



August 21, 2023

*Submitted via email to:*

Lynn Peterson, President, and Metro Council  
Councilor Juan Carlos Gonzalez, Chair, and JPACT  
c/o Metro Planning  
Ally Holmqvist, Senior Transportation Planner  
600 NE Grand Ave.  
Portland OR 97232

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**RE: Comment on the Draft 2023 Regional Transportation Plan and High Capacity Transit Strategy: *Study of North Willamette Valley WES Extension from Portland Metro Region to Salem/Keizer Metro Area***

Dear President Peterson, Chair Gonzalez, and members of the Metro Council and JPACT:

The City of Wilsonville and our public-transit agency South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) appreciate the opportunity to provide comment on the Draft 2023 Regional Transportation Plan and High Capacity Transit Strategy.

**In particular, Wilsonville/SMART seek to raise the profile and priority of the draft RTP's High Capacity Transit Strategy in terms of the Westside Express Service (WES) Commuter Rail potential service extension.** Currently, the draft 2023 RTP lists potential WES extension as part of the inter-city transit system in the plan that is a distinct classification (or "layer") in the network map and therefore ***not*** part of the High Capacity Transit Strategy (based on the transit spectrum: inter-city rail, high capacity transit, frequent bus, regional bus and local bus).

The inter-city rail system includes other connection considerations such as Portland to Astoria, Portland to Newberg and Portland to Eugene. As far as priority within the inter-city network, the 2023 RTP does note: "When developing inter-regional rail service, this corridor alignment [WES extension] should take priority for improving passenger rail service between Eugene and Portland in the nearer-term future."

**We recommend that Metro classify the potential extension of WES *not as* "inter-city" rail system; rather, we recommend a special classification of "inter MPO TMA" or MPO TMA to MPO TMA.** That is, high-capacity transit that connects two Metropolitan Planning Organizations Transportation Management Areas. An MPO TMA encompasses an area larger than a city; rather an MPO is usually a collection of cities, especially in a smaller state like

Oregon. An MPO is a federally mandated body for any urban area over 50,000 in population that directs the flow of federal transportation funding to the Transportation Management Area.

The Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) acts as the Policy Board for the Portland Metro MPO TMA that requires Metro Council concurrence. The Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study (SKATS), operated by the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments, is the designated MPO for the Salem-Keizer area.

**Our understanding is that WES was originally planned to connect the two MPO TMAs—Portland Metro and Salem/Keizer Metro—as opposed to connecting several cities within the Portland MPO TMA.** In this sense, the current operation of WES may be aptly classified as an “inter-city” transit system. And while the proposed extension of WES from Wilsonville to Salem could in microcosm appear as “inter-city” transit, the reality is that this extension would actually connect the Portland MPO TMA with the Salem/Keizer MPO TMA.

**By connecting only relatively close-by each other suburban cities within the Portland MPO TMA, some observers believe that WES was doomed to failure from the start in terms of meeting ridership targets.** No other commuter rail system in the United States connects two suburbs of a city; all other commuter rail systems connect suburbs to major cities’ downtowns; or in other words, connecting the location of where many workers live to where they are employed.

**Over the past decade, the economic reality is that Salem/Keizer and the North Willamette Valley has become a key component of the Portland metro area “laborshed”; that is, the Salem/Keizer/North Willamette Valley region provides a substantial portion of the Portland metro area workforce – which commutes to jobs in Portland from Salem/Keizer/North Willamette Valley.** During the past 10 years, nearly every major corporate headquarters has relocated from Salem to a city in the greater Portland metro area; the corporate employees, however, by and large still reside in Salem/Keizer area and commute to work in the Portland metro region via roads and especially I-5. Thus, we have seen the I-5 Boone Bridge bottleneck become an even greater impediment to mobility with greatly increased traffic congestion both northbound (from North Willamette Valley to Portland Metro) in the AM commute and southbound in the PM commute.

**By creating a new classification of “inter MPO TMA” high-capacity transit, Metro would be able to greatly raise the profile and importance of studying a potential extension of WES that connects Portland MPO TMA with Salem/Keizer MPO TMA.** This kind of designation could improve the ability of the region and state to leverage federal funds for the study and any improvements for new service that may be recommended.

**During the 2023 legislative session, the Oregon Legislative Assembly considered House Bill 2662, “Relating to a study on extending the Westside Express Service commuter line to Salem.”** With bi-partisan sponsorship by Representatives Courtney Neron (D-Wilsonville), Khanh Pham (D-Outer SE Portland), Kevin Mannix (R-Keizer) and Senator Aaron Woods (D-Wilsonville), HB 2662 unanimously passed out of the Joint Transportation Committee and was referred to the Joint Committee On Ways and Means.

**The amended version of HB 2662-A would create a multi-jurisdictional task force composed of state legislators, local governments, transit agencies and railroad interests to study extending the current rush-hour-only Westside Express Service (WES) commuter train from the current southern terminus in Wilsonville for 31 miles to Salem, with stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer.** The bill called for the Willamette Valley Commuter Rail Task Force to report back to the legislature in 2024 with study findings and recommendations. However, while the bill had no fiscal impact to the state or controversy, HB 2662-A died along with hundreds of other bills that both chambers were unable to consider timely during the session.

**HB 2662 enjoyed considerable support, including from:**

- The North Willamette Valley cities of Aurora, Donald, Hubbard, Keizer, Salem, Wilsonville and Woodburn.
- Portland & Western Railroad, operator of WES.
- Salem Mass Transit District (“Cherriots”), SMART (South Metro Area Regional Transit), Tri-Met, Woodburn Transit and Yamhill County Transit.
- American Planning Association (OPA) Oregon Chapter, Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates (AORTA), Rail Passengers Association (RPA) and The Street Trust.
- Oregon state legislators, including Representatives Tracy Cramer (R-Woodburn), Jeff Helfrich (R-Hood River), Kevin Mannix (R-Keizer), Courtney Neron (D-Wilsonville), Senator Chris Gorsek (D-Gresham) and Aaron Woods (D-Wilsonville).

See attached documents and testimonies in support of HB 2662; see also <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2023R1/Measures/Overview/HB2662>.

Former Northwest Portland legislator Representative Mitch Greenlick (now deceased) sponsored several WES extension study bills from 2013 to 2019 that Wilsonville and SMART supported: HB 2338 (2013), HB 2553 (2015) and HB 2219 (2019) all would have created a “Task Force on Extending the Westside Express Service Commuter Line to Salem.”

**During the June 2023 JPACT trip to Washington, D.C., representatives of the Offices of Congresswoman Salinas, whose district WES extension would serve, and Senators Wyden and Merkley all expressed interest in a study for the extension of WES high-capacity transit service from the Portland MPO TMA to the Salem/Keizer MPO TMA.**

Although the City of Wilsonville's South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) agency and Salem Area Mass Transit District share the Monday through Friday commuter "1X Express" bus route on I-5 between Wilsonville and Salem, as traffic congestion on the South Portland Metro and North Willamette Valley I-5 corridor continues to worsen, commuters could welcome a public-transit alternative unaffected by ever increasing highway traffic congestion.

**As ODOT undertakes the I-205 Toll Project and Regional Mobility Pricing Project (RMPP) for tolling all lanes of I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro region from the I-5 Boone Bridge to the Interstate Bridge, issues of impacts to low-income populations of tolls to North Willamette Valley commuters will surface.** To-date, most of ODOT's RMPP outreach has been to Portland-area communities. The lack of sufficient alternative, public-transit commute options along I-5 from Salem/Keizer area to the Portland area makes a non-highway mobility option more attractive.

**Additionally, major new traffic-generators along I-5 south of Wilsonville are projected to increase traffic on the South Metro/North Willamette Valley portion of I-5.** For example, a new 3.6-million-square-foot Amazon warehouse in Woodburn—the largest in Oregon—under construction that opens in 2024 is to be served by hundreds of delivery trucks and with anticipated employment of over 1,500 workers. Additionally, over 800 new residential units are now under construction in Woodburn.

