

Fehr & Peers

Reshaping TriMet's Park and Ride System

Session 6A: Transit Planning

Udit Khandelwal

Transportation Planner

Portland

u.khandelwal@fehrandpeers.com



Context for this Project

Project Goal

Develop a structured approach to rethink the role of park and rides (P&Rs) and the land they sit on.



Why now?

TriMet created a Transit Oriented Development Plan to develop its land in a way that benefits ridership and regional needs.



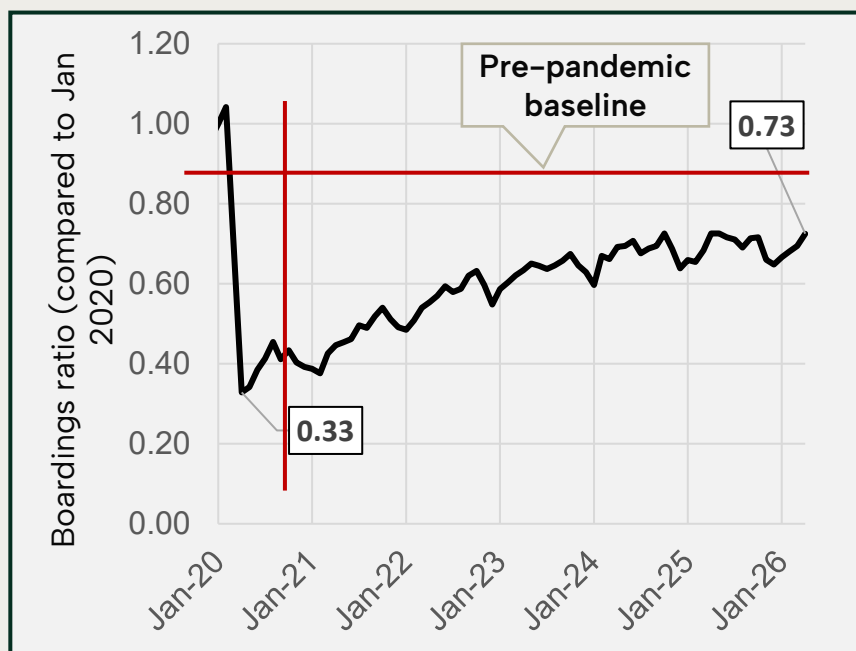
P&Rs are unique, because:

- They serve both transit and car users,
- They are both parking lots and regionally valuable real estate.

Hence the need to consider them separately from other properties.

Quick Facts about TRI-MET

- Mid-sized transit agency
- 700 buses, 4 light rail routes
- Ridership ~70% of pre-pandemic levels
- Reduced services due to lack of funding



