

TESTIMONY OF

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BEFORE THE  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING and URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND  
RELATED AGENCIES

ON  
**SUSTAINABILITY IN PRACTICE**

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**SUBMITTED BY:**

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**TRIMET**

Chairman Olver, Ranking Member Latham and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, I thank you for the invitation to address you today on the important issue of putting sustainability into practice. Throughout my career, I have been committed to advancing the practice of sustainability in order to enhance the livability of our communities and provide for the security of the nation as a whole.

When I left the Environmental Protection Agency to lead TriMet in 1998, I did so because I saw then (as I do now) that public transportation is an essential part of putting America on the path to sustainability. Not only does public transit provide an energy-efficient and environmentally friendly transportation choice that ensures access to opportunity for all of our citizens, it also helps shape our communities and regions in ways that support and connect healthy, vibrant neighborhoods. At a time when America must stimulate its economy, create more jobs, revitalize communities, and reduce its dependence on foreign oil, expanding public transportation can make a significant contribution quickly and cost-effectively.

To ensure that the potential benefits of transit are realized in our region, I have made sustainability a clear and central strategic focus for the agency from the start of my tenure as General Manager. For TriMet, moving towards sustainability means pursuing social, environmental and economic performance in a unified way:

- It means evaluating what and where we build, how we construct and operate what we build, and who is included in the use, operation and construction of our system.
- It means delivering frequent and reliable service that provides a viable transportation alternative to driving alone, while ensuring transit equity and demonstrating environmental leadership in how service is provided.
- It means working with our contractor and agency partners to ensure that the major capital investments we make are building environmentally innovative, cost-effective projects that support our region's land use and transportation goals, even as the benefits of those investments are shared among all members of our community.

This testimony provides examples of TriMet's leadership in the three legs of sustainability, as they are framed from the perspective of the public transportation provider in the Portland region. In particular, we share the successes and lessons learned from our efforts to:

- 1. Support our region's growth vision through high quality transit coordinated with land use planning;**
- 2. Green how we build and operate our system;**
- 3. Ensure equitable access to our services and the economic opportunities associated with the investments we are making.**

I will then conclude by offering suggestions for how the federal government could apply these lessons to foster similar success in other communities.

- 1. Coordinating high quality transit with land use planning has been central to the success of the Portland region.**

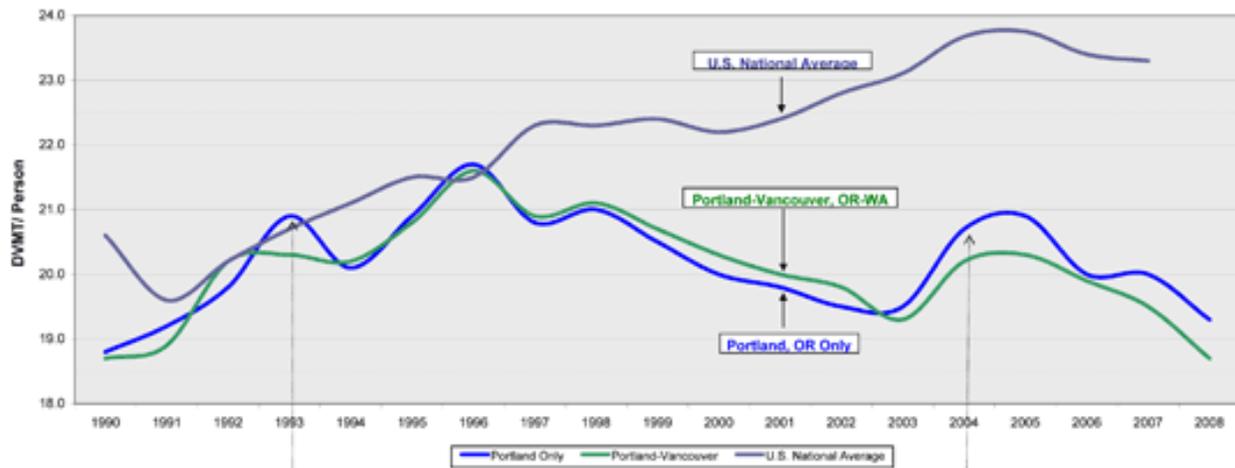
How do we unleash the power of public transportation to protect our environment and enhance our communities' livability? To begin, the federal government must do its part to expand transit availability and promote compact and efficient land use patterns and transit-oriented development. Efficient land use, combined with high quality transit service, particularly fixed guideway service—subway, light rail, commuter rail, streetcar and bus rapid transit—produces results far beyond the immediate benefit of increased use of public transportation.

