TriMet Regional Economic Impact Summary Findings

September 2026

ECO northwest

Study Key Questions

- **Peer performance.** How does TriMet compare with transit agencies serving broadly similar metropolitan areas?
- **Housing feasibility.** How does access to TriMet's public transit services affect the feasibility of future housing development?
- **Cost savings.** How do TriMet services generate benefits to residents in the region?
- **Economic contribution.** How does TriMet contribute to the regional and statewide economy and what is the impact of further service level cuts?

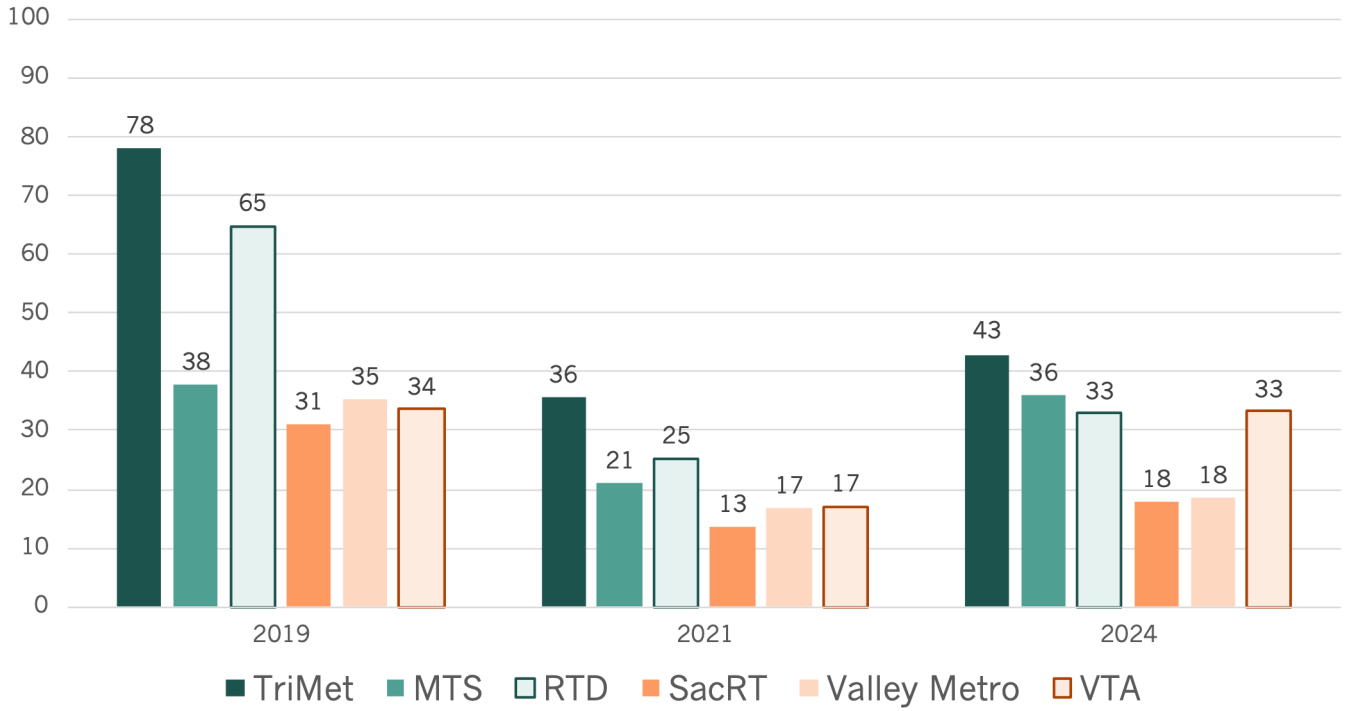
Takeaways

1. TriMet is the highest-ridership system among its western peers and delivers rides at below-average cost per trip.
2. Increasing service cuts could reduce multifamily market feasible capacity by up to half across the region
3. An efficient return on state resources, with economic activity supported by TriMet generating $90 million in annual state revenue compared to $51 million from STIF
4. TriMet's distinctive economic value is regional productivity; service cuts cannot simply be offset by reallocating public spending elsewhere.
5. The cuts already made have been minimally disruptive; the next increment decreases benefits exponentially, causing lasting economic disruption

Performance

TriMet consistently serves more trips per resident than peers

Average Monthly Unlinked Passenger Trips Per 100 Residents Across All Service Modes, 2024