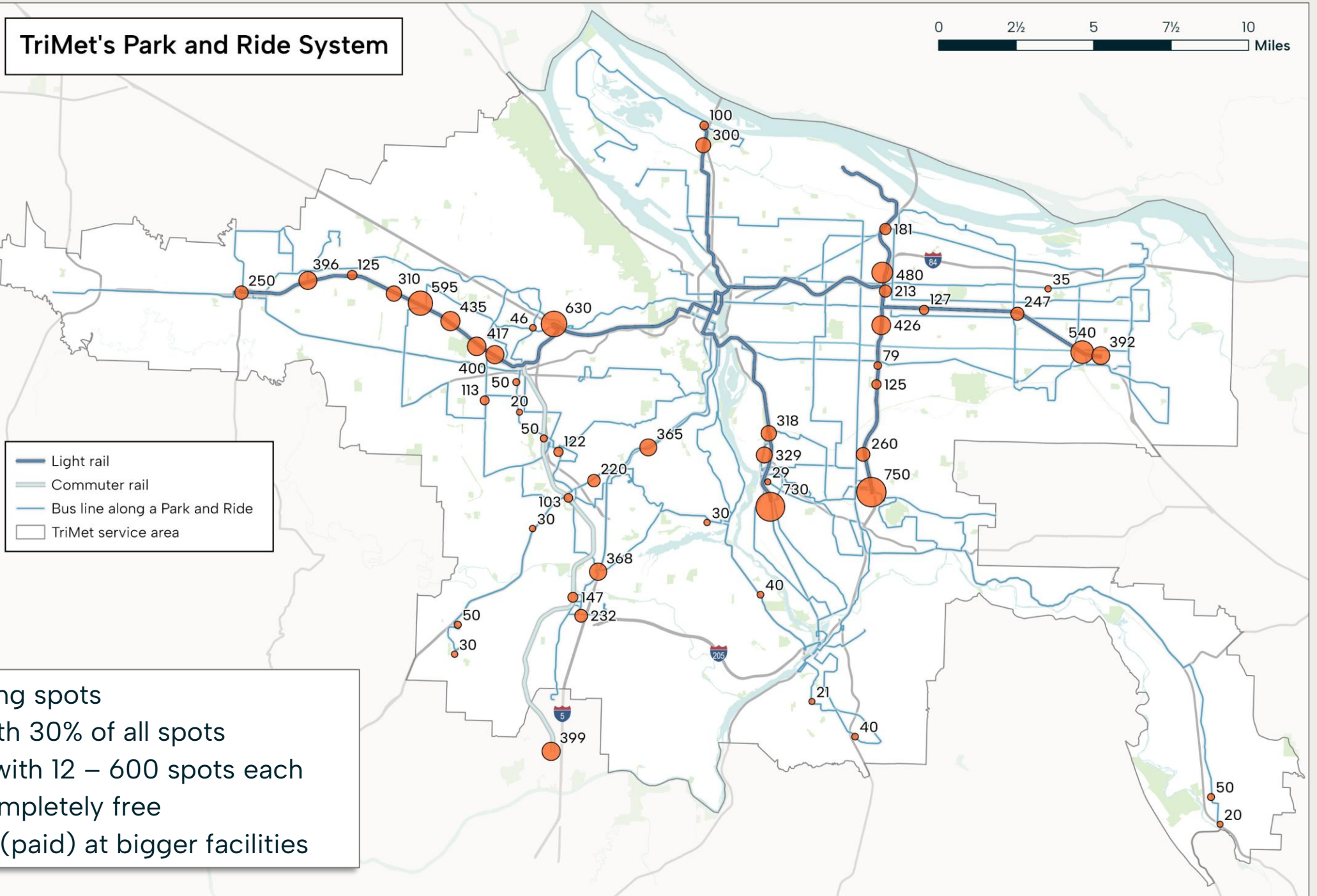
Comparison with peers

Agency	Service area (sq mi)	Weekday ridership (100k)	No. of P&Rs	No. of parking spaces	Overall P&R occupancy
TriMet, Portland	534	1.9	50	11,500	22% in 2025
King County Metro	2,134	2.6	45	26,000	N/A*
Sound Transit	1,080	1.5	52	32,900	N/A*
BART, Bay Area	7,000	1.6	35	47,000	N/A
RTD, Denver	2,345	1.8	87	30,000	19% in 2023

* Much higher than 19%, based on conversations and anecdotal data.

