Public Transit Vehicle Condition

Percent of Public Transit vehicles that meet replacement standards

Our strategy

ODOT's Public Transportation Division (PTD) partners with local transit providers to offer safe and cost-effective public transportation. In 2019, 52 transit providers had over 1,000 vehicles in active service that had been purchased with state or local funding. This figure does not include vehicles purchased by TriMet and Cherriots since they report directly to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and have traditionally received relatively little state investment for public transportation vehicles.

The goal is to keep transit vehicles in a "State of Good Repair" (SGR) based on guidance from the FTA to ensure these vehicles can operate at optimal performance. PTD calculates the expected useful life of various types and sizes of vehicles based on their mileage, age, and condition. The SGR helps determine when a vehicle should be replaced to ensure dependable travel, prioritize resources for replacement, and allows time to purchase replacement vehicles before maintenance or rebuild costs escalate.

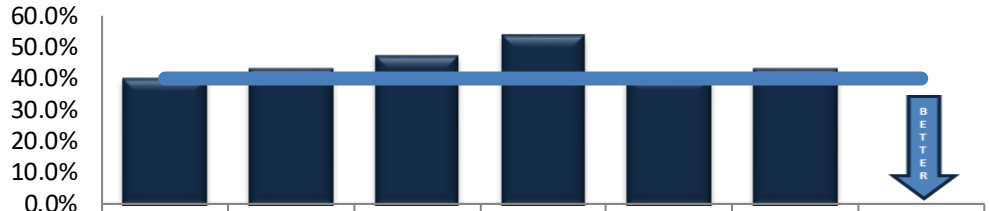
About the target

ODOT holds a security interest in buses that transit providers own, operate, and purchase using state or federal funds. ODOT's goal is for transit providers to schedule replacement of these vehicles before increased maintenance costs or breakdowns occur. Using the most cost effective investment strategy requires planning for replacement purchases while vehicles are within a year of the end of their useful life, when maintenance or rebuild costs could escalate.

How we are doing and how we compare

PTD distributes approximately $12 million annually in federal revenue to Oregon transit providers to replace vehicles. In addition, the Oregon Transportation Commission allocated $5 million annually for 2019, 2020, and 2021 to address inadequate funding for transit vehicles. PTD is distributing these funds over a six year period to allow for gradual replacement of vehicles and to avoid having a

Transit Vehicle Condition - Percent of Public Transit Buses exceeding useful life.



	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Actual/Forecast	40.4%	43.5%	47.4%	54.3%	40.8%	43.4%	
Goal	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%

Facts

The majority of small rural transit buses are expected to last only 5 years or 150,000 miles.

Of the 316 active vehicles in this category in 2019, 25% are past their useful life and another 35% are nearing or at the end of their useful life.

Public Transit Vehicle Condition, cont.

large number of vehicles needing to be replaced at one time.

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) created as part of the 2017 transportation funding package, *Keep Oregon Moving*. Beginning in 2019, STIF is providing new dedicated funding to expand public transportation, provide access to job sites and public services, improve mobility, relieve congestion, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

STIF funds help transit providers provide the local match that is necessary to leverage additional federal funding for vehicles. Transit providers are responsible for determining their local needs and priorities, but it is estimated that a total of 329 new vehicles will be purchased using STIF funds by the end of the 2019-2021 biennium.

Even with STIF funds, PTD estimates that funding will not be adequate; however, this new funding program could bring the fleet closer to the desired goal of less than 40 percent of the fleet exceeding SGR in 2021.

Additional funding will be needed to maintain the goal in 2021 and beyond due to an increase in the number of vehicles projected to exceed useful life by 2021 or 2022. In particular, many of the large, expensive buses that were purchased with funding from the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will soon need to be replaced. Planning for replacement of these vehicles is critical since it can take almost three years to design, order, build, and deliver the larger buses.

Data is not currently available to compare Oregon with other states. A new federal requirement for state SGR targets and reporting could allow future comparisons.

Factors affecting results and what needs to be done

Local transit providers decide which vehicles to replace based on vehicle condition and their ability to meet local match requirements. Oregon transit providers rely on the state Special Transportation Fund (STF) and STIF to provide local match funding for FTA grants which help providers maintain an optimum replacement schedule for their fleets.

The STF has been declining since 2015, making it increasingly difficult for transit providers to meet local match requirements. Ongoing STF and STIF funding stability will be essential to meet this goal.

About the data

ODOT requires transit providers to report the condition and mileage of their vehicles through the Oregon Public Transit Information System (OPTIS) database and to FTA's National Transit Database. Large urban transit providers, such as TriMet and Cherriots, report this information directly.

Contact information

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Data sources

Oregon Public Transit Information System
National Transit Database