

PROPOSED TRANSIT REFORM

to

REDUCE EMISSIONS

and

IMPROVE RIDER SERVICE

PRESENTED BY THE PORTLAND DSA

Proposed Transit Reform to Reduce Emissions and Improve Rider Service

*a report by the
Ecosocialist Working Group
of the Portland Democratic Socialists of America
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Table of Contents

Summary.....	3
Purpose.....	4
Survey Design.....	5
Methodology.....	8
Findings.....	9
Analysis.....	14
Conclusion.....	16
Appendix: Rider Survey.....	18

Summary

In the spring of 2025, members of the Ecosocialist Working Group canvassed riders on high-traffic TriMet lines across Portland, to learn how Oregon can best improve transit service for its riders. We launched this campaign in November, strategized over the winter, then collected rider responses from March to April. Our survey focused on identifying the greatest obstacles transit riders encounter using transit and gauging rider support for potential interventions, such as increasing service along a route or installing more pedestrian-friendly infrastructure near a stop. We also collected data on what specific taxes or cuts riders might support as solutions to our budget crisis. We concluded our outreach with a Transit Town Hall at Portland State University on May 3rd, an event we co-hosted with Sunrise PDX with ten legislators in attendance.

Analyzing results from our survey, we saw three consistent themes in the responses from Portland transit riders:

1. Riders preferred increases in service frequency over any other proposed improvement by a large margin. In each question where we offered riders the option to increase frequencies, it was the top response.
2. The 2nd most popular improvement was expanding the use of unarmed support and crisis resolution staff onboard transit vehicles and at stops. In comparison, the addition of traditional law enforcement or fare enforcement was divisive among our responders.
3. Finally, riders consistently reported concerns about the condition of transit stops. Many riders wanted more seats and shelters at their bus stops, while others reported that the amenities installed at their stops were in poor condition and needed better maintenance.

Based on our analysis, the Ecosocialist Working Group recommends the following actions to best improve our transit system:

1. The Oregon legislature should fund public transit through at least a 0.4% increase to the STIF Tax (as requested by the Oregon Transit Association) to avoid **any** service cuts in the next ten years, and plan to raise this tax to a full 1% by 2035. A significant portion of new funds from this increase should be directed toward reimagining intercity transit options and expanding night service for local routes.
2. The Oregon Department of Transportation should explore the use of unarmed rider ambassadors in pilot programs on transit statewide and compare their effectiveness in improving rider satisfaction to that of fare enforcement or private security.
3. The Oregon legislature should increase state-level funding to transit authorities for increased amenity maintenance and vehicle cleaning. Additionally, the legislature should push transit authorities to adopt more aggressive timelines on building bus shelters and seating across their networks, with a focus on historically underserved communities.

Purpose

Oregon's largest source of carbon emissions is transportation, including both personal and commercial traffic. Any serious effort to combat climate change must reduce transportation emissions dramatically and swiftly. The most effective way we can do this is by encouraging a critical mass of people who exclusively drive to make more trips on public transit. This "mode shift" is the primary goal of our transportation organizing, and we undertook this survey to support that endeavor.

The Ecosocialist Working Group was also called to this task because driving is increasingly a burden on Oregon's workers. The average prices of car insurance and used vehicles has risen dramatically across America in the last five years, and transportation is the second-highest household expense for most low-income American families, costing them around thirty percent of their after-tax income.¹ Working class people are obligated to spend large portions of their income just to participate in society. In much of Oregon, holding a job without a car is impossible, trapping people who can't or don't drive in poverty. Outside of Oregon's largest cities, few practical alternatives to cars exist, with transit options limited to a handful of routes with minimal service. Much like the ongoing housing crisis, the rapidly rising cost of transportation has seen minimal action from governments at all levels, who dismiss it as just another rising cost in an increasingly expensive world.

This is not by accident - it is a symptom of capitalism. The rapid movement of commodities across vast distances by private transport is prioritized over all in a capitalist system. Restless creation of "new" capital assets via suburbanization and sprawl facilitates the capital accumulation of the rich, devalues the assets of lower classes, and insulates the wealthy from the communities they have impoverished. Therefore, we zone for large suburban developments, build mega freeways to "connect" them, and make no obligations for developers to provide for public transit access - or even pedestrian treatments. As a result, many Oregonians cannot complete essential tasks without access to a private automobile. This condition isolates community members, preventing them from providing for one another, and the self-serving mindset drives capitalistic exploitation. In short, transportation is not solely an engineering problem - it is a site of class conflict as well.

As socialists, we believe that the state has a responsibility to meet the needs of everyday people. Transportation, just like food and housing, is a need - thus, the Ecosocialist Working Group believes our transportation system should be designed with absolute accessibility, safety and integration for the communities served. The transportation system of our capitalist society caters to capital enterprise and the desires of the rich, rather than the needs of all citizens. This will remain the case as long as we live under a capitalist regime, and we understand that reforming a capitalist transportation system into a socialist one is impossible.

¹ Maeve Power, ed., "The High Cost of Transportation in the United States," itdp.org, January 26, 2024, <https://itdp.org/2024/01/24/high-cost-transportation-united-states/>.

However, we do not live in the future, we live in the present. As advocates for our working class comrades, we must do what we can today to make everyday life survivable. For our transportation system, this means adopting best practices for transportation engineering and advocating for a strong public transportation network. Rather than attempt to make car ownership cheaper, we must improve our public transit so that all Oregonians can get where they need to go, affordably and on-time. Getting drivers to switch to public transit reduces our carbon emissions and makes our transportation network safer for all users. Most of all, improving public transit benefits existing users, many of whom are low-income, disabled, or both.

Survey Design

Our survey was designed to capture the full scope of rider's opinions on transit in Oregon, and their desired potential reforms. We constructed a large list of initial questions about a variety of transit topics, then narrowed them to those most relevant to everyday rider experience and policy changes currently being considered at the Oregon legislature.

