



AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION

Division 757

Schoppert Hall
1801 NE Couch St, Portland OR 97232-3054
Phone 503-232-9144 • FAX 503-230-2589

Shirley Block
President-Business
Representative

Jonathan J. Hunt
Vice President-Assistant
Business Representative

Mary Longoria
Financial Secretary-Treasurer
Recording Secretary

June 2, 2017

Dear TriMet Riders and Community Members,

Today, ATU 757 attempted for a second time in as many months to bargain in good faith with TriMet regarding the appropriate response to operator and rider safety aboard public transit in Portland. Unfortunately, the union's proposal to reverse the trend of militarized public transit security was rejected without even cursory consideration by TriMet executives.

Our offer included a reasonable increase in the number of in-house, well-trained Fare Inspectors at the agency (as opposed to TriMet's reactionary plan to increase private security and armed police), the reinstatement of the Rider Advocate program, and a commitment to monthly meetings between union leadership and TriMet management to discuss new strategies, best practices, trainings, and public campaigns to prevent future violent acts on TriMet property. This proposal is consistent with both recent testimony that the union provided to the TriMet Board of Directors and the public safety position described in our recent letter to union members and the public after the brutal white supremacist double murder aboard MAX light rail last Friday.

Despite a hasty rejection by agency executives, our offer remains on the table and we are hopeful that transit advocates in the community will help pressure the agency to reconsider. We encourage you to contact TriMet at 503-238-RIDE (7433) or online at trimet.org/contact and insist agency executives listen to transit workers about transit safety.

Our advocacy for a demilitarized, decriminalized transit system isn't simply a response to the recent, high-profile violence against transit riders in Portland. It is a long standing, carefully considered response to the increase in violent assaults against our own union brothers and sisters. In 2016, there were at least 54 serious assaults on TriMet bus drivers. In 2017, we are on pace to exceed that number. And neither of these counts include the dozens of daily "minor" assaults on drivers, such as sexual harassment and spitting.

Media historically pays little attention to these assaults, but it is well past time to address this problem. In an attempt to obscure its actual response to this situation, TriMet is already publically misrepresenting the number of Fare Inspectors and Road Supervisors that it currently

has in the field. And the expensive, inefficient investments in private security and armed police that TriMet is promising will not accomplish the outcomes that workers and riders are both asking for. Out of touch, echo-chamber management at TriMet must listen to the people who know best how to protect themselves and the passengers they care for. We are not disposable pieces of the machines that we operate. We are human beings who demand dignity and deserve a safe place to work. Just as riders deserve a safe way to get to the places they live, learn, work, play, and pray.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shirley Block". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'S'.

Shirley Block

President-Business Representative