The proposed study of extending WES commuter-rail service would also engage local transit agencies in addition to TriMet to include SMART, Salem Area Mass Transit District, Woodburn Transit and Yamhill Transit that would provide bus connections to the WES rail stops in Wilsonville, Woodburn, Donald, Keizer and Salem. **The transit agencies would be charged to develop "last-mile" connections from WES station stops to each of the communities that they serve, providing a key connection link to high-capacity WES transit.** Both Salem Area Mass Transit and SMART would be in a position to redeploy bus assets from the 1X I-5 Salem-Wilsonville run to providing higher-quality last-mile connections from WES to residential home or employment destinations.

**Utilizing the old Oregon Electric Line right-of-way now licensed by Portland and Western Railroad provides the opportunity for a reliable transit-commute solution independent of I-5 highway traffic conditions.** Extension of WES would provide a reliable car-free commute option for the North Willamette Valley/South Metro I-5 Corridor that also provides more highway capacity for trucks and the timely movement of freight.

Even before WES began operating, regional planners and mid-Willamette Valley public officials talked about possible expansion of the proposed WES line. An April 2010 study by the Oregon Department of Transportation's Rail Division estimated that it would cost between \$327 million and \$387 million (in 2008 dollars) to extend commuter rail service to Salem, and an estimated \$5–\$7 million each year to operate the expanded rail line between Wilsonville and Salem, according to the ODOT report. Most of the construction costs for possible expansion included in the ODOT report involved improving existing tracks and bridges between Wilsonville and Salem, and building stations in Woodburn, Keizer and Salem.

The route north of Salem would follow the tracks of the old Oregon Electric Railway, which began operating more than 100 years ago and included 122 miles of track across the northern part of the state, from Gresham to Forest Grove, and from Portland to Eugene. Between 1908 and May 1933, Oregon Electric trains carried passengers up and down the Willamette Valley every day. Sections of TriMet's MAX Blue Line follow Oregon Electric rights of way.

Today, many of the Oregon Electric routes are used by freight trains. Amtrak's Empire Builder, Coast Starlight and Cascades trains run on some of the track from California to the Canadian border. Amtrak is working with state rail planners on possible expansion of its daily rail service through the Willamette Valley.

**The Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments—a voluntary association of over 40 local governments that include Marion, Polk, and Yamhill counties, 32 cities, 7 special districts, and the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde—is now planning to launch in September 2023 the Willamette Valley Commuter Rail WES Extension Work Group to advance the principles outlined in HB 2662.** Participants are to include all of the active supporters of HB 2662, and will include invitations to Metro and TriMet.

In totality, connecting the Portland Metro MPO TMA and Salem/Keizer MPO TMA with high-capacity WES commuter-rail transit service would provide Portland and North Willamette Valley commuters, seniors and others with a valuable public transportation mobility option while reducing vehicle miles traveled and consequent greenhouse gas emissions.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,



Julie Fitzgerald, Mayor  
City of Wilsonville, operator of South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART)

cc: Clackamas County Coordinating Committee  
Washington County Coordinating Committee  
Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments  
Representative Courtney Neron  
Representative Kevin Mannix  
Senator Aaron Woods

Enc: *One-Pager Summary* — Support HB 2662-A – Task Force to Study Connecting Portland Metro-Area WES Commuter Train to Salem/Keizer Metro, Extending from Wilsonville to Salem

*Background Information* — HB 2662 (2023 Regular Legislative Session): ODOT Public Transportation Division Study of TriMet's WES Commuter Train North Willamette Valley Extension from Wilsonville to Salem, with Stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer

*Testimonies regarding HB 2662:*

- *Cities of* Aurora, Donald, Hubbard, Keizer, Salem, Wilsonville and Woodburn
- *Transit agencies:* Salem Mass Transit District ("Cherriots"), SMART (South Metro Area Regional Transit) and Tri-Met
- *Organizations:* American Planning Association Oregon Chapter (OAPA), Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates (AORTA), Rail Passengers Association (RPA) and The Street Trust
- *Oregon state legislators:* Representative Courtney Neron (D-Wilsonville); Representatives Tracy Cramer (R-Woodburn), Jeff Helfrich (R-Hood River), Kevin Mannix (R-Keizer), Courtney Neron (D-Wilsonville), Senator Chris Gorsek (D-Gresham) and Senator Aaron Woods (D-Wilsonville)

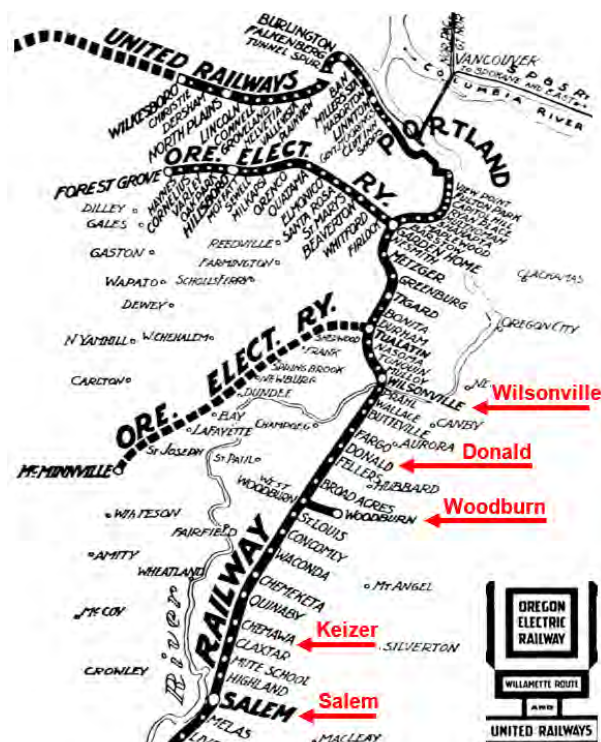
*Legislative documents* — HB 2662A-Engrossed (2023 Regular Session); HB 2662 A Staff Measure Summary (SMS); Fiscal Impact of Proposed Legislation



# Support HB 2662-A – Task Force to Study Connecting Portland Metro-Area WES Commuter Train to Salem/Keizer Metro, Extending from Wilsonville to Salem

Passed unanimously by the Joint Transportation Committee on May 18, 2023, HB 2662-A is a bipartisan bill to create a multi-jurisdictional task force composed of state legislators, local governments, transit agencies and railroad interests to study extending the current rush-hour-only Westside Express Service (WES) commuter train from the current southern terminus in Wilsonville for 31 miles to Salem, with stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer. The bill calls for the Willamette Valley Commuter Rail Task Force to report back to the legislature in 2024 with study findings and recommendations.

- **Increasing population** of Portland metro and North Willamette Valley region needs mobility options, especially for commuters and seniors, many who require transportation for jobs and medical appointments.
- **I-5 traffic congestion continues to worsen** and prospective ODOT tolling of I-205 and I-5 in Portland metro area requires a reliable public-transit alternative unaffected by highway traffic congestion.
- **Additional Federal Transit Administration (FTA) support** for high-capacity WES commuter rail service connecting METRO and SKATS—two federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) Transportation Management Areas (TMAs)—that can increase ridership.
- **Transit commuting and shopping option supports economic-development efforts** of North Willamette Valley communities.
- **Use of former Oregon Electric Railway line**, now owned by Portland & Western Railroad which supports the WES extension study, that operated 1908 – 1933.



Western Railroad which supports the WES extension study, that operated 1908 – 1933.

- **HB 2662-A is supported** by the Cities of Aurora, Donald, Hubbard, Keizer, Salem, Wilsonville and Woodburn; Salem Mass Transit (“Cherriots”), SMART (South Metro Area Regional Transit) and Yamhill County Transit; and P & W Railroad.

**FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT:**  
Greg Leo at 503-804-6391  
[greg@theleocompany.com](mailto:greg@theleocompany.com)



REV 05/15/2023

## [HB 2662 \(2023 Regular Legislative Session\)](#)

### **ODOT Public Transportation Division Study of TriMet's WES Commuter Train North Willamette Valley Extension from Wilsonville to Salem, with Stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer**



#### **ISSUE:**

Although the City of Wilsonville's South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) agency and Salem Area Mass Transit District share the Monday through Friday commuter "1X Express" bus route on I-5 between Wilsonville and Salem, as traffic congestion on the South Portland Metro and North Willamette Valley I-5 corridor continues to worsen, commuters could welcome a public-transit alternative unaffected by ever increasing highway traffic congestion.

Additionally, as ODOT undertakes the I-205 Toll Project and Regional Mobility Pricing Project (RMPP) for tolling all of I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro region, issues of impacts to low-income populations of tolls to North Willamette Valley commuters will surface; to-date, most of ODOT's outreach has been to Portland-area communities. The lack of sufficient alternative, public-transit commute options along I-5 from Salem/Keizer area to the Portland area makes a non-highway mobility option more attractive.

**To date, the City Councils of Aurora, Donald, Hubbard, Keizer, Salem, Wilsonville and Woodburn and the Salem-Keizer Mass Transit District board have voted in support of the ODOT study of extending WES as a high-capacity transit option.** Major new traffic-generators along I-5 south of Wilsonville that projected to increase traffic on the South Metro/North Willamette Valley portion of I-5 are now underway:

- a new 3.6-million-square-foot Amazon warehouse in Woodburn under construction that is to be served by hundreds of delivery trucks and with anticipated employment of approximately 1,500 workers set to open in 2023;
- a new 180,000-square-foot Siletz Tribe Casino/Hotel entertainment complex is planned in North Salem/Keizer area with 1,473 direct jobs at the casino-hotel complex, where a vast majority of patrons are anticipated to come from the Portland metro region traveling I-5, resulting in over 7,800 new weekday trips.

#### **FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT: City of Wilsonville / South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART)**

- Mark Ottenad, Public/  
Government Affairs Director  
503-570-1505;  
[ottenad@ci.wilsonville.or.us](mailto:ottenad@ci.wilsonville.or.us)
- Greg Leo, Public Affairs  
Consultant, The Leo Co.  
503-804-6391;  
[greg@theleocompany.com](mailto:greg@theleocompany.com)

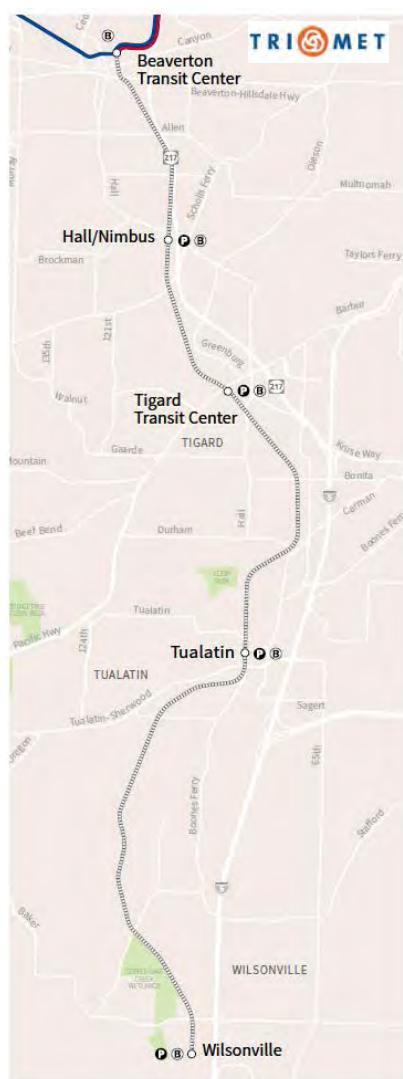


## HB 2662 (2023 Regular Legislative Session)

ODOT Public Transportation Division Study of TriMet's WES Commuter Train North Willamette Valley Extension from Wilsonville to Salem, with Stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer

Long-term population projections indicate that the Portland Metro / North Willamette Valley region will continue to be one of Oregon's fastest-growing areas.

The old Oregon Electric Railway, a 122-mile passenger rail line between Portland and Eugene, was an interurban railroad that operated from 1908 to 1933. The rail line passes through Wilsonville and has a dedicated right-of-way that is not affected by traffic congestion on the highway or local roads, allowing the provision of reliable public-transit service no matter the roadway traffic conditions.

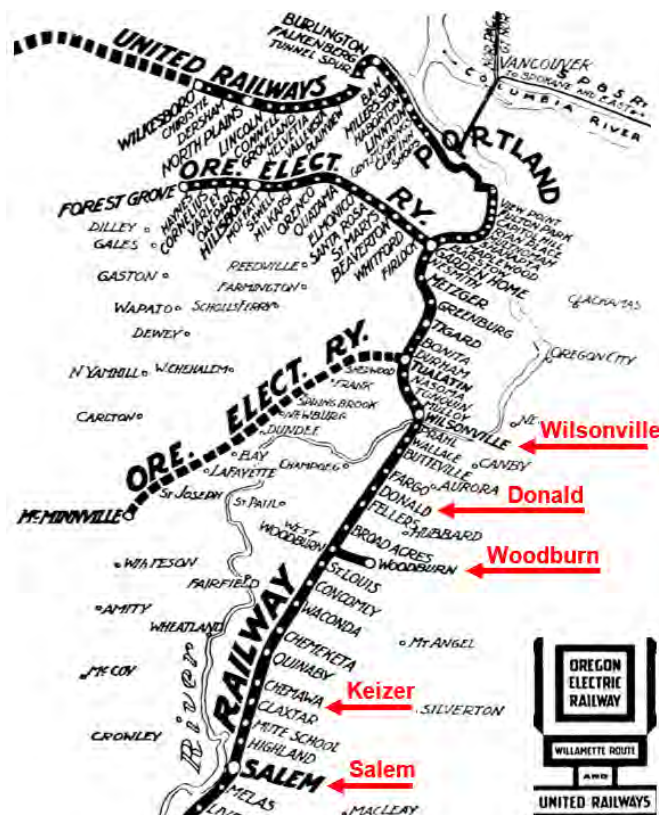


TriMet's Westside Express Service (WES) commuter train began

service in 2009, with stops along the 14.7-mile run at the transit centers of Beaverton, Tigard, Tualatin and Wilsonville. WES runs Monday through Friday during the morning and evening commute "rush hours." WES operates on a portion of the old Oregon Electric Railway now owned by Portland and Western Railroad.

### The Legislative Concept

House Bill 2662, co-sponsored by Representative Courtney Neron (HD 26) and Senator Aaron Woods (SD 13), was pre-session filed for the 2023 regular legislative session. The bill directs the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Public Transportation Division, Rail Operations & Statewide Multimodal Network Unit — in conjunction with WES sponsor TriMet and WES train operator Portland &



## **HB 2662 (2023 Regular Legislative Session)**

ODOT Public Transportation Division Study of TriMet's WES Commuter Train North Willamette Valley Extension from Wilsonville to Salem, with Stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer

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Western Railroad — to study and document the various costs, benefits and operational issues of extending the current rush-hour-only Westside Express Service (WES) commuter train from the current southern terminus in Wilsonville to Salem, with potential stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer. The bill calls for ODOT to report back to the legislature in 2024 with study findings and recommendations.

Similar legislation was proposed unsuccessfully over multiple legislative sessions by the late Rep. Mitch Greenlick of Portland:

- [HB 2338 \(2013\)](#), [HB 2553 \(2015\)](#), and [HB 2219 \(2019\)](#): Creates Task Force on Extending the Westside Express Service Commuter Line to Salem

Each of these bills would have created large task forces composed of legislators, community leaders along the route and transit/transportation agency representatives. When provided the opportunity, the City of Wilsonville presented testimony in support of the proposed legislation.

A 2010 limited study by ODOT of extending WES from Wilsonville to Salem was conducted that reviewed preliminary issues, but did not engage local city governments and transit agencies.

