

From:

Joel Bravo

Email:

jbravo774@gmail.com

Location:

Pearl District – Portland

Submitted written testimony to the Joint Committee on Transportation for the 6/4 Roadshow Hearing:

Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

I am writing today to urge this committee and the Oregon legislature to commit to significant funding of public transit in the 2025 transportation package. Portland enjoyed great renown through the 2000s and 2010s in championing public transit. This attitude was one of many reasons my fiancé and I came to love this city and call it our home. The pandemic has created challenges for all transit agencies in the US, and Portland and TriMet are no exception. While ridership continues to recover and TriMet embraces a new transit model that moves beyond the commuter-centric focus of the pre-remote work era, much more work needs to be done.

Past surveys conducted by TriMet, as well as studies conducted across all transit agencies, list increased frequency as something that can further increase ridership. Washington DC's WMATA and San Francisco's SFMTA both have seen great success in increasing ridership by investing in improved frequency, often to the point of exceeding pre-pandemic ridership levels. TriMet's Forward Together program, which has revamped the bus network to increase frequency and provide more direct connections to major destinations, has also seen success in significantly increasing ridership. The evidence is clear that greater frequency and more direct routes makes transit convenient, popular, and thriving. This, in turn, has great benefits for reducing traffic, reducing emissions, and granting people the freedom to go where they need to quickly and without undue hassle and planning. Higher capacity transit also leads to a feeling of security and safety that can be lacking on empty buses and trains, especially at night.

However, to achieve this goal, it's necessary to commit to significant investment in public transit. Major projects, such as the MAX downtown tunnel, can have enormous impacts on improved transit reliability, much more frequent and faster trains, and increases in ridership. But this requires a commitment to funding. Leaving transit agencies languishing for funds will only result in degrading service and fewer and fewer riders. Riders would be forced to depend on cars more and more, increasing traffic to even worse levels, making our streets less safe, and making it all but impossible for Oregon to meet its decarbonization targets. We can instead choose to become an international leader in transit by aggressively funding transit all across Oregon, unlocking the power and benefits that come from truly frequent, reliable, and fast service.

Undoubtedly, you have heard much on the need to improve public transit, passenger rail, and pedestrian friendly streets. This speaks to the wishes of Portlanders and Oregonians to take a new path for transportation. I urge this committee to invest in Oregonians, our communities, and our planet by making a transformational investment in public transit.

Thank You