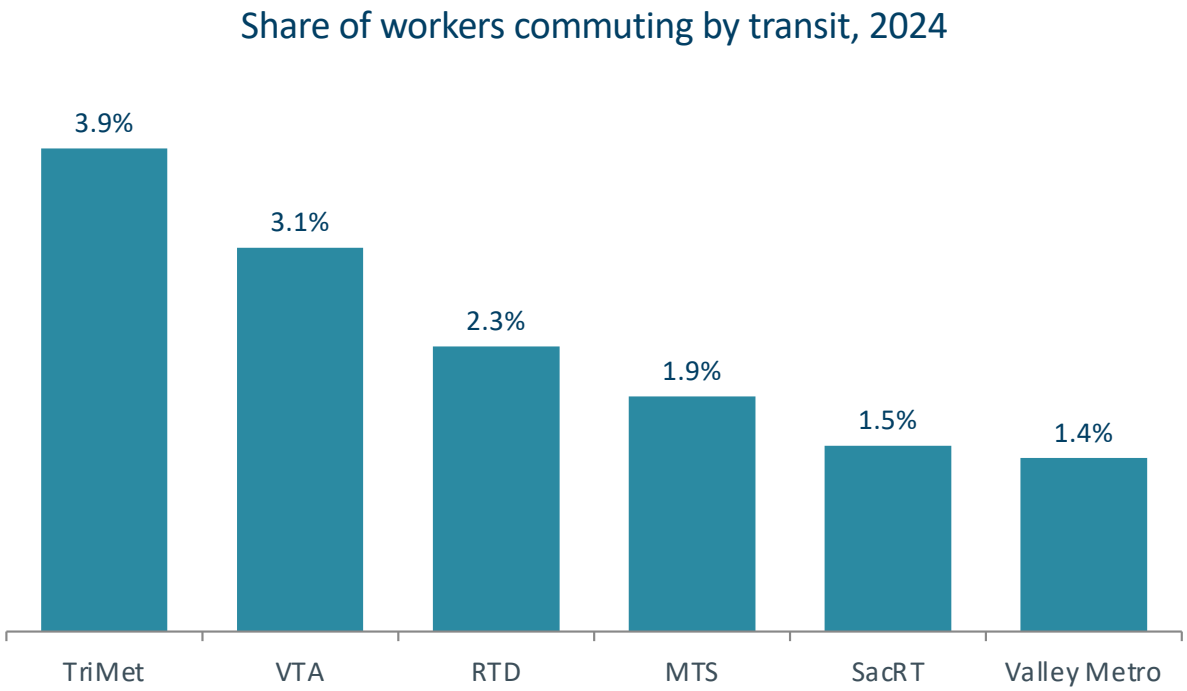
20% more

trips per resident than the next-highest peer.

Source: FTA National Transit Database 2024; ECOnorthwest analysis.

As the economy shifts to hybrid, TriMet remains the peer leader in commute trip share

Compared with five western peer agencies operating both bus and light rail modes.

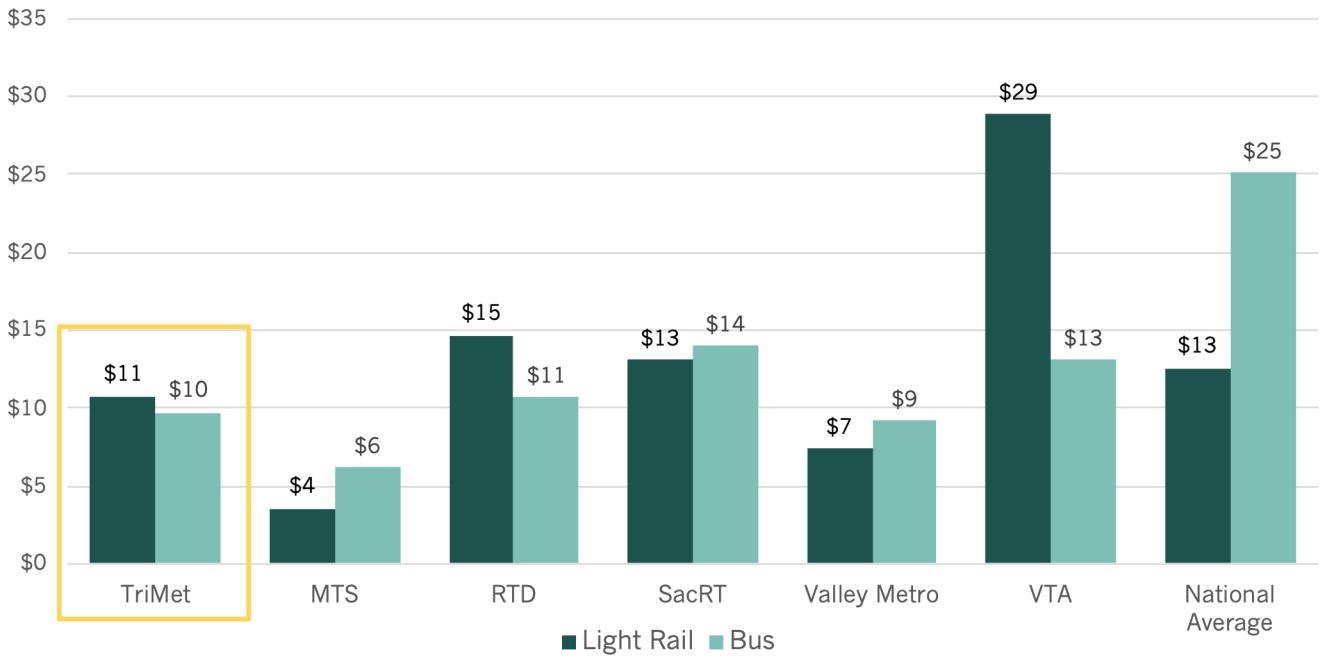


- ~61% of regional employment in industries requiring in-person attendance
- The second-highest work-from-home share (21%)
- The lowest share commuting by car, truck or van (70%)

Source: ACS 1-year 2024; ECOnorthwest analysis. Peer group: Valley Metro (Phoenix), MTS (San Diego), RTD (Denver), SacRT (Sacramento), VTA (San Jose).

Per trip costs are below national averages

Cost per Passenger Trip by Mode, 2024



$307

Annual operating cost per resident

Cost per trip for light rail and bus is below national averages of $13 and $25, and below most peers.

Source: FTA National Transit Database 2024; ECOnorthwest analysis.

