

West Side Light Rail Time & Budget

| | 1988 Forecast | 2004 Actual | Difference |
|--------------|-------------------|---------------|--|
| Ridership | 34,150 (for 2005) | 24,000 | |
| cost of MAX | \$295-395 million | \$963 million | 144-226% over budget (or 109-172% based on later estimates) |
| opening date | 1997 | 1998 | 1 years late |

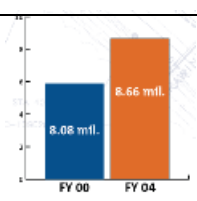
Table created from data found in [Oregonian December 15, 1988](#), [July 7, 1992](#), [July 13, 1999](#) (see below), the Trimet publication, [Westside MAX Blue Line](#);

A Trimet [FactSheet](#) claims that:: The 18-mile Westside MAX extension, built on time and on budget, began service in 1998 between downtown Portland and the western suburbs of Beaverton and Hillsboro. Construction: July 1993-Sept. 1998; Funding: \$963 million; Federal 73%; State/Local 27%

On [October 29, 1998](#), the Oregonian reported that a TRI-MET COUNT SHOWS WESTSIDE ATTRACTS 1,773 NEW RIDERS . At its final cost of \$963,000,000, that is **\$543,147 for each new rider** (\$963,000,000 / 1773 = \$543,147) A look at the numbers shows that most of the riders were former bus riders.

Sources for above chart - all quoted text below is from the actual article

| Data used in chart above is in bold | Date / Link to article | This column contains mostly cut & pasted text from news sources linked in the date column. (search terms were: westside "light rail" OR MAX million) |
|---|---|---|
| \$295-\$395 Million Riders: 34,150 | December 15, 1988 | The alignment, which was estimated to cost \$195.4 million The expense of building the line from downtown Portland to that point is expected to run \$100 million to \$200 million more. He envisioned a daily ridership of 34,150 on the route in the year 2005, |
| Open in 1997 | July 7, 1992 | "The line to Southwest 185th Avenue is scheduled to open in the fall of 1997, with the Hillsboro extension completed a year later." |
| \$963 million Opened: Sept. 12, 1998 | Westside MAX Blue Line ; | Hillsboro/City Center; * Opened: Sept. 12, 1998 * Length: 18 miles * Stations: 32 * Construction: July 1993-Sept. 1998 * Cost: \$963 million |
| 24,000 riders | railfactsheet-westside.pdf July 13, 1999 | This number comes this graphic (divided by 365) from the trimet publication, railfactsheet-westside.pdf , found on their web site in January 2007 . The graphic has since been removed from later versions of this publication. Also, a July 13, 1999 Oregonian article reported: "westside line has drawn an average of nearly 23,000 weekday riders since its opening" |



Here is what the Federal Transit Administration's "[Contractor Performance, Assessment Report](#)", *September 2007* has to say:

Table 3: As-built Project Costs as Percent of Estimate

| City | Project | Mode | As-Built Capital Cost as Percent of Estimate, Adjusted for Inflation | | |
|----------|----------------------|------|--|--------|--------|
| | | | AA/DEIS | FEIS | FFGA |
| Portland | Westside – Hillsboro | LRT | 172.4% | 119.9% | 108.7% |

(Chart reformatted to show just the Portland entry.)

Trimet's trick is to use an optimistic projection to sell the project, then come out with a realistic one much later which is more accurate.