

# Sounding The Alarm



By Karen Bowerman, Lake Oswego City Councilor, Candidate, Clackamas County Commissioner, Position 2

**M**etro imposes an ideology that stifles quality of life while continually promising to improve it.

Their agenda stands between state goals and local implementation. From the troublesome sensitive lands designations on private property in Lake Oswego, to the adoption of a locally preferred comprehensive plan for the new City of Damascus, Metro overreaches.

Metro's agenda assumes an increasingly large role in deciding transportation and land use policies. This growing trend is seen in massive projects such as the Columbia River Crossing, Active Transportation Plan, regional allocation of your federal gas taxes and its \$2 to \$3 billion Southwest Corridor Plan. Livability worsens with planned overcrowding of our neighborhoods, insufficient parking, inadequate road capacity and excessive weight on biking, walking and transit.

Metro claims to leverage dollars through "shared

investment" meaning that local, regional, state and federal funding sources would be used for major transit projects. Whatever the level of government, it is *your* tax dollars. And how effectively are those dollars being used? An elected auditor who functions independently from Metro investigated that very question.

For years Metro has claimed that their strategies of rail transit and high density development are successfully accomplishing the goals of preventing sprawl and providing more livable neighborhoods. Do they? Auditor Flynn recommended in her 2010 report that Metro measure its effectiveness toward goals, and repeated in her 2012 audit that Metro does not measure performance and that 2010 recommendations had not been implemented. It was surprising to read Metro's self-defense that indeed billions have been invested but that evaluation tools are not available for measuring effectiveness! Alarms are sounding because assessing and reporting goal effectiveness are very basic expectations, especially for costly public projects.

Elected officials should lead with policy to ensure that taxpayers' money is being used effectively. They should ensure that local vision drives local plans.

State, regional, county and

local leaders should hear the alarm being sounded by residents who expect scrutiny to make sure tax money is being spent wisely.

While Metro plans more light-rail to be built and operated by TriMet, additional problems are introduced. Light-rail has many goals and in itself is a goal. Take for example the citizen-initiated measure in Tigard asking voters in March 2014 whether the city should oppose high-capacity transit (defined as a system that will reduce available road capacity in favor of light-rail, rail transit or exclusive bus lanes) and hold elections before updating regulations in this regard. Supporters of the measure do not believe that adding rail, reducing road capacity, adding high density development and more car-driving residents will improve quality of life and relieve congestion.

To make matters worse, the TriMet system upon which Metro relies is headed toward financial insolvency despite heavy public subsidies and payroll taxes that are reliable and growing revenue sources. TriMet's cash flow problems stemming from payroll benefits are so serious that TriMet's comeback is to cut service. In 2013, the general manager released a 2030 forecast showing revenue-expense imbalance of \$1.5 Billion. Opting out of TriMet will have to be taken seriously by more cities and counties. Apparently TriMet is not measuring its effectiveness either.

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the law of our general nature."

Neighborhood associations, grass root activists and citizen input are vital factors in keeping America healthy and strong. If the people elect wise and responsible leaders, and if elected officials pass laws that not only enhance but protect our freedoms, then economic stability will be a natural outcome. If we lead by example, once again, the United States can be a positive model to the world.



For  
**Karen Bowerman**  
Clackamas County  
Commissioner



**YOU'RE INVITED TO THE  
CAMPAIGN KICK-OFF**  
Karen Bowerman for Clackamas  
County Commissioner Position 2

Thursday, January 30 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.  
~ Program at 7 p.m.

Drop in for good fun and discussion. Hosted sandwich buffet with dessert and soft drinks.  
No-host bar. Bring family & friends!

Rivershore Bar & Grill  
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