

Rod Park

METRO COUNCIL DISTRICT 1 NEWS | May 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

On May 7th Mayor Gussie McRobert, Mayor of Gresham from 1989-1998, was recognized for her vision and foresight in making Gresham a more livable city. The next time you are at the Gresham City Hall Max Station, you will notice a plaque in honor of her commitment and service to the City of Gresham. I was honored to have attended this ceremony and share my memories of her service.

For those of you who remember her, you may remember that she began her involvement in local politics as an outspoken advocate for the smart development of what is now Gresham Station Shopping Center. She organized hundreds of citizens to ensure that area didn't become just another shopping mall, but a vibrant addition to the ever growing City of Gresham. Her leadership on this issue led to her being elected to Mayor, where she initiated the city's first community-wide visioning program to guide transportation planning and growth management until the year 2020. Her involvement as a citizen and then later as the Mayor changed the face of Gresham for the better, providing its citizens with a more vibrant downtown and choices on how they want to get around. On top of that she also initiated the first voter approved, open space rescue trail development program in the state. This has resulted in the preservation of around 700 acres of buttes, watersheds, wetlands, and creek corridors, and access to 55 miles of off-road trails for recreation.

So to repeat what I shared last week, Gussie, thank you for your years of service and hard work. Gresham and this region is a better place for it.

– Rod Park

Metro considers fee changes for solid waste disposal

As part of the annual budgeting process, Metro is considering changes to solid waste disposal fees, including the per-ton price for waste disposal at Metro's two transfer stations. Changes in disposal fees can affect what haulers charge for garbage collection.

Per Metro code, the rate-setting process to date has included public meetings of Metro's Rate Review Committee (RRC), which comprises representatives from local government and the solid waste industry, along with recycling and rate experts and a citizen ratepayer. The committee forwarded its recommendations to the Metro Council, which considered them during an April 14 public work session.

Metro already has taken steps to limit fee increases through programmatic reductions and operational changes included in the chief operating officer's proposed budget for Metro Council consideration. In addition, the RRC has recommended ways to further limit fee increases while continuing to deliver high-quality programs and excellent service.

There have also been opportunities for public comment. A hearing and first reading of the rate ordinance was scheduled for the April 30 Metro Council meeting. The council also heard testimony



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and took final action at the May 7 Metro Council meeting. Agendas and packets for public meetings on Metro's rates and solid waste budget are available online at <http://www.oregonmetro.gov/index.cfm/go/by.web/id=21730>.

Metro report shows urban centers, corridors generally most affordable

The Metro Council released a report that shows that town centers and transportation corridors are among the most affordable places to live in the region, and that additional investments in affordable housing will be needed as the region grows.

Metro's analysis of the Portland region's housing needs through the year 2030 builds on research completed by the Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies at Portland State University. The study found that urban centers and transportation corridors have the greatest variety of housing and transportation options and often are the most affordable areas in the region.

Although urban centers and transportation corridors save money, the report says housing and transportation costs will still be a burden for 18 to 23 percent of households by 2030, depending on population growth rates. Today, that percentage is 17 percent. Metro considers people who spend more than 50 percent of their monthly budgets on rent and transportation cost burdened.

The report sets the stage for a discussion among the region's leaders about new incentives for mixed-use and multifamily homes and about investments in transportation and other infrastructure to support efficient use of land inside the existing urban growth boundary.

In 1995, the Metro Council and local governments from across the region endorsed the 2040 Growth Concept, a blueprint for managing growth that seeks to direct new households and populations into town and regional centers and transportation corridors while protecting the character of single-family neighborhoods. Today's Housing Needs Analysis indicates that to provide more affordable housing options in centers and corridors, additional public investments and policy changes will be needed.

The Housing Needs Analysis is a companion report to the Preliminary Residential Urban Growth Report, which is intended to inform discussions about choices of public policies and investments that can support a wide range of housing options as the region's population continues to grow. The Metro Council welcomes public comment and feedback on this analysis.

In September, Metro will unveil a package of proposals aimed at integrating long-term regional land use policies with transportation investments. An updated Urban Growth Report, which will include an updated Housing Needs Analysis, will be part of that package, along with recommendations on urban and rural reserve designations and a 25-year Regional Transportation Plan, all of which will be adopted by the end of this year.

More information on the Housing Needs Analysis can be found online at www.oregonmetro.gov/urbangrowthreport

One-of-a-kind fen protected by Metro's voter-approved natural area program

A property acquisition in April by Metro secured the remainder of a rare fen located in the Willamette Narrows area near West Linn. Providing habitat to uncommon, varied and high-quality plant communities, the fen is a unique type of wetland that includes a shallow lake with a floating peat mat.

According to the Oregon Natural Heritage Program, it is the only remaining fen of its kind in the Willamette Valley. The property includes large boulders, rocky piles and other features that were likely created by the action of the Missoula (or Bretz) Floods at the end of the Ice Age. Metro originally purchased 50 acres from the property owners in 1998. The natural area now totals 63 acres.

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

Councilor Rod Park contact information

600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232
503-797-1547 | 503-797-1793 fax
rod.park@oregonmetro.gov

Kathryn Sofich, policy coordinator
503-797-1941
kathryn.sofich@oregonmetro.gov

www.oregonmetro.gov