

TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL BURTON, CHAIRMAN
OF THE METROPOLITAN SERVICE DISTRICT
BEFORE THE HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

March 7, 1979

My name is Michael Burton, Chairman of the Metropolitan Service District Council. I am here to offer testimony in support of the Governor's budget recommendation providing general revenue funds to support the Light Rail portion of the Banfield Transitway Project.

My remarks today are intended to provide a brief review of the work done in the Portland metropolitan area which led our Council on February 8th, to adopt the following resolution:

BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE
METROPOLITAN SERVICE DISTRICT

For the purpose of requesting)	
legislative support for State)	Resolution No 79 - 14
general fund appropriations for)	
the Banfield Transitway Project)	Introduced by Marge Kafoury

WHEREAS, The proposed Banfield Transitway Project has received necessary approval from all local jurisdictions in the Portland metropolitan area and from the Oregon Department of Transportation, and

WHEREAS, The Governor of the State of Oregon has recommended a state general fund appropriation of \$17.8 million (as of February 1, 1979) the required match to the federal grant for the project, and

WHEREAS, It has been determined by Tri-Met that successful operation of light rail transit in the I-205 to Gresham portion of the corridor is not dependent upon increased population density,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED That the Council of the MSD hereby requests that the Legislature appropriate \$17.8 million (as of February 1, 1979) over the period of the next three bienniums as matching funds to the federal grant for the Banfield Project.

ADOPTED By the Council of the Metropolitan Service District this 8th day of February, 1979.

As you know, earlier this year the MSD assumed the transportation planning function of the Columbia Region Association of Governments. With it, came a legacy of years of transportation analysis and intergovernmental coordination which led to the selection of the Eastside Corridor as the priority regional corridor and the Banfield Transitway project from among dozens of alternatives studied.

As the federally designated agency responsible for metropolitan transportation planning, the regional agency's role was to provide a forum for all the jurisdictions in the region to discuss areawide transportation problems and reach consensus on transportation solutions. At the same time, they looked for solutions that dealt with the broader implications of land use planning such as housing, projected population and other regional concerns.

To support the decision-making process, the agency undertook a series of basic studies which identified where people live and work, where the major travel problem areas exist and what priority the problems should have. A conclusion of this study was that the Eastside Corridor through Portland and Multnomah County had major problems that had to be solved. The Banfield Transitway was given priority status by the region for project development in 1977, and a major portion of the region's Interstate Transfer dollars were reserved to implement it.

Several factors led to prioritizing the Banfield Corridor for transitway development. First, the area served by the corridor has and will continue to have the highest population and employment densities in the region. In fact the corridor currently has sufficient density to support a Light Rail investment. Second, the corridor currently experiences the highest travel volumes in the region. Even more important is the fact that it exhibits the highest work commute volumes in the region. These types of trips are particularly important to the success of any transit investment. Third, the corridor currently contains about one-third of the region's lane-miles of congestion -- and therefore experiences the worst travel delays and neighborhood impacts in the region. Fourth, the corridor currently contains three times the amount of regionally significant air pollutant areas than any other corridor in the region. Finally, the proposed Banfield Transitway provides the radial transit link required to make the I-205 project work within the eastside transportation network.

ODOT and Tri-Met were authorized by CRAG to conduct detailed project planning studies. The studies measure project alternatives against project goals such as cost effectiveness, long-term operating cost savings, improved transit service for Eastside residents, minimum community disruption and support for the economic vitality of the jurisdictions served. From this analysis, the Banfield Freeway expansion and Burnside Light Rail Project was selected.

While the Metropolitan Service District Council has only been officially constituted since January 1, 1979, Council members have been receiving briefings on regional transportation issues since our election in November. In addition, representatives from Tri-Met, the Oregon Department of Transportation and our staff have made detailed presentations on the Banfield project. We have also examined various plans and have reviewed the reasons the project was selected from among all of the alternatives studied. In adopting Resolution 79-14 the Council affirmed MSD's support for the Banfield Transitway as the best eastside solution. At the same time, I think we must keep in mind that the entire transportation system is a regional matter and MSD must continue to seek out good solutions to serve all parts of the metropolitan area.

To support this endorsement, the region has committed over a \$100 million of federal funds toward project implementation. In addition, we have agreed to send \$34.5 million in federal dollars committed to support highway improvement in the Portland region to other parts of the state. In return, we ask for state funding support to provide local match for the Banfield and other regional transportation projects.

Thank you for allowing me to comment for the Metropolitan Service District in support of the Governor's proposal.