

Co-Chairs Beyer and McLain, Co-Vice-Chairs Boquist and Noble, members of the committee,

I am writing today to signal my support for SB 332, imposing service levels on transportation districts. My concerns relate to the districts in East Multnomah County, particularly as they relate to how Mount Hood Community College is served by public transportation.

Mount Hood Community College serves over 30,000 students including 11,000 who regularly attend classes or interact with services on campus. Among those 11,000 are 53 residents of Wood Village, Oregon where I am the Mayor.

The college has served the region since 1966 yet it is not served by a light rail line, (as originally promised) and it has regular service from just three bus lines. In 2016 a bus rapid transit line was planned for Division and Powell Boulevards. It was supposed to end at Mount Hood Community College. However, due to budget concerns, the college was removed from the plan.

A Mount Hood Community College student who rides the Max Blue Line to its Cleveland Avenue Terminus in Gresham would still be facing a 43-minute walk to campus. A student who boards a bus after disembarking from Max at Gresham City Hall Station faces 14 stops on the 81 line before they reach campus. On the 20 line it is 13 stops before arriving at school. We simply must make service to the campus faster, more frequent and thus more convenient and conducive to learning.

Another school in the region that could be better served is Reynolds High School. Reynolds serves the greatest number of homeless students in our region. Many of those students commute from outside the district's boundaries because they are staying in a motel or shelter in Portland. They use Trimet. The high school's student body is 40% Latino, 9% Black, 7% mixed-race and nearly 2% Asian-Pacific Islander. It is clearly an issue of equity to better serve the school particularly if the homeless population breaks down over similar demographic lines.

History has pointed out that future promises of a huge service increase from either Light Rail or Bus Rapid Transit will likely be broken. It doesn't change the fact that as many as 11,000 people may be struggling to make it to Mount Hood Community College on time. It seems that public transportation providers have little regard for the struggles of homeless high school students. Getting to class safely and on time should be the least of their worries.

Please take these smaller but no less necessary steps to improve public transportation in East Multnomah County.

Respectfully,

Mayor T. Scott Harden

Wood Village, Oregon