

# Making It Real

## How Metropolitan Planning Organizations Can Change the Future of Cities

*Planners putting colors on maps are like cavemen painting on rocks. They think that by drawing themselves spearing a deer that it will actually happen. This method is called "sympathetic magic." - Sue McGlynn*

Confronted daily by alarming increases in traffic congestion, sprawl, urban disinvestment and citizen frustration and anger, elected officials and planners too often retreat behind another planning exercise or just continue business as usual—with the usual results.

In this provocative and useful *one-day seminar*, you will learn how the Portland region and its MPO, Metro, has successfully turned “colors on a map” into revitalized suburban centers, reclaimed older neighborhoods, increased transit, pedestrian and bicycle use, controlled sprawl and engaged citizens in pro-actively planning their future.

### Practical, useful and implementable

You will learn how to:

1. Use public visioning and goal setting to develop the political support for smart growth initiatives;
2. Use the MPO to bring together agencies and government leaders around a common regional agenda;
3. Take advantage of the smart growth supportive provisions of the TEA-21, including Transportation Enhancements, CMAQ and flexible programming;
4. Direct federal transportation dollars into projects that leverage desired community

development while improving access and safety; and

5. Create road standards that support adjacent land uses, putting the legendary “land use/transportation connection” on the ground, not just in policy statements.

Using local case studies and actual, adopted policies participants will discover how to translate planning and transportation goals into workable solutions in their community. Specific emphasis will be on how to adapt innovative policies and programs to local conditions. Pre-seminar interviews with key players will identify local challenges and opportunities.

### Making your MPO a “player”

Your MPO will become a key player in making changes on the ground that will result in a better community, a better place to live.

Many Metropolitan Planning Organizations struggle to fulfill their intended purpose of coordinating and planning for growth in their regions. Often they are beset by intra-regional rivalries, a history of politicized decision-making and lack of public support (or even knowledge of their existence!).

Observers of modern urban trends such as Neal Pierce declare that regionalism is necessary if we are to protect and enhance quality of life and the economy in our communities. MPO’s are uniquely positioned as the *only* regional entities. MPO’s have the charge and the opportunity to provide regional cooperation and direction critical for the success of regional economies. But establishing this leadership role can be difficult. The natural place to start to assert this role is in the areas where federal law gives the MPO a real and critical role—in transportation

planning and funding. An effective regional voice also can make a real difference in protecting open spaces and habitat as well as avoid environmental damage caused by poorly planned transportation and development.

### Who Should Attend

- **Transportation professionals:** (planners and engineers) from cities and counties as well as the MPO
- **Elected officials:** mayors, city & county commissioners, transit district, port authorities
- **Citizens:** neighborhood leaders, business leaders, community development specialists
- **Consultants:** they write the plans that gather dust and would like to see them implemented

### What you will have when its all over

At the end of the day, in a group exercise, you will be asked to formulate an implementation strategy, focusing on how the tools presented can further regional transportation, land use goals and as regional cooperation. You will have copies of Metro’s transportation and land use policies, transportation funding criteria, street design standards and other pertinent and useful materials.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Rex Burkholder  
1912 NE 11<sup>th</sup>, Portland, OR 97212  
[Rex4mc@teleport.com](mailto:Rex4mc@teleport.com)  
503-282-2599

## The Portland Story

Portland, Oregon is known for its lively downtown, thriving neighborhoods, extensive park system and for having stopped sprawl into the surrounding fertile farmlands. Its vibrant cultural scene attracts college-educated 18-34 year olds, a coveted demographic. Bicycling Magazine declared it the most bicycle-friendly city in North America, twice. Transit use is growing faster than population and car use, riding on an expanding backbone of light rail. One city commissioner called it the only European city in the United States.

Turn the clock back 20 years and the picture would be quite different and disturbingly familiar. Suffering under double-digit unemployment and inflation, crack gangs and suburban flight, you couldn't rent a U-Haul or Ryder in Portland—they had all left for California or Texas.

So, how did the Portland region escape the fate of most US cities—inner city disinvestment, downtowns that roll up the sidewalks at night, suburbs that stretch on forever, overloaded highways and disappearing open spaces? What happened? Can you make it happen in your community? Discover the “magic ingredient” that turned a struggling, small city at the edge of the continent into the success Portland is today.

**Fee:** \$1500 fee includes pre interviews with key parties, full day seminar for 30 (including materials); travel expenses not included.

## Making It Real: Course Outline

*Note: course can be adapted to local priorities*

### 8:00 Registration

### 8:30 Welcome and Introductions

### 8:45 The Power Of A Vision

- Portland's 2040 Concept
- What's in it for us? Creating support for cooperation
- Regionalism (Orfield and Pierce)

### 9:45 The MPO

- Role of the MPO, the forgotten convenor
- Setting the table and getting the right players to sit

### 10:15 Break

### 10:30 Tools Furthering The Regional Vision

- Using the federal transportation funding process to push regionalism and economic development, including funding criteria for programming federal flexible funds
- Regional Street Design Standards (Linking land use and street design)
- Green Street Guidelines (storm water mitigation)

### 12:00 Lunch Break

### 1PM Tools continued, as needed

### 1:30 Implementing The Vision

- Transit investment
- Land use and transportation coordination
- Protection of habitat and open spaces

### 2:00 Role Of Citizen Involvement

- Land use planning as if the future mattered—and people had a say.
- What citizen involvement is and isn't
- The role of community leaders
- Fostering civic infrastructure: advocacy groups and engaged citizenry

### 3:15 Break

### 3:30 Local Case Studies/Implementation



## REX BURKHOLDER

### Knowledgeable, Effective And One Of Us

**Rex Burkholder** spent 10 years working to change transportation policies and priorities in the Portland region and throughout Oregon. He founded two of the most effective grassroots groups in that state, the Bicycle Transportation Alliance and the Coalition for a Livable Future. He served six years on Metro's technical advisory committee on transportation. His successes range from making bicycle lanes part of every road project to uniting labor, environmental and community development groups. By winning a seat on the governing board of Metro, Portland's regional planning agency and MPO, he was able to accelerate that region's progress in re-directing transportation spending, getting regional street design standards adopted and increasing regional cooperation, including across state lines.

**Burkholder** brings his ongoing experience of being “in the trenches” as well as his professional background and training to the urgent battle against sprawl and for sustainable urban development. A graduate of Tufts Noted Masters Program in Urban and Environmental Policy, Burkholder is an articulate and experienced trainer as well as practitioner.