

# State House Democrats block transportation funding bill

By HILLARY BORRUD  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Democratic leaders in the Oregon House have blocked a \$340 million transportation funding bill introduced by a Wilsonville Republican.

State Rep. John Davis, R-Wilsonville, knew his bill faced long odds, given that Gov. Kate Brown and leaders in the House and Senate all said they would not attempt to pass a transportation funding bill until 2017. But Davis decided to pursue the legislation anyway, in an attempt to get a jump on projects to reduce traffic congestion and compete for a share of \$800 million in federal grants for freight projects available this year under the transportation funding bill Congress passed in December.

Davis said Democratic leaders never responded to his emails and phone call requesting a hearing on the bill, and he finally learned the legislation would not get a hearing when he ran into Rep. Jessica Vega Pederson, D-Portland, chairwoman of the committee where the bill was assigned.

Davis' bill would have raised

**'I don't think anybody expects a transportation package to pass this session.'**

Elizabeth Steiner Hayward  
Senate majority whip, D-Beaverton

money for transportation through a combination of bonds, an increase in the gas tax in the Portland metropolitan area to pay for local projects, increases in license and registration fees, and a hike in the weight mile tax for trucks.

House Democrats objected to the bill because it would have eliminated the carbon credit system created under Oregon's low-carbon fuel standard. Last year Republicans refused to vote for any transportation bill that included an increase in the gas tax, unless Democrats would agree to repeal the fuel standard.

"Last session, in 2015, I spent a lot of time and effort on both the clean fuels bill and the transportation package and really worked hard to see if there was a path forward to compromise," Vega

Pederson said. "It wasn't there. We spent a lot of time on it, and a lot of hours in rooms, and really we weren't able to come up with anything that worked."

Davis said he hoped legislative hearings would have provided an opportunity to revisit the low-carbon fuels program.

"I still think legislative oversight is vital, because the (Environmental Quality Commission) has changed the facts on the ground in meaningful ways since the 2015 session through rulemaking," Davis said.

In December, the commission voted to delay enforcement of the fuel standard until 2018, and commissioners said they wanted frequent updates on the supply and cost of alternative fuels and carbon credits.

Senate Democrats, who had helped negotiate a 2015 transportation funding package that ran into opposition in the House, listed transportation package as one of their priorities this year.

"I don't think anybody expects a transportation package to pass this session," said Senate Majority Whip Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, D-Beaverton. "I do think a lot of people think we will have robust public conversation about it in multiple committees because I think the vast majority of us agree that without a transportation package we are going to be struggling, and it is going to be more expensive for businesses to get their goods to market. It's going to take longer for people to get to work. We are more at risk for bridge collapses not just from earthquakes but from other causes so we need to be thinking hard about how we invest in Oregon's transportation infrastructure in ways that protect our future."

Paris Achen contributed to this report.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

# Omnibus housing bill unlikely to pass this session

By PARIS ACHEN  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — An omnibus bill to address the state's affordable housing crisis is unlikely to pass during the Legislature's 35-day session that began Monday, according to state Senate Majority Leader Ginny Burdick.

"There really is a crisis out there," the Portland Democrat said. "People are being thrown out of their apartments. It's a very serious problem in Portland, so I would hope to do at least something on it, but it won't be the omnibus bill. It's just too ambitious for 35 days."

Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer, D-Portland, chairwoman of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing, proposed the housing package after public testimony in November. The testimony highlighted that a shortage of affordable housing and no-cause evictions have exacerbated homelessness and poor living conditions in the state.

The package, which also is championed by House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, includes restricting no-cause evictions and requiring landlords to give 90 days' notice before terminating a lease or raising rent on a tenant.

It would exempt property owners from capital gains taxes when they sell their property to a housing authority.

It would yield an estimated \$5 million by increasing the states' document recording fee to \$30 from \$20.

Keny-Guyer also is seeking \$10 million for emergency housing assistance and \$17.5 million in lottery bonds to preserve affordable housing by compensating for expiring federal rental assistance contracts or matured federal loans.

Sen. Michael Dembrow, D-Portland, chairman of the Senate Workforce Committee, has resurrected a bill that would repeal a ban on requiring developers to include affordable housing units in their new developments. That practice is known as inclusionary zoning. He made a similar proposal last year. That proposal died in the Senate.

Dembrow's proposal received strong support during a public hearing Monday in front of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing. Out of more than a dozen speakers, none spoke against the measure.

Burdick said lawmakers need to narrow the legislation down to one or two measures that can make the most difference. It's unclear whether lawmakers can agree on what those one or two items might be.

"I would say personally one of my biggest concerns in this regard is the issue of tenants being afraid to complain to landlords about unsafe conditions in their housing because of our no-cause eviction law in Oregon," said Senate Majority Whip Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, D-Beaverton. "They're basically very worried that if they complain about mold or poor ventilation or any of the other conditions we know contribute to poor health that they could be given a no-cause eviction notice and be out of a place to live."

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# Warrenton schools aim to take community's pulse

Board ponders vision before deciding to build or upgrade schools

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — As they grapple with whether to upgrade their existing buildings or build a new K-12 campus, the Warrenton-Hammond School Board wants to explore the district's long-term vision.



Debbie Morrow

During a Monday visioning workshop, board members agreed that creating a unified vision comes before potentially going out for a bond, which Board Chairwoman Debbie Morrow said could take three to five years of preparation.

