

When you first become a Bus Operator for Tri-Met, you are told, first and foremost, that every time you get behind the wheel you must think of safety. Often the first ones on a scene of an accident, we use our bus radio system to call for police, fire or medical assistance...and we do so on a daily basis. We assist downed bikers, call for help at crash sites, find children and help the lost. Every operator tries to make the safest decision they can out on the road. Our mission is safety, and to this end we have signed this petition and have started to raise the alarm..

Collected here are the signatures of over 250+ professionals with over 2,900 years of driving experience from across the board at Tri-met. That's 2900 years of eight to twelve hour days, rain, snow or sun, rush hours or midnight. A professional driver logs seven times more miles than the average driver so that 2900 years of experience is the same as 20,000+ years of normal driving. Rail Operator, Supervisor, Bus Operator: we all speak with one voice on this issue. Together, with safety as our motivating force, we have risked our jobs to stand up and be heard. We say with clear voices:

"NO BICYCLES IN THE ROSE QUARTER TRANSIT CENTER"

We bring our years of driving experience to the table, and our dedication to safety. We have no political axe to grind and are not in opposition to Bicycles in general. But we are in opposition to bicycles in Rose Quarter Transit Center (or RQTC).

The Following document is a cry for help from the Drivers of Tri-met to the people and media of Portland. With your help we can prevent the fatal results that will no doubt occur if we remain silent, and current plans go forward. No professional driver ever willingly puts their self or others at risk, but that is exactly what we are being asked to do if bicycles are allowed traverse where multiple 20-ton busses and 3 MAX lines are maneuvering. With your help, we hope this lethal tragedy can be averted.

We cannot let the city of council of Portland squeeze a bike lane through the Rose Quarter Transit Center.

There is a terrible gravity pulling this lethal idea forward with a dangerous momentum, seemingly against all reason. Our voices are silenced by an atmosphere fear and indifference of Tri-Met management, who appear to seek only to get along with whatever force is empowering this irrational idea. Even the Union with its mission to protect the drivers seems to be sitting on its hands on an issue that can potentially not only end careers, but will cost lives.

Beyond being Bus and Rail Operators we are part of this great city. We believe in the power of its citizens to grasp the issues and rally to help save the lives of it's fellow citizens. Sadly, those making these decisions are so unaware of the safety issues down in the real world of the streets of the Rose Quarter Transit Center that an idea of squeezing in bike lanes seems like a worthy project. Such disconnection from the trenches of what it is to drive these streets can only have a lethal outcome. To fight this blindness we the Operators and Road Supervisors of Tri-Met bus and rail ask for your help.

Now I know some will say, "wait the Rose Quarter Transit Center is only 1.5 blocks of area. How can this be a big issue? There are busses, light rail and bikers downtown, right? What makes the Rose Quarter Transit Center different?" This is a great question, and one everyone should be asking.

Here is why RQTC is different.

- **Size:** Downtown the bus mall, (Temporary mall) is dozens of blocks with many stops. Usually, you only cross the light rail one time. The roads are three lanes wide, which are normally only full at rush hour. The RQTC is much smaller, at just 1.5 blocks, and here there are nine (9) bus lines arriving and departing. Even at off-hours it is not uncommon for busses to get bunched up in the RQTC because of its small size. Most bus lines have both an inbound and outbound stop, making up to 18 busses pulling in and out of a very small area.
- **Rail:** In the RQTC you not only have 1.5 blocks with nine bus lines you also have the Max trains. Here you have the Yellow line, The Blue Line and the Red Line, but coming next year you will also have the Green line. That's four (4) rail lines compressed in to one small area.
- **Ridership:** An increase in ridership means more and more busses are coming into the Rose Quarter fully loaded. This affects the safety performance of a bus as far as acceleration and stopping, and it affects the driver by increasing the possibility of distraction from within the bus.
- **Increased Ridership II:** another effect of ridership is that there are larger crowds waiting for the busses, running for the busses and running to or from the MAX. More people waiting increases the chance that someone will walk out from between a bus, dodge across the max or cross a corner - even with a don't walk sign.
- **Venue Overload:** The Rose Garden Arena and the Convention Center already over-tax the RQTC so much so that Tri-met has to have extra security just to keep the streets clear for use during event times. It is so dangerous that Tri-met demands a 5 mile and hour speed during these times.
- **Random Distraction:** Add to the already over-burdened drivers the additional distraction of the occasional wrong-way automobile. This area has a rather complicated traffic patter for street traffic, and it is not unusual for someone to turn the wrong way into a bus area. Again, it is a matter of numbers; the more cars there are, the more often this is likely to occur.

