✓ climate

✓ access

✓ equity

Fare-free transit

in the Portland region

Howard Silverman
hsilverman@pnca.edu
2018 PBOT Traffic + Transportation Course

assessments

Vera Katz report 1998-9

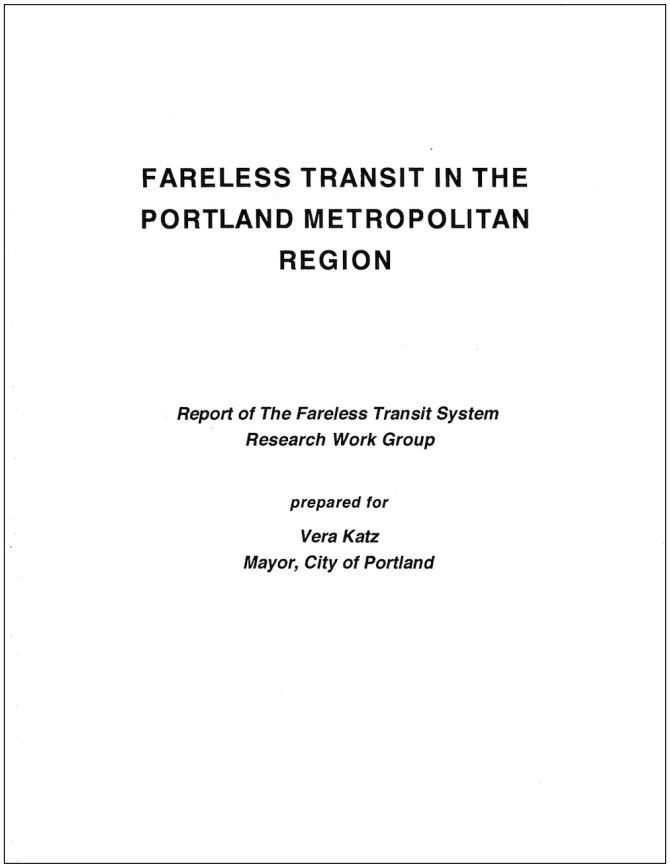


image: efiles.portlandoregon.gov/Record/3061900/File/Document

NAS report 2012

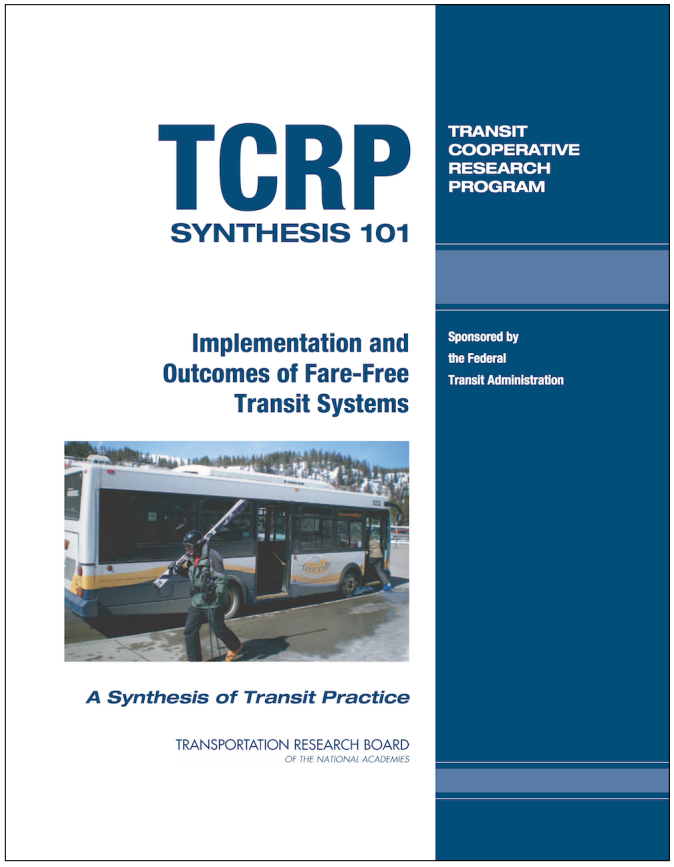


image: https://www.nap.edu/catalog/22753/implementation-and-outcomes-of-fare-free-transit-systems