Superintendent Mark Jeffery said any part of the vision having to do with upgrading facilities is likely to involve a bond, adding the district needs to know the community's pulse before it votes. In 2013, voters in South County roundly rejected a 30-year, \$129 million bond by the Seaside School District to build a new K-12 campus in Seaside Heights. Voters in that district will decide

on another bond measure again in November.

## Survey planned

The Warrenton-Hammond School Board is planning a survey to ask what the community wants from the district, which Morrow said will build a shared sense of ownership. The board would use the community survey, along with student surveys and town halls, to meld the community's vision and theirs into a unified mission.

School administrators cautioned the board to ask the right questions in the survey and not get stuck in the weeds. But if the district isn't asking the questions, board member Greg Morrill said, it is operating out of ignorance.

"My end game is to see higher community involvement and interest in what's going on in these walls," Morrill said, noting the small to nonexistent audiences at board meetings. "We have limited resources. We need to engage the community to bolster those resources."

Morrow said she plans to talk to Jeffery about how the school board can craft a proposed vision statement, contact the Oregon School Boards Association for help creating a meaningful survey and seeing if Seaside Superintendent Doug Dougherty will share his experience.

## Vocational ed

Warrenton has been lauded for its focus on science and tech-

**'My end game is to see higher community involvement and interest in what's going on in these walls.'**

Greg Morrill

Warrenton-Hammond School Board member

nology, from an operational fish hatchery on the Skipanon River and a technology course building underwater robots and drones to a Lego robotics team and computer coding classes.

But the district also grapples with how to build more working-class, career-technical opportunities, such as its fledgling automotive program run by volunteers from a local auto club, and the small number of students traveling to Clatsop Community College for welding courses.

Warrenton High School Principal Rod Heyen said the high school and college's relationship is challenged by scheduling, priorities for students with other activities and at-risk kids who lose the ability to take electives as they play catch-up on core courses for graduation.

Board member Kelly Simonsen, who championed the creation of the automotive club two years ago, said vocational courses would have much more interest on campus. Heyen agreed, and said the high school

has found a niche of using night classes to work around students' schedules and busing students to the college needed.

"I like to think of our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) classes as Shop 2.0," Heyen said, adding he has no problem trying to sell more interest in the school's welding classes at the college.

But Heyen said he feared what he might have to cut to accommodate something like a dedicated welding course. Jeffery said the district isn't anti-career-technical, but wants to be realistic about how such courses are prioritized.

"It comes down to the teacher," Heyen said, noting the success of technology teacher Josh Jannusch and biology teacher Steve Porter's fisheries class. "A good teacher runs a good program."

Tom Rogozinski, the principal of Warrenton Grade School, said a career fair could be a quick and easy way to help entice kids. "I think we could start something like that by spring," he said.

# Rescue teams expand search for missing Cannon Beach man

By LYRA FONTAINE  
EO Media Group

CANNON BEACH — Rescue teams continued to search Tuesday morning for an 87-year-old Haystack Heights man who has been missing since Saturday.

Raymond R. Hickman is described as 5-feet-9-inches tall, bald, blue eyes and wearing glasses. His family said he may have "memory issues."

"We're always hopeful," Cannon Beach Police Chief Jason Schermerhorn said. "Surprisingly, the body can do different things. We're hoping someone took him in."

The rescue teams now have about 60 volunteers from Clatsop, Washington, Tillamook, Multnomah and Clackamas counties and Mountain Wave Search and Rescue. They

were gathering at the firehouse Tuesday morning to expand their search area in the north end of Cannon Beach.

On Monday, teams of volunteers focused on highways and trails by Ecola State Park, as well as near Haystack Heights. Schermerhorn remained optimistic, emphasizing the generosity and help of the Cannon Beach community and nearby counties.

"It's been great, the community support and neighbors and friends who have come to help," he said. It's difficult to search for a person in a large, heavily forested area, he added.

Anyone with information about the missing man should contact Clatsop County Search and Rescue at 503-440-2650 or Cannon Beach Police at 503-436-2811.

# Warrenton school board interviews new recruits

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — The two likely newest members of the Warrenton-Hammond School Board were introduced Monday.

After whittling down from five candidates, sitting board members interviewed Dan Jackson, owner of Safekeeping Storage Center in Warrenton, and Joe Talamantez, financial manager at Tongue Point Job Corps Center.

Two vacancies formed after the school board accepted the resignations of both Adam Neahring and Dennis Warren last month. Neahring and his family moved out of the district, while Warren cited health issues.

Jackson, who joined the district's budget committee this school year, said he found out about the position in the newspaper and thought there



Joe Talamantez Jr.

would be more action on the school board.

"I want to do something in my community," he said. "I've grown up here; I went to Warrenton; my kids went here."

Jackson has a daughter who graduated in 2014, along with sons in the eighth and second grades.

Talamantez was on school board until May, when he was defeated by Warren, a former teacher and school board mem-



Dan Jackson

ber. Warren claimed he didn't mean to run against Talamantez, meaning instead to take the board seat being vacated by retired major league pitcher Brian Bruney and eventually filled by

Dalan Moss, a financial manager for Coast Rehabilitation Services.

Talamantez said the district needs to look at adding more attractive programs and continuing to grow, while finding ways to engage teachers and students. "We need teachers and students fighting to get in and stay here," he said.

Superintendent Mark Jeffery said school board members Darlene Warren, Debbie Morrow, Kelly Simonsen, Greg Morrill and Moss will deliberate, decide whether the two are good fits and come back Wednesday to appoint the new board members.

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