Transit and Housing

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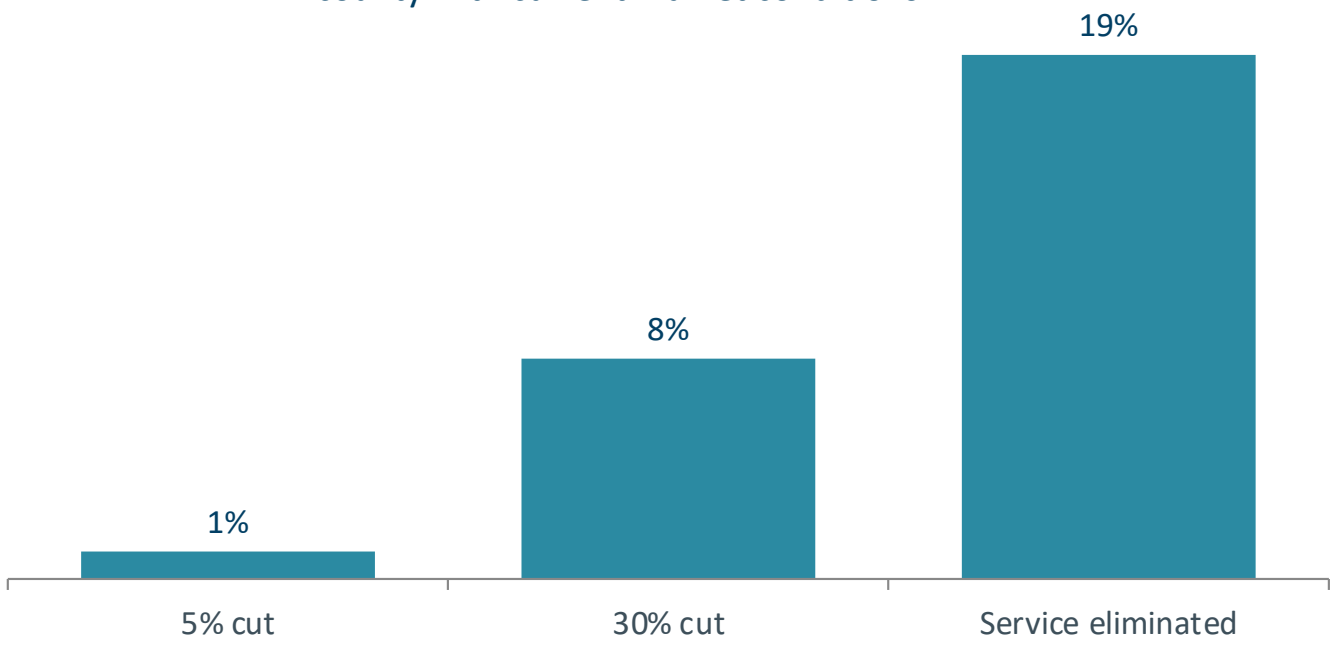
Public transit increases housing production capacity feasibility

Lower car ownership lets developers build fewer parking stalls — which lets more units per acre pencil.

Reduction in market-feasible housing capacity

Tri-county with current market conditions



Market capacity is not a forecast

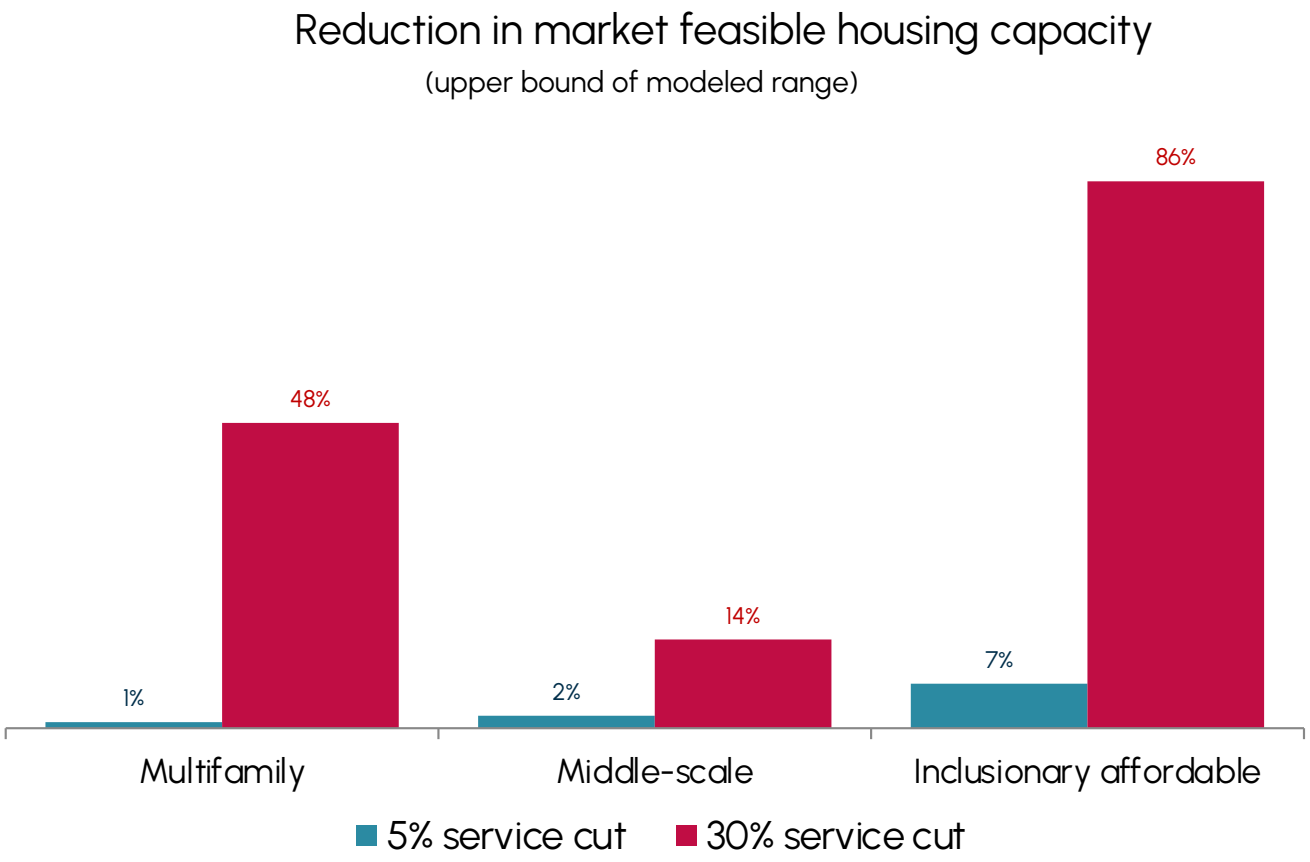
Market feasible capacity is a theoretical ceiling on market-driven supply. Developers will not pursue all of them — but they cannot pursue what is not feasible.

