



Mayor Shawn O’Neil Follow-up Testimony in Support of HB 3453:

Scheduled for public hearing on March 11, 2025, before
the Joint Committee On Transportation

Why Does the City of Wilsonville Support Extending WES?

That is an excellent question, for which I can list a number of salient reasons for our city’s support of WES.

First of all, Wilsonville helps to directly fund WES.

We have an intergovernmental agreement with TriMet to provide over \$440,000 per year to help subsidize WES operations.

Second, Wilsonville hosts over 21,000 jobs, of which 9 out of 10 workers commute to their jobs in Wilsonville.

Over 15% of our employers’ workforce originate from the North Willamette Valley cities of Salem, Keizer and Woodburn.

That is essentially equivalent to 2,100 to 3,200 workers per day commuting from the North Willamette Valley to Wilsonville.

Additionally, 85% of employed Wilsonville residents commute to jobs outside of the city—primarily to Portland-area cities and Salem/Keizer.

The City has heard many times over the years that employers and employees wish that there was a high-capacity, non-highway mobility alternative to driving the increasingly congested I-5.

Being a major Oregon employment center, Wilsonville along with Canby and Sandy left TriMet over 35 years ago in order to achieve better quality transit service for our employers and employees.

Thus, the City of Wilsonville formed the South Metro Area Regional Transit agency, or SMART, to provide better transit service that helps our employers to recruit and retain their employees.

Third, I believe that we all know about the daily traffic bottleneck at the I-5 Boone Bridge in Wilsonville. Over 120,000 vehicles per day cross the Boone Bridge.

In fact, the I-5 Boone Bridge carries nearly the same amount of traffic as the Interstate Bridge over the Columbia River, only 4% less traffic.

But the I-5 Boone Bridge carries one-third more semi-trucks than the Interstate Bridge. This is due to the I-205 Glenn Jackson Bridge over the Columbia that many freight trucks use.

Commuting workers, and students and seniors from the North Willamette Valley communities would welcome a car-free way to travel and avoid the increasing I-5 traffic jams.

And by removing cars from the highway, we are able to maintain I-5's capacity for the timely movement of freight that is so important to our economy.

And finally, if WES were to run to Salem, our SMART transit agency could re-deploy bus assets to provide additional local and regional transit services.

Currently both Salem Area Mass Transit ("Cherriots") and SMART run the 1X express commuter bus between Salem and Wilsonville. With a functional WES connecting Salem and Wilsonville, both transit agencies could modify the 1X schedule and resources to provide increased last-mile and other inter-city transit services.

The City appreciates your consideration and urges a Do-Pass vote on HB 3453 with a referral to Ways and Means. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Shawn O'Neil, Mayor
City of Wilsonville