



# PORTLAND BUSINESS ALLIANCE

*Leading the way*

## **Setting the record straight:**

A story in the September 26 edition of *Willamette Week* inaccurately portrays the Portland Business Alliance position regarding the future of downtown Portland's urban renewal areas (URAs).

*Willamette Week* reporter Nigel Jaquiss refers to the Alliance as the "Sheriff of Nottingham" for allegedly refusing to consider proposals that would use urban renewal district funds to a support local school district. In fact, the Alliance's recommendations include an early return of two downtown urban renewal areas to the tax roles, forgoing as much as \$30 million in downtown projects. The county would then realize the full benefit of the increased property values within those districts by 2012 instead of 2025. This additional tax revenue will help the county fund its many health and human service programs as well as support local schools.

Mr. Jaquiss claimed that the Alliance has said "hell no" to Commissioner Erik Sten's proposal to use Central City URA dollars to assist David Douglas School District in East County with capital projects. In fact, in a meeting on August 28, 2007, Alliance representatives told Commissioner Sten that the organization would review his proposal when it became available.

Because there has not yet been formal proposal from Commissioner Sten to consider, the Alliance has not had an opportunity to discuss it or take a position. The Alliance looks forward to reviewing it and continuing its dialogue with Commissioner Sten's office. The URA task force did recommend that funds normally should remain in the districts that generate them because that is required by the state law enabling the creation of URAs. However, this comment was not in reference to Commissioner Sten's recommendation. The David Douglas proposal is not referenced in the Alliance report at all because it was not on the table when the Alliance report was developed.

Finally, Mr. Jaquiss claimed that the Alliance spokeswoman refused to comment when he called. In fact, Mr. Jaquiss contacted Megan Doern asking if the David Douglas proposal came from the Alliance. Ms. Doern left Mr. Jaquiss a voicemail stating that the proposal came from Commissioner Sten and suggested that he speak with Commissioner Sten about it. She also told Mr. Jaquiss that the Alliance had its own recommendations regarding URAs, and invited him to call her. Mr. Jaquiss did not return the call.

The Alliance requested a correction from *Willamette Week*; the newspaper declined that request.