How it is modeled

Parcel by parcel, against physical dimensions, zoning requirements and tri-county market conditions.

Source: MapCraft analysis for ECOnorthwest. Ranges reflect current market conditions

30% service cuts reduces multifamily market development capacity by up to half



Multifamily
5+ unit apartments and condos

Middle-scale
Duplexes, triplexes, townhomes

Inclusionary affordable
Inclusionary housing requirements for 20+ unit buildings inside the City of Portland

Subsidized affordable production was not modeled but is likely to be affected through higher parking demand raising per-unit costs and consuming developable area.

Source: MapCraft analysis for ECOnorthwest. Chart shows the upper bound of each modeled range; ranges reflect alternative market conditions.

Household Transit Benefits

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How do you calculate the benefits from public transit?

How it works

- Transit service removes personal vehicle trips from the road network
- Fewer vehicle miles means less congestion and shorter travel times
- Drivers and freight operators save time and money whether or not they ride
- Fewer miles driven also means fewer collisions and lower emissions
- Households have less need to own and park a car

How we estimated it

Framework	USDOT benefit-cost analysis guidance
Travel inputs	Metro Regional Travel Demand Model — VMT and VHT with and without TriMet service
Vehicle costs	AAA 2026 weighted-average cost per mile
Value of time	ODOT 2025 passenger and freight values
Emissions	EPA 2023 social cost of carbon
Housing Opportunities	MapCraft analysis

Public transit saves tri-county residents at least $489.4 million annually

Riders and non-riders both save

$163 million
in **vehicle operating costs** saved per year

$323 million
in **time value** saved per year

$3 million
saved in **avoided crashes** per year

Vehicle operating costs	**$162.9M**	$215 / household	Equal to owning and operating ~13,840 vehicles
Travel time	**$323.3M**	$426 / household	Avoids 8M+ added hours of vehicle travel each year
Avoided collisions	**$3.3M**	$4 / household	A 30% cut would eliminate 80% of this benefit
Total household savings	**$489.4M**	**$645 / household**	Before counting any economic contribution

Source: ECOnorthwest analysis, USDOT benefit-cost guidance. Excludes ~$12M in annual avoided-emissions benefits (41,379 MT CO2e) and Clark County benefits of $34.5M. Freight receives $11.1M in travel-time savings.

Public transit generates widespread benefits, including for non-riders

TWO EMPLOYMENT REVENUE STREAMS

$712

TriMet service area employer tax

Levied on employers, not withheld from households

$107

Employee statewide transit tax

0.1% of wages, withheld from every paycheck

TriMet

FY2025 service

WHAT HOUSEHOLDS GET BACK

$645

Direct household savings

Lower vehicle operating costs,
shorter travel times and fewer collisions

Source: ECOnorthwest analysis; TriMet FY2025 payroll tax receipts; ACS 1-year 2024 household counts.

Quantifying Economic and Fiscal Impacts

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Two channels generate economic impacts

THE SPENDING CHANNEL

Payroll, purchases, capital

TriMet pays wages, buys goods and services, and invests in capital. That spending circulates through the regional economy and supports employment and business activity across many industries. Similar in impact to other public sector spending.

THE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK CHANNEL

Mobility and productivity

- Expands the labor market workers can reach and the pool employers can hire from
- Preserves roadway capacity for freight and trips that must be made by car
- Frees household resources otherwise spent on transportation

The transportation network channel differentiates investment in transit from other public spending.

A unique approach to calculating impact

Typical agency study

A one-year input-output multiplier applied to agency spending. Captures the spending channel only.

THIS STUDY

A dynamic 20-year simulation capturing the spending channel and the productivity effects of the transportation network. Uses a counterfactual approach to model the economy with and without TriMet operations.

Full benefit-cost analysis

Would additionally model the counterfactual of alternative public uses of payroll-tax and local funds to capture opportunity costs.