Survey design began in earnest in January 2025. This survey had, in effect, no budget. Handouts, paper survey copies, and all other promotional materials were printed by chapter members using their own resources or publicly available resources. All campaign leaders, canvassers, and data analysts were unpaid volunteers. No funds were requested from the Portland DSA's treasury to fund this campaign, and none were allotted. Canvassers paid their own bus fares.

We used TriMet's 2024 Attitudes and Awareness survey as a starting point as we designed our own, seeking to incorporate its inclusive language while adjusting its length and scope to suit our needs.

Early on, the working group considered mass distribution of the survey through in-person canvassing sessions and online promotion of the survey over social media. However, the working group decided early on in the design of the campaign to instead restrict distribution of the survey to riders canvassed in-person. Working group members and community advocates who worked with our group were asked not to take the survey. Riders we canvassed were provided handouts with a link to the survey upon request, ostensibly for further distribution to friends and family, but we did not distribute these handouts outside of canvassing sessions. We did not post a link to the survey on our social media accounts or send a link to our mailing list.

We limited distribution in this way for a few reasons. Firstly, while many Portland DSA members are regular users of public transit, we already gather their opinions on a regular basis and incorporate them into our platform and advocacy. Additionally, many of our members already subscribe to TriMet's public communications and take their surveys. This canvass was intended to provide the Portland DSA, the public, and Oregon legislators with new information, not a regurgitation of our platform. Secondly, as a socialist

organization, the DSA is frequently attacked by political opponents and bad-faith actors. Keeping publicization of the survey to direct contact and word-of-mouth lowered the chances an opponent found the survey link and attempted to compromise the data or otherwise disrupt the campaign. Thankfully, no such attack occurred.

We elected to limit demographic information to one field - the respondent's ZIP code. We did not collect their name or address, and we did not ask for income, education level, ethnicity, or any other aspect of their personal lives. Respondents were given the option of providing their email address or phone number for future contact by the DSA, but these questions were clearly labeled optional. This was done in the interest of data security for our respondents. Our survey was distributed as a Google Form with minimal encryption. With no budget for specialized software, the potential for a leak of personal information (unintentional or otherwise) was too great a risk for us to take. Therefore, any insight from additional demographic data was forgone.

Similarly, we did not require survey takers to provide an email address to complete the survey. This exposed us to the possibility that one person could respond multiple times, as Google Forms uses email addresses to log and limit responses. After discussion, we decided that accessibility and data security for respondents superseded data integrity. While we cannot quantify how much this increased accessibility, we can say informally that a number of respondents took the survey only after assurance they need not identify themselves in any way, and a number of respondents told our canvassers, unprompted, that they did not have an email address.

After these security concerns were addressed, we began to explore what we wished to achieve with our survey, and what questions would help us achieve those goals. We sought to limit the survey to a maximum of 10 questions, to make it more feasible for a transit rider and less daunting. We also sought to center riders, allowing them to report their own experiences and desires without restrictions on "feasibility" or relevance to existing TriMet services and projects.

We chose to ask three questions on the respondent's system use, to help us differentiate between the desires and needs of different types of riders. We asked riders how often they rode on TriMet in a given week, what times of day they tended to ride, and what route they were using at the time they took the survey. Additional information about rider's destinations, their reasons for taking transit, and their use of other transportation modes were considered, but as TriMet already conducts more extensive survey efforts here, and for brevity, we decided against including these questions.

The remainder of our questions could be divided into two groups: a set of questions asking riders about their prior and current experiences using transit, and a set of questions asking riders what broad or specific changes to transit service (and our transportation system as a whole) they most wanted to see. Readers interested in the exact text of our questions can refer to the blank copy of our survey included as an appendix to this report.

The first group of questions asked riders to describe their experience as a user of our transit system. These questions described a number of common service & experiential problems transit riders experience. We asked respondents to select every option that

applied to them. These "select all" questions were designed to give us a "heat map" of what issues affect the greatest number of users. In conjunction with rider demographic data, these questions would help us understand if certain issues were a priority for riders at certain times of day, or of less regular riders in particular.

The second group of questions asked riders to choose what improvements, from a multiple-choice list, they most want to see. The first question posited a variety of upgrades to the service itself. The 2nd question offered experiential improvements beyond the service, such as unarmed security aboard vehicles and pedestrian safety improvements near transit stops. The 3rd question asked what riders wished to prioritize in Oregon's transportation system more generally over the next 10 years. For the 2nd & 3rd questions, we limited riders to 3 of the listed choices to consider what improvements they wanted most, reflecting the reality of finite resources. The real-world costs of the proposed improvements vary widely, but the goal here was finding rider's priorities, not creating a budget or seeking input on existing projects.

In addition, we included a free response section to give riders the opportunity to tell us their concerns or desires without prompt or restriction. We included this to help us gain context as to why riders prioritized certain improvements over others, and to give riders the opportunity to identify improvements or interventions we overlooked when creating our survey. If multiple riders identified a particular problem on a particular route, or at a particular stop, we planned to include this in our report and bring it to the attention of the relevant agency.

Our final question was a direct ask to riders about what revenue mechanisms they would support to fund Oregon's transportation system. The options presented included mechanisms known to be under consideration by lawmakers in Salem, mechanisms considered in the past, mechanisms previously unproposed, and cost-cutting measures. Riders were asked to select any options they found acceptable. Due to the somewhat esoteric nature of the question, and the inability of our brief survey to give context to riders, we elected to make this question optional.

The unfunded volunteer nature of our campaign meant some limitations. Regrettably, two typos made it into the survey questionnaire and are highlighted yellow in the Appendix—the latest time slot in Q3 was labeled “Night (After 9:00 AM)” and the description of STIF tax in Q11 may not have made clear the payroll tax element of STIF.

