

Average number of transit rides each year per Oregonian

Our strategy

The ODOT Public Transportation Division (PTD) partners with local transit providers to offer safe and cost-effective public transportation. This system supports the state's economy and quality of life across diverse geographies and people. Public transportation provides vital access to essential services and transportation for those who cannot or choose not to drive, while reducing congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Demand for public transportation in Oregon is expected to grow in response to changing demographics. Public transportation is an integral component of Oregon's multimodal transportation system that helps Oregon's diverse communities work by getting people where they want to go. The *Oregon Public Transportation Plan* (2018) outlines policies to increase ridership as well as improve transit outreach, comprehensive planning for transit, and transit facilities.

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund was included as part of the [HB 2017 Keep Oregon Moving](#) to provide funding to local transit providers. In addition, one goal of ODOT's [Strategic Action Plan](#) (2024) is to improve access to active and public transportation. To this end, ODOT is focused on enhancing accessibility for people experiencing disabilities, refining its grants programs that support transit, improving trip planning tools, and establishing priority corridors as part of the Oregon Highway Plan. Strong partnerships with local transit providers to enhance investments in public transportation are key to increasing ridership.

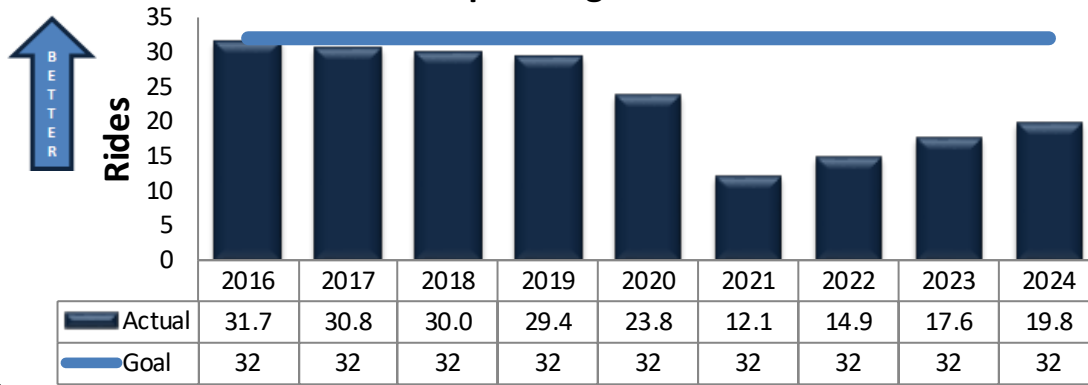
About the target

The target of 32 rides each year per Oregonian was set in 2018 based on 2011-2016 ridership levels.

How we are doing

In 2024, the average number of transit riders per Oregonian was 19.8. While ridership per capita has increased by 64 percent since 2020 and ridership at several agencies is above pre-pandemic levels, the lingering effects of the pandemic continue to impact public transit.

Transit Rides - Average number of transit rides each year per Oregonian



Note: The most recent fiscal year uses National Transit Database (NTD) monthly ridership reports where they are available, the Oregon Public Transit Information System (OPTIS) for data not available through NTD, and the latest Certified Population Estimate from Portland State University's (PSU) Population Research Center. Both data sources may undergo minor revisions in the following fiscal year when PSU updates its estimate and OPTIS and NTD monthly ridership is reconciled to NTD annual reports. NTD annual ridership data is typically published until 12 to 18 months after the close of a given fiscal year.

Transit rides, cont.

Factors affecting results and what needs to be done

Ridership is affected by internal factors – ones that transit agencies can control – such as service frequency, service reliability, geographical coverage and fares. Ridership is also affected by external factors – those that transit agencies cannot control – such as demographics, population growth, car ownership, fuel prices, teleworking, and to a certain extent perceptions of personal safety on transit. For example, when interest rates are low and gasoline is inexpensive, more adults tend to purchase vehicles and rely upon personal automobiles for transportation.

Internal and external factors can often work together to increase (or decrease) ridership. High frequency routes through dense neighborhoods tend to generate higher levels of ridership, while low frequency routes, low-density neighborhoods or rural



areas tend to generate lower levels of ridership.

Local transit providers determine their local needs and priorities. Funding supports increasing ridership, as well as adding or replacing buses, procuring technology, passenger shelters, and service planning.

Maintaining and expanding service is crucial to increasing ridership. Transit service levels were reduced due to COVID-19. Service continues to be affected by inflation, supply chain disruptions, and staffing shortages. As the population grows, the demand for transportation options will surpass available service in less than a decade.

TriMet, Cherriots (Salem Area Mass Transit), and Lane Transit District currently provide over 90 percent of all transit trips in Oregon. Although all Oregon public transit providers invest to serve ridership, the largest agencies will provide the largest gains.

About the data

The KPM was calculated using a combination of data collected by the Federal Transit Administration and PTD. Population estimates come from Portland State University's Population Research Center Certified Population Estimates.

Large urban providers report ridership to the National Transit Database (NTD) monthly and annually, while some smaller agencies report annually. Smaller and rural providers report ridership to the PTD Oregon Public Transit Information System (OPTIS) database on a quarterly basis.

To calculate the ridership KPM, NTD data was used for agencies that report to NTD either monthly or annually. For agencies that do not report to NTD or for which NTD data is currently not available, OPTIS data was used.

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