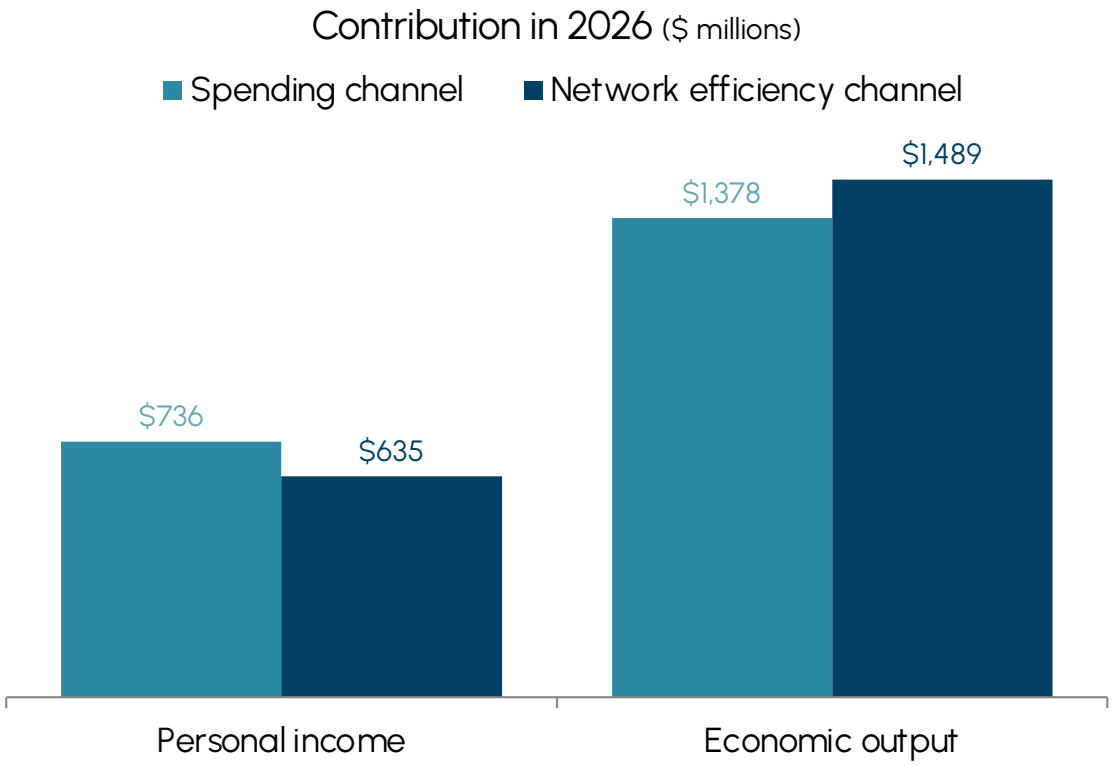
Gross vs. Net Impacts

A substantial share of TriMet's funding is federal and restricted to eligible transit purposes.

Those dollars cannot be redirected to other regional priorities. Without TriMet service they leave the region entirely.

The network channel contributes roughly half of TriMet's value

Tri-county region, based on FY 2025, relative to a future without TriMet service.



Spending channel

8,250 jobs · $736M income · $1,378M output

Network channel

6,130 jobs · $635M income · $1,489M output

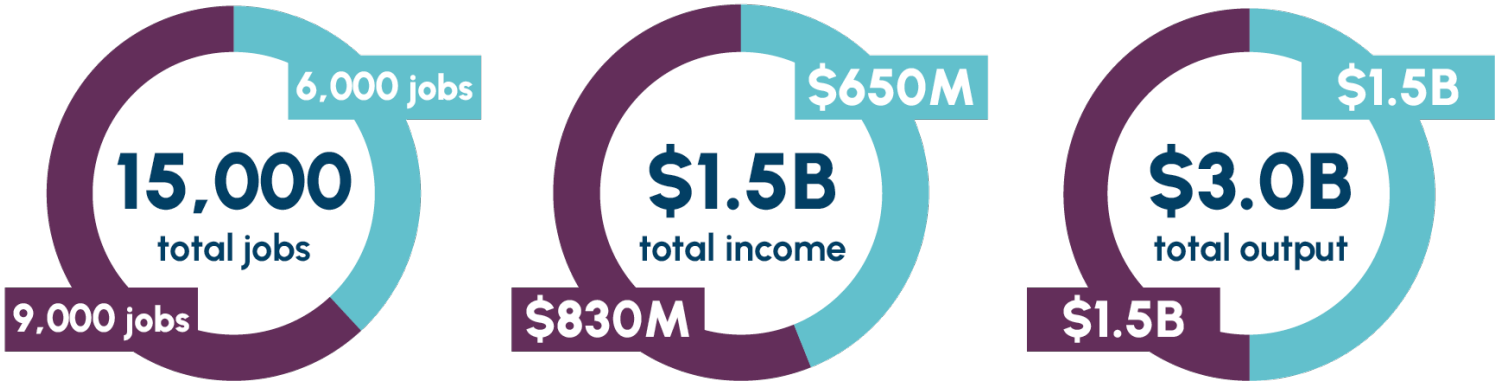
Source: REMI TranSight 2023; TriMet FY2025 data; ECOnorthwest analysis. Across all geographies the spending channel totals 10,380 jobs and the network channel 6,360.

Measuring TriMet's existence value -- Impacts through 2030

ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO OREGON'S ECONOMY

Transportation network efficiency contributions

Ordinary spending contributions[3]



$8.2B

cumulative personal income 2026–2030

$17.3B

cumulative economic output 2026–2030

Source: REMI TranSight 2023; ECOnorthwest analysis. Statewide, in 2026 dollars. Five-year averages: 16,240 retained jobs and 12,540 retained residents per year.