Efficient land use has the potential to significantly change the way we live and travel, reducing our individual carbon footprints while preserving and enhancing our mobility. Higher densities allow for closer proximity of housing, employment and retail, reducing driving distances and enabling communities to plan for and support alternative travel options. In many central business districts, trips taken for shopping, dining or other non-commuting purposes are often made on foot—even by those who drive to work.

In the Portland region, we have seen the benefits of this approach. For over 30 years, the region has been pursuing a radically different path than most urban areas of the United States. In the 1970's, the region chose to cancel a long-standing freeway expansion program and instead direct resources into a multi-modal transportation system. This was coupled with the establishment of an urban growth boundary and the alignment of regional and local land use and transportation plans.

The result of this marriage of smart transportation investments—particularly transit—and land use planning is more compact, efficient cities that are easier to serve with non-automobile transportation modes. Reliable bus service, streetcar and light rail lines, combined with attention to bicycle and pedestrian planning, ensure that residents who choose not to drive can take advantage of a variety of other travel options.

- Between 1996 and 2006, transit ridership in the region grew by 46 percent, while population only grew 16 percent.
- At the same time, daily vehicle miles traveled (DVMT) per capita in the Portland region declined by 8 percent. In contrast, national DVMT per capita rose by 8 percent over the same period.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Source: Metro Regional Government: <http://www.oregonmetro.gov/index.cfm/go/by.web/id=26796>

In addition to helping the region meet federal air quality standards, these trends are reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and helping address climate change. Between 1990 and 2007, community-wide GHG emissions for the City of Portland and Multnomah County, the area's most urbanized county, dropped 17 percent on per capita basis.<sup>2</sup>

And it is clear that residents have discovered these alternative ways of getting around in our mixed use neighborhoods, such as Northwest Portland. When comparing the travel patterns that we see in this dense section of the Portland region with just the rest of the Portland region (which many people recognize is less automobile dependent than many of the nation's suburban areas), we see dramatic differences. Specifically:

- Residents are about 11 times more likely to take public transportation than they are in the region as a whole.
- They are four and half times more likely to walk, and about two times more likely to go by bicycle on those trips.
- On average, individuals in these denser, mixed-use communities drive about half as many miles and have one-half the car-ownership as compared to the typical average person in the rest of our community.<sup>3</sup>

<b>Transportation Mode Share by Transit and Land Use Characteristics</b>							
<b>Land Use Type</b>	<b>Mode Share</b>					<b>Vehicle Miles per Capita</b>	<b>Auto Ownership per Household</b>
	<b>Percent Auto</b>	<b>Percent Walk</b>	<b>Percent Transit</b>	<b>Percent Bike</b>	<b>Percent Other</b>		
Good Transit/Mixed Use	<b>58.1%</b>	27.0%	11.5%	1.9%	1.5%	<b>9.80</b>	<b>0.93</b>
Good Transit Only	74.4%	15.2%	7.9%	1.4%	1.1%	12.38	1.50
Remainder of Multnomah County	81.5%	9.7%	3.5%	1.6%	3.7%	17.34	1.74
Remainder of Region	<b>87.3%</b>	6.1%	1.2%	0.8%	4.6%	<b>21.79</b>	<b>1.93</b>
<i>Source: Metro Travel Survey</i>							

As these results demonstrate, the aggressive development of high capacity transit coupled with regional land use management has made the Portland region a successful model that could provide a framework for other regions to emulate as we think about how to leverage federal and local investments in the creation of livable communities.