Methodology

When planning outreach, the goal was to capture the opinions of regular Trimet riders, particularly working-class ones who have been traditionally under-represented in Trimet's Attitudes & Awareness survey. We exclusively recruited survey respondents by canvassing transit vehicles, with a mix of rush hour and weekend canvassing sessions, focusing on frequent service lines with high ridership to maximize rider contact.

DSA members boarded buses and trains to ask riders to take our survey, with permission from transit operators. Canvassers presented riders with the options to scan a QR code and take the survey on a mobile device, take home a flyer with a URL link to the survey, or fill out a paper version of the survey on the spot. After riders completed a paper survey, canvassers collected it and entered it by hand into the online form. Canvassers answered rider's questions about the survey, its purpose, and the DSA as an organization. Canvassers were trained not to suggest any answers, and all riders who requested a survey were allowed to take it. Riders received no compensation for their participation.

In total, the Ecosocialist Working Group conducted 10 canvassing sessions between March 8th and April 12th. The details of these sessions are as follows:

- March 8th
 - 11:00 AM to 1:30 PM, 82nd Avenue Max Station
 - Lines Canvassed: MAX Blue, Red, Green, Route 72
- March 12th
 - 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM, OMSI to SE Waterfront
 - Lines Canvassed: MAX Orange Line, FX2, 17, 33, 34
- March 15th
 - 11:00 AM to 1:30 PM, Providence Park
 - Lines Canvassed: MAX Blue, Red, 15, 20
- March 16th
 - 11:00 AM to 1:30 PM, Burnside and SE 12th
 - Lines Canvassed: 6, 8, 12, 17, 19, 20, 70
- March 22nd
 - 11:00 AM to 1:30 PM, Rose Quarter Transit Center
 - Lines Canvassed: All MAX Lines, Route 4, 6, 8, 77
- March 27th
 - 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM, 122nd and Burnside
 - Lines Canvassed: MAX Blue, Route 73
- March 30th
 - 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM, Beaverton Transit Center
 - Lines Canvassed: MAX Blue, Red, 20, 54, 57, 76
- April 6th
 - 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM, PSU Urban Center
 - Lines Canvassed: Streetcar, MAX Orange and Yellow, Various Routes
- April 10th
 - 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM, Hollywood MAX Station
 - Lines Canvassed: MAX Red, Blue, Green, 12, 75, 77
- April 14th
 - 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM, Sunset Blvd. and Capitol Highway
 - Lines Canvassed: 12, 35, 39, 43, 44, 45, 54, 55, 56

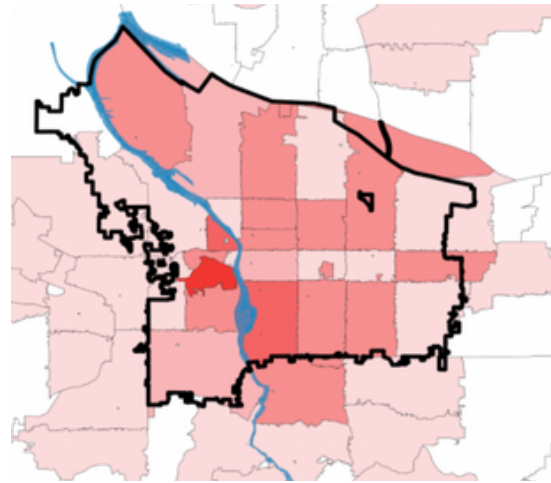
Findings

Our volunteers boarded buses and trains to collect data from **340 transit riders, from 65 zip codes, across 33 Routes**. These riders are overwhelmingly frequent users. **11%** of the riders we spoke to ride less than once per week, **37%** ride most days, and **34%** ride every day. In comparison, **40%** of TriMet's 2024 "Attitude & Awareness" survey respondents rode less than once per month.

The map to the right is a "heat map" of rider's responses according to ZIP code. The darker the color of a given ZIP code, the more responses we received, relative to other ZIP codes. The most popular ZIP codes were:

- 97201, with 29 responses
- 97209, 20 responses
- 97202, 19 responses
- 97217, 17 responses
- and 97219, with 16 responses.

We captured responses from commuting periods throughout the day, on weekdays and weekends alike. The most popular time to ride was from 5 to 9 PM, with **66%** of our respondents reporting they ride at that time. Surprisingly, the least popular time for our riders was the morning, with only **29%** of riders using the system between 8 and 11 AM. **42%** reported using the system before 8 AM, and **32%** reported riding after 9 PM.