Without the economic activity supported by TriMet, growth would be 10% lower in 2030

Projected growth in Oregon real economic output, 2026–2030

$37.5B

The amount Oregon's real economic output is projected to grow between 2026 and 2030.

$3.7B

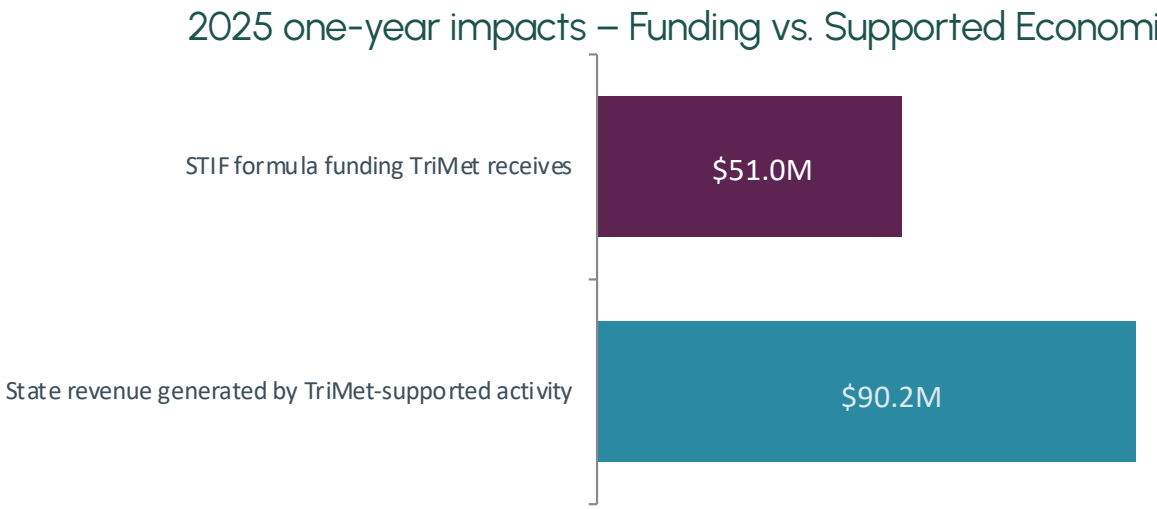
10% of the projected growth - how much smaller that 2030 economy would be without TriMet

~6 months

Of statewide economic growth at the projected pace, forgone over five years without TriMet.

Source: REMI TranSight 2023; ECOnorthwest analysis. Months-of-growth figure applies the five-year average growth rate to the 2030 difference.

TriMet returns 77% more revenue than it receives in state funding



77% more

state revenue generated than TriMet receives in STIF.

The study did not model the effect of eliminating or reducing STIF funding itself. What it establishes is that in the most recent year analyzed, TriMet supported activity contributing more revenue to the state than it received from it.

Source: REMI TranSight 2023; Oregon Legislative Revenue Office, 2026 Oregon Public Finance Basic Facts; ECOnorthwest analysis. Statewide estimates.

Impact of Service Level Cuts

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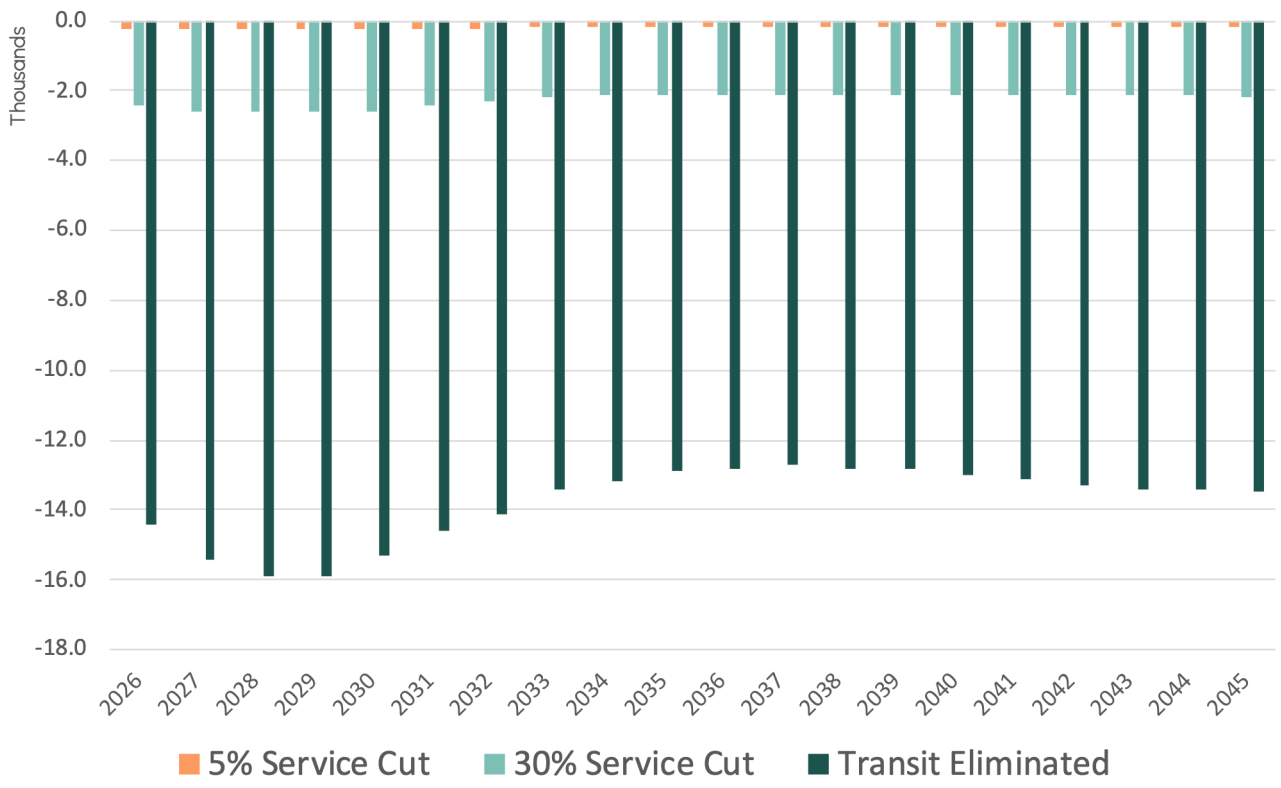
Economic losses are permanent, doesn't recover to baseline

