



Minutes

Meeting:	TriMet Board of Directors Regular Board Meeting	Date:	September 24, 2025
Board Members Present:	JT Flowers Erin Graham Robert Kellogg Thomas Kim LaVerne Lewis Kathy Wai (for public forum only)	Board Members Absent:	Tyler Frisbee Kathy Wai

TriMet Board Business meetings and public forum are available via web video stream. You can access the archived meetings and materials at trimet.org/meetings/board.

Following Public Forum, President Lewis called the business meeting to order at 9:45am.

1. Committee Reports

Committee on Accessible Transportation (CAT) Annual Luncheon – Director Graham provided a summary of the September 17 CAT business meeting. Tommy Hunt, Director of Security at TriMet, provided updates on both Safety and Security staff and blue light phones. CAT also received reports from various subcommittees, including the LIFT Subcommittee, Fixed Route Subcommittee, Wayfinding Subcommittee, and the 82nd Avenue Community Advisory Committee. CAT Chair, Jan Campbell, read a letter on behalf of CAT to the board regarding service reductions and introduced a number of CAT members who attended this morning both in-person and virtually. The next CAT business meeting is scheduled for October 15.

Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC) – Director Flowers provided a summary of the July 23 MPAC meeting. The committee received two briefings from Metro staff regarding a State Legislative Update and also an overview of Metro’s State-Mandated Regional Housing Coordination Strategy. Metro’s State Affairs Staff provided a summary of the 2025 legislative session ending in June and outcomes specifically related to land use, transportation, and housing bills. Metro staff then shared a summary of the Regional Housing Coordination Strategy, which is a requirement of the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis. The next MPAC meeting is tonight, September 24.

Crash Advisory Committee – Director Kellogg provided a summary of the August 14 Crash Advisory Committee meeting. Committee members reviewed and discussed the crashes they were assigned. This was determined first by the committee voting on the highest-priority crashes from May 31 to November 30, 2024, and they were assigned based on which they felt most strongly about. The committee further discussed the process of reporting crashes and looking into the possibility of all crashes, including those that are not required to be reported to the FTA, utilizing the same reporting forms and process as those that are required to be reported to the FTA. The next Crash Advisory Committee meeting will take place spring 2026.

Finance and Audit Committee (F&A) – Director Kim shared a summary of this morning’s F&A meeting. Staff provided an update on the FY25 external audit conducted by Eide Bailly. Management reported there are no findings to date in the external audit. Auditors from Eide Bailly will present the results of the audit at the October 22 TriMet Board Meeting. The committee also discussed a budget balancing score card presented by management of financial information for FY26 through FY240 outlining new revenue, service cuts and spending reductions. This budget score card will also be discussed at the November 12 Board Retreat.

General Manager FY25 Performance Evaluation – President Lewis presented the annual FY25 Performance Evaluation of General Manager, Sam Desue, Jr., covering the time period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. A copy of the report evaluation is located in the meeting archives at www.trimet.org. Key deliverables for the General Manager this past fiscal year included 15 deliverables focused on ridership growth, community engagement, safety and security, workforce stability, infrastructure, and financial stewardship.

The General Manager additionally advanced innovation and equity initiatives by providing same-day service for paratransit-eligible riders and addressing “first and last mile” challenges with other mobility options, along with leadership development, while emphasizing safety, accessibility, and fiscal responsibility.

Sam Desue has successfully met the Board’s FY25 objectives, delivering on business goals and advancing strategic priorities. Under his leadership, TriMet was recognized by Forbes in 2024 as one of Oregon’s top five employers – and the best Oregon-based employer overall.

He has navigated significant fiscal challenges stemming from an ever-changing political and regulatory environment, the pressing needs of asset maintenance and replacement, global supply chain disruptions, and reduced financial resources.

Despite these obstacles, TriMet continues to move forward with focus and determination. Guided by Sam’s leadership and the Board’s vision, we are confident in the agency’s ability to meet challenges head-on, seize opportunities, grow the ridership, and deliver the safe, reliable, and innovative transit service our region deserves.

President Lewis opened the floor to comments from other board members. Following comments, she continued with the report. Now would usually be the time where the Board would consider a motion to adjust the General Manager’s annual compensation. And, this being a year in which the General Manager successfully met all expectations on all performance objectives, we would typically give our General Manager a merit increase.