1st edition 2017 2nd edition 2018

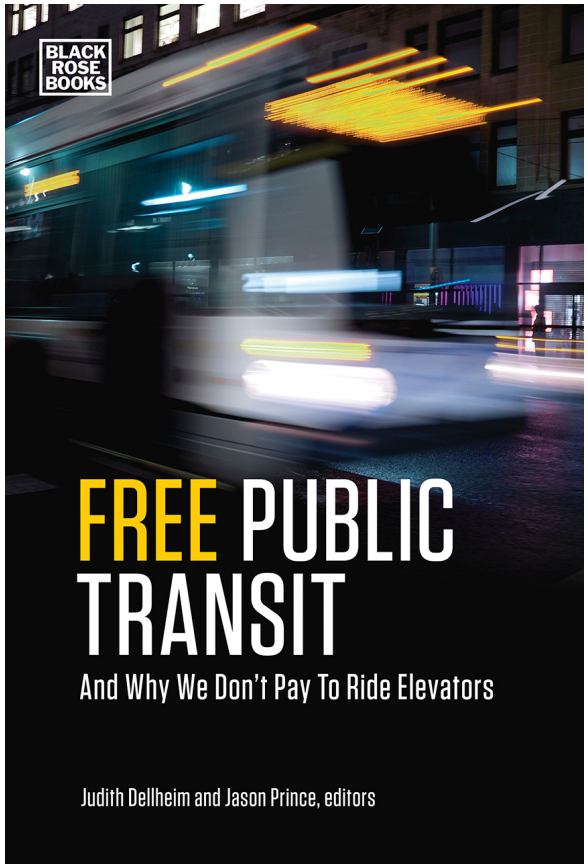


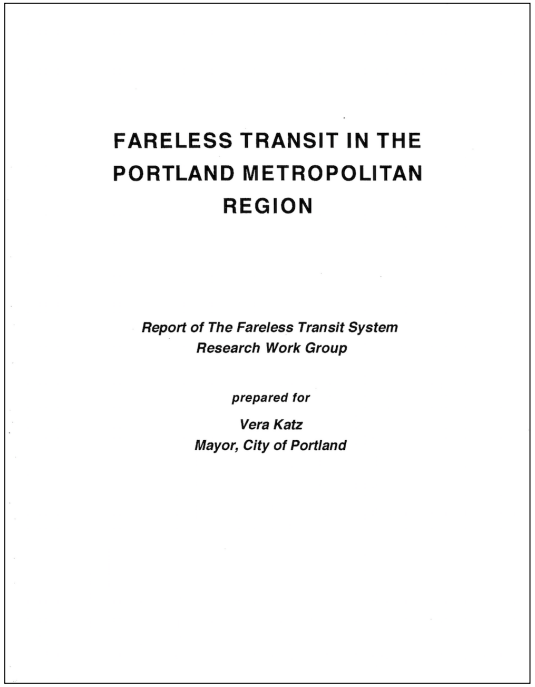
image: https://www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/distributed/F/bo31274589.html

interviews

GB Arrington

Director Strategic & Long Range Planning
TriMet (1975 - 1999)

