

Submitter: Andi Howell
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4008

Good morning, my name is Andi Howell. I am the Transit Director for the City of Sandy and a board member of the Oregon Transit Association (OTA). I have been with the City of Sandy since 2013 and have been on the OTA Board since 2015. Prior to HB 2017, I sat at the OTA table with transit agencies from all over the state as we struggled to identify a dependable source of revenue. There was no single dedicated funding source for general public transit. Some agencies were unable to meet their federal funding potential due to a lack of local match funds, some agencies went out for bonds, some partnered with private business. Most agencies worried about their funding each biennium. The Special Transportation Fund (STF) existed for transit agencies to provide service for persons who are elderly and/or disabled but the STF revenue had not increased in several biennia. In 2017, Oregon passed a transformative transportation package that included transit as an essential part of the network.

HB 2017 was absolutely something to celebrate as it created the Statewide Transit Improvement Fund (STIF), a stable, state revenue source for transit. With this new source, former options, such as Connect Oregon were no longer eligible and the STF funds were combined into one STIF program a few years later. But with dedicated funding and a state goal of increased transit service, transit agencies added service and closed gaps across the state.

With these funds, transit agencies, including Sandy, were able to update equipment and add service. In the first few years of funding, Sandy added late night runs that closed a connection gap with County services and updated very old computers and monitors, dispatch software and outdated lighting in shelters. Sandy also began saving for a larger capital/construction project that has nearly completed the design phase.

Since 2019 Sandy has been able to double the hours of our local Shopper Shuttle and add Saturday service. This Shopper serves our local businesses and is designed to support our most vulnerable residents who would otherwise be scheduling rides on our more expensive and high demand dial-a-ride. We've heard wonderful stories from residents who now spend time on the shopper shuttle together as social time rather than scheduling individual rides. The shuttle is operated by 2 trolleys, making the trips a memorable experience especially.

We've also been able to add hours of service including weekends to our Sandy Estacada route. This route began as a jobs access service and provides a transit option in the rural areas surrounding Sandy, Eagle Creek and Estacada. We've recently interlined this route with a Clackamas County service providing connectivity from Estacada to the mountain communities and have seen a steady increase in ridership.

One of Sandy's most recent accomplishments was the ability to partner with TriMet in what has been termed the "regional coordination program". With STIF funding that is designated to our region and put into the regional coordination program, Sandy was able to kick off the Clackamas Town Center (CTC) route. This route was identified in Sandy's Transit Master Plan, providing transit from Sandy through Boring and Damascus - who previously had no transit options. The route coordinates with other services at TriMet's busy Transit Hub at the Town Center, providing greater connectivity and improved mobility. This route provides Sandy residents with access to healthcare (stopping at Kaiser), jobs, goods and services while also providing a transit option in previously unserved areas of Clackamas County.

The CTC route is long but by partnering with TriMet and using STIF funding, we were able to make a planned route come to life and create new transit connections. I am hopeful for this Transit Funding Task Force. Thank you for the opportunity to support transit and have meaningful discussions about Oregon's transportation system and transit's vital role.