

Greetings ODOT Funding Review Committee,

My name is Hayden Hutsell, and I am a resident of Beaverton, Oregon. As a frequent user of the Beaverton Transit Center, I am writing to express my strong support for funding of a downtown tunnel for the MAX. This project is not just an infrastructure improvement; it's a step towards a more connected community. A downtown tunnel would reduce travel time and increase reliability that comes with surface, non-grade separated light rail.

With the recent development of the Tigard Triangle area, faster and more frequent transit to city center is desperately needed. I used to live there, and it takes nearly an hour from home to Pioneer Square, making trips very slow and are certainly not very accessible (or attractive) to most.

Moreover, I urge you to consider the introduction of weekend WES service. The current weekday-only schedule limits accessibility and convenience for many who rely on public transportation for their weekend endeavors, whether for work or leisure. Easier access to Tigard TC for North bound WES trains to catch a MAX wouldn't be half bad, certainly better than bus.

Lastly, the current reliability/frequency of MAX services as the night progresses is suboptimal. Many community members, including myself, depend on the MAX for safe transportation after evening shifts or late-night events. Enhancing service reliability during these hours would not only benefit riders and help people get home in a timely manner after nighttime events and activities. As I understand it, we don't have a lot of rail downtime here, and a plan was made to use buses instead of MAX to potentially extend service time for our degraded rails as well as extended service into the nighttime for riders.

Investing in these initiatives is investing in the people of the Portland metropolitan area. I trust that the committee will recognize the profound impact that such improvements would have on our daily lives and the long-term prosperity of our community.

In addition to the points previously mentioned, I would like to emphasize my personal circumstances which mirror the experiences of a growing segment of our population. I do not drive and am wholly reliant on public transportation for my work, leisure, and travel needs. There are many individuals like myself who are drawn to this city for its transit-oriented lifestyle. We make our lives work by living near transit lines, which allows us to be part of the urban fabric without the need for a car.

However, the current system often favors those who can afford to live near major transit hubs. We must strive for a more inclusive system that serves a wider demographic, ensuring that access to reliable transportation is not a privilege limited to a few but a right enjoyed by all. Let's move towards a future where our public transit network works for more people, facilitating a sustainable, connected, and equitable community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Warm regards,

Hayden Hutsell