



August 6, 2018

HB 2017 Committee
c/o Deanna Palm, Chair
Diane McKeel, Co -Chair

RE: HB 2017 Special Transportation Infrastructure Funds (STIF)

Dear HB 2017 Committee Members:

On behalf of the Washington County Board of Commissioners and all who live, work and visit Washington County, I want to express my appreciation for the ongoing partnership the County and TriMet enjoy. Our shared commitment to providing transportation options throughout the Metro area has benefited many.

Within the TriMet District, the County has become a very diverse and increasingly dense urban area, and our transit needs have increased accordingly. I am writing today to ask the HB 2017 Committee and TriMet Board to prioritize funding for transit services through the new HB 2017 STIF program, and to increase transit service in Washington County to meet growing demand.

Consider the following:

- Washington County has grown much more diverse – most diverse in region – with over 30% non-white.
- About half of Washington County’s jobs are starting wage. These workers are more transit-dependent and would benefit the most from additional transit service.
- Approximately 36 percent of Washington County households can be considered transit-dependent, earning less than \$50K per year.
- Over 32 percent of urban Washington County households don’t have access to any transit compared to 23 percent regionally.
- Only 55 percent of schools (K-12) in Washington County are served by any transit.

Both service frequency and expanded coverage are needed to provide travel options for those who need it most, and to help address Washington County’s increasing traffic. The attached appendix details Washington County priorities for transit service improvements based on results of a sketch-level evaluation consistent with STIF criteria and TriMet’s Service Guidelines. We would like to see serious consideration given to the immediate and tier-one service enhancements for HB 2017 funding.

1. Invest more in demand response services and upgraded transit stops to improve safety and access for our most vulnerable users, including seniors and people with disabilities.
2. Enhance access for low-income and minority populations and increase system efficiency by investing more in services that reduce service fragmentation and improve access to jobs and essential destinations, including:
 - a. Improve shuttle services and vanpool programs
 - b. Add and expand park & rides

Washington County supports TriMet's basic approach to allocate HB 2017 funds, but recommends a stronger focus on service improvements. Of the three scenarios presented to the HB 2017 committee, we support the combination of ridership and coverage improvements. However, the scenarios as presented do not go far enough to address transit parity and keep pace with growth in Washington County. In order to achieve these goals, we would support the following:

Specific recommendations for HB 2017 STIF funding:

1. Shift proposed Non-Diesel Bus Program funds to improved service frequency and coverage:

Increased funding for service (from 59% to as much as 70%, as supported by the online survey respondents) will help ensure adequate funding for new and improved transit service to keep pace with significant growth. This could be accomplished by reappropriating \$3.5M of the \$5M currently proposed for the Non-Diesel Bus Program to service improvements.

We support additional funding for Portland Streetcar service, but believe it should come from the expanded service allocation rather than a separate set-aside.

In addition, the remaining \$1.5M from the Non-Diesel program should be allocated to improved demand response services (i.e. Ride Connection). These services fill a critical void for many transit-dependent residents in Washington County.

2. Fund TriMet alternative fuel fleet conversion from capital sources:

We support the transition of TriMet's fleet to alternative fuels over time. However, we believe the additional ongoing HB 2017 revenues should be focused on providing more service, which will directly support transit dependent populations while helping reduce traffic and related air pollution.

The proposed \$28M one-time set aside is a good start for the Non-Diesel Bus Program. We recommend developing a comprehensive plan for shifting TriMet's fleet over time and identifying an appropriate capital funding source for the fleet upgrades.

3. Retain proposed Regional Coordination allocation (\$3M-Base):

This proposed funding is already over-subscribed, which speaks to the need to address existing service gaps within the TriMet district. These services address an existing need for the County until such time as new TriMet service can be added. Over time, as TriMet expands service, these revenues would be freed up to fund other shuttle and last mile service needs.

4. Retain proposed School Transportation allocation (\$490K):

We support the current proposal of one percent of the funds dedicated to a youth pass program, but acknowledge it will not provide significant benefit in Washington County without first making service improvements to schools.

We appreciate OPAL's aspirational proposal and support the objective of improving transit access for all students, but believe this proposal can only be realized after the TriMet system is built out to serve all schools. Funding the youth pass now will reduce funding available for

service, and will not provide significant benefits in Washington and Clackamas counties where many schools lack transit service.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners looks forward to working with you as we continue our partnership to provide effective transit for Washington County and the region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R R R', is positioned above the typed name of the commissioner.

