Metro didn't implement any of those land-use laws. We said, "This is what you'll do Hillsboro, Beaverton, Damascus," (wherever it was), and I had to go down and sit with those guys way ahead of time and say, "You know, Mayor Hughes," (or whoever it was) "I'm about to impose on you to fix…What do you need to do this?" "I need 240 acres of developable land so I can put this plant on it out there." Well, God damn it, that's not regional planning, so I've got to say, "You know you're right. I'll get you that, but I need to have you protect those streams out there." "Absolutely, we'll protect those streams." And it ain't right. "I didn't plan for you guys to do that, you're going to have to implement that stuff." So they did. So it was working with 24 cities and three counties and TriMet and the Port [of Portland]…. You know, we built the light rail out to the airport with one public hearing. We slipped that sucker through with nobody knowing, and fortunately it didn't affect anybody's neighborhoods. ODOT [Oregon Department of Transportation] had the right of way. We got the money. We went to the airport. I said to the airport guys, "We need to take your landing fees and put them into that," and they went, "Oh, you can't put landing fees into light rail?" I said, "Yeah we can, read the law." So they went down. "Yeah you can." I went to the FAA [Federal Aviation Administration), and the FAA defers to the airlines. So we went around and talked to every one

of the airlines. They all went, " Hmm, mutter, mutter, mutter. Okay fine." So we build that thing out there.
Now the PIC was the other part of it - the Portland International Center out there - which hasn't really taken off. We got the development company, gave 'em exclusive development rights in order to get $35 million for them to pay for that so we made deals like that. You can make those kind of deals, bit not very often and everything's got to fit. It's gotta work. It's gotta be good. Nobody made any money out of it. In fact, we lost money. Probably the company did, too, but they could afford it. They'll eventually get it back when they do develop it. They're going to put IKEA out there now (that's the first development going in there). Everybody wants to go buy their fake furniture out there, and that bothers me - these big box guys - but I think I learned the necessity of understanding that neighbors having different needs and being able to figure out a way to find a connecting need. That was important.

The other thing is that I've discovered the limits used to developing on the edge all the time. You can't do that. To say, "Okay, you can have twenty years worth of land every five years." What are we doing? Because we would go intensively after that, everybody wants to jam everything up on top of that one, and that's dumb. So if you're going to protect riparian areas or natural areas, which we ought to do (you don't get too much opportunity in the world to have this kind of place), we've got to be really mindful of that. Which means if you're going to have population come in, we could all say, "Well, let's stop having population come in." Well, let's forget about that for a minute because it's going to happen. We're gonna have population growth, even if we didn't import one other person. If you guys ever get married and you have more than one child, you just increased the population base. If you live longer than I do, you will have made it even worse. So let's figure out a way to have a livable place that I think is more in terms of small villages. I think Portland is actually an area of neighborhoods that are sort of small villages connected together, and I don't want to lost that, but we used to have jobs connected. People used to walk to work. So I learned that unless you're doing more complete planning - planning every element including the economic aspect of jobs - you're not really getting at it. So we gotta take the entire urban area…. What's the name of the one-armed guy that did the Colorado River back in the 1880's after the Civil?

NS: Powell?

MB: I think he said instead of using astral lines, in other words, the surveyor lines to lay out states, we should use watersheds as the basis of how we set up jurisdictions in the west. And he was so right. If anybody had listened to him 150 years ago (or whenever it was), and said, "We're not going to set up California like this and Oregon like that."…. Actually we do have a watershed boundary. It's called the Columbia and the Snake, and other than that we go pht, pht, pht [makes cutting motion] like this and you tend to sort of ignore the natural barriers. If we did anything on a watershed basis as a means to do that, we'd be designing places a lot different than we did. But that didn't happen. I mean, Portland is fortunate because it's got 200 square foot blocks. Do you know why we have 200 square foot blocks? Most cities have 400 square foot blocks. You know, you go downtown and it's this very livable, likable little…. You've got these little small blocks because the guys that develop it knew the most valuable piece of property is a corner because you can get people coming in this side or the other side. So they said, "Instead of 400 foot, let's do 200 foot streets, and we'll sell more corners." That wasn't because it was good planning, that 20 years, 50, 100 years from now, we'll have a really nice little place. They thought, "We're just going to make money off these corners. So you have to recognize that the

thing that's driving people on a lot of stuff is money. Well, make that work to your advantage, not to your disadvantage. Find a way to protect natural spaces, and doing it that way is actually of value. In fact, I would argue it adds tremendous value. I've had homebuilders in front of me saying, "Look, the fact that I'm not going to let you develop within 50 feet of the stream increases the value of property 100% because people want the stream. If you want to build out over it, you're going to screw up your whole value of that property." So some people get it, and I don't even know where we started the question, but that's really valuable. I learned that stuff, and that's what I think I got out of this whole process.

