

Councilor Burkholder is continually updating his contact list, so you may be receiving this newsletter for the first time. If you have any questions about the content of this newsletter or wish to be taken off this list, please contact Kathryn Sofich at [kathryn.sofich@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:kathryn.sofich@oregonmetro.gov). [Requires that your e-mail be set to HTML view.]



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Rex Burkholder represents District 5, which includes Northwest Portland, North Portland, Northeast Portland, downtown Portland, a portion of Southwest Portland and a portion of Southeast Portland.

#### **IN THIS ISSUE**

1. A message from Rex Burkholder
2. Metro is cautious in financial downturn
3. Metro launches high capacity transit build-a-system tool
4. Kids get creative for annual art contest
5. Events of Note in the District
6. Rex's contact information

#### **1. A message from Rex Burkholder**

After 4 years as chair of the region's Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT), I soon will be turning the gavel over to Councilor [Carlotta Collette](#) (JPACT is made up of local elected officials and representatives of state agencies, as well as three Metro Councilors.). This change in leadership has provided me with the opportunity to look back at what we have been able to accomplish and to focus on the goals for the future.

During the past four years members of JPACT worked together to make our transportation investments more progressive and sustainable, more collaborative and equitable, and more efficient, effective and accountable.

What does this mean? Well, let me lay it out for you.

#### **Progressive and sustainable**

In the past, the [Regional Transportation Plan \(RTP\)](#) essentially was a list of projects largely based on traffic counts. Thanks to our hard work, the new plan instead will focus our transportation investments on projects that support our community's values and goals -- health, equity, choices, safety, and fiscal stewardship. The new plan also reinforces the link between land use and transportation. Finally, under my leadership, JPACT acted to ensure that green house gas emissions will be measured and used to help prioritize transportation planning and investing. All these actions together will lead to an RTP that will provide us with more sustainable choices for how we get around this region.

**Please see the attached RTP Update brochure.**

### **Collaborative and equitable**

As a group, JPACT worked together to improve the way the region allocates federal transportation money through Metro's Regional [Flexible Funding program](#) -- about \$30 Million annually. JPACT and the Metro Council vote on which projects to fund. Members at the JPACT table have worked together to incorporate equity, transparency and sustainability into the criteria used to select projects. As a result, the region's transportation choices are now more about collaboration and community values and less about deal making. I am particularly proud that this year members agreed that a minimum of \$7.2 million should be set aside for bike and pedestrian projects and that in the end we put an additional \$2.8 million for a total of \$10 million into critically needed bicycle and pedestrian projects along with strong investment in transit, transportation demand management and improvements in the efficiency of our road network.

In addition, I brought together representatives of all Oregon Metropolitan Planning Organizations (i.e. Eugene-Springfield, Salem-Keizer, Bend, Rogue Valley and Corvallis) to address issues common to all metropolitan areas. During the last three years, we worked together to speak up on behalf of the transportation needs of urban areas at the state and federal level and we formed a new organization, the [Oregon MPO Consortium](#).

### **Efficient, effective and accountable**

Congress passed a transportation stimulus bill on February 17<sup>th</sup>, approved the money on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and Metro acted to make local investments with that money on March 5<sup>th</sup>. Our region received a total of \$102 million for transportation projects to get people back to work. The combination of good staff work and strong relationships between our elected leaders allowed for this process to run smoothly. The Portland Tribune reported that we moved with "NASCAR speed."

**And now, looking forward....**

**Progressive and sustainable**

I will continue working to ensure Metro takes its regional leadership role to the next level. To successfully weather the multiple challenges we face—climate, energy, economic—we need to change how we think and act on a daily basis. Being more energy efficient and less carbon-consumptive will make our lives fuller and happier. This will not be easy in the work we do at Metro or in the work we ask our partners to do.

Current modeling for the RTP shows that even with our best efforts (and we are considered a leader nationally) greenhouse gas emissions will increase by 30 percent during the next twenty five years, mainly due to population growth. In response, Metro is launching a [Climate Change Action Strategy](#) to take a critical and informed look how we should meet our greenhouse reduction goals. I am leading a conversation with my colleagues about what we need to do in this region. It won't be easy but I am committed. In short, this means looking seriously at the role that bicycles and transit can play, how we can better integrate trails into the transportation network, and how to continue leading the nation in smart urban development.

**Collaborative and equitable**

I am looking forward to continuing to lead the RTP update process along with my colleague, Councilor [Rod Park](#). Our focus will continue to be on how we can best invest our transportation dollars to ensure safe, sustainable and reliable transportation and vibrant communities. In addition, Metro will continue to advocate for urban areas to have a stronger role in state transportation planning to ensure our urban centers are getting the investment they need to serve their residents.

Thanks for the great four years as chair of JPACT.

*-Rex Burkholder*

**2. Metro is cautious in financial downturn**

The Metro Council is currently looking at the proposed budget for the fiscal year that will begin on July 1, 2009. Like all governments, Metro must have a balanced budget. And like workers and households in the region, Metro is cautious in this financial downturn. The solid waste system is a large part of Metro's activities, and we have seen a sharp decline in waste, particularly from construction and demolition. Even waste coming from households has fallen off as people are cutting back on consumer spending and staying in the same house or apartment.

