

House Committee on Judiciary

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HB 2777

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TriMet Transit Equity Advisory Committee supports HB 2777

The TriMet Transit Equity Advisory Committee (TEAC) is a TriMet advisory committee representing a diverse cross-section of community leaders charged with providing insights and guidance to TriMet's General Manager on transit equity and access issues. TriMet established TEAC to support the development of its transit equity strategy and to serve as a sounding board and a link to community organizations. Members of the committee represent a diverse population including minority and low income communities who are disproportionately transit dependent.

Over the past year, in response to community concerns about TriMet's fare enforcement policies and tactics, TEAC reviewed TriMet's fare enforcement program. TEAC members did a deep dive into current procedures, listened in on focus groups with transit-dependent riders on the subject of fare enforcement and reviewed TriMet customer surveys and fare enforcement data. Early this fall, TEAC developed a set of recommendations to improve TriMet's fare enforcement program and in the late fall, presented those recommendations to TriMet. TEAC was very pleased to see that TriMet's initial proposal to reform fare enforcement included many of TEAC's recommendations.

Chief among TEAC's recommendations is the desire for decriminalization of fare enforcement. Notably, TEAC recommended finding ways to reduce fines, offering community service in lieu of a fine and finding ways for riders to avoid the court system entirely. In conversation with transit-dependent riders, common themes were not having enough money to pay the \$175 fine, wishing the fee was less, and wondering if there could be other ways to resolve the citation like community service. Riders also spoke of the long-term impacts of being unable to pay the fine and the snowball effect fines and exclusions had on their ability to work and meet their basic needs of getting to the grocery store and doctor appointments.

HB 2777 addresses many of these concerns. By allowing TriMet to develop an administrative procedure that stays the violation for 90 days, TriMet is able to provide an option for riders to avoid the court system. The program's intent is to give riders more time to come up with money to pay the fine, have the option of a reduced fine if they pay early, and do community service instead of paying a fine. If enacted, HB 2777 will give many TriMet riders multiple options for resolving their citation and the option to avoid the court system and its potential for long-term ramifications for their work and life.

If the bill passes, TEAC looks forward to providing input and working closely with TriMet to devise this system. We hope and anticipate playing a significant role in developing a program that meets the various needs expressed by riders.