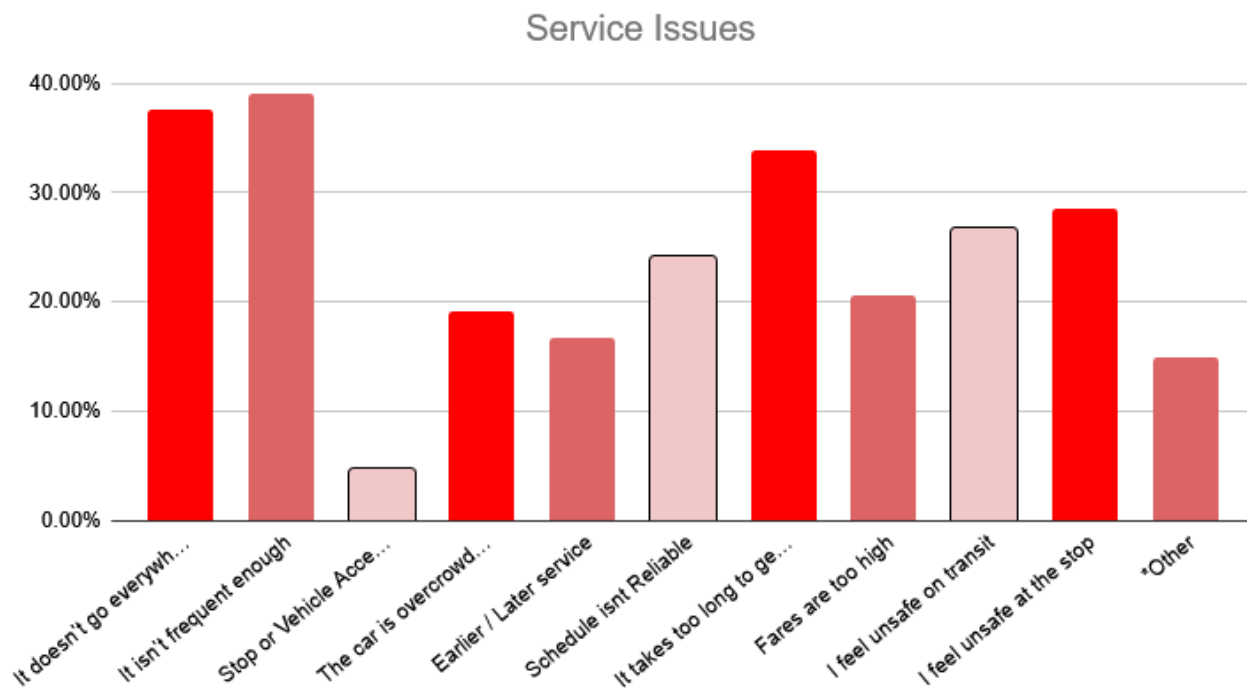
Our approach to canvassing resulted in oversampling of rail over buses. Just over **50%** of those canvassed were aboard a MAX train, which is not proportionate to the percentage who ride MAX according to Trimet's own ridership data (35%). We do not see this as a serious flaw in the survey's results, as the geographic distribution of respondents was independent of MAX access. The remaining riders we canvassed were either riding a bus, **39%**, or the streetcar, **9%**, with the remainder (**3%**) neglecting to report a mode.

Bus riders who responded to our survey originated from a variety of routes. The only two bus routes we canvassed at least 10 riders on were Route 12 (13 riders), and Route 15 (10 riders). Most canvassing sessions intersected a MAX station, and when we had fewer canvassers available on a given day, we prioritized the MAX to maximize our response rate. Future researchers might consider more focused targeting of specific lines to gather statistically significant levels of data about the preferences of riders on those lines.

First off, we asked riders a multiple-choice question about potential service issues, instructing riders to check all the listed problems they had personally encountered. The most frequent service issue was **infrequent transit service**, reported by **39%** percent of all riders. This was followed closely by **poor transit coverage** and **slow trip speed**, which were reported by **38%** and **34%** of riders, respectively. Notably, the number of riders who

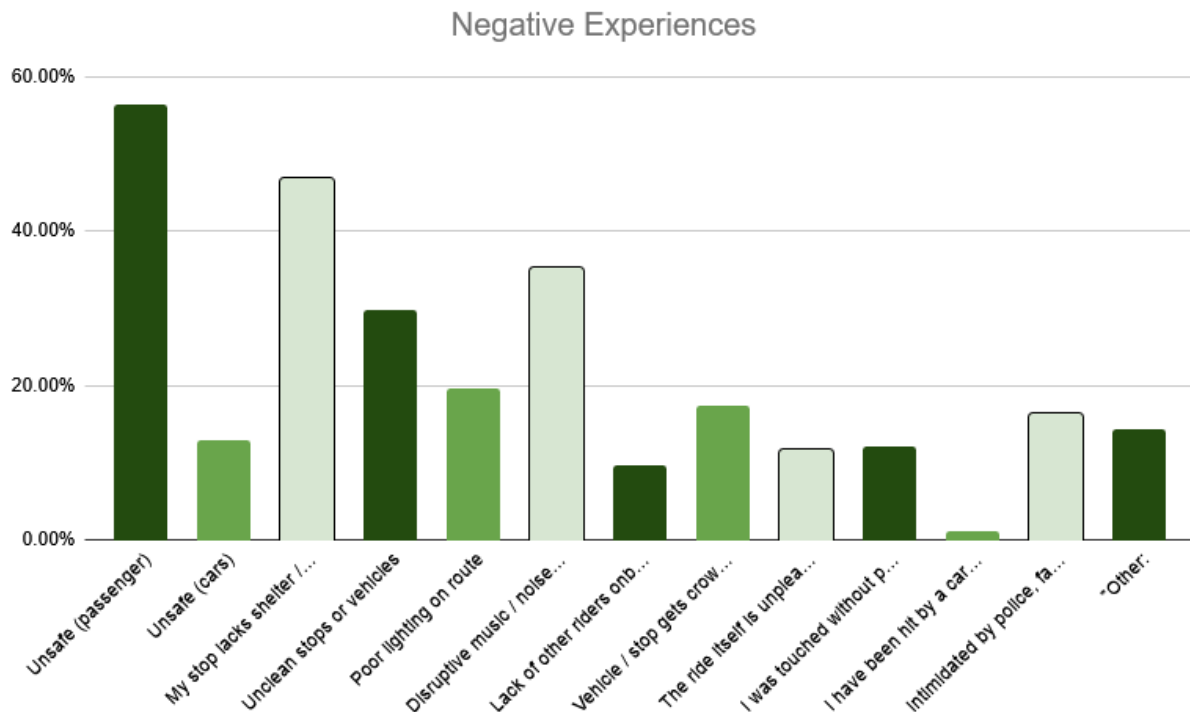
reported feeling unsafe aboard the transit vehicle was similar to the number who reported feeling unsafe at the transit stop - **27%** to **29%**, respectively. The same riders did not necessarily choose both: of the **97** people who reported feeling unsafe at a transit stop, **62** of them felt unsafe aboard transit as well. **62** of the **91** riders who felt unsafe on transit also felt unsafe at stops.

Next, we asked riders a question about negative experiences on transit. This time we asked riders if they had ever experienced the problem described, rather than asking if it was a regular occurrence. The most frequent negative experiences reported were **inappropriate passenger behavior**, at **56%**; **unimproved stops and shelters**, at **47%**; and **disruptive noise or music from another passenger** at **35%**.