However, given TriMet’s financial deficit and required service and staffing reductions, both the General Manager and Board agree that forgoing a merit increase is the most responsible course. This decision demonstrates fiscal discipline at the top and reinforces the agency’s commitment to financial stability.

The Board reserves the right to revisit this issue in the future as circumstances warrant.

2. General Manager Report

June, July and August Ridership

General Manager Desue provided an overview of ridership during the summer months. In June, TriMet provided 5.6 million total rides, increasing ridership more than one percent, over June 2024. In July, TriMet provided 5.7 million rides, marking a 5% increase in ridership over July 2024. To give some perspective, that 5% percent represents an additional 62,500 rides for the month of July. August ridership came in 5.5 million rides, which was about the same as August 2024. While overall ridership was flat for August, weekly bus ridership was up 4.7%, compared to last year.

Budget Update

As we work to close our \$300 million dollar budget gap, our efforts for additional funding at the state level have been put on pause. By now, you may have seen that the special session vote in the legislature has been postponed until next week. We remain hopeful about the passage of an increase in the STIF. While it is only a temporary increase, its approval would buy us more time to work with lawmakers on a steady, permanent increase in transit funding. We have already begun reducing expenses on the administrative side but today, our focus must be on the service cuts ahead and the difficult steps we need to take now.

Service Cuts Outreach

We know that every service cut, no matter how small, affects someone. To lessen the impact on our staff, riders and the greater community, TriMet will make smaller service cuts to start. This approach provides us with some additional time to work with our riders and learn how we can best serve them, going forward. Mr. Desue introduced Director of Mobility Planning and Policy, Tom Mills, and Jennifer Koozer, TriMet's Director of Community Affairs and Engagement, to talk about what is planned and the potential cuts we may be facing, as well as provide a look at the outreach plan and how we will be soliciting feedback on the potential cuts coming late next year and the year after. A copy of the presentation can be located in the meeting archives at www.trimet.org.

Executive Team Updates

Mr. Desue stated "As General Manager, I am leading the way in our cost-cutting measures here at TriMet. A few weeks ago, I shared my plans with staff to streamline the Executive Leadership Team. I made a commitment to all TriMet employees that changes would start at the top. These changes to our Executive Team aren't just good, they're great! They help set us up for organizational success for years to come. The decisions I have made, gave way to opportunities for two hard-working and dedicated women." Mr. Desue then introduced TriMet's new Chief Operations Officer, Inessa M. Vitko and new Executive Director of Transportation, Mary L. Hill. As Chief Operations Officer, Inessa will focus on day-to-day operations of our Transportation and Maintenance Divisions. Mary L. Hill as Executive Director of Transportation will have oversight of Bus, Rail, WES, LIFT, and Portland Streetcar. Both Inessa and Mary started their professional careers with TriMet and spent years coming up through the ranks. Inessa's first role was a training services administrator, and Mary just like myself started out as a bus operator. Both Inessa and Mary then shared their thanks and appreciations.

Monthly Operations Analysis

Mr. Desue introduced Les Spitler, Director of Transit System Support Services, to present the Monthly Operations Analysis. A copy of the report is located in the meeting archives at www.trimet.org.

Monthly Safety and Security Update

Mr. Desue invited Andrew Wilson, Executive Director of Safety and Security, to come forward and present a monthly Safety and Security Update. A copy of the presentation is located in the meeting archives at www.trimet.org.

General Updates

Mr. Desue shared details from his recent meetings and travels. As TriMet's representative on JPACT, last week, I traveled to Washington, D.C. with fellow leaders from 11 public agencies around the Portland Region. We met with the majority of Oregon's congressional delegation, as well as staff from USDOT, FHWA and FTA, to advocate for our shared regional transportation priorities. We emphasized the importance of preserving federal funding programs for transit and infrastructure, and we highlighted our shared support for regional projects including 82nd Avenue, TV Hwy, Montgomery Park Streetcar and IBR.

While in D.C., I also met individually with most of the Oregon congressional offices to provide updates on TriMet's projects and budget challenges. I am pleased to report that the members of our congressional delegation are fighting hard to protect the CIG program that projects like 82nd and TV Hwy rely on. Finally, leadership staff and I met with FTA Administrator Marc Molinaro in Boston. We were one of only six transit agencies to meet with the administrator. It was a good meeting, as the administrator knew of the problems we were facing. We outlined our safety and security efforts for him, talked about projects that were in the works, and reassured him that our strategic plan was helping to guide us. Again, a great conversation and an important one as we work to continually improve our relationship with the FTA.

