

I did not get my first car until I was 26. I came from a lower middle-class family with a single mother who struggled to keep food on the table for herself and two boys. Buying a car for myself was simply not an option for a very long time; my mom wouldn't be able to afford it, and it would be near impossible to budget my student loans with car payments, auto insurance, gasoline, and maintenance costs on top of everything else.

Living in Wilsonville, it was about a 2-hour trip each way by transit to Clackamas Community College's main campus in Oregon City, one that I endured 3-5 days a week for about 2 years. It was not much better after I graduated, living in Sherwood and commuting to Hillsboro. I still consider myself very lucky in this regard, for having at least some access to reliable transportation allowed me to further my education and go to work, until I was able to stand on my own two feet and drop enough money for a down payment on a used 2012 Mazda6.

I paid off my auto loan in 3 years and pay roughly \$650/mo to continue to drive this car, which is much more than \$100/mo for a monthly Trimet pass but still better than the average driver. This would still cripple the budget of many others, in a time where more people than ever are living paycheck to paycheck.

I would love to see Portland stop living in the shadow of the 20th century and transform into a city people can live and thrive in, rather than just drive to work for or use as a right-wing scapegoat to blame society's woes on. One of the best things we can do to make that succeed is by providing people greater opportunity to travel about the metro area, without having to incur massive budgetary constraints that owning a car foists upon an individual. Portland has a great public transit system in comparison to the national standards, but I know we can do far greater. More subways, more buses, more nighttime options, more express routes.

We are setting ourselves up for a very bleak future if public transit continues to take a legislative backseat by locking more and more people out of any chance at upward mobility, alienating our neighbors for freeway expansions that will only get clogged in a few years anyway, polluting our atmosphere, and ultimately continuing to push for an environment that is hostile to pedestrian traffic and human life, all in some misguided testament to personal autonomy; of which we will have none left unless we push for change.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,

Joseph Van Kleeck
Hawthorne neighborhood