<sup>2</sup> City of Portland Office of Sustainable Development: <http://www.portlandonline.com/osd/index.cfm?c=41896>

<sup>3</sup> Source: Metro Regional Government Household Travel Survey

## **2. TriMet continually improves its own sustainability practices in construction and operations to benefit our community and the planet while helping the bottom line.**

Another area in which the Portland region aims to lead by example is greening how we build our projects and run our transit operations. While high quality transit service itself is inherently part of a livable community, by advancing their own sustainability practices, transit providers can expand the benefits enjoyed by communities in return for their investment in transit.

### **Greening our Construction Practices**

As TriMet grows its transit system to meet the increasing transit needs of our community, it undertakes numerous construction projects, from bus stop improvements to light rail lines. Through carefully selecting products, incorporating green design principles and analyzing the impact of its construction choices, TriMet ensures the projects built today support a healthy community tomorrow. Adding new green construction practices to proven methods, TriMet is committed to building our projects in a “community- and earth-friendly way,” as expressed in our agency Sustainability Policy.

TriMet’s Interstate MAX Yellow Line light rail project, completed in 2004, provides a model for how to build these projects in a sustainable way. During design and construction of the rail line, TriMet pioneered new practices that both protect the environment and save money. The project capitalized on the innovative thinking of TriMet staff and contractors alike to find new and creative ways to apply sustainable building practices to transit construction projects. Innovative green construction practices, many applied to light rail construction for the first time, saved \$3 million in construction costs over conventional light rail design and construction, at the same time reducing waste and recycling materials. Some of the highlights of these include:

- **Plastic railroad ties and bollards** – TriMet was the first to use recycled plastic railroad ties in embedded light rail trackway. The MAX line used 6,000 plastic ties made of recycled plastic automobile gas tanks. The project was also the first to use bollards with recycled plastic content in paved portions of the trackway. The bollards and the recycled plastic chain discourage pedestrians from crossing the trackway. The plastic bollards are 20 percent cheaper than steel, saving \$100,000. The plastic bollards also eliminated the need for grounding that is required for steel bollards, saving an additional \$150,000.
- **Reusing and recycling materials** – TriMet reused materials, such as concrete curbs, sidewalks, trees and asphalt that were located along Interstate Avenue, which saved money by reducing the amount of new materials purchased and the cost of sending materials to landfills. On several acres of track construction, TriMet used innovative civil engineering design that allows the existing road base concrete to stay in place while a new layer of asphalt is laid on top. This practice saved nearly \$2.4 million in demolition, trucking and disposal fees. In sections where the existing roadway couldn’t be left in place, TriMet used recycled asphalt and concrete as base materials for roadway, trackway and sidewalks. About 80,000 yards of material was used in all, enough to cover a 50-foot-wide strip, five miles long and 1.5 feet deep. TriMet saved \$186,000 by foregoing the purchase of solely virgin materials and on disposal fees. Old steel trolley rails uncovered during excavation were excavated, saved and recycled into rebar.

Building on the success we achieved with the Interstate Yellow Line MAX, TriMet continued to focus on innovative, green practices during the construction of the new I-205/Portland Mall Green Line MAX, which opened for service last fall. *Please see the attached Yellow and Green Line Fact Sheets for more detail.* How we manage stormwater and landscaping to protect water quality and quantity have been particular focuses of the most recent project and across our facilities. Our strategies include:

- **Stormwater management** – While building new facilities, TriMet focuses on improvements and innovation for stormwater management. Where possible, natural landscaping systems are used employing bioswales, natural filtration, and other systems that return water naturally to the ground.
  - Along the new Green line, street stormwater runoff is treated through bio-filtration planters outfitted with innovative planting and landscape areas. TriMet also added landscaping that includes visually appealing planting strips and bioswales for water filtration to treat the stormwater from the street, tracks and light rail operations. Dry wells associated with the bioswales detain the cleaned water and gradually release it into the soil to replenish ground water and reduce the flooding and scouring of streams and rivers. Some of the innovative stormwater treatment activities and systems installed by TriMet include:
    - Incorporating a cast-bronze art scupper in a pond that collects stormwater and treats it naturally in a bioswale
    - Installing new stormwater treatment devices in drains that reach the Willamette River
    - Using porous concrete pavers on station platform areas to allow rainwater to naturally filter into the ground
    - Routinely sweeping the Park & Ride lots and garage parking areas to keep sediment and other contaminants out of streams and the groundwater.
    - As part of the Green Line MAX project, TriMet also installed 290 Silva Cells, a modular underground bio-retention system that improves stormwater management and encourages healthy tree growth near station platforms.
- **Landscaping practices** – To reduce water use and limit pesticide and other chemical requirements in landscaping practices, TriMet incorporates “water wise” landscaping into all its new landscaping projects, focusing on nature-scaping—using hardy, pest-resistant native plants with water conservation in mind.
  - By adjusting to more native, water-efficient landscaping practices over the past five years, TriMet has reduced water demand, incorporated landscaping into site design to reduce heating and cooling costs, reduced stormwater runoff, reduced pesticide use and generated less yard debris from pruning and trimming. Achieving these environmental benefits paid off for TriMet in another way: Reducing landscaping expenses by more than \$200,000 per year. All existing TriMet landscaping is being phased to nature-scaping principles as well.
  - Tree preservation and replacement were project priorities during Green Line MAX construction. More than 1,200 trees were planted as part of the project. TriMet also added 5.2 acres of diverse landscaping—including native vegetation such as red-flowering currant, tall Oregon grape and western red cedar—designed to flourish with minimal maintenance.

## Greening Operations

At TriMet, we have worked hard to improve the efficiency of our vehicles, benefiting the environment and our budget. Through a concerted focus by our operators and mechanics on reducing idling at layovers, adjusting transmission and shift points, front-end alignments and steering control arms, and maintaining a set tire pressure, TriMet has reduced fuel consumption in our bus fleet by over 7.5 percent since 2000. We use regenerative braking on our light rail trains, akin to hybrid-electric cars, to reduce energy consumption by over 20 percent. Our region's electricity supply is already relatively clean, with a substantial portion being derived from hydropower. We also pioneered the use in transit applications of new thermal management equipment inspired by the U.S. military and NASCAR to further improve our bus fleets' fuel economy, with early results suggesting an additional fuel savings of 5 percent. Last year, TriMet and our manufacturing partner EMP received the EPA's Clean Air Excellence Award for this innovation. TriMet also uses a 5 percent biodiesel blend throughout our fleet.

## The Total Transit System

Complementing these operational efficiencies and construction innovations, we make our service as attractive as possible to increase ridership and further heighten our efficiency gains on a per passenger basis. We do this through a focus on what we call the Total Transit System: providing frequent, reliable service during all times of the day and every day of the week; clear customer information; easy access to stops; comfortable places to wait for transit; and modern vehicles.

TriMet's online Trip Planner gives users step-by-step instructions showing how much to pay, how long the trip will take, and how to get to a destination using buses, MAX and the Portland Streetcar—including where to board, make transfers and walking directions. In addition to helping customers plan their trip, we also think it is important, especially in this era of extreme time management, to recognize that merely having published schedules for our public transit system is not enough. We need to provide our customers with real time information about their transit trip.

To do this for our customers, TriMet has developed Transit Tracker. This is a system that can be accessed either through an office or home computer or by your cell phone. By entering the location ID of the bus stop or train station, you are able to get the actual arrival time of the next bus or train. For those of us who are regular transit users, as I am, it takes the guesswork out. It means that you can relax or read, get a cup of coffee, or know that you need to stay there because your ride is expected in a couple of minutes. We now receive over one and a half million calls per month to the Transit Tracker service because people want to have greater control of their lives and be able to better manage their time while still making use of the public transit option.

Google is on the forefront of providing mapping for all sorts of travel and locational needs. As they began to include transit options in their tools and looked across the country at transit systems, they chose Portland, Oregon. They did this in part because we had the data necessary to provide the mapping, but also because TriMet has personnel that are committed to providing tools to assist our riders in making it easy and convenient to use our system. This reflects our commitment to ensure transit becomes an integral part of their lives and an element of how they operate on a day in and day out basis. Google has now expanded that system to over 400 cities around the world based on the model developed with TriMet.

