



EAST METRO
ECONOMIC ALLIANCE
2017 ADVOCACY AGENDA

Approved
04/06/2017

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 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 Division corridor through Tri-Met resources.**
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 STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) and CTE (career technical education) policies.**

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 or against policies that force only business to close the state budget gap.**
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 a Minimum Wage Compromise.**
6. **Oppose efforts to impose prevailing wage requirements on private development projects receiving tax incentives.**



2017 Advocacy and Legislative Agenda

The East Metro Economic Alliance (EMEA) is a non-profit organization comprised of businesses, chambers of commerce, other non-profit organizations and public agencies working together to shape the future of East Metro through economic advocacy. EMEA builds consensus and promotes action on issues vital to the economic development and livability of the East Metro region the includes Fairview, Gresham, Troutdale, Wood Village and East Portland.

Our Vision

“A community of prosperity and vibrant economic opportunity”

Our Mission

To promote a community of excellence, the East Metro Economic Alliance shall be a leader in creating community wealth through smart growth, smart kids and smart industries within East Metro cities of Fairview, Gresham, Troutdale, Wood Village, and East Multnomah County. “

Our Shared Work:

To accomplish our mission the members of EMEA agree to be committed to the following work both as one collective organization and separately through each of our entities:

- Drive economic development advocacy for a business-friendly climate supporting through retention and expansion of existing businesses, and recruitment of new businesses in targeted industries and clusters.
- Provide leadership through a “united voice” on policy and for economic development, infrastructure and skilled workforce policies and initiatives at the local, state and federal levels.
- Support educational partners to ensure a well-educated workforce.
- Collaborate with all stakeholders and decision makers to influence long-term economic policies that will sustain East Metro’s future.

Visit us at www.EastMetro.org to learn more about our work and to join our efforts.

East Metro Economic Alliance is committed to influencing decisions and policies on issues vital to the economic development and livability of the region. To provide guidance to policy makers and stakeholders in the evaluation of policy, below is the EMEA Scorecard to ensure each policy promotes a community of prosperity and vibrant economic opportunity in the East Metro Region.

<p style="text-align: center;">Transportation</p>	<p>Policies and programs should promote transportation improvements to, from and in the East Metro region that move people and goods efficiently, strengthen our economy and support quality of life.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Land Use</p>	<p>Policies and programs should promote sustainability and the long-term prosperity of the East Metro region, including an adequate supply of industrial and shovel-ready lands.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Education and Workforce</p>	<p>Policies and programs should develop a more efficient, integrated method of preparing skilled workers to the employers who need them.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Business Environment</p>	<p>Policies and programs should provide for a competitive and flexible business environment that encourages Federal, State, Country, Regional, Local and Business investment.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Livability</p>	<p>Policies and programs should enhance community livability within the East Metro region to attract and retain businesses and employees and make the regions a better place to live, work, play and prosper.</p>



2017 Legislative Priorities

The following serves as a call to Oregon Legislators to prioritize Economic Development during in 2017. The East Metro Economic Alliance and its members support the following priorities for the 2017 Oregon Legislative Session:

Pass a Transportation Bill

This should be the priority of the Oregon Legislature. A comprehensive Transportation Package with infrastructure investments must be passed in 2017. The state and our region have been placed in a holding pattern in the absence of such a bill. It has been discussed ad nauseam and now the legislature must act and pass a bill in this session. The absence of a bill means local governments are finding it difficult to plan and prioritize projects and makes our state less attractive for business acquisition and growth.

Reform PERS

PERS costs will go up an extra \$885 million next biennium, a 44 percent increase from the \$2 billion per biennium that public employers are currently paying. Skyrocketing PERS costs are limiting services to all Oregonians as public funds are spent to support unrealistic benefits rather than public services. EMEA supports PERS reforms and opposes changes which could potentially increase PERS costs, including reclassification of workers. This increase PERS costs hurts our local government and school district the most and will lead to dramatic service level reductions and the laying off of staff and teachers. This must be addressed in the 2017 Session.

Support Oregon Employers

Create a training wage to incentive employers to take on the cost of training unskilled employees as well as hire additional seasonal employment. Refrain from overregulating scheduling of workers as businesses and employees should have flexibility in scheduling without unnecessary costs and burdens. Modify Oregon work hours and overtime laws, which penalize manufacturing, to align with Federal Regulations. Modify protected leave programs and align FMLA, OFLA and Oregon Sick Time legislation to prevent overlapping benefits and the streamlining of compliance activities. Also, the BOLI overtime interpretation should consider shift differential and not include time that was already paid as overtime.

Prioritize funding for industrial lands development

Industrial lands currently exist, but lack sufficient infrastructure for development. These are untapped sources for job creation and tax revenue. 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.

Support STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art & math) and CTE (career technical education) policies

STEAM 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. Continuing to invest in pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs and provide new incentives for new investments in manufacturing.



2017 Advocacy Agenda

Transportation

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

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

- 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 Division corridor.

EMEA supports the east-west bus rapid transit connection from downtown Portland to Gresham Transit Center. EMEA will advocate for the funding of the project through the appropriate TriMet resources.

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 two years. This will include being a part of any policy decisions and working with our partners in “G-9” to ensure East Metro interests are taken into account.
- 3. Encourage Development Process Review.**
Advocate for streamlining local jurisdiction development review processes.

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 MHCC General Obligation Bond.**
This bond will result in even greater educational opportunities that will lead to jobs for our residents and increase our ability to attract and retain businesses. Mt. Hood Community College has played a vital role in our community for nearly 50-years. The college provides great educational opportunities, serves as a major employer of local residents and adds greatly to the economic vitality of our region.

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 a Gross Receipts Tax or against policies that force only business to close the state budget gap.**

We believe a Gross Receipts Tax would harm the economy of Oregon and encourage disinvestment in Oregon. With ballot measure 97 failing, we will strongly advocate against forcing segments of business or even all of business from shouldering all of the responsibility of closing the state’s budget gap.

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. **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.