

# Robert Liberty

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Robert Liberty  
represents  
District 6, which  
includes portions of  
Northeast, Southeast  
and Southwest  
Portland.



## Light Rail on Barbur and Powell Boulevards: Moving to the Head of the Line?

A personal message from Councilor Liberty

Since the first MAX light rail line opened in 1986, the region's rail transit network has expanded faster than any of us could have imagined. With the opening of the WES commuter rail this spring and the Green Line from Clackamas Town Center to Gateway this September, the region will have built 71 miles of rail, dramatically increasing transportation choices in our region.

The next two light rail lines moving forward in the planning and funding pipeline are the one from downtown through Southeast Portland to Milwaukie (about 95% of the funding has been identified), and the extension of the Yellow Line to Vancouver as part of the Columbia River Crossing project.

So what comes next?

That was the question answered by the High Capacity Transit System Plan carried out by Metro. The study was undertaken to identify the best potential investments in high capacity transit – light rail, commuter rail, rapid streetcar, bus rapid transit - that the region should make over the next 30 years. The first phase narrowed the potential investments to eighteen possible projects. Each of these projects was then evaluated against 25 different criteria, addressing everything from the impacts on housing affordability (by reducing other household transportation costs), how the project would meet community development aspirations, and impacts on families of modest means, to the costs to build and operate the line.

As a result of this evaluation process, future rail projects were classified into four tiers. At the top of the list in the “Near term regional priority corridors,” were three projects: Upgrading the WES commuter rail line in Washington County to mimic light rail service, building light rail in the vicinity of Barbur Boulevard to Tigard and Sherwood, and another light rail line in the vicinity of Powell Boulevard between Portland and Gresham.

The High Capacity Transit System Plan is more than a collection of recommended projects. It effectively describes a broad range of purposes for these investments that are far more than just moving people around. It also describes how communities can move possible projects upward in the priority tiers.

The Metro Council is scheduled to act on the results of the High Capacity Transit System Plan – including the high priority given for potential Powell and Barbur Boulevard projects – on July 9, 2009.

An important part of the success of these potential investments will depend on how well they increase transportation choice and facilitate the development of new housing, shops and community amenities around the stations along the route. And that will require the active participation of the people with a great deal of expertise and a large stake in the success of these project: the residents that live along these routes.

– Robert Liberty



[www.oregonmetro.gov](http://www.oregonmetro.gov)

## Outcomes from the JPACT Retreat

In late May, the Metro Council hosted a retreat with members of the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) to discuss the financing strategy for the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). JPACT, a 17-member committee of elected officials and transportation agency officials, is making key recommendations to the Metro Council on what transportation needs the region should prioritize and how to fund them.

Using break-out groups and scenarios for the region's financial future, all participants were encouraged to focus on prioritizing regional transportation investments. They also discussed what additional financing tools the region should pursue to address unmet maintenance and capital needs in transportation systems.

The retreat was very successful in that everyone was very engaged and provided excellent input on issues from how cities and counties can get more flexibility, to how to draw the best balance between maintaining the infrastructure throughout the region, as opposed to building new projects.

Throughout the summer, Metro will continue working with members of JPACT to synthesize all of this input, refine ideas, and develop a draft RTP project list and financing strategy to release for public comment by September 15. The public comment period will last for 30 days.

This whole process will culminate with JPACT and the Metro Council approving the RTP by resolution by the end of 2009, with the intent of adopting a final RTP by ordinance in June 2010.

The retreat provided a very exciting and important opportunity because the transportation investments made now will determine how the region develops over the long term. As you know, residents are fortunate to live in a place where leaders and residents made visionary transportation choices decades ago that allowed the Metro region to become one of the most livable urban communities in the country. The work being done now by the Metro Council and our transportation partners throughout the region will keep the region unique and enable the economy to prosper.

## Project Polar Bear invites teens to team up, Win an adventure

Local teens can join the fight against global warming, help save imperiled polar bears in the Arctic and maybe earn a trip to the San Diego Zoo, in a new competition sponsored by Polar Bears International.



Project Polar Bear challenges teams of two or three teenagers, ages 14 to 18, to develop a community project aimed at reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. For the contest, PBI has teamed up with North American communities whose zoos, like the Oregon Zoo, have polar bears.

The winning team will receive a VIP tour of the San Diego Zoo, including a behind-the-scenes look at its Polar Bear Plunge exhibit, plus admission to SeaWorld San Diego and a \$500 prize for each participating student. The teens also will be interviewed about their involvement in the program for a PBI video.

To enter the competition, teams must register by July 31 at [www.polarbearsinternational.org/project-polar-bear](http://www.polarbearsinternational.org/project-polar-bear). Groups will decide on a project and complete progress reports to measure the success and impact of their efforts. Each team will also have its own Web page for showing before and after pictures, videos, audio interviews and other data demonstrating the outcome of its project.

## 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

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