Innovation Award Winners

Mr. Desue shared while on the East Coast, the American Public Transportation Association awarded TriMet another Award for Innovation. He introduced a video that highlighted a creative solution the TriMet Maintenance of Way team created to combat a big issue facing transit agencies across the country. The video can be viewed as part of the September 24, 2025 meeting video on www.youtube.com/trimet. Mr. Desue then introduced Rail Maintenance of Way manager Donovan Young and Assistant Rail Manager Sean Hall. This is the second consecutive year TriMet has been awarded the APTA Innovation award. APTA has also awarded TriMet Gold awards for Rail Safety, Security and Management for the last three years straight. Our peer agencies are taking note, and these innovative solutions are making transit better, not just at TriMet, but also for transit riders across the country.

Employee Recognition

Mr. Desue invited Director of Accessible Transportation Programs, Eileen Collins Turvey up to introduce TriMet LIFT Operator Sue Leavy, who not only serves some of TriMet's most vulnerable riders with care and integrity, but she literally saved a person's life. The recognition of Sue can be viewed as part of the September 24, 2025 meeting video on www.youtube.com/trimet.

Consent Agenda

- Approval of Board Meeting Minutes for July 23, 2025
- Resolution 25-09-45 – Authorizing a Contract Modification with Mass. Electric Construction Company for Construction Manager/General Contractor Services for Six Elements of the Type 1 Traction Power Substation Replacement Project
- Resolution 25-09-46 – Authorizing a Modification of the Contract with Trapeze Software Group for the Tripbroker API for Trapeze PASS Cloud Hosting Services

Action: Director Graham moved to pull Resolution 25-09-45 from the Consent Agenda. Director Kellogg moved for approval of the Consent Agenda with the removal of Resolution 25-09-45. Director Flowers seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

4. Resolutions

Resolution 25-09-45 – Authorizing a Contract Modification with Mass. Electric Construction Company for Construction Manager/General Contractor Services for Six Elements of the Type 1 Traction Power Substation Replacement Project

General Manager Desue discussed Resolution 25-09-45. This resolution seeks Board authorization for Contract Modification #2, with Mass. Electric Construction Company for the Type 1 Traction Power Substation Replacement Project. This comes after the Board approved Resolution 25-03-14 for pre-construction services and Resolution 25-06-32 for Modification #1. The traction power substation replacement project is a multi-year effort that is being managed as a multiple element project. Modification

#1 authorized up to \$4.9 million Dollars to procure long-lead items for the E. 181st Avenue part of the project. Modification #2 would allow Mass Electric to procure long-lead items for five other project elements and move forward with construction on all six Traction Power Substation Replacements. All six sites are located along TriMet's original Banfield MAX Blue alignment, installed in 1983. With this project, the existing traction power substations at each site will be removed and replaced with a new, prefabricated substation that: complies with current safety standards, provides more space for maintenance activities and improves heat resilience for future, extreme weather events. This resolution would authorize an increase in the CM/GC contract of \$15.5 million dollars for the purchase of long-lead items. It also authorizes an increase of \$14 million dollars for construction services, for a total contract increase of \$29.5 million dollars. Along with these increases, the resolution seeks change order authority of 10%. That increases the contract authority by \$32.5 million dollars, raising the total contract amount to \$37.57 million dollars. The amount is included in the Maintenance Division's FY2026 budget and future fiscal year budget forecasts for the division.

Action: Director Kim moved for approval of Resolution 25-09-45. Director Kellogg seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Resolution 25-09-47 – Approving TriMet's Updated 2025 Title VI Program

General Manager Desue discussed Resolution 25-09-47. Title VI was enacted as part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Under the Civil Rights Act, the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) and FTA require transit agencies to update and submit their Title VI Programs to the FTA every three years. Therefore, as a condition of receiving federal funds, TriMet must document the Board's review and approval of its updated 2025 Title VI Program and submit it to the FTA by October 1st. A copy of the updated 2025 Title VI Report is included in the Board packet. Between submittals of TriMet's Title VI Programs, the Board regularly reviews and approves Title VI analyses accompanying any proposed major service or fare change. As such, all analyses conducted since TriMet's 2022 submittal are included as attachments in the Program document. Also included are documents, analysis briefs, and other materials that satisfy all 16 of the FTA's Title VI reporting requirements, listed in the Board Memo of your packet. There is no financial impact associated with the updated Title VI Program.

