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November 13, 2026

Sam Desue, Jr.
General Manager
TriMet
101 SW Main Street
Portland, OR 97204

TriMet Board of Directors: Dr. LaVerne Lewis, Thomas Kim, Tyler Frisbee, Erin Graham, Robert Kellogg, JT Flowers, Denyse McGriff

RE: Restore STIF Human Services Transportation Funding

Dear Mr. Desue and Members of the TriMet Board:

On behalf of AARP Oregon and our over 200,000 members across the Portland Metro region, I am writing to urge TriMet to reallocate $2 million from its proposed 2028-29 contingency to maintain STIF Human Service Transportation funding for the Ride Connection Network.

For older adults, reliable transportation is fundamental to their independence and quality of life. It provides access to health care, groceries, family and friends, and the ability to remain connected to community. Yet we know that no single transportation option can meet everyone's needs.

Fixed-route transit and LIFT paratransit are essential parts of our region's transportation system. So too are the community-based, nonprofit and volunteer transportation services provided through the Ride Connection Network. These services help fill the space between traditional public transit and paratransit, providing options for people who cannot effectively use fixed-route transit, may not qualify for LIFT, or need additional assistance to get where they need to go.

Without continued investment in Human Services Transportation, an already significant gap in service will grow. Ride Connection reports that it is already unable to fulfill approximately 36,000 ride requests each year because of limited resources. Separately, Ride Connection estimates that TriMet's proposed 2028-29 budget would mean 55,000 fewer trips over the biennium, affecting approximately 2,750 individual riders. These figures reflect both existing unmet demand and the additional service impacts of the proposed cuts. For older adults and people with disabilities, those lost trips can mean missed medical appointments, difficulty accessing food and essential services, and increased isolation.

AARP Oregon believes our region should be building a transportation system that matches services to people's needs and uses the full range of available mobility options. Human Services Transportation is not a substitute for LIFT or fixed-route transit. It is a necessary part of the transportation continuum, and allowing this capacity to erode would move our region in the wrong direction.

For these reasons, AARP Oregon urges TriMet and the TriMet Board of Directors to reallocate $2 million in STIF Human Services Transportation funding for the Ride Connection Network. At a time when our region's population is aging, we should be strengthening, not shrinking, the transportation options that allow people to remain independent and connected to their communities.

Thank you for your consideration and for TriMet's continued work to ensure that our regional transportation system serves people of all ages and abilities.

Sincerely,



Bandana Shrestha
State Director, AARP Oregon

cc: HB2017 Transit Advisory Committee