The nature of responses to these 2 questions differed notably. Firstly, there were clearer priorities on “Negative Experiences” compared to “Service Issues”: only **4 responses** to the former were reported by **20%** or more riders, compared to **7 responses** to “Service Issues”. Secondly, the 3 “negative experiences” most reported well outpaced any other responses, and two of them - **inappropriate passenger behavior** and **unimproved stops and shelters** - were reported more by a large margin.

For our first question on transit improvements, riders still used their unlimited choices judiciously. The two most popular improvements both commanded a majority - **more frequent service**, at **56%**, and **expanding night and early morning service**, at **54%**.

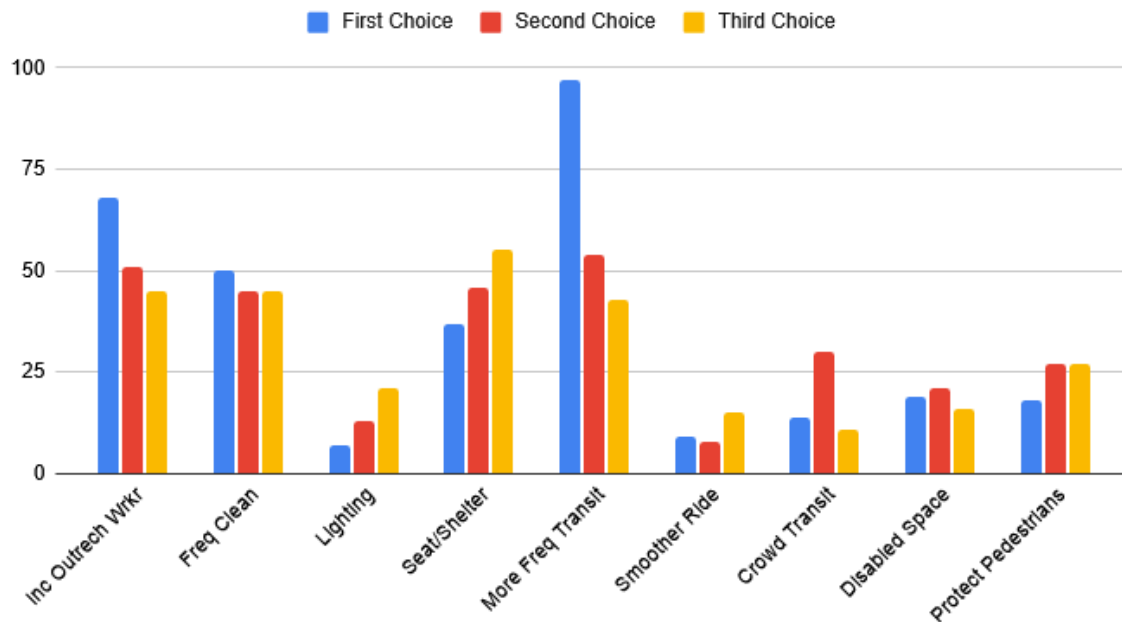


Improving stop amenities fell just behind at **48%**, with **reducing fares** and **creating Express routes** tied at about **41%** support.

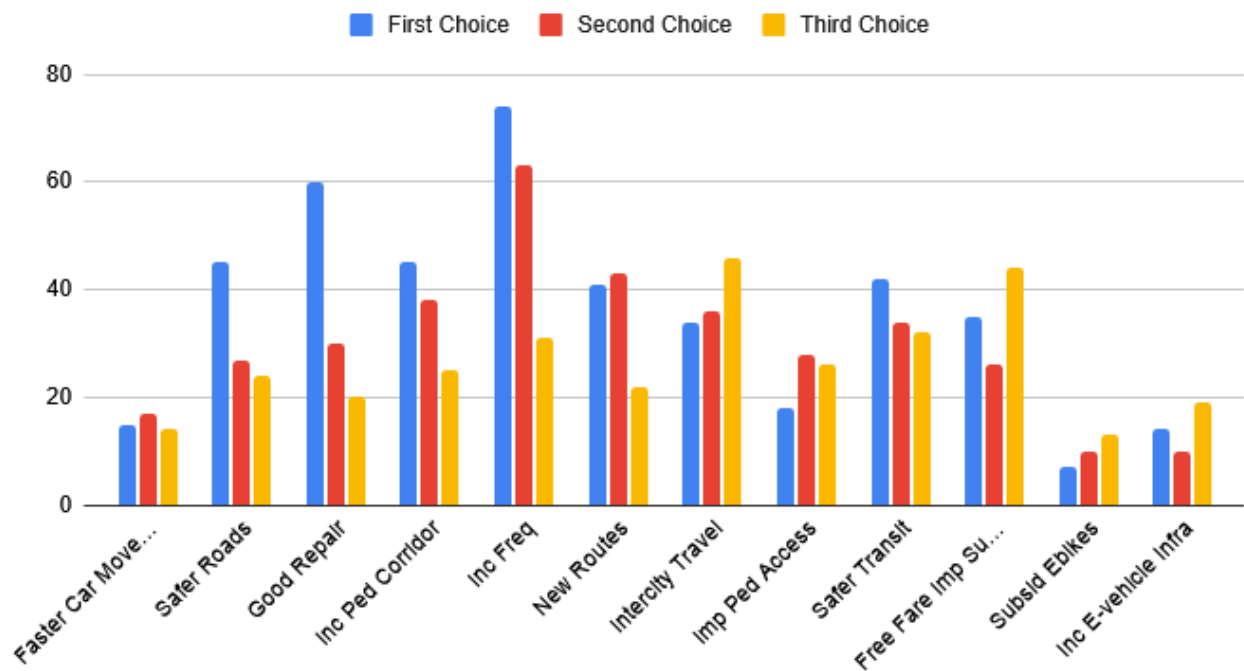
For the second question, which offered a wide breadth of service improvements, riders still prioritized **increased transit frequency** (57%) over the other options. **Introducing outreach workers** was the second most popular option, at **48%**. Transit frequency maintained its high popularity from the previous question, despite the new options and the limit on rider's selections. In fact, it is almost exactly the same. **More frequent cleaning** and **improved shelter facilities** were tied for 3rd highest priority, at **41%**, leaving the remaining options well behind.