Estimated Annual Employment Difference from Baseline by Service Reduction Scenario, 2026–2045



Employment

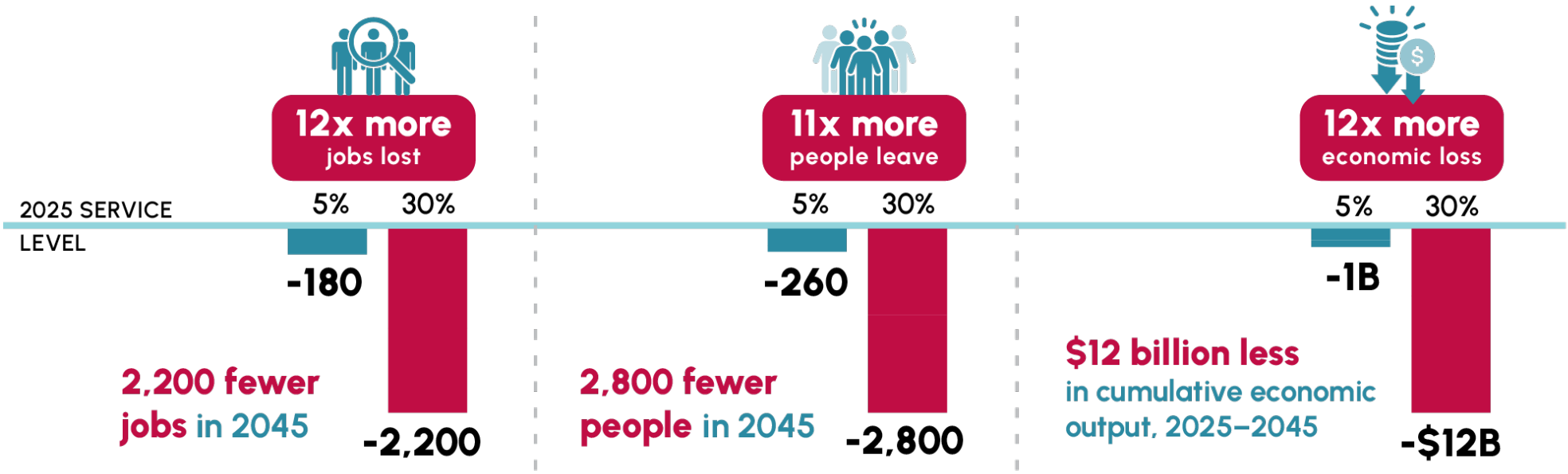
Falls immediately, peaks in year two or three, then partially recovers as workers and businesses adjust — settling on a lower path and staying there through 2045.

Population

Responds more slowly and recovers less. By 2045: ~2,900 fewer residents under a 30% cut, ~17,700 without TriMet service.

Further rounds of service cuts would have an outsized impact

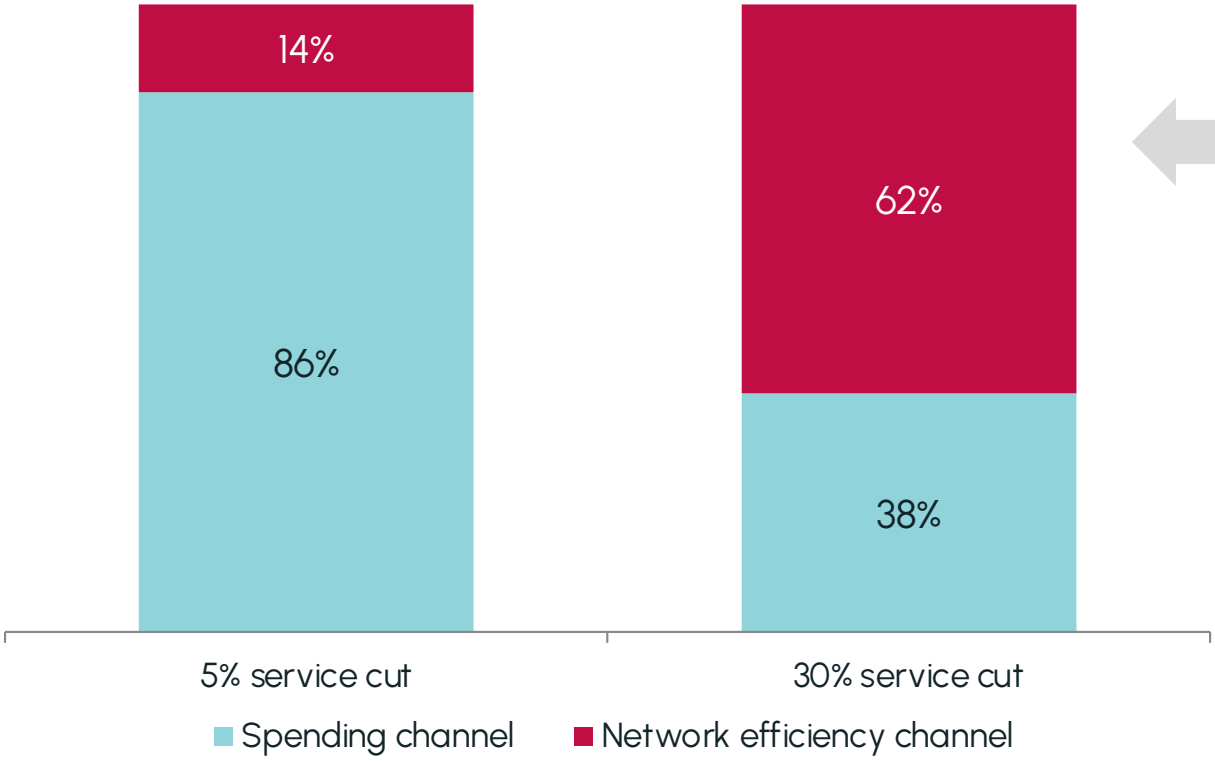
A 30% service reduction produces 10–12x the economic losses of a 5% service cut by 2045.