NS: Do you think that you were successful and made good contributions to the region?

MB: Yeah, I do. I feel pretty good about what I did. A couple things I should have done more of and didn't, but yeah…I do. I think I was there at the best of times. I had the advantage that Dave Bragdon doesen't have right now, and that Rena Cusma before me didn't have of being in a period when planning was the best thing on the planet. Like I said, I could stand up in front of a group in Budapest and say, "Planning works. Look at these," and show them the numbers. "Here's the employment. We have a one percent unemployment growth," and that kind of stuff. So it was fun. I had a good time, and yeah, I think I did some stuff. I wish I'd done more, but you know, I feel successful.

NS: Do you see yourself getting back into politics?

MB: No. I am on the Criminal Justice Commission for the State of Oregon. That's another one of my side hats. I'm on the Willamette Partnership, which is trying to do something to restore the Willamette [River]…that is a major thing going on. I'm on the board of that. I'm on the Hines Board for National Sustainability. I was on the President's Council for Sustainability until it got axed. So I get involved in that kind of level of things and enjoy that. You know, to get back into the grit and grind of actual politics right now is not…You know, I got invited to about ten parties last night, the election night parties, and went to one and that's it. No, no, no. I mean, if somebody asked me to sit down and said, "Would I share some activity to look at X?" I would consider that. I would. But there're probably people out there who know more about this stuff than I do now, so they probably would pick better people. Having a history of something doesn't mean you're really good at the future. It's really important that people don't ignore those lessons, as we all know. But in planning, you also have to look forward. So how do you take where you're at right now, and all the things that you've got and get yourself to the next best thing? That takes a lot of energy, a tremendous amount of energy. So anybody who wants to get into this has to have a tremendous amount of energy. There's a woman names Lynn Peterson who used to work for me at Metro and then went to work for TriMet and then she wanted to get into this in a big way and got elected to the Lake Oswego City Council. I said, "Go out and get involved in some local government." Last night, she got elected as a Clackamas County Commissioner. I see people like that and I go, "Yes! There are people out there who are going to be able, for the next fifteen years or twenty years, to actually do some forward thinking." I hope she doesn't get burned out over in the damned commissioner's seat. But there are people [like] Brian Newman over on the Council…he seems to be somebody on the Metro Council very interested in actually doing stuff. He's not in there just to shine on. There are some people who got into those Metro offices that were just there…they looked at it as a jumping on to the next big thing. In fact, when I went in there and ran for this thing, everybody said to me, "God Burton, you ought to run for governor sometime, and that's a dead-end seat," and I said, "That's

what I want to do, though. I'd be happy to be governor, but I want to do that and if that doesn't get me to that, that's not what I'm looking to do." So I think there are people out getting involved in politics today that I hope will have that same reason for doing it.

NS: Do you see some changes in the attitudes of the council members?

MB: Yeah, I think there's less grandstanding going on. I had a couple people there, this Kvistad guy and Ruth, like I said, who was pretty good, but she needed to be stroked all the time, and Patricia McCaig who was supposed to be the cat's meow and kind of blew it, and this sort of thing. They [the current councilors] seem to be more interested in working together, it appears to me, and doing some serious stuff, so I hope that's the prevailing thought. I think the getting rid of the Executive Officer's position has defused what I saw as that sort of ceiling of envy that didn't need to be there. I could figure it out. I said, "It's a natural tendency." But I think they're all over there working together. There was a lot of individual egos that don't seem to exist quite as badly or as much, I think, but I'm not close enough to say. But I think that's a change. That's good. That's positive.

NS: Do you think that public perception of Metro has changed?

