

Congestion ahead (unless we take action now)



TriMet & Rapidly Changing Portland

As one of the fastest growing regions in the country, the Portland area is seeing significant demographic changes as central city housing prices grow and middle income families move to areas with lower housing costs. To curb congestion and keep our economy moving, and to address the transportation needs of middle income families, we need to invest in more and better transit service.

Linking Affordable Housing to Jobs

Twenty years ago a significant portion of the region's minority and low income residents lived in areas close to the central city with good transit service. Today, due to the increasing cost of housing, the region's minority and low income populations have dispersed, moving to outer east Portland, Gresham, Aloha and Beaverton – areas that have historically had less transit service. At the same time, the region has added new employment centers such as Troutdale Reynolds Industrial Park, North Hillsboro and Tualatin-Sherwood Road. The region now faces the challenge of connecting workers in these dispersed areas to both new and traditional job centers. Over the last several years TriMet has engaged the community in developing long-term service plans to meet these emerging needs.

Strategy #1: Low Income Fare

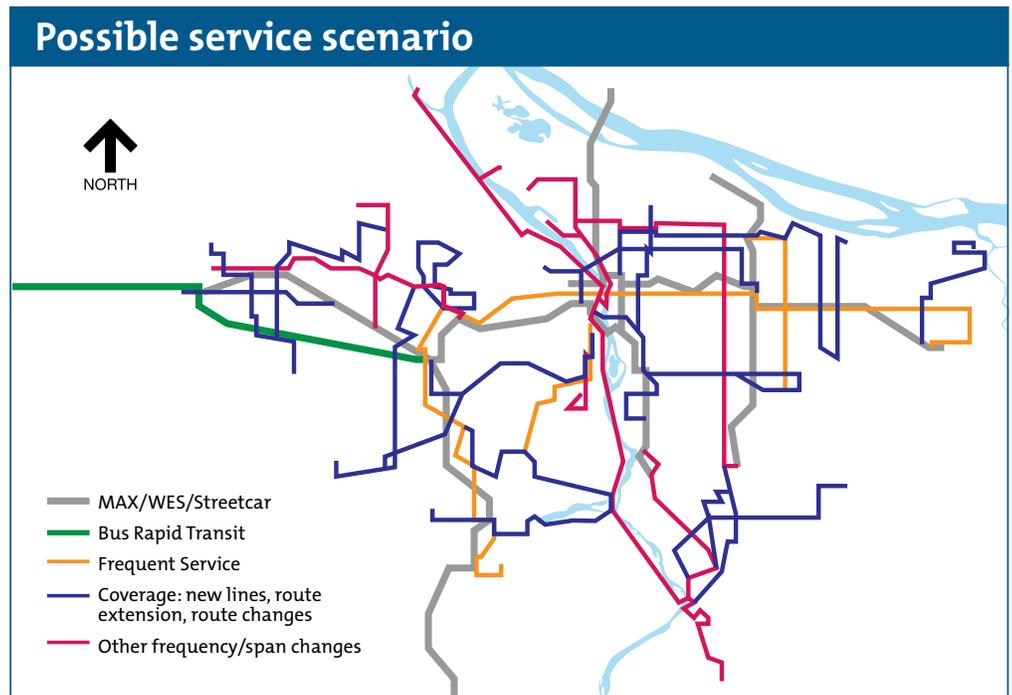
TriMet has been working with community stakeholders on strategies to meet the needs of people who struggle to afford the standard transit fare, but who rely on transit to get to jobs, education, health care and other critical services. A community task force has recommended a low income fare program to support those earning less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. The plan would require approximately \$12 million a year in additional funding. Under a low income fare program, a \$100 TriMet monthly pass would be reduced to \$28. Additional state funding could offset the costs of such a program.

Strategy #2: More and Better Service

Additional state funding would allow TriMet to expand and improve the transit system, including:

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- More frequent service lines and increased frequency and span on other lines
- Improved north-south service, including new bus lines that allow people to travel to growing job centers for early and late shifts especially in North-east Portland
- Improved service to regional job centers including North Hillsboro, Clackamas Industrial Area, Clackamas Town Center, Columbia Corridor and Troutdale Reynolds Industrial Park
- New service to developing and growing communities such as South Hillsboro, South Cooper Mountain, Progress Ridge, Happy Valley and the NW Portland/Conway District
- Bus rapid transit (frequent, express bus) on a promising corridor like TV Highway between Beaverton, Aloha, Hillsboro, Cornelius and Forest Grove
- Better access to job training at PCC, MHCC, Clackamas Community College and OHSU campuses
- An expanded bike share system to connect large, suburban, campus job centers with MAX, especially in Washington County



How We Get There

The legislature is considering a transit funding element as part of a larger package. Their recommendation is a 1/10th of one percent tax on employee payroll. At this level, the proposal would generate an estimated \$107 million statewide for local and intra state transit programs. The individual impact of such a tax is small. For example, an individual earning \$25,000 a year would have \$2.08 per month deducted from their paycheck. An individual earning minimum wage would pay \$1.69 a month. Moreover, with a low income fare program, individuals earning up to \$23,700 and a family of four earning \$48,600 would qualify for steeply discounted transit passes.

Minimum wage workers would save more in one month on transit than they would pay all year in payroll tax*.

**Assuming passage of a 0.1% payroll tax package and implementation of a low income fare program.*

How Would This Affect Low-Income Earners?

TriMet has committed to implementing a low-income fare program for the region should the transportation bill become law. With it, low income earners, even after paying the tax, would pay significantly less for their monthly or annual transit passes.

	Individual below 200% of Federal Poverty Level	Family of four below 200% of Federal Poverty Level
Tax Paid	\$1.98	\$4.05
Transit Benefit*	\$70.00	\$140.00

** For monthly pass*

Congestion Has a Cost

Traffic jams aren't just frustrating for drivers. The delays and related costs add up to a real drain on our economy – in Portland and around the rest of the state. With the projected growth of 400,000 people and 260,000 jobs over the next 20 years, analysts predict traffic congestion will increase three-fold without new investments in transit and roads.

The good news is that a 2014 Portland Business Alliance study found that investing in transit and roads would reduce that impact by almost half, while generating \$1.1 billion in economic benefits and over 8,300 jobs per year by 2040 – a return of \$2.40 for every \$1.00 invested. Now is the time to invest in transit because congestion has a real cost to the region and the state.