



Testimony by City of Wilsonville Mayor Shawn O'Neil - TRIP 2025 Omnibus Transportation Bill, HB 2025:

Reinvesting in Oregon's Transportation System

Scheduled for public hearings on June 10 - 12, 2025, before the Joint Committee on Transportation Reinvestment

Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, Co-Vice Chairs Bruce Starr and Shelly Boshart-Davis and members of the Joint Committee on Transportation Reinvestment:

I am testifying on behalf of the City of Wilsonville in support of HB 2025, the Transportation Reinvestment Act of 2025. On September 16, 2024, the City Council adopted Legislative Session Priorities, clearly stating our position on the Transportation Reinvestment Package before you today:

- 1) “Increased Road and Public Transit Resources with a 2025 Transportation Funding Package that advances the I-5 Boone Bridge and Seismic Improvement Project with the French Prairie Bike/Ped facility, and implements WES Commuter Rail Wilsonville-to-Salem Extension Study”,**
- 2) SMART Transit-Service Territory Alignment with City of Wilsonville Boundaries; Adjustment of TriMet Service Boundaries. Among other key legislative priorities.**

In HB 2025, there is thoughtful consideration of revenue sources, missed opportunities to improve our current transportation system, and a lack of vision for new alternatives to move Oregonians in a more congested future.

The Good:

- The expanded array of revenue mechanisms to support the state highway fund and ODOT operations, including: fuel taxes, Title Fees, Vehicle Registration Fees, Commercial Vehicle Delivery Fees, and indexing fuel tax to inflation, are effective means to meet the growing operations and maintenance costs for our road system.
- Recognition of the need for electric vehicles to pay their fair share is a positive and equitable step forward.

- The growing recognition that rail efficiencies will play an increasingly vital role in Oregon's transportation future is long overdue. This should be addressed through a stronger state role in both freight and intercity commuter rail planning and route development.
- Efforts to enhance accountability for the funds allocated to transportation projects are vital, especially concerning the "mega projects" or "anchor projects," which have faced shifting scopes and rising budgets. Implementing a more robust management system for these mega projects represents a significant step forward that is essential to ODOT's credibility. We commend the committee for addressing the concerns regarding ODOT accountability.
- We strongly support maintaining the *50% ODOT - 30% Counties - 20% Cities* allocation of the State Highway Fund as outlined in HB 2025, but oppose any effort to fund the anchor projects by deducting these revenues "off the top" of the allocation formula. The anchor projects are ODOT's responsibility, and should not detract from the much-needed revenues necessary to keep our transportation system moving at the county and city levels.

Areas needing more work:

- Our city operates the award-winning South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART), funded in part by the Statewide Transit Investment Fund (STIF) and our local workers through the employment tax. Our support for STIF funding has always depended on correcting the alignment of TriMet's boundary within our city's urban reserves and future urban growth boundary, an area currently taxed but not served by TriMet. In 2023, Senator Woods and Representative Neron introduced HB 2226 to address this issue, but the committee pulled the bill from the agenda the day of the hearing. In the 2025 Legislature, SB 418 was introduced but was never heard by the Joint Transportation Committee. Since February 2016, when our Wilsonville City Council passed Resolution # 2562 to make the City of Wilsonville's boundaries coterminous, the City of Wilsonville and TriMet have negotiated under the supervision of Representative, now Senator, Neron Misslin, to resolve this boundary dispute between the transit providers. TriMet and Wilsonville were unable to reach an agreement. Until this situation is corrected administratively by TriMet or legislatively by the Joint Transportation Committee, the City of Wilsonville will remain neutral on increasing revenue for the State Transportation Investment Fund.
- Similarly, the City of Wilsonville collaborated with Senator Woods and then-Representative Neron to introduce HB 2795 in 2025. This bill aims to reform the process by which qualified entities receive STIF funds from the State of Oregon

through TriMet. SMART and four other rural transit operators in Clackamas County have encountered challenges in accessing their allocated STIF funds promptly as qualified entities. The legislators have suggested that it would be more effective for Clackamas County to receive and reallocate the STIF funding directly to the *qualified entities* rather than waiting to obtain funding allocations through TriMet.