For all of the reasons listed above, Rose Quarter is unique in Portland. No single place has focused so many people, busses and rail, combined with the two major venues of the Rose Garden Arena and the Portland Convention Center.

This is why we say 'NO TO BIKE IN THE ROSE QUARTER TRANSIT CENTER'

The alternative is simple and sensible. Leave the bike lanes going around the Rose Quarter, and enforce nobikes in the Transit Center.

The Alternative?

- Keep the bike traffic going around the Rose Quarter.
- Add the enforcement Campaign, and this time give out tickets – not just warnings – to bicyclists who enter the RQTC.

There are areas cars should go and cars should not, places that busses should go and places busses should not, and there are places bicyclists should go and places they should not. All we are asking for is 1.5 block of Portland where the distraction of bikes is removed. Is this outrageous? In the name of safety – and what can be more important the lives of the people of Portland? – can we please have one little 1.5 block of area of Portland free of the distraction of bikes?

Just to be clear—Here are the reasons

Reasons For Bikers Going Around The Rose Quarter Transit Center		Reasons To Squeeze Bikers Through The Rose Quarter Transit Center.
Bus Line 77	Increase Distractions to Bus Operators	<p>Total amount of bike lanes in Portland increased by 1.5 Blocks.</p> <p>???</p>
Max Blue Line	Bus line 74	
Bus line 8	Cost of physical Rose Quarter Changes	
Increased people moving in front of busses	Bus line 36	
Cost Temporary Enforcement Campaign	Bus Line	
Bus line 35	High Volume Line 4	
Increased bike intersections	Max Green Line (Coming Soon)	
Bus line 10	Bus line 44	
Max Red Line	Max Yellow Line	
Bus line 70	Increase crowding by limiting lanes	
Increase difficulty to Max Operators	Much more dangerous in the dark.	

Again I Ask: what is so compelling about putting a bike lane through Rose Quarter Transit Center? What is so compelling that you can see past the accumulated 2,500 years of driver experience collected here? The bike lanes have gone around for years. What is so important about spending money on this issue, moving busses and leaving Operators and Management with a no-win scenario...accepting it, or fighting it and losing their jobs?

Tri-Met Operators Pushed Out On A Ledge.

Imagine you are visiting a friend in a high-rise building. This friend forces you out on a ledge a hundred stories up, tells you it's safe, then shuts the window so you cannot get back in. Now, technically your "friend" has not killed you. If you stay up there, eventually you will kill you. Your misstep, your moment of distraction, and down you come. But is your friend innocent? You cannot live on the ledge. Your friend's actions indirectly caused your death but not directly, in no way is this "Friend" innocent.

This is what the Operators of Tri-Met Max and Bus feel like. They are being pushed out on a ledge. We look in the window and there are all the people who are supposed to be protecting us. There is the city council, Tri-Met management...even the Union in the back trying to make phone calls to get the window open. All these people seem happy to see us out on the ledge.

Sooner or later when we fall, and someone is killed, they can all walk away saying "Oh, that operator was too distracted or was not paying attention", or "That operator should have seen that bicyclist with no light coming up on his blind side, or coming off the curb behind waiting pedestrians".

The point is not whose fault it is. Even if the bicyclist is riding 100% safely, eventually someone will fall off the ledge. You cannot live on a ledge. Sooner or later you will fall. The point is that those persons that really created this lethal event will go on as if nothing is wrong. They will blame the bicyclist, or they will blame the Bus or Max Operator. Someone's career will end, someone's life will end, but the same politicians and technocrats who cannot see the reason of not putting us out on the ledge will never see the reason of changing their plan to allow bicyclists back out of the RQTC. Why would they? They have the scapegoats: it is the operators of Max and bus or Biker's fault. What is a life here or there, or a career, when you have got to put a bike lane on 1.5 blocks of Portland!

Maybe the City Council should just announce what the acceptable body count of this idea is going to be? Or how many injuries are acceptable for a Bus or Max that has to make emergency stop? Maybe they should let us know that before they force us out onto the ledge.

Convenience cannot overrule safety. What compelling reason is there for adding the bike lanes in one of the most dangerous spots in this city of bicyclist? What reason can be so important that it's worth risking even a single pedestrian and bicyclist's life? The answer is none.

Please call Portland City Council Members and tell them. No Bicycles in Rose Quarter Transit Center. Tell them to listen to your drivers, and their years of real world experience on the road driving. Hear their voice and heed their warning.

City Council

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Tri-Met

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