

I work as a pharmacist for a diverse patient population in east Portland. Before I moved downtown and fully grasped the economic prosperity and transportation efficiency transit provides, my original understanding for the need to prioritize funding for transit and maintenance rather than new car infrastructure started with learning about the perspectives of my patients. Our unhoused and lowest-earning neighbors do not drive cars, especially in east portland. They fully rely on TriMet, cycling, and their own two feet (or wheels) as they simply have NO other option. However, while many of the low-income people I serve and know rely on TriMet 100%, most of the middle and upper-middle income people I know also understand the vital role transit plays in our transportation system (especially if they've been to NYC or Europe). Most of us want to use TriMet more or be able to cycle places instead of driving. And why? Simply put, while America may be rich, American citizens, our cities, and our communities are not!! Those I know, especially patients I talk with, understand very clearly that driving a car is expensive, shouldn't be necessary in a CITY, and is an American luxury that is bankrupting us all. We desire and desperately need to have a VIABLE alternative to driving to reduce our transportation costs (and many of us also want to play our part in the good that we can do for the environment, not just our wallets). My patients and those with higher incomes including myself cannot continue on with our city and state's few resources being used on projects to expand the LEAST efficient and MOST polluting form of transportation. I strongly urge that the state of Oregon invest in people, major maintenance upgrades to our current system, and strong communities to generate economic activity which benefits us all. Transportation is a MEANS of stimulating economic activity, not an economic end in itself, so let's choose efficient modes to maximize our prosperity.

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