TriMet representative



FARELESS TRANSIT IN THE PORTLAND METROPOLITAN REGION

Report of The Fareless Transit System Research Work Group

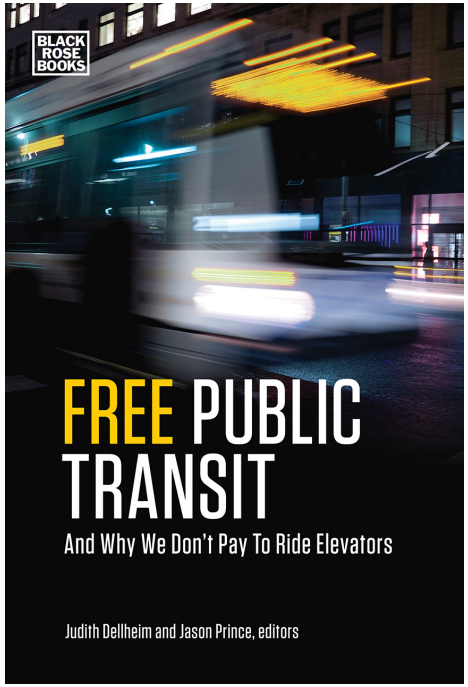
prepared for

Vera Katz
Mayor, City of Portland

Aaron Golub

Director, Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning, PSU (2015 -)

blurb



benefits

challenges

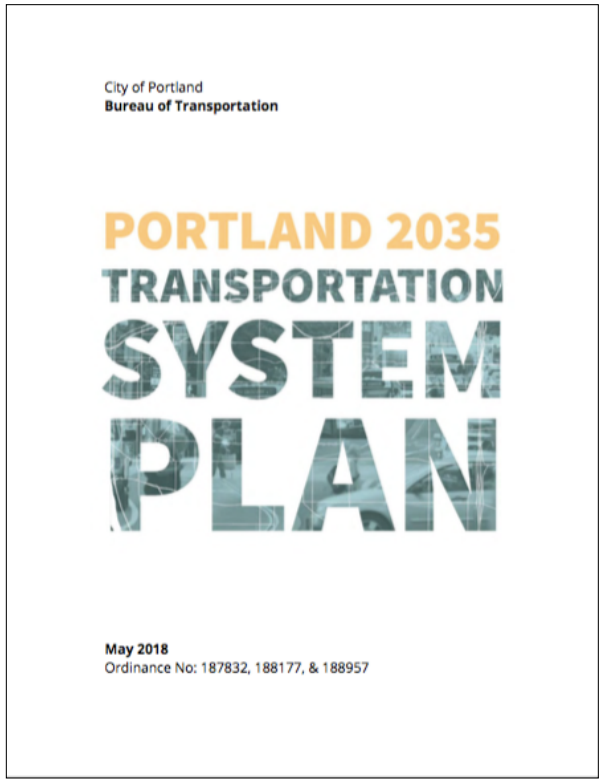
Twenty years later:
Time for another look at fare-free transit.

- ✓ climate
- ✓ access
- ✓ equity

The calculus has changed.

climate baseline

We (Portland) are not on track to meet our transit-related climate target.



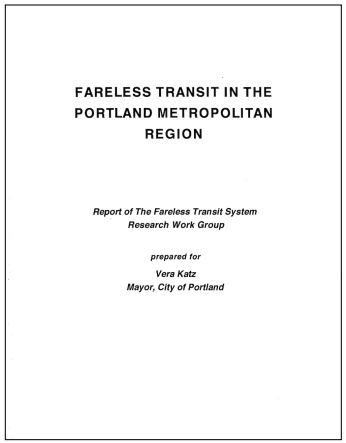
Transit-related climate target
50% below 1990 levels by 2035

Transit mode-share (as proxy)
Target: 25% by 2035

Trend: flat-lined at 12-13% from 1996 to 2015

climate, access

Fare-free transit would significantly boost ridership.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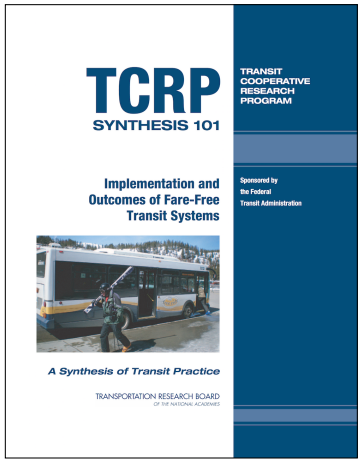
<u>1998-9 Vera Katz study</u>

estimated ridership increase:
+ 25% peak
+ 6O-65% off-peak



<u>2012 NAS study</u>

estimated ridership increase:
+ 20 to 60%

estimated motorized mode switching:
+ 5 to 30%

access, equity

How do we, as citizens, relate to our transit system? As a service? A public good? A civic right?