Rather than set-up a large task force that involves considerable effort on behalf of many parties as prior legislative efforts attempted, the proposed legislation sponsors a technical study led by ODOT Public Transportation Division in conjunction with WES sponsor TriMet and WES operator Portland & Western Railroad. The technical study would review the specific operational and locational issues for extending and operating WES on the old Oregon Electric Railway to provide inter-city passenger-rail service for commuters of the North Willamette Valley and South Metro Region using the existing WES trains and Oregon Electric Line/Portland & Western railroad tracks.

**Consultants hired by ODOT would be directed to engage with the City Managers' Offices** of cities to be potentially served by the WES service extension—including Wilsonville, Donald, Woodburn, Keizer and Salem—in order to better understand local-access and other related issues.

**The study would also engage local transit agencies** in addition to TriMet to include SMART, Salem-Keizer Mass Transit District and Woodburn Transit that would provide bus connections to the WES rail stops in Wilsonville, Woodburn, Donald, Keizer and Salem. The transit agencies would be charged to develop “last-mile” connections from WES station stops to each of the communities that they serve.

## **HB 2662 (2023 Regular Legislative Session)**

ODOT Public Transportation Division Study of TriMet's WES Commuter Train North Willamette Valley Extension from Wilsonville to Salem, with Stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer

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The legislation calls for ODOT to present the results of the WES North Willamette Valley Extension from Wilsonville to Salem Study to the legislature during September 2024 legislative days prior to the 2025 legislative session. Depending on the results of the study, the legislature may wish at that time to convene a larger task force composed of multiple interests to further advance potential WES extension planning efforts. In order to fund the study, a general fund or other appropriation is required, with a recommended allocation of \$500,000.

### **Background Information**

The 2018 Portland Metro Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) recommends extending WES commuter-rail service from the Portland metro region—including Beaverton, Tigard, Tualatin and Wilsonville—to Salem/Keizer with a stop in Woodburn. Original WES plans called for the high-capacity WES train to connect the federally-designated Portland Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area with the Salem MPO in order to provide greater ridership potential and access to additional Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding for mass transit that connects the transportation management areas of the MPOs.

Utilizing the old Oregon Electric Line right-of-way now licensed by Portland and Western Railroad provides the opportunity for a reliable transit-commute solution independent of I-5 highway traffic conditions. Extension of WES would provide a reliable car-free commute option for the North Willamette Valley/South Metro I-5 Corridor that also provides more highway capacity for trucks and the timely movement of freight.

Through a \$10 million grant under Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program, ODOT Public Transportation Division conducted a nine-year-long rail feasibility study between Portland and Eugene for Amtrak train use. In 2021 FRA selected Alternative 1 for the Oregon Passenger Rail alignment that follows the existing Amtrak Cascades passenger rail route and can accommodate increased passenger rail services by improving track, signal and communication infrastructure.

The ODOT *Oregon Rail Plan* of 2020 notes issues with WES, but does not provide any detailed study or recommendations. As noted above, ODOT conducted a limited study in 2010 of extending WES that reviewed preliminary issues, but did not engage local city governments and transit agencies.

Submitter: Stuart Rodgers  
On Behalf Of: Mayor Brian Asher  
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation  
Measure: HB2662

February 21, 2023

Joint Transportation Committee  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE, Room 453

RE: Aurora City Council Votes in Favor of WES Extension Study (HB 2662)

Attention: Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain and Committee Members,

This is to notify the Co-Chairs of the Joint Transportation Committee of a Majority Aurora City Council support (3-1) for House Bill 2662 to study the viability of the extension of the Westside Express Service as a long-term solution and alternative to increasing traffic on the I-5 corridor. Also, given increasing pressure on State Highway 99E, Ehlen Road, and other arterial roads, providing access to and through Aurora and the North Marion County region, the City of Aurora determines it of importance to support a study of mass transit options.

Please accept this letter among others committed to investing in the future of our transportation and transit infrastructure.

Thank you,  
Mayor Brian Asher

City of Aurora  
21420 Main Street  
Aurora, OR 97002

Office: 503-678-1283

Submitter: Eric Underwood  
On Behalf Of: Mayor Rick Olmsted and Donald City Council  
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation  
Measure: HB2662

RE: Support of WES to Salem Extension Study Bill

On behalf of the Donald City Council, I would like to convey full support of HB 2662 which would commission study relating to the feasibility of extending the Westside Express Service commuter line to Salem. Donald joins the other communities on this proposed line expansion in wanting to study the need and usefulness of this service. We see many benefits of an extension of Westside Express Service, not to mention greater mobility options for the Donald community.

The City of Donald requests that the Joint Committee on Transportation move HB 2662 forward with a "do pass" recommendation.

Sincerely,  
Eric Underwood, MPA  
City Manager  
City of Donald  
Office: 503-678-5543

# CITY OF HUBBARD

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February 21, 2023

Hubbard City Council  
Mayor Charles Rostocil

Attention Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Transportation

Regarding: HB 2662

The City Council of Hubbard has voted to support HB 2662, a study on the feasibility of expanding the WES service from Wilsonville to Salem. The support for this effort can be linked to the following goals the Hubbard City Council would like to address:

- Help relieve the congestion on the I5 corridor between 217 and past Woodburn during peak commuting hours.
- Help relieve the congestion along the 551 cutoff and 99E during peak commuting hours. Congestion along 99E in Canby, Aurora, Hubbard, and Woodburn has become extremely congested.
- Provide alternative transportation options for those unable to afford future tolling along I5.
- Provide alternative transportation options for individuals and families that cannot afford private transportation.
- Help expand mass transit to a rural community.

The desire of the Hubbard City Council would be to have HB 2662 define a plan to expand mass transit to the rural communities via WES (and a yet-to-be-defined last mile connection to Canby, Aurora, and Hubbard), and tax impacts to our rural communities (the cost for this effort).

Kind Regards

Charles Rostocil  
Mayor of Hubbard  
[Charles.Rostocil@gmail.com](mailto:Charles.Rostocil@gmail.com)  
503.951.3448





# City of Keizer

Phone: (503) 390-3700 • Fax: (503) 393-9437  
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Mayor Cathy Clark

Councilor Laura Reid

Council President Shaney Starr

Councilor Kyle Juran

Councilor Soraida Cross

Councilor Robert Husseman

Councilor Dan Kohler

February 7, 2023

Joint Committee on Transportation  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE, Room 453

Dear Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain and Fellow Committee Members,

At its regularly scheduled meeting on February 6, 2023 the Keizer City Council received testimony and unanimously voted to support HB 2662 which would commission a study about the feasibility of extending the Westside Express Service commuter line to Salem. Keizer joins the other communities on this proposed line expansion in wanting to study the practicality of this service extension.

We believe this study is congruent with Oregon's values by investing in mass transit. Our hope is that this service expansion would provide Oregonians with additional choices for living and how more choices on how to get themselves to their places of employment and recreational opportunities. This service has the potential to impact housing choice, transportation congestion, and green house emission goals.

Keizer is well positioned to receive this service with the commuter line already available at Cherriots regional bus transfer station on the north side of the Salem Keizer metropolitan statistical area. The City of Keizer requests that the Committee pass HB 2662 with a do pass recommendation.

Sincerely,

Mayor Cathy Clark

CC: Sen. Brian Boquist, Rep. Shelly Boshart Davis, Sen. Lyn Findley, Sen. Lew Frederick, Sen. Aaron Woods, Rep Paul Evans, Rep. Jeffrey Helfrich, Rep. Kevin Mannix, Rep. Nancy Nathanson, Rep. Khanh Pham, Sen. Kim Thatcher, Rep. Courtney Neron, Sen. Aaron Woods

**"Pride, Spirit and Volunteerism"**



**Testimony by City of Wilsonville Mayor Julie Fitzgerald Supporting HB 2662:**

***Legislation Provides Opportunity to Improve I-5 Commuting Between Portland Metro Area–North Willamette Valley With Reliable High-Capacity Transit Option***

Scheduled for public hearing on Feb. 21, 2023, before  
the Joint Committee On Transportation

Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, Vice-Chairs Boquist and Boshart Davis, and Members of the Committee:

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2662, which sponsors an ODOT study of extending TriMet’s WES commuter train from Wilsonville to Salem, with stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer — growing communities aspiring to improve transportation options.

