

DRAFT Mayors Sign-On Letter

June **DRAFT**, 2025

Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain
Joint Committee on Transportation
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Via email

Dear Senator Gorsek and Representative McLain:

We appreciate seeing language in the draft transportation package (HB 2025) that directs ODOT to review the funding methodology for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF), including the qualified entity process. However, there are broader, structural issues not currently captured in HB 2025.

Clackamas County is the third most populous county in Oregon, with 16 incorporated cities fully or partially in the county and the largest rural population in the state. As our region continues to grow and housing prices rise, many people are looking to suburban and rural areas for more affordable housing, thereby expanding our region's commute shed—the distance an employee travels from home to work. A larger commute shed increases congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. Accessible, reliable, and safe transit service is one tool to mitigate those impacts.

Six different transit providers help residents, workers, and visitors travel to and through Clackamas County. Although we have many transit providers, much of Clackamas County is a transit desert with service levels far below those experienced in nearby Multnomah and Washington counties. For example, of the approximately 284,000 Clackamas County residents who live within the TriMet district, 113,000 (40%) of them live farther than ¼ mile from a transit route, an industry standard measure of transit accessibility. These people are contributing to STIF through their paycheck for a service that they cannot reasonably access. Older adults, children, and people with a disability are particularly disadvantaged by distance from transit.

To identify and address those gaps and inequities, as well as to begin improving transit service or adding it where there is none today, we propose including in the transportation package the following language: "The state to convene a transit workgroup that includes local stakeholders to resolve and improve interagency partnerships and service, and address transit gaps and unmet needs in the region."

Investing in transit is investing in our communities. It connects people to jobs, enhances economic opportunities, and fosters an environment where all neighbors can thrive, regardless of where they live. We believe this is a first step toward improving service and access for all our constituents.

Sincerely,

DRAFT

Lisa Batey, Mayor of Milwaukie
Rory Bialostosky, Mayor of West Linn
Joe Buck, Mayor of Lake Oswego
Tom Ellis, Mayor of Happy Valley
Michael Milch, Mayor of Gladstone
Denyse McGriff, Mayor of Oregon City
Shawn O'Neill, Mayor of Wilsonville

CC: Senate President Wagner
Speaker of the House Fahey
Clackamas Caucus