MB: No. Hell, you know everybody lives in Metro and nobody lives in Metro. You live in West Linn and you live in Hawthorne. You know, nobody lives in Metro, and if you asked anybody, "Where do you live? What's Metro?" half the people haven't got a clue. "Who runs the zoo?" Go out and ask anybody on the street, "Who runs the zoo?" "Uh, the zoo does." "Who runs the [Oregon] Convention Center?" "Who owns the 8,000 acres of parks?" (it might be a little bit more, by the way). "How important is that?" "That's really important." "Are you willing to pay for it?" "No." Oregonians always want everything on the cheap. They're gonna want everything, but they're gonna want it on the cheap. I don't want it to interfere with anything. They passed Ballot Measure 39 yesterday. I thought we'd finally vote that damned thing down. They passed [Measure] 37. My mother-in-law voted for 37. I said, "Why? You're intelligent. Why did you vote for that?" "Well," she said, "I don't think the government should be able to take your land without compensation." I said, "Mother-in-law, read the constitution. It already says you can't do that. This says not only can they not do that, you have to pay them for what they may not be able to do." I want a stock option like that. I'm gonna buy stocks that say, "Gee, your stocks didn't work out, but you still have to pay me for them. Land is commodity, you know, and it's difficult for the public sometimes because they read the first lines. They said, "Oh, they shouldn't be able to…You're right mother-in-law, they shouldn't be able to do that," without reading the rest of it because measures are complicated. I think the initiative process…and by the way, not all states have the initiative process (only 17 states have the initiative process), so it's not like a god-given right. The constitution doesn't guarantee it. It was just this thing imposed on us and that's when we moved away from being a republic to being a democracy. A democracy is great as long as you have *very* well informed and *very* engaged citizens. But they're not engaged and not that well informed, so they get pissed off at the republic (with a small "R" and "D" on these things) and therefore, we sort of lose what's going on and we end up with a lot of bad measures on the ballot.

I think, though, as far as the perception of Metro [goes], we used to play around—in fact somewhere…see that thing on the wall over there? [points to a mounted gavel] Of course, you can't see this on the tape, but that's the thing I got for my being the first chair [presiding officer of the MSD Council]. Can you see underneath the little hammer - that little thing that says

Metro? If you look at that closely, it's a weird looking semi-Native American eagle because we had that for a symbol. So we came up with that god awful looking thing. That was in 1979. So by 1995, they were still trying to look for a symbol. The council said, "Oh we've got to get everybody to know who we are and we'll put Metro on everything." I said, "You've got to be kidding me. Nobody cares, and why do we care? Why don't we just run really good functions? " If the public was happy about the zoo and happy about the Expo Center, and they're happy about the parks, who cares?

Well, I'll tell you why they care…it's because when you need to go out and ask them for money to support it, they'll be…and they did that last night in connection with the parks thing. So they made the point there, but identifying and caring and understanding what Metro is and I don't think…I mean, you brought up if people still…Do people still take civics in high school? They probably don't, so I don't know if the public even knows what a county and a city is, you know, and people don't know what's in the Constitution. Here's a fun one to ask. "What does the United States Constitution say about the establishment of cities and counties?" You'll see people say, "Gee, you know…." And if you said, "Don't you think you ought to know that?" they say, "Yeah, I should know that. Where is it in the Constitution?" Well, it isn't in the Constitution, there's nothing that mentions cities and counties in the Constitution, but if you said to somebody "What is the provision in the Constitution that guarantees that the United States will be a democracy? Can you tell me what provision that is?" Well, there isn't one because it doesn't say that. What it says specifically is that the Constitution provides that there should be a republic. It doesn't say democracy. It doesn't even say that in the Oregon Constitution. So the public, bless them, are pretty blissfully ignorant about a lot of things, and when you look at what's important from Iraq down to the zoo, let me tell you the zoo comes out on the bottom, I hope. So they do have their priorities generally in order. They're more concerned about the bigger things, and they are only concerned about the zoo and the garbage when it gets down to their pocket book. This is the Johnson Creek thing. Nobody gave a damn about Johnson Creek until somebody walked around and gave them a phony bill and said, "You're gonna get charged a hundred bucks." Then five hundred of them showed up and tried to shout us down. So they're getting to it when there's that.

