



Business/Careers

Have a Happy Father's Day

Smith, Blumenauer tour interstate alignment



Legislators Meet Community Leaders Supportive of the Project

CONTRIBUTED STORY FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

U.S. Senator Gordon Smith, U.S. Representative Earl Blumenauer and Tri-Met General Manager Fred Hansen on Thursday toured the Interstate MAX alignment and met

with Portland community leaders to discuss the MAX project. The discussion focused on the strong support the project received from the neighborhoods and ongoing revitalization efforts. "The Interstate MAX alignment is a great opportunity to transform

Portland's light-rail system into a transportation network worthy of a first-class city," said Smith. "The project rose out of a community-based, citizen-led effort and I will continue my efforts to obtain the needed federal funding for the project." "North Portland's backing is critical as we push for this project to receive full federal funding. Oregon is very fortunate to have two Senators who recognize that this project would bring great economic revitalization to the metro area and to our state and help make our communities more livable," Blumenauer said. "Interstate MAX has the highest rating in the country of any light rail project. Senator Smith has demonstrated his strong commitment to this project, and it's this type of leadership that will secure funding to

move us into construction," Hansen said. Smith, Blumenauer and Hansen met with, among others, members from the Interstate Avenue Business Association and members from the North Portland Neighborhood Association, including residents of Arbor Lodge, Overlook, Kenton, Piedmont, and Humbolt neighborhoods. The Interstate MAX is a proposed 5.8-mile extension of Portland's 33-mile MAX light rail system. The Interstate MAX line runs along Interstate Avenue from the Rose Quarter Transit Center to Kenton, and then to the Expo Center. The project includes 10 new stations, and would operate from the Expo Center through downtown Portland. All local funding for the \$350 million project has been approved.

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Action team three will look to select, support and retain teachers that contribute to the goals of the Strategic Plan. "If we are going to accomplish the things that we want to accomplish for our kids, we need to give teachers and principals the right tools," said Tim Lauer, team three facilitator. Achievement disparity is addressed by team four. Their intent is to eliminate the achievement disparity of low-income and children of color. This is to be accomplished by improving communication with these students and parents, and by breaking down cultural barriers such as racism, language differences and low expectations.

Action team five looks at legislation and regulations. They want to achieve greater partnership and negotiation with the community on the way that legislation and regulations are made and put into effect.

Team six stresses the need for flexibility in the way the Strategic Plan is implemented.

Standards and assessment managed by team seven will decide how successful the Strategic Plan is. They want to look at individual student growth and goal achievement over test scores. "We need to remind people that the end product of all work is not a test score. It's a student's learning," said Evelyn Brzezinski, director of research, evaluation and assessment.

Not all of the standards set by the Strategic Plan have been completely agreed upon. The Crisis Education Team (CET), made up of educators and others, wants the District to take more specific actions for change. Although the Strategic Plan has included many of the suggestions made by the CET not everyone is satisfied. Katie Haycock, an outside expert hired by the District, agreed with many of the CET's recommendations. No course of action has been decided upon since Haycock's report was released.

The core planning team is a large group of people from every Portland community made up of business and community members, parent representatives, teachers, principals, students, school board members, PPS union representatives, and other PPS staff. Canada stressed that dialogue, along with community input, is necessary.

"We will look at every recommendation, not only those that come from the action teams but from outside individuals as well," said Canada.

PPS Foundation Staff member, Sally Yee said that community involvement sets this plan apart from previous plans. "More of the community owns

this plan than any of the other plans that have been put forth," said Yee. The next meetings will be held on June 19, 21, and 26 at 6:30 p.m. During the June 19 and 21 meetings there will be time set-aside for public comment. For more information on the Strategic Plan call the Strategic Plan Office at 916-3472 or 916-3390, or on-line at <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/plan/index.shtml>.

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