

TriMet gives a LIFT to independent living

TriMet's LIFT paratransit program, which provides more than **1 million rides annually**, offers door-to-door transportation for low-income elderly and disabled citizens who are unable to use standard public transit. As demographics change, the LIFT service is facing significant challenges; in the next 25 years, Portland expects the elderly **population to grow by more than 150%** and by 2030, elderly and disabled citizens will comprise **28% of Oregon's population**. TriMet and other transit agencies across Oregon are grappling with the challenge of meeting increased demand, higher costs and decreased financial resources.

LIFT preserves independent living

For many elderly and disabled riders, LIFT offers the mobility to maintain independence. **Paratransit is a low-cost bridge to independence** for thousands of Metro area residents who, due to disability or limited mobility, rely on the service to get to work, doctors appointments and the social activities that keep them vibrant and healthy.

Disproportionate cost burden

LIFT is a critical service, but providing door-to-door paratransit is expensive, **costing more than \$30 a ride**. Despite TriMet's efforts to keep costs in check, LIFT service has increased in cost by 6.8% annually over the past decade. TriMet shoulders the vast majority of the cost burden, paying for \$27 million of LIFT's \$31 million operating cost from its general fund budget. Without additional support from other sources, quality service provision will be hampered by escalating demand.

LIFT at a glance

- LIFT service provides more than 1 million rides each year
- LIFT service costs TriMet \$30/ride
- 86% of LIFT funding comes from TriMet's General Fund
- Two-thirds of LIFT riders earn less than \$30,000 per year
- 76% of recurring trips take riders to work or doctor's appointments

Source: Trimet, 2012; Gilmore Research, 2008

Need for state support

With 67% of lift riders subsidizing on less than \$30,000 a year, losing mobility would require moving into costly state funded care. LIFT helps seniors stay in their homes and out of expensive assisted living facilities, but unfortunately, unpredictable and insufficient state funding constricts growth and service improvement. State support is critical to avoid service cuts or fare increases that will leave seniors and disabled riders without the transportation they need to remain independent.

