

Portland Tribune - 4/14/06

Metro needs old hands, new faces

Portland-area voters have important choices for the Metro Council, candidates whose decisions will help shape the livability and economy of the metropolitan region.

That's why it is important to return incumbents David Bragdon as the regionally elected president of the Metro Council and Rod Park to represent Metro District 1, serving East Multnomah County, Happy Valley and Damascus. And that's why we're not yet sold on who the best candidate is to represent Metro District 4 in Washington County.

Bragdon, who is unopposed, has served as a unifying force on the Metro Council and within the Metro bureaucracy. He also is a growing voice for regional cooperation.

While we don't always agree with Bragdon, we salute his hard work, his accessibility to citizens and community leaders around the region and state, and his demonstrated practice of not only listening to others, but learning from others.

In four years as Metro Council president, Bragdon has improved greatly in his ability to manage complex policies, build consensus and achieve success.

Park has served as an effective partner for local communities within his district by aiding their economic development efforts.

He has been instrumental in decisions to add land for jobs and is passionate about increased funding for regional transportation improvements.

Jim Duncan, who moved to Damascus a year ago, opposes Park. Duncan was active in Portland for many years, but he lacks Park's deep east county roots and extensive knowledge of transportation and land use.

Meanwhile, voters who live in Beaverton, Hillsboro and the western part of Washington County have a much tougher choice for Metro Council District 4.

Running for office are Tom Cox, a management consultant and past Libertarian candidate for governor; Kathryn Harrington, a retired Intel Corp. manager and current community volunteer; Kathy Christy, a real estate broker and former Washington County commissioner; and Al Young, a masonry contractor and former state legislator from the Hillsboro area.

At this time, we most favor Christy and Harrington for this seat.

Christy has significant experience working with local governments during her eight years on the county commission board and long service in other community and local government matters.

Those past roles would serve her well at Metro. But to date, Christy has not convincingly articulated a clear vision for the Metro Council.

Harrington is much more definite on matters such as housing supply, transportation improvements, natural spaces, land for jobs and continued close relations between Metro and local cities.

But she has no track record because she's never cast public votes. And there is no proof she can help

shape regional public policy. Frankly, she hasn't ever been elected to public office before.

Cox doesn't favor big government and opposes the expansion of Metro's responsibilities.

Young is a leader from the past whose contributions helped shape Washington County in the 1970s and 1980s.

We think no one candidate will win the May 16 primary outright for District 4.

We think voters should send Christy and Harrington on to the general election in November, requiring each candidate to better demonstrate why she is the best choice.

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