OPAL
ORGANIZING PEOPLE / ACTIVATING LEADERS

"Mobility is **a human right** and public policy should attempt to lower barriers to mobility for all."

— OPAL, Bus Riders Unite, Low Income Fare Equity report

image: http://www.opalpdx.org/about/
quote: http://www.opalpdx.org/2016/08/bus-riders-unite-release-life-report/

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
NAACP
FOUNDED 1909

"ESTABLISHING A public transportation system as **a basic civil right**..."

— 107th NAACP Annual Convention, 2016

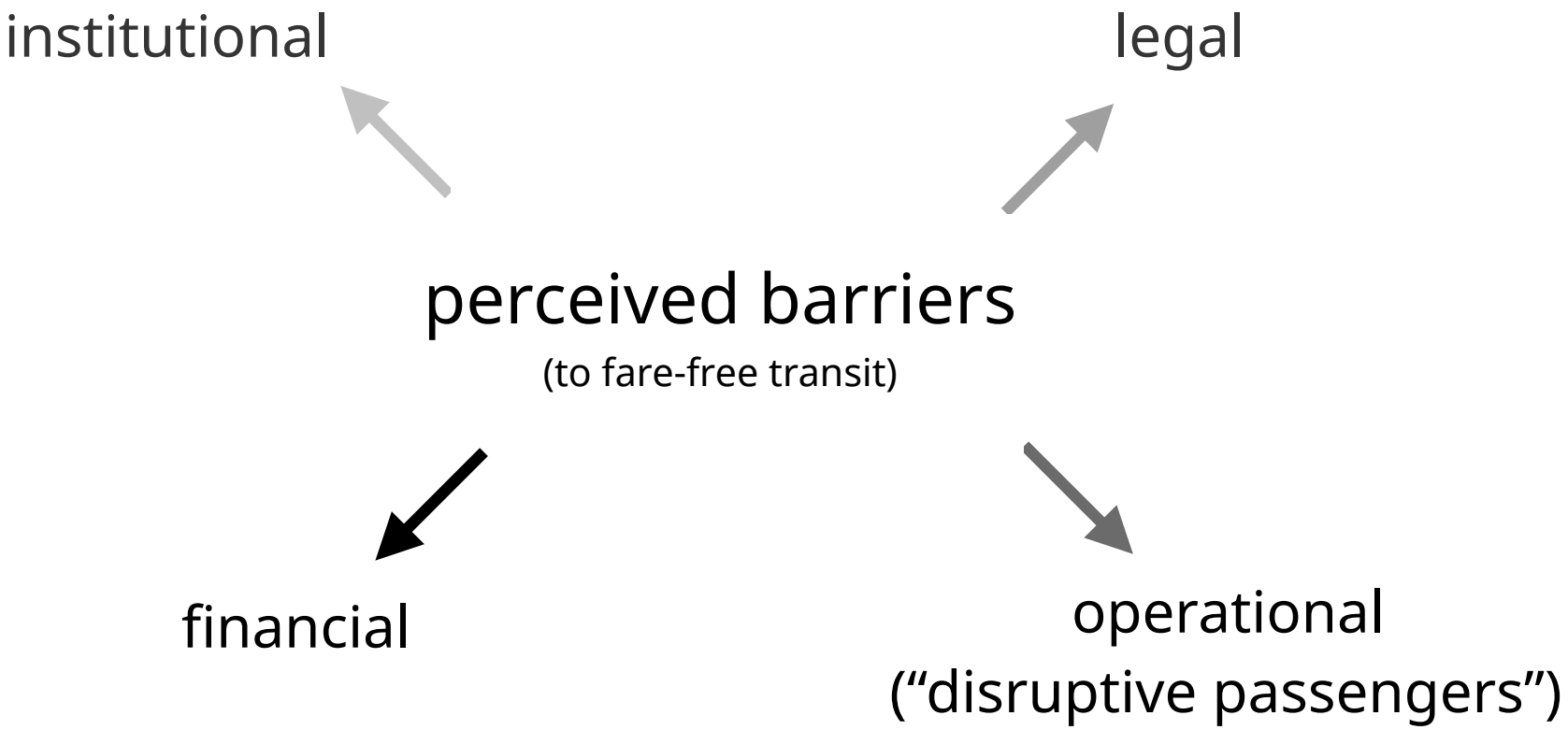
image: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NAACP
quote: http://allaboardohio.org/2016/07/19/naacp-policy-public-transit-is-a-civil-right/

