

# Robert Liberty

METRO COUNCIL DISTRICT 6 NEWS | January 2009

Robert Liberty  
represents  
District 6, which  
includes portions of  
Northeast, Southeast  
and Southwest  
Portland.



## Gilded age, golden age

It is a new year and possibly a new era.

We are leaving a gilded age behind, twenty years that rivaled our nation's first gilded age that began after the Civil War.

That era, like the present, was characterized by the rise of a new class of the super-rich, whose wealth separated them socially, physically and intellectually from the rest of Americans. It was also an era characterized by lax oversight, limited regulation and regular

eruptions of corruption in government. But the wild speculation and the associated intellectual scaffolding of economic and social Darwinism came crashing down in October 1929.

Today we have entered a severe recession which, like the two prior recessions, was the result of an irresponsible bubble psychology and marred by dishonest business practices by various bankers, financial consultants, investment groups and CEOs living lifestyles more suited to the Roman Empire than the American Republic.

Just as in the first gilded age, private malfeasance had its public counterpart in our federal executive branch, many parts of which have engaged in massive waste, fraud and the abuse of power over the last eight years.

The most recent illustration comes from the Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service. It was described by that department's Inspector General, as exhibiting a "culture of ethical failure" in which government officials gave away public assets at bargain prices while enjoying sex and drugs with industry representatives.

The free market libertarianism and celebration of individual rather than common success that provided the thin, intellectual veneer is peeling off.

The gilding is coming off and the people who will bear the severest consequences--job loss, evaporation of their retirement savings or money for their children's education--are not the people at the top, but at the bottom.

But the inauguration of the new president could mark the transition to a new age where the focus shifts from greed and the individual to the common welfare of the nation: economic, social and environmental.

We will be re-learning some simple ideas: the importance of being thoughtful and thrifty with both public and private assets; that national success is measured by much more than the enrichment of a few individuals; the constructive role of government in investment, regulation and oversight; and the value of honesty and competence in private and public enterprises. Perhaps virtue grows best in the soil of necessity. These may seem like old-fashioned values but they are the right foundation for the post-gilded age.

In our region and our state, we were never full participants in this last gilded age. Instead we have followed a more distinctive path and adhered to different standards of success. As a result we have tremendous assets that can provide a foundation for this new era:

*continued*



[www.oregonmetro.gov](http://www.oregonmetro.gov)

An active citizenry with great sophistication about matters of community development and design, and with a strong commitment to protection of our shared environment.

A growing sector of entrepreneurs and businesses working to create a sustainable economy.

Government that is far more honest and open than many Americans enjoy.

Natural beauty and natural resources that are the envy of the world.

It might be enough to support a new age, one that is golden rather than gilded, provided we work together.

– Robert Liberty

## Public weighs in on regional transportation funding

A 45-day public comment period on the allocation of regional flexible transportation funding for 2010-13 closed at noon on December 1, 2008. Regional flexible funds come from two federal funding categories established by Congress—the Surface Transportation Program and Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality funds. These funds are administered in the Portland metropolitan region by Metro, and a total of \$67.8 million is expected to be available during the 2010-13 funding cycle.

A new, two-step process for allocating regional flexible funds was developed by the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) after extensive stakeholder and community input. During Step 1, JPACT identified nine regional programs and recommended that \$46.14 million be apportioned among them, subject to public comment.

During Step 2, local jurisdictions and agencies submitted 26 competitive applications to fund projects that totaled \$57.8 million in requested funding—about twice the \$21.65 million expected to be available. Public comments will help narrow the project list to more closely match the available funding.

In total Metro received 797 comments as letters, emails, comment forms, online and written summaries of oral comments offered at four public “listening posts.” Of that total, 574 comments—72 percent—came in through the Metro web site. Regardless of category, projects that featured bicycle, trail and pedestrian

improvements garnered the most support, accounting for 553 (69%) of all the comments received.

Next, the Transportation Policy Alternatives Committee (TPAC), a technical committee that provides recommendations to the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT), is scheduled to make its final draft recommendation by February 2, 2009, for further public review and comment. On February 12, 2009, JPACT and the Metro Council are scheduled to hold a public hearing on the recommendations before JPACT and the Metro Council consider approval in early March.

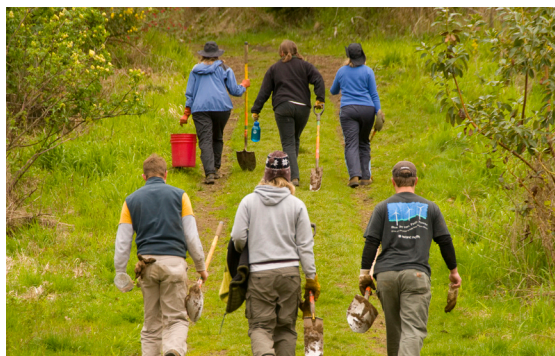
For more about the regional flexible transportation fund process, the candidate projects, and updates to the decision making schedule, visit the project website at: [www.oregonmetro.gov/regionalflexiblefund](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/regionalflexiblefund). You may also call 503-797-1551 to request e-mail updates about the funding process.

## Events to note in District 6:

### Rosemont Bluff work day

Saturday, January 24 , 9 a.m. to noon

Help remove ivy and clematis from the only natural area in this part of Northeast Portland. Rosemont Bluff Natural Area is on Northeast 68th Avenue just off Glisan. To register, call 503-823-6131.



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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

Metro Council President  
David Bragdon

Metro Councilors  
Rod Park, District 1  
Carlotta Collette, District 2  
Carl Hosticka, District 3  
Kathryn Harrington, District 4  
Rex Burkholder, District 5  
Robert Liberty, District 6

Auditor  
Suzanne Flynn