## Leading the Industry by Example

As a result of these efforts, TriMet is recognized as a sustainability leader in the transit industry. Yet TriMet is certainly not alone in our pursuit of sustainability. The American Public Transportation Association (APTA), which represents over 1500 transit agencies and transit-related businesses—90 percent of transit riders travel on APTA member systems—has launched an industry-wide sustainability commitment including both the agency which deliver transit service and the many businesses that support them. I am proud to chair this effort on behalf of APTA. This commitment is performance-based and sets clear reduction targets for water usage, criteria air pollutants and water pollutant discharge, carbon emissions, energy use and waste. The structure of the commitment is such that transit systems and supporting businesses with the highest level of environmental performance are being asked to continuously improve their performance. (*See attached APTA Sustainability Commitment document.*)

### **3. TriMet offers a model for ensuring that all members of our community benefit from our investments, either as users or providers of our services and projects.**

Provision of public transit ensures access to the places, goods and services that are essential for all of our communities to have vital participation in all aspects of society. Transportation is needed to attend school, get to jobs, access health care and participate in social, recreational or civic activities. The construction, operation and maintenance of transportation projects also offer direct economic opportunities to community members.

## Ensuring Transit Equity and Environmental Justice

When people cannot afford a private vehicle, public transportation is necessary to ensure that everyone in a community has access to all the activities offered in society. Socioeconomic and demographic analyses demonstrate that the people in our community who are most likely to be transit-dependent are economically disadvantaged populations.

Transportation equity issues arise when transportation benefits accrue disproportionately to the wealthier and more educated segment of society, while transportation burdens (such as environmental impacts) fall disproportionately on people of color and/or individuals at the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum. As such, transit equity is intimately tied to environmental justice.

Transit equity and environmental justice are considerations in decisions about the following:

- Transit service to low-income neighborhoods and communities of color
- Placement of bus stops and shelters
- Allocation of new low-floor buses
- Serving non-English-speaking populations

### **Transit service to low-income neighborhoods and communities of color**

TriMet's goal is to ensure the allocation of service and amenities is fair and equitable throughout our system. By providing high quality service equitably throughout the region, TriMet can attract and serve more riders, which in turn helps strengthen the system. TriMet has traditionally planned transit service and on-street amenities to achieve the highest ridership potential, without regard to income, race or neighborhood. To determine how service lines up with transit equity goals, TriMet used the latest data from the US Census to look at where low-income and minority populations are located in the district.

TriMet then analyzed its service in relation to low-income and minority neighborhoods. Most Frequent Service lines are in North, Northeast and Southeast Portland, providing high quality service to transit-dependent and low-income populations. In addition to having the highest frequency in our system, these routes are also designed for a variety of trip purposes, locations and times (including commuting, medical appointments, special events and school), and are served primarily by easier-to-board low-floor buses. In 2003, TriMet adopted new criteria to govern how Frequent Service is to be expanded. The most important factor in the criteria is ridership, but one of the factors TriMet also weighs is the density of the transit-dependent population. To determine transit dependency, TriMet looks at areas with high proportions of low-income residents, seniors and/or persons with disabilities.

### **Placement of bus stops and shelters**

TriMet prioritizes its bus stop and shelter improvements on high-ridership Frequent Service lines, which are concentrated in transit-dependent areas. As a result, transit equity objectives are being met by the priority already applied to those lines. TriMet also uses funding from the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program to support transit equity. TriMet is the regional administrator for Job Access grants. Some of the grant funds have been used to improve conditions at bus stops, by providing new shelters and schedule information.

### **Allocation of low-floor buses**

TriMet seeks to ensure that its operations do not have a disproportionate impact on air quality within the region. TriMet's deployment of new low-floor buses helps to achieve this goal because of advanced pollution control equipment installed on these new buses. Emissions from the bus are substantially less than emissions from TriMet's older vehicles. The allocation of new low-floor buses is an environmental justice consideration because TriMet can control where these new buses are placed. Too often, low-income neighborhoods are on the receiving end of environmental hazards and pollutants. TriMet looks at the on-road emissions data collected by state and federal environmental agencies to map high existing levels of diesel emissions. TriMet uses the data to determine which routes new low-floor buses should serve. By placing new buses on routes that already have high levels of vehicle emissions, TriMet will not further contribute to air pollution in those neighborhoods. TriMet has also secured funds to retrofit its bus fleet with diesel particulate traps to further mitigate air pollution.