"For me, accessibility means that you don't need to purchase a fare."

— Rep. Diego Hernandez, District 47 - Portland

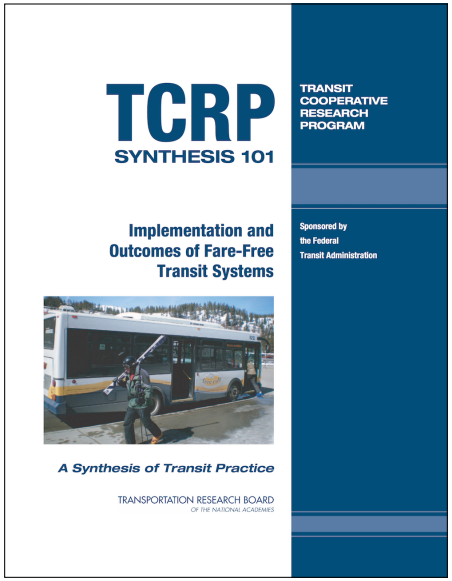
image: https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/hernandez/
quote: https://www.spreaker.com/user/oregonpublicbroadcasting/trimet-fare-enforcement

challenges


institutional
legal
perceived barriers
(to fare-free transit)
financial
operational
(“disruptive passengers”)

operational

“disruptive passengers”