On the positive side spring break has seen great attendance at the Oregon Zoo and at local theaters and performance halls where the “stay-cation” philosophy finds Metro residents enjoying local activities instead of traveling. Metro’s proposed budget is about the same size as last year. Executive salaries have been frozen, and we have taken a sharp pencil to programs that have accomplished their goals and are ready to stand on their own. Growth areas include the continued purchasing of land to protect water quality and habitat and construction at the zoo, activities that may provide some local economic stimulus. Most importantly, we want to continue our land use and transportation work. When the region starts to recover, we want to remain ready to encourage and support the region’s livability and environmental diversity as it returns to economic prosperity.

You can learn more about [Metro’s budget by visiting the website](#). A calendar shows the upcoming public hearings on the budget beginning with April 2, April 16 and April 30. In addition, the “budget summary” and “Chief Operating Officer’s Budget Message” provide a helpful overview of what is being proposed.

### **3. Metro launches high capacity transit build-a-system tool**

On March 23, Metro launched an online build-a-system tool and questionnaire as part of the prioritization process for the High Capacity Transit System Plan. The plan will guide the region’s investments in high capacity transit – light rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit or rapid streetcar. The tool and questionnaire are available through April 24 at [www.oregonmetro.gov/goingplaces](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/goingplaces).

The build-a-system tool allows users to be “virtual planners,” choosing which high capacity transit lines to build within a limited budget. Users balance trade-offs such as ridership, cost, connection to attractions and institutions, and carbon emission reduction to create the system that they would like to see.

The tool is coupled with a questionnaire addressing the project’s evaluation criteria to help Metro understand the values that drive people’s thinking on transit investments. Responses to the questionnaire will be used to balance the region’s priorities as Metro evaluates potential new lines and improvements to the current system.

The community values generated by the tool and questionnaire will be used by Metro and local jurisdictions in considering the choices and investments needed to successfully implement high capacity transit in a way that encourages rebuilding in centers and corridors. Knowing that high capacity transit is a powerful tool to help build vibrant, prosperous and sustainable communities, the feedback will also inform the Regional Transportation Plan update and support the aspirations of local communities.

Find out more about the plan by visiting project staff as they feature the online tool:

**10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, April 11**

Powell’s Books

1005 W. Burnside St., Portland

**11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, April 18**

Earth Day celebration  
downtown Hillsboro

To learn more about the High Capacity Transit System Plan, to answer the questionnaire and to build your system, visit [www.oregonmetro.gov/goingplaces](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/goingplaces).

**4. Kids get creative for annual art contest**

More than 2,400 entries from K-12 students throughout the region poured in for Metro's 14th annual Earth Day billboard art contest. With imagination and tools ranging from colored pencils, crayons and pens to watercolors and computers, kids shared their energetic, visual messages of waste reduction and resource conservation. About 200 finalists' designs currently line the lobby at Metro Regional Center, remaining on public display through Earth Day, April 22.

Four contest winners – one each from grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12 – and eight honorable mentions were selected by a panel of judges. Each of the four winning designs will be posted as public billboards throughout April and one other month. Meanwhile, the young artists, their families and teachers, and the public are invited to the contest's art show and unveiling of the winning entries from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, April 4, at Metro, 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland. The free event will include fun activities to help families learn more about composting, cleaning with less-toxic products and creatively reusing materials.

For more information, please contact waste reduction educator Freda Sherburne at 503-797-1522 or [freda.sherburne@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:freda.sherburne@oregonmetro.gov).

**5. Events of Note in the District**

**Native trees of Forest Park**

Thursday, April 9

*9:30 am to noon*

Celebrate Oregon's Arbor Week with a closer look at the native trees of Forest Park on a guided hike with Stephen Hatfield. Suitable for ages 10 and up. Advance registration required; send e-mail to [hikes@forestparkconservancy.org](mailto:hikes@forestparkconservancy.org).

**Forest Park invasive plant removal**

Saturday, April 18

*8:45 am to noon*

Join forces with the No Ivy League and help battle what they call the "green plague" at Forest Park. Groups of five or more are asked to register in advance. Bring water, work gloves and a conquering attitude. Meet at the Lower Macleay

Field House at the end of Northwest Upshur just past 29th. Advance registration not required. For more information, call 503-823-9423.

### **Birdsongs at Whitaker Ponds**

Friday, April 24

*7 am to 9 am*

Join David Helzer for an early-morning birding hike around Whitaker Ponds. Learn about the birds that utilize the slough and work on your birdsong identification skills. Bring your binoculars. Hike lasts 1-2 hours. Registration and cost: Free; donations are welcome. Advanced registration required; call at 503-281-1132.

### **Hillside Park work party**

Saturday, April 25

*9 am to noon*

Hillside is one of Portland's newest pesticide-free parks. Help replace the use of pesticides with people power by weeding and mulching. Snacks, gloves and tools provided. Meet at Hillside Park, 653 NW Culpepper Terrace in Portland. For more information, call 503-423-7549.

For a complete list of Metro events, please check the Metro Calendar at [www.oregonmetro.gov/calendar](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/calendar).

## **6. Councilor Rex Burkholder's Contact Information**

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### **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.

Your Metro representatives

Metro Council President David Bragdon

Metro Councilors

Rod Park, District 1

Carlotta Collette, District 2

Carl Hosticka, District 3

Kathryn Harrington, District 4

Rex Burkholder, District 5

Robert Liberty, District 6

Auditor Suzanne Flynn

For more information, call the Metro Council at (503) 797-1540, fax (503) 797-1793 or send e-mail to [metro council@oregonmetro.org](mailto:metro council@oregonmetro.org). The hearing impaired can call TDD (503) 797-1804.