



2016 LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY AGENDA

**Approved
1/14/16**

Table of Contents

- Executive Summary2**
- Recap of 20153**
- EMEA 2016 Legislative Advocacy Agenda**
- Transportation4**
- Land Use & Development.....5**
- Education & Workforce Development5**
- Regulation, Business Environment & Fiscal Policy.....6**

Executive Summary

With the goal of promoting a community of excellence, the East Metro Economic Alliance shall be a leader in creating community wealth within East Metro cities of Fairview, Gresham, Troutdale, Wood Village, and East Multnomah County. We are committed to influencing decisions and policies on issues vital to the economic development and livability of the region. Our 2016 Legislative Advocacy is focused on five key areas: Transportation; Land Use and Development; Education & Workforce Development; and Regulation, Business Environment and Fiscal Policy.

Transportation: EMEA will advocate for transportation improvements that move people and goods efficiently, strengthen our economy and support our quality of life. WE WILL:

1. **Seek funding and project completion for key north-south corridor improvements identified in the East Metro Connections Plan.**
2. **Seek funding of key transportation projects from the Federal Highway Trust Fund.**
3. **Support Bus Rapid Transit along the Powell-Division corridor.**
4. **Advocate for enhanced TriMet services in East Metro.**

Land Use / Development: EMEA will advocate for land use policies and programs that promote sustainability and the long-term prosperity of the region, including an adequate supply of industrial and shovel-ready lands. WE WILL:

1. **Prioritize development of and funding for industrial lands currently within the UGB.**
2. **Actively Participate in Urban Growth Boundary Review.**
3. **Promote Development Policy Process Review regionally and locally.**

Education and Workforce Development: EMEA will advocate for programs which develop a more efficient, integrated method of preparing skilled workers to the employers who need them. WE WILL:

1. **Support efforts to stabilize education funding in order to ensure a well-educated work force.**
2. **Support STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and CTE (career technical education) policies.**
3. **Support policies which drive Oregon's 40-40-20 goal.**

Regulation, Business Environment and Fiscal Policy: When policy discussions and changes are considered, EMEA will advocate for less regulation and more flexibility for business. WE WILL:

1. **Support tax policy which promotes economic development as a driver for maintaining and expanding services.**
2. **Advocate strongly against a Gross Receipts Tax.**
3. **Support Reform of the PERS System.**
4. **Promote legislation and policies which simplify reporting and adherence requirements and allow businesses in Oregon to remain competitive.**
5. **Support passage of Oregon Clean Electricity and Coal Transition Plan, LC42.**
6. **Support a Minimum Wage Compromise.**
7. **Oppose efforts to impose prevailing wage requirements on private development projects receiving tax incentives.**

We have three reenergized committees – Transportation and Land Use, which is co-chaired by Tim Brunner and Steve Entenman, Education and Workforce which is chaired by Dr. Debra Derr and Legislation which is chaired by Kathy Clevenger that will actionize our support of this agenda through advocacy at the legislative level and in regional and local policy and rulemaking.

Recap of 2015

As we look forward to the Legislative Session of 2016, we first want to highlight achievements last year as there were key victories that will impact East Metro. This included funding for the Boy's and Girl's Club as well as some of our transportation projects being accepted into the Federal Highway Trust Fund pipeline. Other key victories included:

- [HB 2652](#), "Amends definition of "rural area" to mean area outside urban growth boundary of city of 40,000 or more, as boundary is acknowledged on date on which application is submitted for strategic investment program." This legislation corrected an inequity under which land added to the UGB after 2002 was treated as rural rather than urban property for the Strategic Incentive Program.
- [SB 5542](#) "Appropriates moneys from General Fund to Oregon Youth Authority for certain biennial expenses." Includes the East Multnomah County Gang Enforcement task force.
- [HB 3072](#) "Establishes funding mechanism for activities related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics education and activities related to career and technical education that can lead to high wage and high demand jobs." Other CTE legislation.
- [HB 2734](#) "Authorizes local government to adopt program granting property tax abatement against taxes imposed on brownfields in amount equal to specified percentage of certain remediation costs. Authorizes local government to adopt program granting property tax abatement against taxes imposed on brownfields in amount equal to specified percentage of certain remediation costs."

While we had some wins and some setbacks in 2015, we have not lost our resolve and will work hard to advocate and influence decisions and policies on issues vital to the economic development and livability of the region. We ask that you also stand with us.



2016 Legislative Agenda

Transportation

EMEA will advocate for transportation improvements that move people and goods efficiently, strengthen our economy and support our quality of life. WE WILL:

1. Seek funding and project completion for key north-south corridor improvements identified in the East Metro Connections Plan.

Projects in design which are funded through construction:

- The design and construction for the 238th project was funded through ODOT STIP and Metro MTIP programs. The project is still in design but should be complete later this year and then out to competitive bids.
- The design for intersection improvements and widening along Hogan Drive (242nd) between Division and Burnside is ongoing and construction is funded.
- Cleveland Ave. improvements between Division and Stark include changing from a 2-lane to 3-lane section with sidewalks and bike lanes is also in the design phase.

Other projects requiring funding include:

- 182nd/190th Connections to Clackamas County
- Eastman/223rd Connections
- 242nd Connections to Clackamas County
- 181st Sidewalk Improvements in Rockwood
- Catalyst Projects for Springwater District

2. Seek funding of key transportation projects from the Federal Highway Trust Fund.

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act was signed into law on December 4, 2015. EMEA will advocate to direct funds to key transportation projects in East County, including those identified in the EMCP.