When we asked riders to rank their priorities for transportation spending over the next 10 years, responders once again asked for **increased transit frequency**, with **keeping roads and bridges in good repair** being the second most popular option. **Good Repair** received **60** 1st rankings, lagging behind **Transit Frequency's 74**. Transit frequency's overall support was a triumphant **49%**, far more support than any other option, and it had the most second place votes as well. **Safer roads** and **more pedestrian corridors** also had a lot of first place votes, with **45** first place votes, though more people ranked pedestrian improvements 2nd or 3rd. Although it did not prove an especially popular first or second choice for riders, establishing intercity bus service was consistently supported across the ballot, making it the second most-wanted of the options at **34%**. The rest of the options either hovered at around 32% support with few first choice votes, such as **creating more pedestrian corridors**, or sank to the bottom, like **subsidizing e-bike purchases** with just 9% support.

Improve Safety and Comfort Ranked

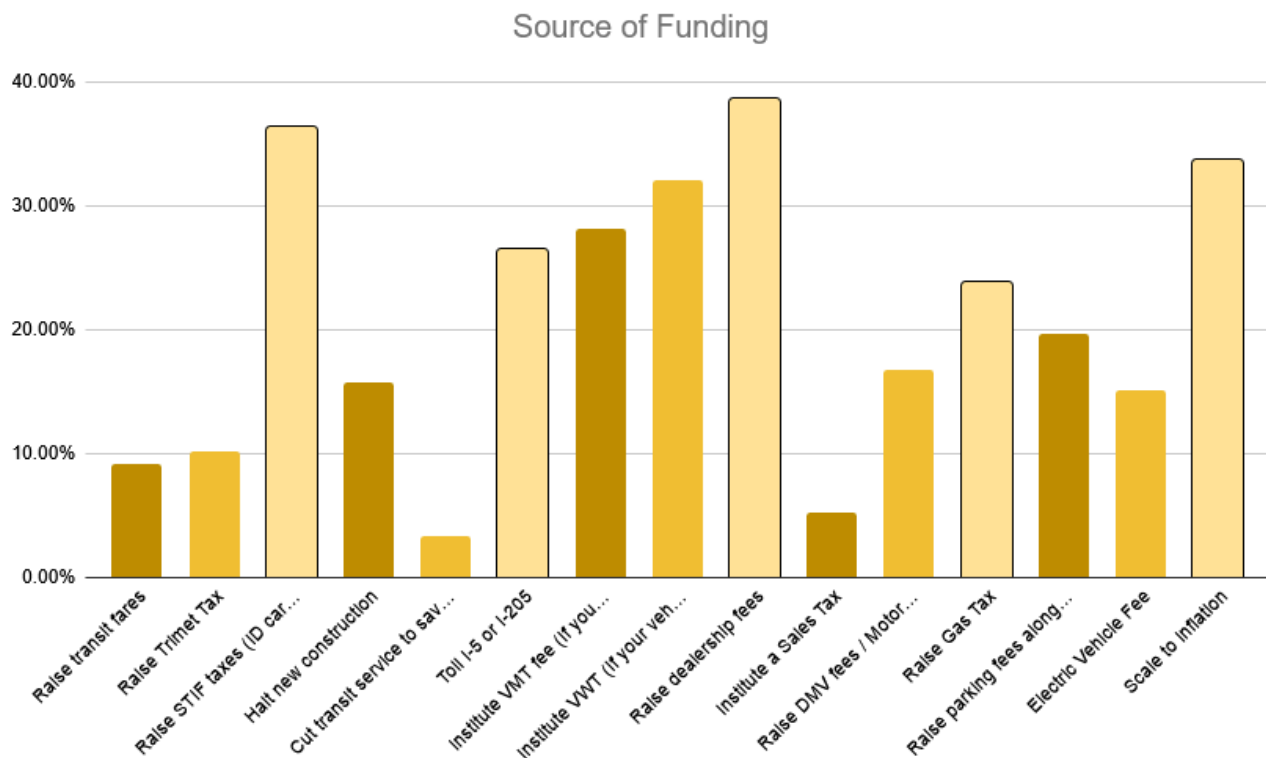


Preferred Transportation Spending Ranked



Free response questions saw greatly differing attitudes towards law enforcement and fare enforcement. Riders were greatly concerned about disruptive behavior, but split on the value of enforcement; of **22** responses concerned with safety, **9** called for **stricter security/police** and **4** called for **softer/less enforcement**. Conversely, **9 free responses** called for **less strict fare enforcement**, while **4** called for **greater fare enforcement**. For comparison, **40** free responses mentioned specific **service improvements**, **30** free responses mentioned **cleanliness or maintenance** of facilities, and **20** were concerned with **wayfinding or user experience**.

Better transit requires resources, and the riders we spoke to support a variety of new revenue streams. The most popular ideas were increasing **dealership fees (39%)**, raising the **Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) tax (36%)**, and **scaling existing taxes to inflation (34%)**. Road user fees were also popular, with tolling, Vehicle Miles Traveled fees, weight fees, and an increase to the gas tax all scoring at least **20%**. **Only 3%** of riders we spoke to supported cutting service, compared to **9%** who supported raising fares and **12.5%** who supported halting new road construction projects.



Analysis

Above all else, one trend stands alone: **users of all rider demographics want increased frequency of service more than any other proposed improvement.** The below table breaks out different “types” of riders, sorted based on the problems they reported aboard transit, the particular line they use, and the time of day they usually ride. Column 3 shows the total number of riders in that demographic, and the rightmost column shows how many ranked increased service as a top 3 priority. A bolded number in column 3 means service frequency received more rankings than any other improvement for that group.

