



August 20, 2018

RE: HB 2017 Special Transportation Infrastructure Funds

Dear HB 2017 Transit Advisory Committee Members:

I submit these comments on behalf of Westside Transportation Alliance (WTA). WTA is a nonprofit organization that works with private employers and public agencies in Washington County to reduce auto commute trips. WTA works through employment sites to educate and engage employees with existing transportation options and works to increase the number of transportation options available for commute trips. WTA's members include Nike, Washington County, Intel, Amazon, City of Beaverton, Columbia Sportswear, First Tech Federal Credit Union, City of Hillsboro, Kaiser Permanente, Portland General Electric, SolarWorld, Genentech, Lam Research, and Laika.

Of the three scenarios (coverage focused, ridership focused, and combined) presented to the committee, WTA supports the combined focus option scenario. This scenario maximizes the benefit to Washington County employers and employees as well as to Washington County residents that connect to job sites outside the county.

WTA supports maintaining the Regional Coordination Funds allocation at the current level (\$3M annually). These funds will support services that help fill gaps in TriMet's District and provide connections to key employment areas for many people. The funds also help connect people in rural areas to TriMet services – enabling transit usage that would not otherwise be possible.

WTA supports the proposed use of one-time funds for capital investments in security, amenities, digital displays, and accessible bus stops. These investments, especially in bus/MAX/WES stops around Washington County employment hubs, will help make transit usage safer and more convenient for more people.

Because commute trips are more predictable they have the potential to be the easiest to shift out of the single occupancy vehicle, and because they are often repeated on multiple days each week investments in transit services that connect people to job sites can result in an overall reduction in auto trips. Expansion of transit services to entry level job sites is a significant consideration, especially for communities with high percentages of low-income households. Ensuring frequency of service and coverage along routes in Washington County that serve high numbers of entry level job sites is an important part of improving service for households in high equity need census block groups.

As the committee evaluates the proposal for seniors and people with disabilities, WTA urges the committee to find ways to fund these programs that do not result in a reduction of the proposed service investments within Washington County – especially along routes that serve higher density groupings of entry level job sites. WTA urges the committee to fund the proposal by reallocating funds that do not impact proposed service investments.

WTA appreciates its strong and ongoing partnership with TriMet, and we look forward to future collaborations that will engage more people in using transit for commute trips in Washington County. Within the TriMet District, Washington County has become a diverse and increasingly dense urban area. Please consider:

- Since 2010, Washington County has added more than 8,500 jobs per year, and the pace has accelerated in the last couple years adding more than 11,000 jobs per year.
- About 50% of the county's jobs are starting wage, comparable to 49% within TriMet's District, and these workers would benefit from additional transit service.
- Approximately 36% of Washington County households can be considered transit dependent earning less than \$50K per year.
- Washington County has grown much more diverse – the most diverse in the region – with more than 30% non-white.
- Urban Washington County is nearly 40% more dense than the TriMet District average and is approaching Portland's residential density, increasing cost-effectiveness of service.
- Over 32% of urban Washington County households don't have access to any transit compared to 23% regionally.
- Major arterial corridors, including Baseline, Cornelius Pass, 170<sup>th</sup>, 209<sup>th</sup>, Walker, Durham, Tualatin-Sherwood, Brookwood, and Evergreen, currently have no or very limited fixed route service.

The need for investments in service frequency and expanded coverage in Washington County have grown accordingly and will continue to grow in the future. WTA appreciates the Washington County investments included in the combined focus option scenario, however these investments still only represent a portion of the current community need – and those needs will only grow in the coming years. Reducing service investments from the original combined scenario would result in an even larger gap between community needs and services and would result in less access to entry level job sites that serve as an important resource for people from low-income households.

Thank you for your service on this committee. WTA looks forward to working with TriMet, our member organizations, and other partners to engage more people in using the transit improvements that result from this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Pazdalski". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jeff Pazdalski  
Executive Director