3. Support Bus Rapid Transit along the Powell-Division corridor.

As the Powell-Division corridor study comes to a close, EMEA whole-heartedly supports the east-west bus rapid transit connection from downtown to MHCC. EMEA will advocate for funding of the project and will support the recommendations for the proposed bus rapid transit system additions and the subsequent developments along the corridor for our region.

4. Advocate for Enhanced TriMet Services.

54% of TriMet operating funds come from a payroll tax currently set at 0.7237% of wages. The TriMet board approved an increase to 0.8237% over the next 10 years, beginning January 1, 2016. While all businesses in the TriMet service area pay the same payroll tax, the current system predominantly benefits downtown Portland businesses due to the hub-and-spoke routes, including all five light rail lines. TriMet service expansion needs to provide substantial benefit to East County businesses or the payroll model should change to reduce the cost burden on business which do not benefit. EMEA will also push for a 5-year review of the tax increase and resulting service adjustments.

Land Use & Development

EMEA will advocate for land use policies and programs that promote sustainability and the long-term prosperity of the region, including an adequate supply of industrial and shovel-ready lands. WE WILL:

- 1. Prioritize development of and funding for industrial lands currently within the UGB.**
Industrial lands currently exist within the UGB, but lack sufficient local and state funding for development. The State should create and fund creative programs to help those industrial parcels become ready for development, removing barriers such as infrastructure, site planning, and brownfield impacts.
- 2. Participate in Urban Growth Boundary Review and Decisions.**
EMEA will participate in the scheduled review of the UGB expansion decision scheduled for three years. This will include being a part of any policy decisions and working with our partners in “G-9” to ensure East Metro’s interest are taken into account.
- 3. Encourage Development Process Review.**
Advocate for streamlining development review processes with local jurisdictions.

Education & Workforce Development

EMEA will advocate for programs which develop a more efficient, integrated method of preparing skilled workers to the employers who need them. WE WILL:

- 1. Support efforts to stabilize education funding in order to ensure a well-educated work force.**
Oregon education funding is fragile and highly dependent on income taxes, which are significantly impacted by a volatile economy. EMEA supports legislative action to minimize the impact of swings in the economy.
- 2. Support STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and CTE (career technical education) policies.**
STEM jobs not only pay higher than average wages, but most jobs of the future will require a basic understanding of math and science. To grow companies that successfully compete as global leaders in innovative products and services, Oregon needs to develop the well-educated, talented employees that fuel such businesses.
- 3. Support policies which drive Oregon’s 40-40-20 goal.**
Oregon established a 2025 goal of having 40 percent of the state's adults with four-year college degrees, 40 percent with two-year degrees or the equivalent, and the remaining 20 percent with high school degrees. EMEA sees critical components of achieving this goal to include accelerated learning/dual credit programming for high school students and ongoing accountability and funding for Oregon Promise.

Regulation, Business Environment & Fiscal Policy

When policy discussions and changes are considered, EMEA will advocate for less regulation and more flexibility for business. WE WILL:

1. **Support tax policy which promotes economic development as a driver for maintaining and expanding services.**

Tax policy should be comprehensively planned rather than piecemealed, encourage economic development and result in demonstrable outcomes of critical importance to Oregonians. We cannot as a state use an increase in taxes to “Solve all problems”. We should be using tax policy to make investments in economic development that will reverberate throughout the economy and share the burden across the state not just on the business community.

2. **Advocate against the Gross Receipts Tax.**

We believe the Gross Receipts Tax would harm the economy of Oregon and encourage disinvestment in Oregon. It is billed as a “Tax on Out-of-State Corporations” but there is no economic modeling they show this tax will be paid by anyone other than hard working Oregonians.

3. **Reform PERS.**

In April 2015, the Oregon Supreme Court overturned 2013 legislative changes to the PERS system, ruling that lawmakers cannot lower the cost of living adjustments on benefits earned prior to the PERS reforms. Legislative leaders need to immediately consider other proposed changes to avoid the forecasted cost increases as high as \$870 million in the 2017 to 2019 biennium. There is no way this can remain status quo. It must be addressed immediately by the legislature.

4. **Promote legislation and policies which simplify reporting and adherence requirements and allow businesses in Oregon to remain competitive.**

It is important to understand that legislation has real cost to business even when there is no direct fiduciary element. Simplifying reporting with both make proper regulation easier and faster for state agencies, reduce costs for business and allow Oregon business the ability to adapt to changes in the marketplace.

5. **Support passage of Oregon Clean Electricity and Coal Transition Plan, LC42.**

Legislation avoids statewide ballot measure; moves Oregon off coal fired generation no later than 2035; increase renewable portfolio standard to 50%; meets electricity sector obligation to meeting state greenhouse gas emission goal of 75% reduction below 1990 emissions by 2050.

6. **Minimum Wage Compromise**

Engage with legislature to advocate for common sense changes to the minimum wage laws; not a ballot measure, training wage, not allow local option/preemption, include other payments, like shift differential, amend OR specific overtime laws.

7. **Oppose efforts to impose prevailing wage requirements on private development projects receiving tax incentives.**

The Legislature has considered legislation to impose prevailing wage requirements on private development projects that receive local tax incentives through the Enterprise Zone or Strategic Investment Program. Extending prevailing wage requirements to these private development activities could have a chilling effect on attracting private economic development that increases local employment and property tax revenue.