Rider Demographic	# of riders	# of those riders who ranked increased service as a top 3 priority
Bus Riders	131	87
MAX Riders	175	87
Daily riders	118	72
Riders who reported being made uncomfortable by another passenger	192	113
Riders who take the bus at night	110	62
Riders who reported their stop lacks a shelter or seat	159	105
Riders who ranked unarmed support staff as a priority	164	81

A few populations favored increased frequency in particular. **72** of the **118** everyday riders we surveyed ranked increased service, far above the second place choice of improved stop infrastructure at **53** rankings. For night riders, **62** ranked increased service as a priority, compared to stop infrastructure at **52** rankings and unarmed support staff at **51** rankings. Of all groups, however, it's bus riders who supported increasing service the most: **87** out of **131** riders asked for increased service, well above the **55** who ranked unarmed support and **50** who ranked improved stop infrastructure.

Support for increased service is clearly consistent across many types of riders: even riders with other pressing concerns about transit still had service increases as a top priority. Even among the **159** responders who reported their bus stop lacks seating or weather protection, increasing service was still more popular than building more benches and shelters at transit stops, with **105** responders requesting **increased service** and **90** responders requesting **improved stop amenities**.

Riders with serious safety concerns also voiced support for increased service.

For the **164** riders who ranked unarmed support staff as a priority investment, **81** of them also asked for improved service, making it the most popular second choice. The next most popular improvement was stop and vehicle cleaning, with **69** riders, and no other improvement received more than **50** rankings. Of the **97** riders who reported feeling unsafe at the transit station, the most popular improvement was unsurprisingly unarmed security, with **54** rankings. The second most popular choice, however, was service - **45** of those riders ranked increasing service as a priority, putting it above the **40** who asked for improved stop amenities and the **35** who asked for more transit vehicle cleaning. It is also worth noting that **54** of these riders who felt unsafe waiting at their stop reported their stop lacked weather protections or a seat, above the average for our sample. **This suggests the infrastructure of a given stop could play a role in perceived safety for riders.**

Additionally, riders with different opinions on the efficacy of unarmed support agreed on the importance of increased service. **110** riders who reported being bothered by another passenger's behavior ranked unarmed security as a priority for funding, while **82** riders who had the same negative experience with another passenger did not. These two groups, however, had significant overlapping support for increased frequency- **57** riders of the **110** who ranked unarmed security also ranked frequency as a priority, as did **56** of the **82** riders who did not, more overlap than any other priority between the two groups.

Our data also suggests that precisely when and how we might upgrade service frequency matters. **40** free responses request a variety of changes to service, making it again the most popular topic in its section. However, of those 40 comments, **11** asked for increased night service in particular, making it the most popular specific request regarding service by a wide margin. Additionally, **53%** of riders requested transportation services run buses earlier and later than their current schedules in our free-choice improvements question - the second most popular request for that question, behind increased frequency. **Transit agencies need the resources to increase frequency at all times of day to serve riders with needs beyond traditional “rush hour” commutes.**

We will be analyzing trends in responses regarding unarmed support staff and improved stop infrastructure in a second edition of this report, if time permits. Additionally, we hope to have stronger ZIP code level analysis for responses, to better understand what riders in different geographical areas are asking for.

Our results clearly show that working-class riders want more frequent transit above all other potential interventions. Increased service makes riders feel safer at the stop, because they won't be waiting exposed on the street for as long. Increased service means riders will use the bus for morning errands or evening outings, when they may otherwise have driven their car, called a rideshare, or stayed home. Increased service allows better accessibility to transit for those with jobs outside the 9 to 5 circuit, or those who use mobility assistance. Increased service even goes hand-in-hand with the desire for more BAT lanes that received overwhelming support in TriMet's recent 82nd Ave survey.

Increasing service comes with operational challenges for our state's transit agencies, and requires a significant investment of new resources. But our survey demonstrates consistently that existing users see increasing the frequency of service as the

network's greatest need. The state of Oregon can achieve our mode shift goals and climate commitments if our leaders listen to their constituents and combine a major frequency upgrade with better amenities and cleaning at stops and support staff trained in conflict resolution.

Conclusion

Moving away from private automobility to public transit is an urgent need. Our proposals form a short-term solution for our worsening transportation funding crisis, one we believe is a fundamental necessity for Oregon and Oregonians. We have a duty to protect the right of the working class to freely travel and pursue opportunities for improvement without relying on the upkeep and costs of a personal vehicle. People who cannot afford the luxury of an electric vehicle will be forced to make increasingly difficult choices as the cost of fueling and upkeeping a car continues to climb. Without supporting transit we risk further isolating Oregon's rural residents, blocking people who cannot drive from reaching essential services or other people in their communities - public transit is the only mode of transportation we have that is accessible to people of all ages and levels of ability.

As Ecosocialists, we also believe it is critical for the state to align our transportation policy with environmental stewardship. Carbon emissions are irrevocably and undeniably changing the climate in a way hostile to humanity itself. Here in Oregon, we have seen hotter summers, icier winters, and more struggle and suffering on the part of working people every year for a long time - and it's only going to get worse. The next transportation package needs to contribute to the solution of both problems. We have no time to waste.

The Oregon legislature has an obligation to use this transportation package, and any subsequent legislation, to make investments that meet the needs of riders and the needs of our planet. Oregonians around the state deserve access to truly great public transit, and no one knows what the system needs better than those who rely on it every day.

Based on their testimony and our analysis, we recommend the following actions:

1. The Oregon legislature should fund public transit through at least a 0.4% increase to the STIF Tax (as requested by the Oregon Transit Association) to avoid **any** service cuts in the next ten years, and plan to raise this tax to a full 1% by 2035. A significant portion of new funds from this increase should be directed toward expanding intercity transit options and expanding night service.