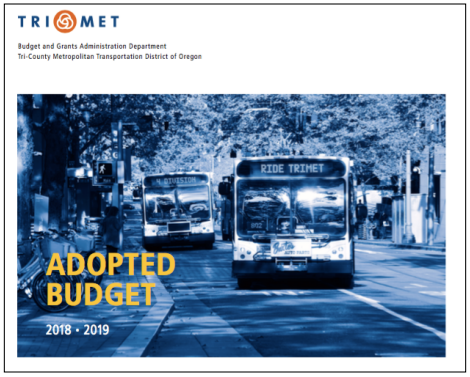


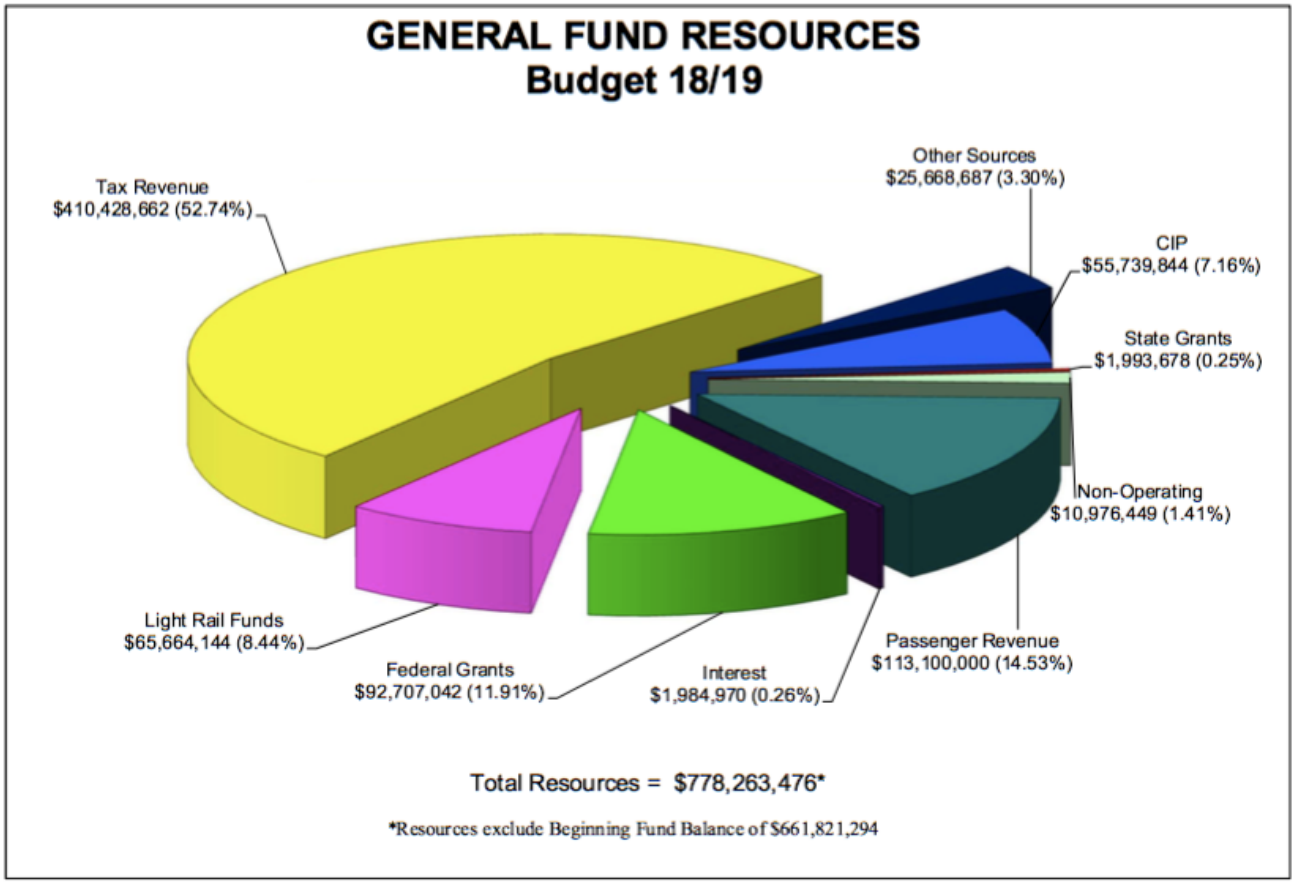
2012 NAS study

“Many managers [of fare-free transit systems] … noted that their bus operators prefer to deal with a few more disruptive passengers if it means that they do not have to deal with fare collection and fare disputes.”

financial

What's the cost?
Loss of passenger revenue: $113 million





financial

What's the cost?
a basic formula

revenues lost (passenger fares):	+ $113 million
expenses avoided (fare collection):	— $?
associated service upgrades:	+ $?
	¿ $120 million ?