So we spent a lot of time trying to sharpen up the image. That folder you had [referring to a brightly colored folder given to the interviewer at Metro]…okay, I said to my graphic [design] people (and they're really good over there), "Let's come up with sort of a common look about all the crap. So they came up with that kind of colorful, blockish thirties looking, whatever that stuff is there. Everything now, I think (I don't know if its still there or not) came out with that on it. So I said, "We've got a common look." The same thing went on here at Portland State about the image of PSU. Does anybody really care? They came up with a color. They came up with the stuff. Now we have imposed over each one of us over here…when we do any kind of stuff, the logo has to be a certain size in reference to the rest of the page size, yada, yada, yada. We had the same thing over there [at Metro], and I was having trouble with that because Coca-Cola, or whoever these big companies were, would come and would want to sponsor the concerts at the zoo, but they obviously want the Pepsi thing (or whatever it was) on there, and they didn't want the Metro thing on there. So the councilors said, "No, by god! We want the Metro thing bigger than the Pepsi" (or I don't know who it was). Actually it wasn't Pepsi. It was the Tazo Tea people. That's an Oregon organic tea company. By god, you can't get a lot better than that. They wanted to sponsor a concert at the zoo, and they wanted it to be able to say Tazo Zoo, and our rule said that the Metro symbol had to be bigger than the Tazo tea thing, and I just made a

decision that we're not going to follow that rule. We're going to put Tazo up there and put Metro on the bottom. Boy, they got all over me. The council said, "What are you doing?" I said, "Nobody going to that zoo concert really cares whether it's Tazo or Metro. They want to go see whoever is playing and Tazo is paying us, so why don't we give 'em some credit?" So we really got all hung up on that crap. So anyway, to answer your question, no I don't think people know any more about Metro [now] than they did then. I'll tell you this…there was a lot more press about Metro when I was in office than there is now.

NS: Why do you think that is?

MB: Because we were doing stuff. We were doing planning. We were out in the villages. We were doing the Expo Center. We were doing a lot of stuff, and so naturally we got covered on that stuff. And then there was a guy named Gregory [Nokes]. [laughs] This is an interesting story. He was *The Oregonian* reporter assigned to Metro, which is just…actually think of it, the bottom of the barrel - city hall, White House, but then you've got Metro. This guy was over here, I can't think of his name…an older guy. Not real old, but an older guy. And when I was in the legislature, I used to have a friend over in…I taught at the University of Portland for a few years, and a friend of mine was there and he's had me come back and do a communications class. He had me come in and talk about the media and elected folks. So I would go and talk to the class. One year when there was a scandal that broke out with Bob Packwood, who was a senator and he got in a really tight re-election race with Les Aucoin, and Packwood beat Aucoin or actually Aucoin didn't succeed in unseating Packwood. Real close. After that happened, then this whole scandal comes out about how Packwood had been chasing people around the office and pinching people in the, you know—nothing really awful, but apparently he was just an absolute nerd. He'd just walk up to women and he'd start fondling 'em. Stupid, dumb things. So it all came out and ultimately he resigned. Well, that story didn't break because *The Oregonian* sat on it during the election. It broke instead, nationally somehow, and *The Oregonian* got caught on it. Well, I happen to know something about the background of both these guys, but the *The Oregonian* slogan at the time was, "If it's important to Oregonians, you'll find it in The Oregonian." So I went into this class on the blackboard and got a piece of chalk and wrote up there, because I was going to talk about the media, "If it's important to Oregonians, you'll find it in *The Washington Post*," because the Washington Post was the one that broke the story. Everybody laughed and I explained how this happens. It's, you know…media, sometimes it's not what they do do, it's what they don't do. Later on the whole Goldschmidt thing…I could tell you about that story and how they didn't print it. *The Oregonian* didn't. They got caught out and it was *Willamette Week* that did it…beat them right to the punch. So I was up there telling 'em. Well, somebody in the class, one of the students there, looked at that and thought that's cool and they had bumper stickers made up and they'd had it printed just like with *The Oregonian* script thing, and it said "…you'll find it in *The Washington Post*" and they started selling 'em and giving them away around town. Somebody sent me one, with a little note that says, "Thanks." Well, the *Willamette Week* picks up on this because they always like to rib *The Oregonian*. So some guy calls me up and says, "Are you….Did these come from you really?" I said, "Yeah, I was in this class. I just was trying to make this point." So they printed a little article about this thing. Well, when I got elected to Metro, I had a few souvenirs that I took into my office.