Action: Director Graham moved for approval of Resolution 25-09-47. Director Flowers seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Resolution 25-09-48 – Authorizing a Contract with Paladin Technologies, Inc. for Milestone Licensing and Care Support Services for TriMet's Information Technology Division

General Manager Desue discussed Resolution 25-09-48. TriMet's Information Technology, or IT, Division manages an extensive and growing CCTV or closed circuit network that currently includes about 10,000 cameras. In addition to the cameras themselves, the IT Division manages the network, servers and software; a system that relies on licensed software provided by Milestone Systems. Given the size and complexity of TriMet's CCTV environment, the Milestone technical support services are extensive. As is typical for systems of this scale, TriMet maintains a support contract with Milestone that provides regular software updates, technical support, and advantageous pricing on additional device licenses. The support contract is purchased through an authorized retailer, such as Paladin Technologies, using a competitive bidding process. TriMet received 4 bids in response to an Invitation Bid for Milestone licensing and technical support. TriMet determined that Paladin was the lowest responsive bidder, at \$2.86 million dollars. The bid came in more than \$1 million dollars below TriMet's Independent Cost Estimate for the 5-year contract. Funds for the contract will be drawn each fiscal year from the Board-adopted budget for IT operating expenses. Approval of the resolution has no financial impact.

Action: Director Kim moved for approval of Resolution 25-09-48. Director Flowers seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

President Lewis paused the Regular Business Meeting and convened the TriMet Contract Review Board (TCRB) to consider the last resolution.

Resolution 25-09-49 – Authorizing an Exemption from Low Bid Requirements to Procure Construction Services for the Powell Garage Fuel Cell Electric Bus Maintenance Facility Upgrade Project

General Manager Desue discussed Resolution 25-09-49. This resolution requests that the Board, acting as TCRB, authorize an exemption from low bid requirements to allow a best value Competitive RFP process to procure construction services, and a key specialty trade partner, for the Powell Garage Fuel Cell Electric Buses Maintenance Facility Upgrade Project.

On May 2, 2025, TriMet obtained a \$39 million dollar Federal Low or No Emission Grant that will provide us with:

- Up to 14 Hydrogen Fuel Cell Electric buses or FCEBs
- Facility upgrades at Powell Garage to maintain hydrogen vehicles
- A hydrogen fueling station, and
- Training for the mechanics who will work on the buses.

The Powell Garage FCEB Maintenance Facility Upgrade Project will provide Fuel Cell Electric Buses to support the planned 82nd Avenue Transit Improvement Project. At this time, development services for building modifications for the fueling infrastructure have been implemented, and 30% project design has nearly been achieved. TriMet is ready to begin the process of selecting a construction contractor. This project is complex, requires exclusive expertise in selective applications and involves a wide and complex market structure. The TCRB's approval of the exemption from low bid to allow a best value competitive RFP procurement process will give TriMet the ability to select a CM/GC services contractor based on factors other than the cost. TriMet will use the RFP process to obtain a contractor to provide CM/GC services, along with a key specialty trade partner with expertise in hydrogen infrastructure design and construction for the project. The selected CM/GC contractor will help establish design constructability, costs, and schedule certainty throughout. The Findings in support of the exemption are attached as Exhibit A to the Resolution. A public hearing was held on the proposed Findings on September 4, 2025, and no objections were made.

Action: Director Flowers moved for approval of Resolution 25-09-49. Director Kim seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval. President Lewis reconvened the TriMet Board of Directors for the remainder of the business meeting.

5. HOUSEKEEPING MATTERS

President Lewis provided two reminders to the Board: to submit their comments on the draft FY26 General Manager Performance Objectives by October 3 and of the Executive Session scheduled for the morning of Thursday, October 9 to evaluate the General Manager's performance.

Hearing no further business, President Lewis adjourned the meeting at 12:01pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Falesha Thrash

Falesha Thrash, Board Administrator and recording secretary