The City of Wilsonville operates the South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) agency, which collaborates with the Salem Area Mass Transit District to share the Monday through Friday commuter “1X Express” bus route on I-5 between Wilsonville and Salem. SMART buses also meet each WES train to provide the last-mile connection to employers.

**As traffic congestion on the South Portland Metro and North Willamette Valley I-5 corridor continues to worsen**, commuters, shoppers and those with medical appointments would welcome a public-transit alternative unaffected by ever increasing highway traffic congestion. **As a commuter train, WES is unimpeded by highway traffic congestion**, offering the potential for a reliable transportation option that connects to major metro areas.

As ODOT undertakes the I-205 Toll Project and Regional Mobility Pricing Project (RMPP) for tolling all of I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro region, equity issues of impacts to low-income populations of tolls to North Willamette Valley commuters are of concern. **The lack of sufficient reliable, public-transit commute options along I-5 from Salem/Keizer to Portland area makes a non-highway mobility option more attractive.**

The City understands that both the WES study and potential extension provide the state an opportunity to leverage federal transit funds for commuter service connecting Portland METRO and Salem-Keizer SKATS—two Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) Transportation Management Areas (TMAs)—and that can increase WES ridership.

The City appreciates your consideration and urges a Do-Pass vote on HB 2662. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Julie Fitzgerald, Mayor  
City of Wilsonville



May 9, 2023

Senator Lew Frederick, Co-Chair  
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Transportation  
Oregon Legislative Assembly

*Sen.LewFrederick@oregonlegislature.gov*  
*Rep.SusanMcLain@oregonlegislature.gov*  
*patrick.h.brennan@oregonlegislature.gov*

**RE: May 11 Work Session on HB 2662-4 — Volunteer task force to study extension of Westside Express Service (WES) high-capacity commuter transit train from Portland Metro Region to Salem/Keizer Metro Area**

Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to respectfully request that the Joint Committee on Transportation advance HB 2662-4 to the floor of each chamber for vote.

The -4 amended bill creates a volunteer, multi-jurisdictional task force composed of state legislators, local governments, transit agencies and railroad interests to study extending the current rush-hour-only Portland metro Westside Express Service (WES) commuter train from the current southern terminus in Wilsonville for 31 miles in the North Willamette Valley to Salem, with stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer.

The increasing population of the Portland metro and North Willamette Valley region requires mobility options, especially for commuters and seniors, many of whom require transportation for jobs and medical appointments. Intensifying traffic congestion on I-5 and prospective ODOT tolling of I-205 and I-5 in the Portland metro area demands a reliable public-transit alternative unaffected by highway congestion. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) support for high-capacity WES commuter rail service connecting METRO and SKATS—two Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) Transportation Management Areas (TMAs)—can greatly increase ridership.

**HB 2662-4 is supported by the Cities of Aurora, Donald, Hubbard, Keizer, Salem, Wilsonville and Woodburn; Salem Mass Transit (“Cherriots”), SMART (South Metro Area Regional Transit) and Yamhill County Transit. The City appreciates your consideration and urges a Do-Pass vote on HB 2662-4. Thank you.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie Fitzgerald".

Julie Fitzgerald, Mayor  
City of Wilsonville, operator of South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART)



February 21, 2023

Joint Committee on Transportation  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Letter in Support of HB 2662 in 2023 State Legislative Session:  
ODOT Study of Extending WES Commuter Train from Wilsonville to Salem**

Dear Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain and Committee Members:

The Woodburn City Council supports Representative Courtney Neron and Senator Aaron Woods to pre-session file HB 2662. This proposed legislation would fund an Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Public Transportation Division study of extending TriMet's Westside Express Service (WES) commuter train into the North Willamette Valley from Wilsonville to Salem, with stops in Donald, Woodburn, and Keizer.

The old Oregon Electric Railway, a 122-mile state-operated rail line between Portland and Eugene that passes through Salem, has a dedicated right-of-way that is not affected by traffic congestion on I-5 or other roads, thereby allowing the provision of reliable public-transit service no matter the roadway traffic conditions. WES operates on a portion of the old Oregon Electric Railway now owned by Portland and Western Railroad.

A significant portion of Salem-area residents commute to the Portland metro area, and vice-versa. As a city located mid-way between Salem and Portland located on I-5, Woodburn is well versed in workforce issues with some 80% of our residents commuting to work on I-5.

With both increasing population and traffic congestion, along with potential tolling of I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro region, our commuting residents and their employers could benefit from a study regarding the costs and benefits of providing a public transit option for commuting between the Salem metropolitan area and the greater Portland metro area.

Sincerely,

Frank Lonergan, Mayor  
City of Woodburn



February 21, 2023

Joint Committee on Transportation  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE, Room 453

### **Cherriots Urges Support for HB 2662**

Dear Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain and Fellow Committee Members:

Salem Area Mass Transit District, locally known as Cherriots, provides fixed route transit and paratransit services within the Salem-Keizer urban growth boundary. In addition, the District operates commuter services to Wilsonville and provides Cherriots Regional service to rural communities in Marion and Polk counties like Stayton & Dallas. SAMTD co-operates the 1X Wilsonville/Salem Express, which is utilized by commuters between the Portland-metro area and Oregon's capital city.

At its January 26, 2023, meeting the Salem Area Mass Transit District voted unanimously to support HB 2662, which would commission a feasibility study for extending the Westside Express Service commuter line to Salem.

We believe that as traffic congestion on the South Portland Metro and North Willamette Valley I-5 corridor continues to worsen, commuters would benefit from a public transit option unaffected by ever increasing highway traffic congestion.

In 2013, the District opened the Keizer Transit Center adjacent to the Portland and Western rail line in the City of Keizer as part of the greater Keizer Station shopping complex. The District chose this location with the intent that this transit center could be modified and a rail platform built allowing an ideal commuter rail stop in Keizer. The District would then provide feeder service to and from the transit center serving the commuter rail line in order to provide first mile/last mile connector service. The District is also committed to providing first mile/last mile connector service at the Salem rail station.

The Salem Area Mass Transit District Board of Directors requests that the Committee pass HB 2662 with a "do pass" recommendation.

If there is additional information you need, please do not hesitate to contact the District's General Manager Allan Pollock. He can be contacted at (503) 361-2550 or [allan.pollock@cherriots.org](mailto:allan.pollock@cherriots.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian Davidson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "I" and "D".

Ian Davidson  
President, Board of Directors





**Testimony by SMART Director Dwight Brashear Supporting HB 2662:**

***Outcomes of Proposed Legislation Could Allow SMART and Other Transit Agencies to Increase Local Area Coverage and Improve 'Last-Mile' Connections***

Scheduled for public hearing on Feb. 21, 2023, before  
the Joint Committee On Transportation

Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, Vice-Chairs Boquist and Boshart Davis, and Members of the Committee:

As the administrator of the Portland metro-area's other Federal Transit Administration (FTA)-designated Urban Area Transit Operator, I am testifying in strong support of HB 2662.

South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) is an agency of the City of Wilsonville, and was formed over 30 years ago in order to provide increased transit service for business employers' commuting employees, as well as to provide a mobility option for seniors, youth and low-income populations. Additionally, public transit helps to remove single-occupancy vehicles from our highways, thereby providing more roadway capacity for the timely movement of freight essential to our economy.

SMART collaborates with the Salem Area Mass Transit District to share the Monday through Friday commuter "1X Express" bus route on I-5 between Wilsonville and Salem. SMART buses also meet each TriMet WES train to provide the 'last-mile' connection to employers, as well as connections to Salem and Canby.

If WES continued onto Salem, SMART and other transit agencies would be in a position to redeploy assets to provide more local-area service, as well as improved 'last-mile' connections between train stops and major local destinations.

Investing to improve public transit is a smart economic-development strategy recognized by local governments. A study by the American Public Transportation Association found that every \$1 invested in transit generates \$5 in economic return.