Roy Rogers, Commissioner
Washington County Board of Commissioners

RR/cj

Enclosure: Appendix - Route-specific transit service priority recommendations

cc: Washington County Board of Commissioners
Andrew Singelakis, Director, Land Use & Transportation
Tom Mills, Manager, Service Planning, TriMet

Appendix

Route-specific transit service priority recommendations

Establish more frequent service

Frequency is a prime concern for transit users. Many bus lines in Washington County operate with insufficient frequency to make them attractive to a broad range of riders. Travel time is a critical factor for people making trips, especially people that need to get to starting wage jobs. Without reliable and frequent buses potential users, especially low-wage earners, are hesitant to use transit for fear of missing their bus and having to wait a long time for the next bus to arrive.

- Expand and upgrade the highest ridership bus lines to 15 minute frequency all day.
- Improve peak service frequencies on all local bus service in Washington County to 15 minutes or better during the morning and afternoon commute times.
- Add or improve midday, weekend and evening service with 30 minutes or better frequencies.

Strengthen the transit grid, fill coverage gaps and build the market for emerging transit corridors

Many parts of urbanized Washington County lack requisite all-day transit service, while other areas currently have service but lower than desired frequencies (or only operate as peak-hour routes). Improving the network to create a grid of relatively frequent, all-day bus routes, will especially help low-income riders access jobs. We should be building the market especially in new growth areas – Progress Ridge, Cooper Mountain, River Terrace and South Hillsboro – that are expected to add more than 17,000 households at higher densities than most of East Portland. These high-growth areas do not have transit service. Improving coverage expands the utility of transit to serve a greater variety of trips within the county, reduce the need for multiple transfers, and reduce the need for out-of-direction travel.

Immediate service enhancements

These could be delivered immediately without any and/or minimal capital investment within the next one or two years. The enhancements reflect approximately \$1.5M in new annual operating costs plus less than \$1M in capital expenses for new buses. Making these immediate frequency and coverage improvements to existing routes would provide service benefits to an estimated 47,000 low-income residents and serve 49,000 jobs earning less than \$40,000/year.

- Upgrade Line 20 weekday and weekend service frequency to 15 minutes
- Upgrade Line 52 weekday and weekend service frequency to 15 minutes
- Add mid-day service to Line 53
- Improve weekend service frequency of Line 62 from 45 to 30 minutes
- Improve weekend service frequency of Line 88 from 60 to 30 minutes

Tier-one service enhancements

These reflect the highest ranking routes in terms of service to low-income households, reducing service fragmentation, ridership and relative ease of implementation. Making these near-term frequency and coverage improvements would provide service benefits to an estimated 60,000 low-income residents and serve 96,000 jobs earning less than \$40,000/year. Near-term enhancements reflect approximately \$12M in new annual operating costs plus just over \$11M in capital expenses for new buses.

- Reroute Line 47 to South Hillsboro via either Brookwood, Century, or Cornelius Pass
- New service (Line 40) connecting Hillsboro and Beaverton via Main, Baseline, and Jenkins with 30-minute all day frequency, in conjunction with introduction of Line 47
- Improve Line 48 with weekday and weekend service frequency to 15 minutes
- Upgrade Line 54 weekday and weekend service frequency to 15 minutes
- Extend Line 56 from Washington Square to Progress Ridge and South Cooper Mountain
- Extend Line 62 Loop through Progress Ridge (Murray/Scholls Town Center); consider combining Lines 37 and 62; option to run via 121st to Tigard. Improve weekday peak service frequency to 15 minutes
- Upgrade Line 76 weekday and weekend service frequency to 15 minutes
- Extend Line 96 from Commerce Circle to SMART Central via 95th Avenue and Boberg Road

Tier-two service enhancements

These show the second-highest ranking routes. These enhancements reflect approximately \$14M in new annual operating costs plus just over \$16M in capital expenses for new buses. Making these frequency and coverage improvements would provide service benefits to an estimated 56,000 low-income residents and serve 60,000 jobs earning less than \$40,000/year.

- Extend Line 36 from Tualatin Park & Ride to King City via SW Durham Rd, improve weekday frequency to 30 minutes and evening and weekend service
- Extend Line 37 from Tualatin Park & Ride to Tigard TC , improve weekday frequency to 30 minutes and evening and weekend service
- New service (Line 49) connecting Sunset TC to PCC Rock Creek with 30 minute all day frequency
- Extend Line 59 to Quatama MAX and reroute eastern end to terminate at Beaverton Transit Center and expand weekday service to midday with 30 minute frequency.
- Improve Line 62 weekday and weekend service frequency to 15 minutes
- Extended Line 67 to cover parts of Lines 45 and 92, improve weekday PM peak to 20 minute frequency and add 30 minute weekend service
- Extend Line 88 via Cornell, Brookwood, and Jacobson to replace parts of the North Hillsboro shuttle and improve weekday peak to 15 minutes