- The City of Wilsonville/SMART acknowledges the significance of employee-paid payroll tax funds in supporting transit, especially rural transit, which many Oregonians depend on as their primary means of transportation. The City of Wilsonville maintains a neutral position on imposing additional employee payroll taxes to support the STIF until these fundamental fairness issues are resolved. We urge the committee to address these concerns regarding STIF collections and allocations by amending HB 2025 with the provisions of HB 2795.

Two key missed priorities:

- Our city's top legislative priority is the seismic rebuild of the I-5 Boone Bridge and the associated bike/ped facility. If the I-5 Boone Bridge becomes inoperable due to a seismic event or any other issue, the primary north-south interstate connection between the Portland Metro area and the rest of Oregon, including the Pacific Coast, will be disrupted. Nowhere in HB 2025 is the I-5 Boone Bridge mentioned. The City of Wilsonville, under the leadership of Senator Neron Misslin, has collaborated with ODOT staff, our congressional representatives and other stakeholders to advance the planning and design work necessary for rebuilding the I-5 Boone Bridge in the event of a seismic incident or other issue. At a minimum, HB 2025 should designate the I-5 Boone Bridge as a major priority and allocate funding to complete the design phase of this critically important project.
- In the 2023 Session, HB 2662A unanimously passed the Joint Transportation Committee to establish an inter-jurisdictional Task Force to plan for an extension of the West Side Express (WES) from Wilsonville to Salem. This Task Force would work through the financial, operational, planning and service coordination of future rail for the Willamette Valley. The Joint Ways and Means Committee failed to fund the WES planning and coordination bill. In 2024, once again, with active bipartisan, bicameral support, SB 1572 was passed unanimously by the Joint Transportation Committee. We were advised to promote and position this project in the best possible way for consideration in the 2025 Transportation Package. However, the study was again not funded. We do not see language funding for this work in HB 2025.
- During the current 2025 Legislative Session, the Joint Transportation Committee unanimously passed HB 3453A. This bill establishes the governance structure and

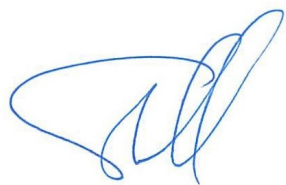
transitional terms for creating a Willamette Valley Commuter Rail Authority to plan and manage the long-term establishment of commuter rail service on the existing Portland and Western Rail (PNWR) between Beaverton and Salem, including the currently operating WES. We understand that planning for more frequent commuter rail service between the businesses and communities of Washington and Marion Counties will take time; however, we see nothing in this current Omnibus Transportation Bill that would help facilitate this planning and discussion. We question why the commitment made by the Joint Committee on Transportation over the past three legislative sessions has not been funded. We urge the committee to advance the planning for the Willamette Valley Rail Commuter service in the TRIP 2025 Omnibus Transportation Bill.

Conclusion

The City of Wilsonville appreciates your hard work on the TRIP 2025 Omnibus Transportation Bill. We urge the Transportation Reinvestment Committee to address the areas requiring additional attention, as indicated in our testimony, particularly regarding planning for the I-5 Boone Bridge replacement, adjusting the boundary, and reforming STIF Qualified Entity funding.

To ensure a more resilient future, we advocate for advancing the WES to Salem Willamette Valley Rail Authority to develop transportation solutions that are more dynamic, better funded, flexible, and capable of meeting the emerging needs of our growing and increasingly demanding transportation system. The best time to plan for new services to accommodate future growth is now, not in 20 years when congestion on the I-5 corridor will be much worse than it is today.

The decisions made by this legislature will shape our transportation future. Let's ensure that all modes of transportation are recognized, all voices are heard, and that Oregonians are prepared to embrace both the responsibilities and challenges of our transportation future.



Shawn O'Neil, Mayor
City of Wilsonville