SMART appreciates your consideration of this testimony and urges a Do-Pass vote on HB 2662. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dwight Brashear, SMART Director

February 21, 2023

Representative Susan McLain and Senator Chris Gorsek  
Joint Committee on Transportation  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**Re: HB 2662**

Co-Chair McLain, Co-Chair Gorsek and Members of the Committee:

TriMet is Oregon's largest transit provider, serving more than 1.6 million people across our 533-square mile service territory. Our service includes 80 bus lines, 1 Frequent Express bus rapid transit line, 5 MAX light rail lines, our LIFT paratransit service, and the WES commuter rail line. TriMet is neutral on HB 2662, but we have several clarifications and requests that we would like to put on the record.

Under TriMet's charter, we cannot operate transit service outside of our service territory, and while we do operate WES, heavy passenger rail is not one of our core competencies as a transit agency. We recommend creating a state-chartered public corporation or some form of rail authority to extend and operate the WES line between Wilsonville and Salem, as TriMet is not the appropriate entity to oversee that project or operate that service.

House Bill 2662 calls for ODOT, in collaboration with TriMet, to study issues related to extending WES including increasing the frequency and hours of service. We currently only run WES on weekdays during the morning and afternoon rush hours, with trains every 45 minutes. Part of the reason for those limited service hours is that we lease the tracks that WES uses from Portland Western Railroad. Under the terms of our lease agreement, we are only allowed to run WES on their tracks during those windows of time on weekdays.

The frequency of WES service is also limited because WES ridership is low and the operations and maintenance costs for heavy commuter rail are high. TriMet has some concerns about the opportunity cost of being directed to increase WES service as a component of extending the service to Salem. Our plans for our limited funds include expanding our bus service with a focus on low-income, high ridership areas, continuing our transition to a zero-emission bus fleet, and a new bus rapid transit line on 82nd Avenue. We want to make sure that pressure to increase TriMet's investment in WES would not result in less funding for these other priorities.

If the state does move forward with extending WES to Salem, TriMet would support having the rail authority or other entity that operates the extension take over the operation of the existing WES line from Beaverton to Wilsonville as well. We believe that WES service would run more smoothly if the entire line is operated by a single entity. Relatedly, since TriMet currently operates WES under a 50-year lease agreement with Portland Western Railroad, we think that exploring the mechanics of transferring that lease to a rail authority or other entity is an important part of study proposed by HB 2662. TriMet supports expanding the high-capacity transportation options available to Oregonians, and we would be happy to consult with ODOT on study that incorporates these considerations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Miles Pengilly', is positioned above the typed name.

Miles Pengilly  
State Government Affairs Manager  
TriMet



American Planning Association  
Oregon Chapter

*Creating Great Communities for All*

February 21, 2023

Joint Committee On Transportation

Senator Chris Gorsek, Co-Chair

Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair

Senator Brian Boquist, Co-Vice-Chair

Representative Shelly Boshart Davis, Co-Vice-Chair

RE: Testimony from the Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) in Support of House Bill 2662

Dear Co Chair Gorsek and McLain, Vice-Chairs Boquist and Davis, and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments in support of HB 2662 related to extending the Westside Express Service commuter line to Salem.

OAPA is a nonprofit professional membership organization of over 800 planners and those who work with planning in formulating and implementing development and conservation policies at the state and local level. OAPA works to create sustainable and vibrant Oregon communities through professional development, advocacy for sound planning, providing resources to meet the challenges of growth and change, and embracing and promoting diversity, inclusion and equity.

Our support of HB 2662 stems from the OAPA priority policy that "Oregon Needs To Act Now To Confront Climate Change". We know that climate change impacts every Oregonian. Oregon is experiencing rising temperatures and extreme heat; drought; extreme precipitation and flooding; wildfires; rising sea levels; vegetation changes; ocean acidification; and slope stability. All over the state these events are impacting homes and businesses; economies; public infrastructure; and public health.

"The rail network, for both passengers and freight, produces lower GHG emissions than roadway and air transportation, which means that shifting trips from road and air to rail in markets where it makes sense can reduce overall transportation emissions" (Federal Railroad Administration - [railroads.dot.gov](https://www.railroads.dot.gov)).

OAPA supports legislation, such as HB 2622, to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through increased equitable access to sustainable and reliable transit including commuter and passenger rail.

OAPA recognizes the importance, as described in the American Planning Association [Climate Policy Guide](#) (Dec. 2020) of strategically investing in all transit options, including rapid bus transit, self-propelled light rail, streetcars, commuter trains, and heavy rail systems to suit the specific needs of each part

of the region. We would ask this this be a premise of HB 2622.

OAPA also asks that HB 2622 address two critical issues raised by the Federal Railroad Administration - [railroads.dot.gov](http://railroads.dot.gov)):

1. "Rail's reliance on diesel fuel leaves a large challenge in reducing GHG emissions from the rail industry. Transforming railroad power to clean and renewable fuels is critical in responsibly protecting the environment. Shifting the propulsion and general operation of locomotives from traditional energy to sustainable fuel sources will be beneficial to the health of the rail industry and our planet."
2. "The rail industry is vulnerable to climate-related weather events and must address the issue of infrastructure resiliency. [Rail] investments should be built to withstand the effects of climate change. Adverse conditions, such as excessive heat, flooding, sea-level rise, tornadoes, hurricanes, and wildfires are exacerbated by climate change and threaten the safety and reliability of the rail network."

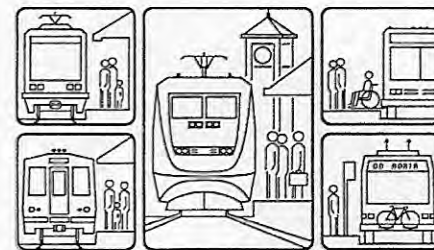
Again, we thank you for the opportunity to express OAPA's support of HB 2622.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Ray', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Aaron Ray, AICP** ([he/him/his](#)) <[president@oregonapa.org](mailto:president@oregonapa.org)>

President, Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association  
*Relevant Resources, Better Planners, Exceptional Communities*



**House Bill 2662 – Testimony in Support.  
Presented in person at the Hearing on  
February 21, 2023**

The Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates (AORTA) supports passage of House Bill 2662 to study extending the WES commuter rail service to Salem. This proposed service would offer many social and economic benefits to the region. Here are some of the reasons to approve HB 2662:

1. As I-5 becomes more congested the train becomes an attractive option to driving. Rail infrastructure comes at a lower cost than building urban freeway lanes to add capacity. Once upgraded, it is easy to add rail capacity with longer trains and additional trains.
2. Addresses equity issues by providing mobility options for low income, disabled, students and others unable to drive and/or own a motor vehicle.
3. Takes advantage of latent capacity by upgrading existing infrastructure without negatively impacting the tax base.
4. Provides access to jobs along the route. Gives businesses a larger region for workforce growth.
5. Connects with local transit linking Marion, Polk, Lincoln and Yamhill counties for better regional access.
6. Train travel is psychologically more attractive than riding buses. People who will not ride a bus will choose to go by train. They will even ride a bus to connect to the train, thus generating more patronage on the connecting bus lines. There will be a significant increase in ridership over the current 1X Bus operated by Cherriots and SMART.
7. It will reduce travel time by eliminating the bus/train transfer at Wilsonville and I-5 congestion.
8. Safety issues will be addressed with infrastructure improvements and more public education. Areas in Salem like Front Street and the Northeast district need to receive special attention.
9. Parking is not required for people arriving by transit. This reduces the employee and guest parking requirements for businesses and public agencies, providing citizen access to the State Capitol and other government offices.
10. Tourism is an overlooked benefit of rail transit. Recreational riders will spend money with local businesses and restaurants.
11. Freight trains will operate more efficiently and safely using the upgraded track and signal system.
12. Supports development of the Port of Willamette freight transload facility at Brooks.



If there are concerns about Tri-Met extending to Salem with WES, this doesn't have to happen. WES is operated by the Portland & Western Railroad under a contract with Tri-Met. The extension to Salem could be under a separate contract with Cherriots and/or SMART or even a new state agency to operate the entire system.