[Burton's assistant knocks and enters the room]

So there was this bumper sticker in my office (I moved it later on), but there was a big cork board up there that somebody had used, so I stuck it up there and put a couple little doo-dads that I had and that was one of my trophies. Greg Nokes. Greg Nokes was the guy. Greg had been, I found out later, the managing editor of *The Oregonian* when that story broke and he's the one that sat on it. When it came out in the *The Washington Post*, they were going to fire him, but his dad had worked for the paper for years so they sort of said, "Okay, you come back and finish up your retirement time and we're going to make you a reporter and you've got Metro." So he comes in to interview me for the very first time - he's sitting over there and he kept looking over my head, and he did the interview. Well, for the first couple months it was like he was after me. So finally I call him in and I said, "Your stories are just…what's the problem." "Well," he said, "You know what that's about," and I said, "What?" And I didn't know he was the guy. So it took about a year to get him sort of back around to say, "Look, nothing personal about all this stuff."

But the press plays a very important part in letting the people know about what's going on. Now there's less and less people getting their news out of the newspaper; more and more are getting them online, but nonetheless, it's a medium presentation of what's going on that is getting smaller and smaller and smaller. People don't…you know, God, what did I read in the paper the other day…by the time I got over to the bottom of the story, there was the meat and I can't remember really what it was. It's like the rest of this thing…and I was thinking, "Whoah, here's the what's going on. It was way down here," and I was talking to people about it and nobody had read that far down in the story. "Did you see this point?" So you get the 30 second sound bite from the media on the television. I learned to be pretty good at giving 30 second sound bites. That was one of the things that I…you know, Lars Larson would come and stick a camera at me and you know he'd "Blah, blah, blah." That guy's a total and complete jerk, but I thought, "Okay, I'm just going to goad him back," and I'd give him a 30 second sound bite that would, you know, stun him. You'd learn to try to get things down into very short bites so that people would get it, and I got pretty good at that and I developed that simply because it was self-defense in a lot of these things because you got on at first and you'd try to be like this 90 minute long conversation we're having to really explain things and you realized nobody listens to this stuff. You know, you guys have to, but….

[End of Tape 2, Side 1]

What the people know about what's going on is going to be basically what they get on the six o'clock news or what they get out of the newspaper in the morning. I never made an effort to do that. I had a couple of good PR [public relations] people, or media people, who knew how to make sure they got the stories, but we had a lot of stuff to do. We were doing a lot of land use and building. God, I think I did over half a billion dollars worth of building and implementation while I was there. That's more than the State of Oregon did. You know $155,000 worth of parks, a couple hundred million dollars worth of Convention Center/Expo Centers. I mean, when you start thinking about, it was close to…I can't even think of all the stuff that we did. I didn't personally do this, but Metro had built $500 million worth of stuff that it gave the community, so that's big…that's a big deal! And if you counted roads in that money, add another billion to that because it was a billion dollars spent on roads in the eight years I was on there. You add light rail to that, and you just upped that another half a billion. So I mean, the half billion I'm talking about was buildings and zoos and convention center. We had a zoo measure. We were rocking and rolling, so that gets in the press and everybody says, "Oh, yeah." So you know, I still go out,

I still find people. Somebody came up to me the other day and said, "Hey, we have a cigar smoking deal at Rich's tomorrow, or something, and come on over." First of all, I don't smoke cigars. I was in Jake's down there and everybody else smoked cigars, and I was in there about 15 minutes and said, "I can't take this," and I started to walk out and some guy said, "Mike!" I don't know him, but I said, "Oh, hi. How are you?" So I still run into people like that because I had a lot of exposure and it was…but I tell you, people will say, "Yeah, it was really cool when you were running the buses." I didn't run the buses. That's TriMet. They don't have a clue! Or I have them come up and say, "God, I wish you were back on City Council." No, never was on City Council. So they personify things and they don't quite get it right. So it goes that way. But I don't think Metro as an entity (as a government), is understood, except for people that don't like it. You definitely see a lot of, "Oh, Metro is spending all of our money, doing all that type of stuff." Hell, we're not spending anybody's money, hardly. Metro is one of the cheapest governments around. If you look at the tax measure and see what's on there, it ain't much compared with the rest of it, so anyway….