### **Ensuring Inclusive Participation in Economic Opportunity**

To ensure that the fruits of our investment in our public transportation system are shared by all members of our community, TriMet continues its national, award-winning model for involving minority and women-owned businesses that began with the Interstate MAX Light Rail Project.

TriMet has continued to partner with its prime contractors, subcontractors and other agencies to remove barriers for disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) firms to work on our most recent I-205/Portland Mall Light Rail Project and the Washington County Commuter Rail line. On Interstate MAX, 71 DBEs helped build the project, totaling \$36 million in contracts. On the I-205/Portland Mall Project, 113 DBE firms received more than \$62 million in contracts. Through this partnership, prime contractors provide mentoring and access to union apprenticeship programs to help small and emerging firms build capacity and expertise in new trades.

### **Building capacity**

With a focus to create opportunities that incorporate sustainability and inclusion, TriMet and its prime contractors are taking the following steps to help DBEs build business capacity:

- Providing technical and business assistance to DBEs and other small businesses to ensure they are able to provide contracted work. Such assistance includes marketing support, fringe benefit package management and safety training.
- Dividing scopes of work into smaller packages to encourage DBE contractors to bid and work alongside larger firms as the smaller firms build capacity.
- Rotating contracting opportunities created within a division of work.
- Assisting contractors to ensure their workforce reflects the community.
- Providing technical assistance and training on estimating, financing, business development and job performance.
- Providing assistance on contract performance, bonding issues, DBE and EEO certification and Owner Controlled Insurance Program (OCIP) forms.
- Facilitating relationships with organized labor in all crafts, bringing experienced workers and formalized apprenticeship programs to DBE contractors.
- Facilitating relationships with financial institutions and advancing resources to improve cash flow for DBE contractors.
- Creating opportunities for promising new companies to have on-the-job general contractor experience by managing multiple subcontractors for a complete portion of the work.

### **Expanding expertise**

Similar to the Interstate MAX Project, prime and subcontractors are mentoring minority, women and emerging firms to teach new skills and recruiting new DBEs to the marketplace.

- C.O.A.T. (Chicks of All Trades) Flagging was recruited from the private sector to provide traffic management services for the Portland Mall project.
- Affordable Electric was recruited from the private sector to help bring additional diversity to the electrical trades and provide track conduit installation.

- Raimore Construction was recruited to perform concrete and brick flatwork and assist with diversifying the trades.

Additionally, prime contractors are creating opportunities for promising new minority companies to have on-the-job general contractor experience by managing multiple subcontractors for a complete portion of the work. Two include:

- Pacificmark is performing turnkey design/build work for building expansion and improvements.
- Liberty Steel Erectors is performing significant elements of the Steel Bridge retrofit.

### **Breaking down barriers**

Past practices discouraged minority DBE firms and workers from joining trade unions. TriMet's projects have helped open the door for more diversity in union ranks, with trades fully embracing diversity and providing access to their apprenticeship programs. The DBE program has partnered with local union halls to provide one job agreements to DBE contractors. As a result, unions are providing:

- Employees with benefits and pension plans.
- DBEs with another avenue of continued employment.
- Formal apprenticeship programs that benefit labor from communities of color.
- Experienced craftsmen to build the capacity to work on diverse scopes of work.
- Marketing for contractors on other projects.
- Partnerships with union halls rather than adversity.

### **Marketing and management support**

TriMet developed an online directory to help DBE firms market themselves to prime contractors. The DBE directory highlights each firm's expertise, experience on similar projects, insurance and business philosophy. Minority, women and emerging small businesses are included in the directory. In addition, a new integrated web-based reporting program, called Elation Systems, has been implemented. This software provides real-time data on DBE and diverse workforce usage and payroll, and recalculates DBE involvement as change orders are implemented, making diversity tracking a truly measurable deliverable. Together, and in partnership with all of its prime contractors, TriMet continues to expand the model that builds capacity in an inclusive and sustainable manner within the DBE community, as well as the small and emerging business community.