Source: REMI TranSight 2023; ECOnorthwest analysis. Tri-county region, cumulative over 2026–2045.

Deeper service cuts create losses that other public spending can't easily offset

Share of tri-county economic output losses by channel



The productivity value of mobility cannot be easily recaptured by shifting funding to other public investments.

More extensive service cuts would shift losses more heavily into mobility and productivity efficiencies that TriMet service supports.

Source: REMI TranSight 2023; ECOnorthwest analysis. Chart shows economic output; ranges cover jobs, population, personal income and output.

The fiscal impact is amplified under increased service level cuts

$2.4 billion

in cumulative state tax revenue over 20 years

$120M per year, on average

Estimated additional state tax revenue supported by TriMet over the next 20 years.

Revenue the state forgoes under each scenario over 20 years

	Total	Average Per Year
5% service cut	–$43M	–$2M
30% service cut	–$423M	–$21M
Service eliminated	–$2.4B	–$120M

Statewide long term impacts

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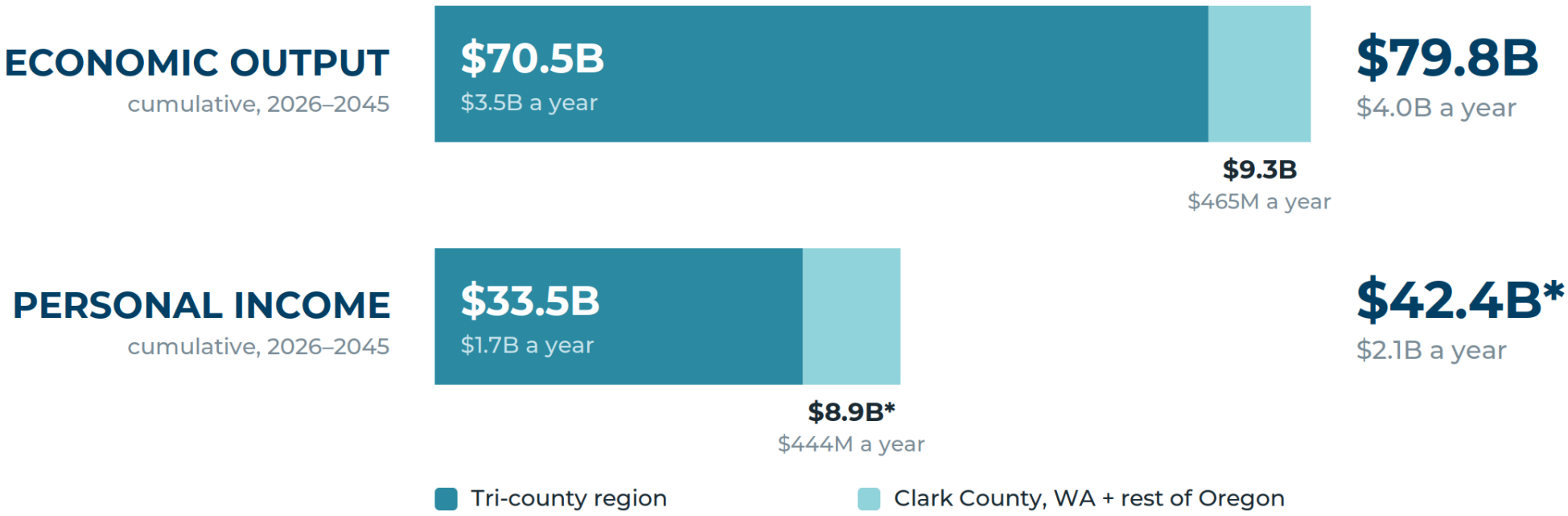
Benefits extend beyond the Portland Metro

Cumulative gain with TriMet service versus a future without it, 2026–2045.



Smaller figures are annual averages, spreading each 20-year total evenly across 2026–2045. *Estimated from the 2026 geographic distribution.

Source: REMI TranSight 2023; ECOnorthwest analysis. Existence-value estimates, not a benefit-cost ratio.

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Los Angeles

Portland

Seattle

Boise