NS: So is it valuable?

MB: I think it's invaluable. I think particularly if they're able to hold on to that planning concept. They could move everything else off the deck - the zoo and all that other stuff. Certainly nobody could do a solid waste system better than a regional government because that's very collective and emphasizing the waste reduction aspect of that. The Convention Centers, you know, I've often thought you could franchise those out and just get a check. A lot of jurisdictions do that. You could put the Expo Centers in there. But you wouldn't have a regional park system like we've got unless it was done on a regional basis. You wouldn't be able to save land all the way from the Sandy River out to Trask. You wouldn't be able to do that without that regional government being in place. So I think that's invaluable. And then being able to plan for the future - to do that is something that you have to give some authority to. We not only had the charge, we were given the authority, because if you read the charter, Metro had the ultimate authority. In fact, there's an interesting provision. It's subchapter nine or something of the Council and it says if anything goes to court regarding this, the judge will rule Metro prevails. It's the damnedest thing. It's like an instruction to the court. A lawyer must have written that. So it's in there. It's a fallback. So there's a tremendous amount of authority, which to some extent, the local jurisdictions kind of fear, so I never pushed it. I said, "Let's cooperate and do this." You could tell people what to do, and I don't want you to do that. Let's figure it out. We're all better off doing it together. So it needs to be there. It really needs to be there. Other areas need to do something like this, I think.

NS: So as you look back over your time at Metro and in political office, how would you like to be remembered?

MB: Fondly. Yeah. No, I mean seriously, what you really want to do is be remembered as somebody who tried to push the envelop on new ways of thinking and who was thinking of how to make places better for people to live in. I mean, that's the legacy you want. You want to leave the place better than when you got here.

NS: Do you think you did that?

MB: I hope so. Yeah, I think so. At least I can point to some things that would indicate that to me, and hopefully people will remember me for that. Yeah. So, I think that's important. There's no specific thing. I mean, you know, people want to have buildings named after them and, I don't need any buildings named after me. Actually I wouldn't mind having a park named after me someday - perhaps some little cool glade somewhere that I might have. But other than that, you know, you go around and see names and you don't know who these people are. So the memory would be mostly, you know, "He left it in better shape than when he got here and he was trying to make it a good place to live in at the same time and by that, less consumptive." Because I've got some conditions on the way that I think things are better - less consumptive and more sustainable.

NS: Is there anything that wasn't covered that you want to add.

MB: Oh probably, but I'll think about it in the middle of the night, and if we start down that road…You know, I think we covered most of the things. A lot of politics. A lot of stuff that went on. You'll be talking to other people and that's good. I mean talk to everybody who was in that first crowd because their perceptions might be different than mine. Their memories might be better about times. When I looked at this time line here [prepared by another group of PSU students], I'm like, "God I don't remember." I said, "I can't remember." I get mixed up. I have to stop and think, "When was I in office and what are those dates?" I went to fill out a form the other day, something about when was your last employment stopped and said, "When did I leave over there? Was it 2002 or 2001?" Well, actually it was 2003. Which isn't that long ago. So I'm really—if I don't write it down I forget. And I've got huge stacks of…I've got all my date books so I could pull all those out and tell you what I did the whole eight years I was there [as executive officer], day-by-day, hour-by-hour. Interestingly enough I kept them for a couple reasons. Mostly for tax purposes because I would travel all over the place and I didn't claim mileage. I'd take it at the end of the year as a tax write off, so I wanted to demonstrate that. It was a logbook. Then it became important to go back and say, "Gee, when did I do this and that and the other." So I kept a log, and I've also got a whole…my staff was great. I had a great personal staff. They kept clippings and I've got all that stuff and if you guys want it or want to look at it, I'll haul it out wherever it is. I've got it in storage downtown and you can have it, or look at it or do something with it. It might be helpful…there's some interesting stuff, you know. I had a lot more hair in those days, for instance.

NS: Well, alright, I can't think of much else.

MB: Well, I'm glad you were so patient.

NS: Well, thank you very much.

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