financial

comparing proposals

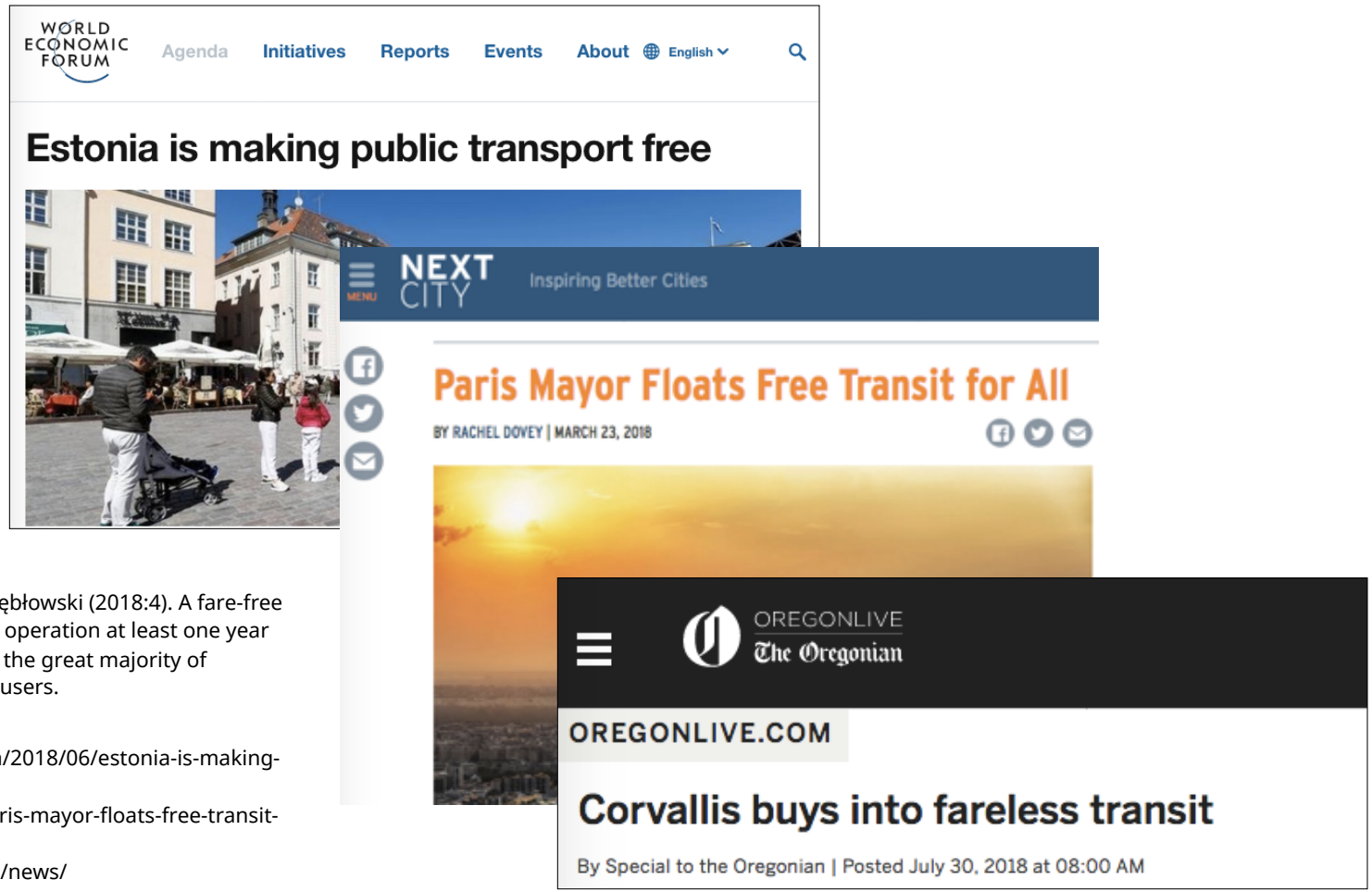
	Vera's report (1998-9)	**Free Public Transit book (2018)**	**friends of Howard**
financial mechanism	$75 parking fee on regional, non-residential, off-street parking	land tax (i.e., Georgist, geonomics tax)	$12 landing fee on passenger arrivals at PDX
would provide	$50 million (1999 calculations)	???	$120 million (personal calculations)
legal hurdles	yes	yes	yes
equity	regressive?	progressive?	strongly progressive
climate	progressive	progressive?	strongly progressive

benefits

challenges

The benefits far outweigh the challenges.

(Maybe that's why ~97 cities worldwide now have fare-free systems.)



"97 cities" source and definition: Kębłowski (2018:4). A fare-free transit system is defined as one in operation at least one year with no fees, most of the time, for the great majority of services and the great majority of users.

images:
https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/06/estonia-is-making-public-transport-free/
https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/paris-mayor-floats-free-transit-for-all
https://www.oregonlive.com/expo/news/erry-2018/07/61810d5ec56405/corvallis-buys-into-fareless-t.html