

Rod Park

METRO COUNCIL DISTRICT 1 NEWS | March 2009

Rod Park represents District 1, which includes Fairview, Gresham, Happy Valley, Maywood Park, Troutdale, Wood Village, Damascus and portions of East Portland.



A personal message from Councilor Park

Over the past two years I have been chairing the Regional Freight and Goods Movement Task Force. This task force is comprised of a variety of people who are responsible for operations, logistics as well as helping plan future multi-modal freight networks. It was charged with giving a voice to issues faced by freight movement, which is very important to our region's economy. The outcome of this task force has been to inform and help shape Metro's update of the Regional Transportation Plan, a blueprint that directs project development activities as well as transportation and land use planning.

The task force presented a summary of its findings this month at the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation and educated policy makers of some of the challenges faced by freight mobility and provided recommendations on where investments should be made.

I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you some of the key issue areas for freight. For example, one huge issue is the unpredictability of the delivery of goods and services due to congestion. (For more information, go to: <http://www.oregonmetro.gov/index.cfm/go/by.web/id=16673>) While congestion is an inconvenience for all of us, companies like Intel and Nike have to truck their products to the airport in order to be shipped and arrive at its or its' customer's factory on time as to not disrupt production schedules. As congestion grows, travel times have grown less reliable, requiring Intel to change production schedules, making it less competitive to produce the products here.

Examples of some of the project recommendations are to ensure the development of multi-modal freight movement – which means ensuring movement can take place by rail, highways, and waterways - and to address key congestion hotspots, i.e. the Columbia River Crossing and I-5/I-405 loop. The challenges of the freight community are only known when we don't receive products or when companies move out of Oregon owing to their inability to economically produce or move their products. By considering the challenges laid out by the task force, it is our hope that goods movement in our region will continue to flow and local jobs continue to grow.

– Rod Park

Metro's recycling hotline: over two million served

The Metro Recycling Information hotline reached a major milestone when it answered its two millionth call on Saturday, February 28th. The popular recycling and disposal information clearinghouse has been part of the regional government since 1981. Fielding such questions as “how can I recycle 300,000 defective shopping bags” and “what can I do with 2.5 tons of outdated astrology books,” the hotline operates six days per week with a staff of six specialists who answer questions from residents and businesses about recycling, garbage disposal, household hazardous waste, natural gardening and reuse options for unwanted materials.



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In this increasingly automated era, callers are frequently surprised to hear a person answer the phone. According to customer-service surveys, callers value the quick, helpful answers they get from talking with people at Metro's recycling information hotline.

The hotline has grown from an operation whose only resource was a map marked with recycling depots to a GIS database-driven service with hundreds of recycling, reuse and disposal referrals as well as several hundred topic files. In its first year of operation, the hotline answered just over 9000 calls. In 2008 more than 104,000 calls were answered.

The recycling information referral database can also be viewed through Metro's website. This additional way of providing information captured another audience: businesses that want to recycle. About 90 percent of hotline calls are residential, but 88 percent of web visitors in 2008 were from businesses.

Metro Recycling Information, at 503-234-3000, is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Find a Recycler web page address is www.oregonmetro.gov/findrecycler.



Metro Council advances 15 priority areas for possible transit investments

The Metro Council voted Feb. 12 to approve further evaluation of 15 transportation corridors for future investments in light rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit or rapid streetcar. The corridors are spread throughout the region and will be part of Metro's Regional High Capacity Transit System Plan. The Plan is a 30-year approach to prioritizing investments in new transportation corridors as well as changes to existing corridors, and is being developed as a component of the federally mandated Regional Transportation Plan.

The 15 areas were narrowed from a broad list of 55 proposed corridors, which Metro

developed with region-wide engagement from residents, businesses, community organizations and local elected leaders. The corridors selected for further evaluation best fit the criteria of expected ridership, cost, environmental constraints, social equity, transit connectivity, traffic congestion and regional 2040 Growth Concept land uses. Funding and specific modes have not yet been designated for any particular corridor.

The Council also adopted a set of criteria to prioritize the 15 selected corridors. These criteria are based on community, environment, economic and deliverability measures.

To learn more about the plan, visit www.oregonmetro.gov/goingplaces.

Metro employees make the plunge for Special Olympics

What reason would seemingly functional people put on silly costumes and jump into the Columbia River in February? It can only be one thing - the annual Polar Plunge! A special event co-sponsored by Metro, the Polar Bear Plunge is a unique opportunity for individuals, organizations and local businesses to support Special Olympics Oregon athletes by jumping, walking or slowly crawling into the icy Columbia River.

The plunge took place at Metro's M. James Gleason Boat Ramp and Broughton Beach. It was estimated that as many as a thousand participants took the plunge including Metro's own employee team, the "I C Rangers". Led by Metro parks property stewardship director Mike Brown, the team hoped to raise \$1000 for the Special Olympics by dipping into the frigid waters. "I C Rangers" team members include Scott Paskill, Annie West, Mike Carpinella, Howard Rasmussen, Jim Caudell, Ryan Hixson, Resa Allen and Kendra Carrillo.

About Metro

Clean air and clean water do not stop at city limits or county lines. Neither does the need for jobs, a thriving economy and good transportation choices for people and businesses in our region. Voters have asked Metro to help with the challenges that cross those lines and affect the 25 cities and three counties in the Portland metropolitan area.

A regional approach simply makes sense when it comes to protecting open space, caring for parks, planning for the best use of land, managing garbage disposal and increasing recycling. Metro oversees world-class facilities such as the Oregon Zoo, which contributes to conservation and education, and the Oregon Convention Center, which benefits the region's economy.

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