



CITY OF

PORTLAND, OREGON

OFFICE OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

Sam Adams, Commissioner
1221 S.W. Fourth Avenue, Rm. 220
Portland, Oregon 97204-1994
(503) 823-3008
FAX: (503) 823-3017
E: samadams@ci.portland.or.us
www.commissionersam.com

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

June 18, 2007

Contact: Mark Lear at (503) 823-7604

Or: Roland Chlapowski at (503) 823-1123

Commissioner Sam Adams to Hold a Series of Town Hall Meetings To Discuss Portland's Ailing Transportation System

(PORTLAND, OR) - The City of Portland, in response to the unlikely event that the Oregon Legislature will approve an increase of the gas tax, is initiating discussions to address the issue of transportation funding and to plan for the future. Over the next few weeks, Commissioner Sam Adams, the Portland Office of Transportation, and the Portland Neighborhood District Coalitions are hosting Town Hall meetings to discuss transportation funding, maintenance, and safety.

Where:

Southwest Portland

Tuesday, June 19, 7-9pm
Multnomah Center
7688 SW Capitol Highway

Southeast Portland

Wednesday, June 20, 7-9pm
St. Philip Neri Church - Carvlin Hall
2408 SE 16th Avenue

North & Northeast Portland

Tuesday, June 26, 7-9pm
King Neighborhood Facility
4815 NE 7th Avenue

Northwest Portland

Wednesday, June 27, 7-9pm
Friendly House Conference Room
1737 NW 26th Avenue

Central Northeast & East Portland

Monday, July 2, 7-9pm
Firehouse #12
4415 NE 87th Avenue

When: All open houses run from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Event attendees:

City Commissioner Sam Adams
Oregon Department of Transportation Staff
Neighborhood District Coalitions
Interested and Concerned Citizens

Why: Portland's transportation system is in trouble. There is a backlog of projects and with a growing population, there is more demand placed on the transportation system. We must begin to address these problems now to ensure a sustainable and safe system for the future. These meetings create a dialogue for how to garner transportation dollars and spend them efficiently and effectively.

--MORE--

Background:

There is a backlog of projects, and with a growing population, there is more demand placed on the transportation system. Currently, 32% of Portland's arterial streets, 22% of the bridges, and 43% of the traffic signals are in poor condition. Deferred maintenance adds an estimated \$9 million annually to the \$425 million transportation backlog that exists. Additionally, too many Portlanders are being injured and killed on those roads.

A public opinion poll conducted in 2007 among Portland residents on transportation needs showed strong support for road repair, maintenance, and safety. Given the current situation, the money does not exist to adequately address these issues. In order to cover the funding gap, it would take a seventeen-cent increase in statewide gas taxes, which is unlikely to happen in the immediate future. Oregon's last gas tax increase occurred in 1993 and the Portland metro region receives only forty-six-cents out of each dollar paid through gas taxes and vehicle registration fees. Additionally, there are no allocated local funding sources for basic maintenance.

The good news is that something can be done to help improve the system and ensure its health. The Town Hall meetings around Portland are the beginnings of several conversations about how to obtain more funding for transportation and how to spend those dollars efficiently and effectively. These Town Hall meetings provide residents of Portland a unique opportunity to learn about current transportation funding situation and provide their input on how to fix the problem.

The Town Hall meetings will be held at five locations in Portland's unique neighborhoods. All Portland residents are invited and encouraged to attend these discussions with Commissioner Adams.

For more information on the Town Hall meetings, or for general information regarding the transportation funding initiative, contact Mark Lear at (503) 823-7604 or Roland Chlapowski at (503) 823-1123. Or log on to www.commissionersam.com/node/2536.

###