### **Where we go from here: Applying the Lessons Learned**

As we think about how our Federal partners can help other communities apply the lessons we've learned in Portland, the first thing to note is how encouraging it is to have partners who are serious about helping build livable communities. Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Administrator Peter Rogoff has already had the FTA act on a number of key issues that would accelerate the delivery and improve the quality of highly beneficial transit projects across the country. These steps will ensure that economic development and environmental benefits are considered in New Starts project ratings, as Congress intended, rather than rewarding sprawl as previous policies directed. Under Administrator Rogoff, the FTA is also taking encouraging steps to better recognize and support walking and biking in connection with the use of transit. He is also ensuring that FTA is fulfilling Congress' will as it considers funding streetcar projects under the Small Starts program to streetcar projects. These are the types of policy direction that TriMet has long encouraged at FTA, and it is heartening to see that the FTA is once again working to support transit's role in building livable communities.

We are also hugely encouraged by the cooperation of Secretaries Donovan and LaHood and Administrator Jackson through their interagency Sustainable Communities Partnership. By breaking down the administrative silos between and among their agencies, the Partnership is helping communities make wise choices that integrate transportation, housing and land use considerations. By sharing their expertise across programs and rewarding the behavior they want to see, the agencies are leveraging their combined programs to help communities across the country plan for and attain their vision of sustainability and community livability. With the announcement of U.S. DOT's Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants, we were pleased to see these new approaches result in a better balance among the types of projects being supported by federal investment and a strong tie to the range of potential benefits and impacts the projects would have in their communities.

What the Administration has proposed will go a long way toward supporting the development of livable communities. One concern is that initial proposals out of HUD for their Sustainable Communities grants do not mandate a role for transit – which we know is essential for making livable communities. This may be appropriate for the regional planning grants, but not so for the community challenge grants, which appear more focused on implementation. Supporting actual project implementation that embodies the outcomes we're striving for will be key to building sustainable communities. Transit agencies must be at the table with cities, metropolitan planning organization (MPOs) and housing developers to make this happen. The importance of this region-wide coordination is a key lesson from our experience in the Portland region.

There are numerous examples of promising projects underway in our region, which could use direct support and which might be models for other areas. For example, we are currently working with the Housing Authority of Portland to improve transit access as part of the Hillsdale Terrace redevelopment project for which they have applied to the HOPE VI program. While we recognize that the current use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to fund the initiative may dictate which recipients are eligible for grants, there is a way to ensure transit agency participation in these planning efforts, either through heavily weighted criteria for partnership or through a direct requirement that transit be at the table.

It would also seem that, although we do need to strengthen capacity-building among MPOs for integrated regional planning, these initiatives must also support technical capacity-building within transit agencies (something we have, but most do not) to be viable partners with MPOs on these planning efforts, especially those that are modeling-heavy.

While the agencies in the Partnership are working hard to help advance sustainability in communities across the country, the vast oversubscription of the TIGER and FTA's Transit Investments for Greenhouse Gas and Energy Reductions (TIGGER) grant programs demonstrates the scale of unmet demand for resources to implement the projects that will make our communities more livable. Just as our interstate highway system was built with major federal investments in the last century, we cannot expect to build the transit, bike and pedestrian infrastructure we need to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century without a central federal role and substantial federal investment to complement that made locally.

In evaluating and financially supporting sustainability investments, it is important for the federal government to be mindful of the need to consider costs and benefits over the lifecycle of the investment. While the TIGER and TIGGER grant programs laudably evaluated lifecycle costs and benefits, there are other areas of federal transportation programming where upfront capital costs are considered to the exclusion of operational savings. In our experience, these potentially higher first costs are often recouped in the near term through reduced operating expenses. The New Starts program for major transit capital projects is one such area where innovation can often be discouraged due to an emphasis on upfront cost-containment.

In conclusion, let me emphasize that the future prosperity of our nation, in many ways, will rely on a dramatically expanded public transit system—a system that provides high quality transportation for most of our citizens. It must be a system that helps reverse the threat of global climate change. And, finally, it must facilitate the integration of our transportation and land use systems. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.