

I believe it is long past time to get truly serious about transit in the Portland Metro area and the Upper Willamette Valley in general. What we have right now is a novelty, a system that can move a moderate amount of people around at a frustratingly slow pace, with frequencies of 15 minutes seen as "aspirational."

Meanwhile, billions are spent on freeway widening projects which are expected to be overwhelmed less than five years after their completion, all to improve driving times by less than 10 minutes. Enough is enough.

If we want less drivers on the road, or better travel times for all commuters, not just those in cars, then we have to massively invest in our regional transit systems, not our freeways. Start with a MAX tunnel under downtown and the Lloyd district so that East-West frequencies improve. Create a regional rail authority and charge it with delivering fast and frequent rail service from Vancouver to Salem and beyond. Invest in upgrading MAX into a fully automated metro system. These are all huge projects, and they could transform the shape and prosperity of our region. They will do more than any freeway expansion project ever could, but they cannot be done if we continue to starve our state of resources just to add another lane to I5.

The Willamette Valley needs bold, decisive, and visionary leadership, and it needs something different than just the same old arguments about asphalt. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Alex Graham