

# Carlotta Collette

## METRO COUNCIL DISTRICT 2 NEWS



### A personal message from Councilor Collette

Over the past year or so, Metro has been working with partner cities and counties to look at costs to build and maintain the infrastructure all communities require – roads, bridges, water and sewer systems, parks and plazas, and civic centers and schools. We conducted a survey of infrastructure needs regionwide, and looked at comparable costs to build a mix of residential and commercial communities at the edge of our region versus rebuilding within existing urban centers and transportation corridors.

This is all part of our multi-year effort called “Making the Greatest Place.” Our goal is to assemble information that can help prioritize where we make future investments. You’ve probably heard that our region is expected to grow by one million people by 2035 – of which about a third are our children and grandchildren, and the rest newcomers, attracted by many of the same things we value here.

It’s Metro’s responsibility to determine how much land we need to house and provide employment. We are doing this in collaboration with Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties, as well as the 25 cities inside the Metro regional boundary. What we learned shouldn’t surprise anyone. For example, infrastructure such as sewers, power lines and street grids cost more per dwelling in communities with bigger lots or are further from existing infrastructure. That’s because streets and pipes that serve many households have more taxpayers and ratepayers sharing the costs than those that serve only a few. Even though developers and homebuilders (and eventually homebuyers) pay a large portion of the costs to provide services through what are called “system development charges,” those charges do not cover the full cost of providing services. They rarely cover the costs, for example, of building and maintaining highways, transit systems or bridges to reach the newly developing communities. They rarely account for the longer commutes (and environmental impacts) to get to and from urban job centers where most people still work. So for the costs that are not paid by developers, the rest of us pick up the tab.

What might be news to all of us is the tab for building at the edge of our region is roughly twice as much than building within existing communities where much of the infrastructure is already in place. For example: construction of the new North Main Village in downtown Milwaukie provides a mix of affordable and market rate housing (105 new dwellings), plus commercial spaces, for about \$28,000 in infrastructure costs per dwelling. The development is close to plenty of bus routes and has an easy commute (by bike, bus or car) to either downtown Portland or the area’s biggest employer OHSU.

Similarly, Gresham’s Civic Neighborhood was built for about \$37,000 per dwelling in infrastructure costs. More than a thousand new homes and about 2,400 new jobs were created. The existence of light rail, major highway connections and an established sewer and water system help make this development a success.

**Carlotta Collette**  
represents  
**District 2, which**  
**includes the cities of**  
**Gladstone, Johnson**  
**City, Lake Oswego,**  
**Milwaukie, Oregon**  
**City, Rivergrove and**  
**West Linn and a**  
**portion of Southwest**  
**Portland.**

At the edges where transit, highway connections and other infrastructure are not already in place or are insufficient to support growing populations, we see a much different picture. To extend urban-scale infrastructure to the City of Damascus, for example, costs could reach as much as \$134,000 per dwelling. To realize the Southwest Tualatin Concept Plan and build a new industrial area for nearly 6,000 new jobs would cost about \$216,000 per comparable unit. (In our analysis, we assumed the infrastructure to create five jobs is about the same as to create one household. This is a commonly-used figure.)

Why should this matter to you? As much as you may like to think otherwise, you pay the bulk of the cost of growing our communities and creating jobs. Your tax dollars build the highways, and pay for the sewer systems, schools, parks and other resources we value. Incentives to create jobs or housing opportunities come out of your taxes.

The Metro region is internationally famous for getting it right so far. Our track record for building compact and vibrant communities that are models of sustainability is largely unmatched. Are we up to the challenge of continuing our record as the stakes and the pressures rise? Can we accommodate the need for more homes and jobs in ways that really make sense for all of us? You can help us answer those questions.

In the next year and a half, Metro and your county and city governments will be asking you to help set priorities for how to manage regional growth. I encourage you to work with us. Visit our web site: [www.oregonmetro.gov/greatestplace](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/greatestplace) for an overview of what we are working together to accomplish. Dig deeper at [www.oregonmetro.gov/infrastructure](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/infrastructure) or [www.oregonmetro.gov/rtp](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/rtp) for more analysis and information specific to the infrastructure and transportation questions. Get on our mailing lists and come to the meetings and workshops that will be held throughout the region in the coming year. I look forward to seeing you there.

– *Carlotta Collette*

## Metro Council awards grants to three neighborhood enhancement projects

The Metro Council has dedicated \$389,500 in matching grant funds to improve water quality, support local wildlife and increase access to nature for residents. The Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants Program helps ensure that every community enjoys clean water and nature as elements of its character and livability.

The Metro Council created a committee of citizens, local government officials and natural resource experts from across the region to review grant applications and make recommendations for funding. Projects selected for funding include a new park designed with native plantings next to a mixed-income housing development in Northern Clackamas County, a nature discovery and demonstration garden called “Conservation Corner” at the new offices of the East Multnomah County Soil and Water Conservation District and restoration of Crystal Springs Creek, a tributary of Johnson Creek, at Westmoreland Park.

For more information on the Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants Program, please visit [www.oregonmetro.gov/nature](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/nature).



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## About Metro

Clean air and clean water do not stop at city limits or county lines. Neither does the need for jobs, a thriving economy and good transportation choices for people and businesses in our region. Voters have asked Metro to help with the challenges that cross those lines and affect the 25 cities and three counties in the Portland metropolitan area.

A regional approach simply makes sense when it comes to protecting open space, caring for parks, planning for the best use of land, managing garbage disposal and increasing recycling. Metro oversees world-class facilities such as the Oregon Zoo, which contributes to conservation and education, and the Oregon Convention Center, which benefits the region's economy.

### Your Metro representatives

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David Bragdon

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