2. The Oregon Department of Transportation should explore the use of unarmed rider ambassadors in pilot programs on transit statewide, comparing their success in de-escalating difficult situations and improving rider satisfaction to that of fare enforcement and police patrols.
3. The Oregon legislature should increase state-level funding to transit authorities for the explicit purpose of amenity maintenance and vehicle cleaning. Additionally, the legislature should push transit authorities to adopt more aggressive timelines on building bus shelters and seating across their networks, with a focus on historically underserved communities.

Oregon legislators have a clear mandate to fund transit service - we only ask that they listen to their constituents. We welcome requests for our data and questions about our process, and hope that this survey may prove useful to other advocates for the working class across Oregon. Please email us at ecosocialistpdx@protonmail.com for all inquiries.

Appendix: Rider Survey

Your answers will be kept anonymous, even if you volunteer personal information at the end of this survey.

1. What transit line are you currently riding? For example, "MAX Green Line" or "9 Bus"

2. How often do you ride public transit?

Select only one choice.

- Less than once a week
- Once or twice a week
- Most Days
- Every Day

3. What times of day do you ride transit?

Select all that apply.

- Early Morning (before 8:00 AM)
- Morning (8:00 AM to 11:00 AM)
- Day (11:00 AM to 5:00 PM)
- Evening (5:00 PM to 9:00 PM)
- Night (after 9:00 AM)

4. Which of these problems do you face using public transit in your city?

Select all that apply.

- It doesn't go everywhere I need it to go
- It isn't frequent enough
- It is hard for me to get to the transit stop and/or on the transit vehicle
- The car is overcrowded / no seating
- Transit doesn't operate when I need it
- The schedule for transit isn't reliable
- It takes too long to get where I need to go
- Fares are too high
- I feel unsafe onboard transit
- I feel unsafe waiting at a transit stop

5. Of these potential improvements to transit, which would you find useful?

Select all that apply.

- Running more buses / trains more often
- Adding new stops along an existing route
- Moving the route of an existing bus line
- Creating “Express Service” routes with less stops but faster trips
- Speeding transit up with dedicated lanes along the route
- More bus shelters / benches / other rider amenities
- Increasing service at night, in the early morning, and on the weekends
- Reducing or eliminating fares

6. Sometimes, we have negative experiences using public transit. Please tell us which of the following experiences you have personally had.

Select all that apply.

- Another passenger has made me uncomfortable / threatened me
- Passing traffic makes me feel unsafe / at risk of getting hit
- My transit stop lacks weather protection and/or a seat
- Vehicles or stops are not clean enough on my route
- Vehicles or stops are not well lit on my route
- Disruptive music / noise from other riders onboard has bothered me
- Lack of other riders onboard / at the transit stop makes me feel vulnerable
- The vehicle or transit stop gets too crowded
- The ride itself is bumpy or unpleasant
- I have been assaulted / touched without permission by another rider
- I have been hit by a car / other vehicle during my journey
- I have felt intimidated by transit police, fare enforcement staff, or security
- Other: _____

7. How can your safety and comfort on transit be improved?

Select your 3 favorite options and rank them as your 1st, 2nd or 3rd favorite.

- ☐ Increased presence of crisis outreach workers and unarmed support on-board and at transit centers
- ☐ More frequent and thorough cleaning of transit vehicles and stops
- ☐ Better lighting on vehicles and at stops
- ☐ Better amenities at transit stops, such as seats and shelters
- ☐ Running more buses or trains more often
- ☐ Making the ride smoother and less bumpy
- ☐ Reducing crowding on transit vehicles
- ☐ Adding more seating space for disabled riders / people in mobility devices
- ☐ Greater pedestrian protections and traffic calming around Trimet stops

8. What would you like to see Oregon spend its transportation dollars on over the next ten years?

Select your 3 favorite options and rank them as your 1st, 2nd or 3rd favorite.

- ☐ Faster movement of cars
- ☐ Making roads safer for all users (for example, improving street lighting) Keeping roads and bridges in good repair
- ☐ Create pedestrian and bicycle corridors, such as the Springwater Corridor
- ☐ Faster, more frequent service on existing transit routes
- ☐ Creating new transit routes (bus or rail) within your city
- ☐ Creating new transit routes (bus or rail) between cities
- ☐ Improving pedestrian and transit access to our recreation areas
- ☐ Making transit service safer and more welcoming to all riders
- ☐ Introducing free fares for youth and improving transit subsidy programs
- ☐ Subsidies/rebates for electric bikes/electric vehicles
- ☐ Building more electric vehicle charging infrastructure

9. Are there specific issues on a transit route that you want addressed? Issues could be a damaged bus shelter, a dangerous intersection, or disruptive incidents near a stop. Please name the transit line in particular, and give as much detail as possible in your answer.

10. What is your ZIP Code? _____

11. This question is optional.

The Oregon Department of Transportation is struggling to fund planned construction and maintenance projects. How do you think Oregon should seek additional funding for transportation improvements?

Select all that apply.

- ☐ Raise transit fares
- ☐ Increase Trimet's Payroll & Self-Employment Tax
- ☐ Increase to Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund taxes (ID card fees, cigarette taxes)
- ☐ Halt new construction projects to save money
- ☐ Cut transportation service to save money
- ☐ Begin tolling I-5 or I-205
- ☐ Institute a Vehicle-Miles-Traveled fee (If you drive more, you pay more)

- ☐ Institute a Vehicle Weight Tax (If your vehicle weighs more, you pay more)
- ☐ Increase business fees for car dealerships
- ☐ Institute a Sales Tax
- ☐ Increase DMV fees / Motor Vehicle
- ☐ Registration fees
- ☐ Increase the Gas Tax
- ☐ Increase parking fees along rapid transit
- ☐ Institute an Electric Vehicle Fee
- ☐ Scaling existing taxes to match inflation

12. This question is optional.

If you would like to receive our working group's monthly newsletter, please enter your email address below.

13. This question is optional.

If you would like a phone call to learn more about the Portland Democratic Socialists of America, please provide your phone number.