As a passenger transportation/tourism professional with over 50 years of management experience in the industry, I urge passage of this legislation.

Robert E. Krebs, AORTA, Immediate Past President  
Former: Cherriots' Board Director, ODOT Passenger Rail Coordinator and Oregon  
Business Owner

As a council representative for Oregon, to the national rail-advocacy organization Rail Passengers Association (RPA), I am testifying in support of **HB 2662**, which requires the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to study extending Portland's Westside Express Service (WES) train to Salem and increasing its frequency. RPA's goals include improving and expanding conventional intercity passenger train service, increasing connectivity among all forms of transportation, and improving safety for rail passengers.

This extension of WES service, if implemented, would fulfill all three of those goals. Extending the route would increase the area the train serves, and would connect with local public transit services along the route, most notably Cherriots, Salem's public transit. And when new routes are added, ridership on connecting routes also goes up.

Residents of Portland frequently travel to Salem, and vice versa, and most of this travel occurs on busy highway Interstate 5, creating traffic congestion and delays and increasing the risk of high-speed crashes when traffic is flowing freely. Train travel along this route would be safer, faster, and more environmentally friendly, as rail is the most fuel-efficient form of transportation.

Furthermore, experience has shown that when additional frequencies are added to existing routes, revenues rise faster than costs, showing that in the long run, this extension would actually reduce the cost of running this service, saving taxpayer money.

I urge the Oregon legislature to pass this bill as a first step toward implementing expanded service for WES.



2/21/2023

To: Joint Committee on Transportation

Re: In Favor Testimony - HB 2662 Study Extending WES to Salem

Dear Senators and Representatives,

The Street Trust is a membership advocacy organization representing street users from across Greater Portland, Oregon. We advocate to break the political gridlock to address unsafe and incomplete public streets that threaten lives and livelihoods, and to win policy and investments that save lives, reduce barriers, and expand mobility and opportunities to the people and neighborhoods our current system neglects.

We support HB 2662, which would spend \$500,000 studying the extension of WES Commuter Rail from Wilsonville to Salem; however, it is imperative that this study centrally consider:

- **Equity impacts on priority communities across the greater Portland metro** including communities of color, people with limited English proficiency, youth, transit-dependent people and people with limited vehicle access, residents of affordable housing units, people with low incomes, seniors, people with disabilities, people with low & medium wage jobs, and people working in essential retail/human/social services jobs
- **Climate impacts, greenhouse gas pollution, and air quality impacts** on the greater Portland metro and beyond

Thank you for your continued leadership on improving transportation for Oregonians.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Iannarone  
Executive Director, The Street Trust  
sarah@thestreettrust.org

**COURTNEY NERON**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
DISTRICT 26



## **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

### **Testimony in Support of HB 2662**

February 21, 2023

Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, Vice-Chairs Boquist and Boshart Davis, and members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

For the record, I am Courtney Neron, State Representative for House District 26, here today in support of HB 2662. I want to co-sponsors, Senator Woods and Representative Pham, as well as the leadership of the City of Wilsonville for their partnership in bringing this rail bill forward.

The cities that I represent in the outer SW Portland Metro Region are among the fastest growing communities in the state. As our region grows and changes, we know we need to be proactive and thoughtful about identifying and investing in public transportation solutions. With this bill we have the opportunity to study an additional option for commuters that can help to mitigate increased congestion and carbon emissions. I also want to highlight the growing local economy with major companies like the Amazon warehouse in Woodburn. New developments bring new job opportunities but they also increase pressure on our roads, which is why it is so important for us to research potential transportation alternatives.

HB 2662 requires the Oregon Department of Transportation to study the extension of the Westside Express Service (WES) commuter train from Wilsonville to Salem with stops in Donald, Woodburn, and Keizer in collaboration with TriMET and the Portland Western Railroad.

With Oregonians returning to in-person work, employers struggling to find enough workers, increasing costs of living, and greenhouse gas emissions reductions needed, we need to consider multimodal transportation solutions that connect Oregonians with the economic opportunities offered by our local employers. This study will focus on one option available to achieve our goals.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of HB 2662. I urge your support and swift passage of the bill.

Sincerely,

Rep Courtney Neron

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Courtney Neron". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

House District 26

Wilsonville, including the Charbonneau district, King City, Sherwood,  
Tigard/Bull Mountain, and Parrett Mountain

KEVIN MANNIX  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
DISTRICT 21



COURTNEY NERON  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
DISTRICT 26

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 20, 2023

Speaker Dan Rayfield  
President Rob Wagner  
Co-Chair Elizabeth Steiner  
Co-Chair Tawna Sanchez  
Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

**RE: Please pass HB 2662 A - A Legislative Policy Office Task Force to Study Commuter Rail Service in the Northern Willamette Valley**

Dear Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee:

The Chief Sponsors of this bill carefully reworked the bill from a Study to a Task Force to create minimal fiscal cost. The Legislative Policy Office Task Force approach allows us to research the operations and governance issues with a bipartisan, bicameral approach. HB 2662-4 allows the identification and discussion of issues related to establishing commuter rail in the Willamette Valley between Beaverton, Wilsonville and Salem.

The Legislative Policy Office Task Force comprised of transit districts and cities, including TriMet and Portland & Western Railroad, to document the costs, benefits and operational issues of extending the current rush-hour-only Westside Express Service (WES) commuter train from the current southern terminus in Wilsonville for 31 miles to Salem, with stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer. There is minimal cost to this Legislative Task Force.

The amended bill calls for the Task Force to report to the legislature in 2024 with study findings and recommendations for extending commuter rail service in underserved communities in the Northern Willamette Valley. Below are additional points that highlight the need for HB 2662 -4:

- The increasing population of the Portland metro and North Willamette Valley region needs mobility options, especially for commuters and seniors, who require transportation for jobs and medical appointments.
- I-5 traffic congestion continues to worsen, and prospective ODOT tolling of I-205 and I-5 in the Portland metro area requires a reliable public-transit alternative unaffected by highway traffic congestion.
- Additional Federal Transit Administration (FTA) support for high-capacity WES commuter service connecting METRO and SKATS—two Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) Transportation Management Areas (TMAs)—that can increase ridership.



- Transit commuting and employment options support North Willamette Valley communities' economic and housing development efforts.
- The commuter rail on an existing rail line helps Oregon meet its 2035 Climate goals.
- HB 2662-4 is supported by the Cities of Aurora, Donald, Hubbard, Keizer, Salem, Wilsonville and Woodburn; Salem Mass Transit ("Cherriots"), SMART (South Metro Area Regional Transit) and Yamhill County Transit.

In the closing days of this Legislative session, please act to authorize this LPRO Task Force so that the Cities and Transit Districts who have advocated for this bill can start collaborating on commuter rail planning for the Northern Willamette Valley.

Sincerely,



Representative Kevin Mannix



Representative Courtney Neron



Representative Jeff Helfrich



Senator Gorsek



Representative Tracy Cramer



Senator Woods

## A-Engrossed House Bill 2662

Ordered by the House May 18  
Including House Amendments dated May 18

Sponsored by Representatives NERON, MANNIX; Representative PHAM K, Senator WOODS (at the request of City of Wilsonville) (Presession filed.)

### SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure.

*[Requires Department of Transportation, in collaboration with Tri-Met and Portland & Western Railroad to study extending Westside Express Service commuter line to Salem. Directs department to submit findings to interim committees of Legislative Assembly related to transportation not later than September 15, 2024.]*

*[Appropriates moneys from General Fund to Department of Transportation for study.]*

**Establishes Willamette Valley Commuter Rail Task Force.**

**Sunsets January 2, 2025.**

Declares emergency, effective *[July 1, 2023]* on passage.

### A BILL FOR AN ACT

Relating to a study on extending the Westside Express Service commuter line to Salem; and declaring an emergency.

**Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

**SECTION 1. (1) The Willamette Valley Commuter Rail Task Force is established.**

**(2) The task force consists of 18 members appointed as follows:**

**(a) The President of the Senate shall appoint two members from among members of the Senate, one of whom is registered with the largest political party in this state and one of whom is registered with the second largest political party in this state.**

**(b) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint two members from among members of the House of Representatives, one of whom is registered with the largest political party in this state and one of whom is registered with the second largest political party in this state.**

**(c) The Governor shall appoint:**

**(A) One member chosen from a list of persons recommended by the Aurora city council;**

**(B) One member chosen from a list of persons recommended by the Donald city council;**

**(C) One member chosen from a list of persons recommended by the Hubbard city council;**

**(D) One member chosen from a list of persons recommended by the Keizer city council;**

**(E) One member chosen from a list of persons recommended by the Salem city council;**

**(F) One member chosen from a list of persons recommended by the Wilsonville city council;**

**(G) One member chosen from a list of persons recommended by the Woodburn city council;**

**(H) One member who represents the Salem Area Mass Transit District;**

**NOTE:** Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

(I) One member who represents South Metro Area Regional Transit;

(J) One member who represents Woodburn Transit Service;

(K) One member who represents Yamhill County Transit;

(L) One member who represents Portland & Western Railroad;

(M) One member who represents the Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates;  
and

(N) One member who represents the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon.

(3) The task force shall:

(a) Study extending the Westside Express Service commuter line to Salem, including increasing the frequency and hours of service and establishing a new entity to administer the rail service; and

(b) Identify opportunities to apply for funding under the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58) or other federal funding programs.

(4) A majority of the voting members of the task force constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business.

(5) Official action by the task force requires the approval of a majority of the voting members of the task force.

(6) The task force shall elect one of its members to serve as chairperson and another to serve as vice chairperson. The vice chairperson may act as chairperson in the absence of the chairperson.

(7) If there is a vacancy for any cause, the appointing authority shall make an appointment to become immediately effective.

(8) The task force shall meet at times and places specified by the call of the chairperson or of a majority of the voting members of the task force.

(9) The task force may adopt rules necessary for the operation of the task force.

(10) The task force shall submit a report in the manner provided by ORS 192.245, and may include recommendations for legislation, to an interim committee of the Legislative Assembly related to transportation no later than September 15, 2024.

(11) The Legislative Policy and Research Director shall provide staff support to the task force.

(12) Members of the Legislative Assembly appointed to the task force are nonvoting members of the task force and may act in an advisory capacity only.

(13) Members of the task force who are not members of the Legislative Assembly are not entitled to compensation or reimbursement for expenses and serve as volunteers on the task force.

(14) All agencies of state government, as defined in ORS 174.111, are directed to assist the task force in the performance of the duties of the task force and, to the extent permitted by laws relating to confidentiality, to furnish information and advice the members of the task force consider necessary to perform their duties.

**SECTION 2.** Section 1 of this 2023 Act is repealed on January 2, 2025.

**SECTION 3.** This 2023 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2023 Act takes effect on its passage.

## HB 2662 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

### Joint Committee On Transportation

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**Action Date:** 05/11/23

**Action:** Do pass with amendments and be referred to Ways and Means. (Printed A-Eng.)

**House Vote**

**Yeas:** 7 - Boshart Davis, Evans, Helfrich, Mannix, McLain, Nathanson, Pham K

**Senate Vote**

**Yeas:** 3 - Frederick, President Wagner, Woods

**Abs:** 2 - Boquist, Findley

**Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued

**Revenue:** No revenue impact

**Prepared By:** Patrick Brennan, LPRO Analyst

**Meeting Dates:** 2/21, 5/11

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#### **WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Establishes the Willamette Valley Commuter Rail Task Force, consisting of 18 members appointed by the Speaker, Senate President, and Governor. Directs Task Force to study extending Westside Express Service commuter rail line to Salem, frequency and hours of service, establishing a new entity to administer the rail service, and opportunities to apply for funding through federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Designates Legislative Policy and Research Office as staff support for Task Force. Directs Task Force to submit report to Legislative Assembly by September 15, 2024. Sunsets January 2, 2025. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

#### **ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Role of rail transportation in reducing carbon emissions
- Role of rail transportation in reducing traffic congestion
- Potential connections of extended Westside Express Service (WES) line
- Which entity should operate an extended WES service
- Need to ensure ability to continue to operate freight rail if on shared corridor
- Potential economic impact

#### **EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:**

Replaces the measure.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

TriMet is Oregon's largest provider of public transportation services, operating over 80 bus lines, five light rail lines, paratransit services, and one commuter rail line. The Westside Express Service (WES), inaugurated in February 2009, connects the Beaverton Transit Center to the Wilsonville Transit Center. The WES operates on freight tracks owned by the Portland & Western Railroad, and makes 10 trips north and south each weekday, roughly every 45 minutes. The WES service includes three intermediate stops and provides connections to the South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) system in Wilsonville, the Yamhill County Transit Area system in Tigard, and Salem-Keizer Area Mass Transit District, also known as Cherriots, via express bus from Wilsonville to Salem.

House Bill 2662 A creates an 18-member Task Force on Willamette Valley Commuter Rail to study and make recommendations on the potential to extend the WES commuter rail service to Salem.

## FISCAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Measure: HB 2662 - A

82nd Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2023 Regular Session

Legislative Fiscal Office

*Only Impacts on Original or Engrossed Versions are Considered Official*

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Prepared by: Haylee Morse-Miller  
Reviewed by: Amanda Beitel, Tom MacDonald  
Date: May 15, 2023

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### Measure Description:

Creates Willamette Valley Commuter Rail Task Force.

### Government Unit(s) Affected:

Legislative Assembly, Task Force/Committee/Workgroup, Legislative Policy and Research Office, Cities

### Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Costs related to the measure may require budgetary action - See analysis.

### Analysis:

HB 2662 - A creates the 18-member Willamette Valley Commuter Rail Task Force which is to study extending the Westside Express Service commuter line to Salem, including increasing the frequency and hours of service and establishing a new entity to administer the rail service; and to identify opportunities to apply for funding under the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act or other federal funding programs. The task force is to submit a report to the interim committee of the Legislative Assembly related to transportation by September 15, 2024. The bill directs the Legislative Policy and Research Office to provide staff support for the task force. The bill declares an emergency and takes effect on passage, and the task force sunsets on January 2, 2025.

#### Legislative Policy and Research Office

The bill requires the Legislative Policy and Research Office (LPRO) to provide staff support to the task force. LPRO assumes a minimal fiscal impact with existing staff to provide support to this task force. Assuming monthly meetings over 12 months, this will require one Senior Legislative Analyst, one Research Analyst, and one Committee Assistant all assigned part-time to the task force (0.25 FTE), at a total cost of \$257,533 using existing General Fund resources. Although LPRO's current service level budget supports interim committees and task forces, if the work required by this task force, or if the cumulative enactment of other legislation with interim committees and task forces exceeds expenditure levels beyond those assumed in the 2023-25 budget, additional General Fund resources may be required.

This fiscal impact statement assumes that the work required of LPRO to assist the task force with the study is limited to work that can be performed using existing staff. However, LPRO notes that if any public outreach and engagement work is required, there may be additional costs related to this measure.

#### Legislative Assembly

The bill is also expected to have a minimal impact on the Legislative Assembly. Four members of the task force will be legislative members who are entitled to per diem and travel reimbursement. Meetings are set by the chairperson so it is unknown how often the task force would meet; however, assuming that the task force meets nine times, the estimated per diem and travel reimbursement costs will total \$10,100. This amount includes the Federal Insurance Contribution Act (FICA) tax, assumes the per diem remains at \$157 per day, and estimates an average mileage of 171 miles at the current rate of \$0.655 per mile. This estimate could change based on the number of meetings held. The task force would not incur additional costs to the Legislative Assembly budget if the meetings are held at the Capitol building during the Legislative Session, or Task Force or Legislative Days.

Although the 2023-25 Legislative Assembly budget contains funds allocated for interim committees and task forces, if the work required by this task force, or if the cumulative enactment of other legislation with interim committees and task forces exceeds expenditure levels beyond those assumed in the 2023-25 budget, additional General Fund resources may be required.

Other entities

There is no fiscal impact for cities.