TriMet's Park and Ride System

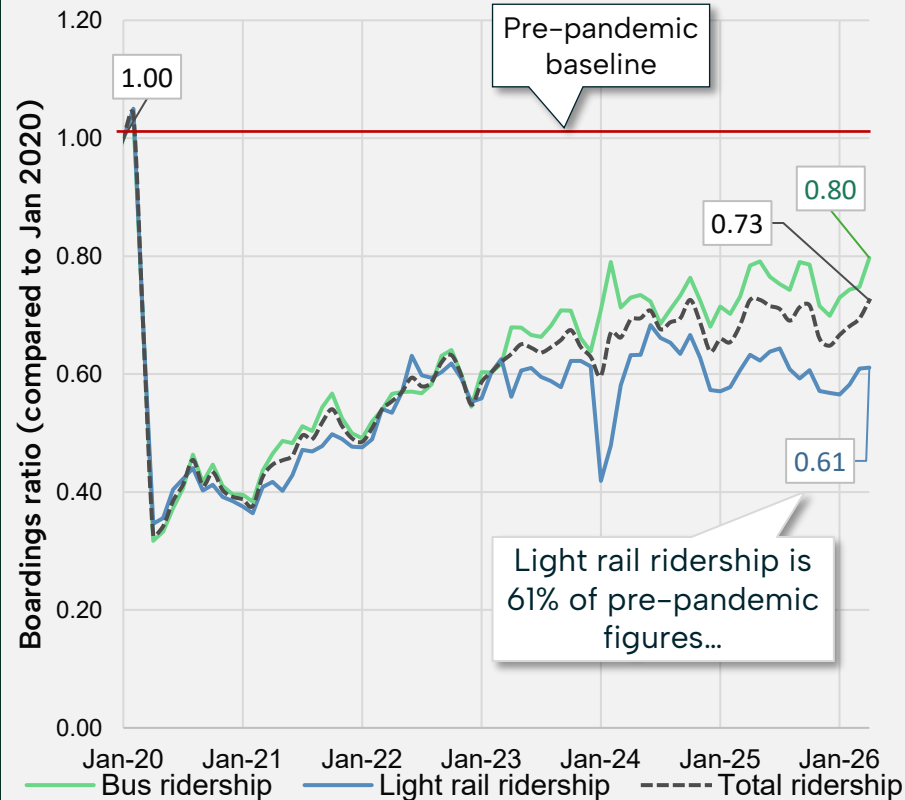
0 2½ 5 7½ 10 Miles



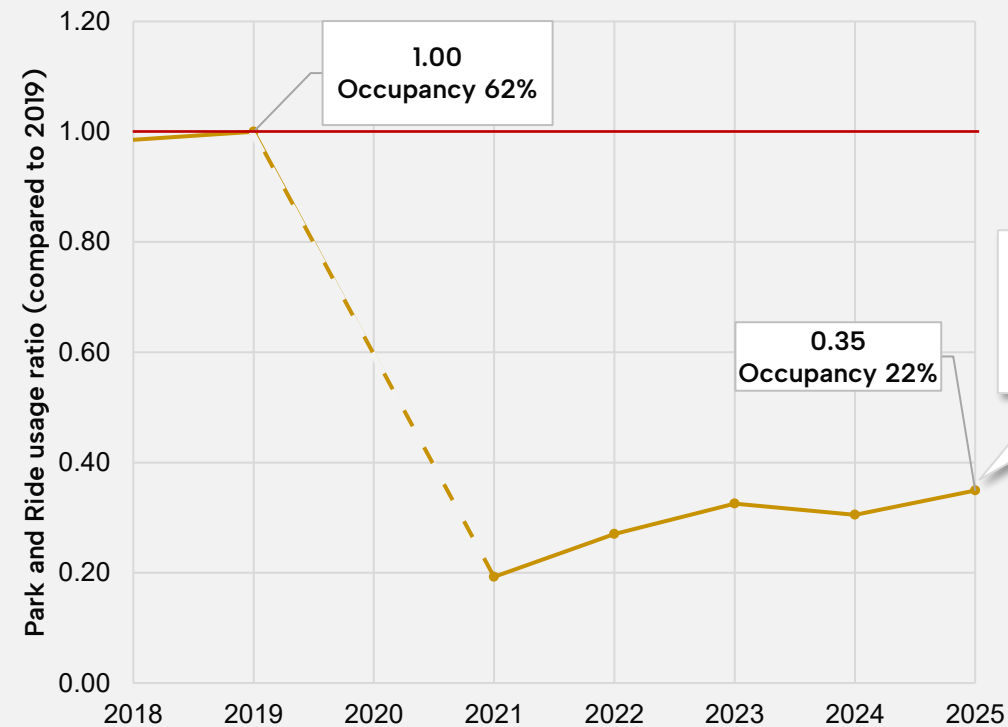
- ~11,700 parking spots
- 6 garages with 30% of all spots
- Surface lots with 12 – 600 spots each
- Parking is completely free
- Bike parking (paid) at bigger facilities

System trends

Ridership recovery



Park and Ride recovery



Possible reasons for low P&R recovery:

- More people drive to downtown now,
- Fewer people work in downtown.

... while P&R occupancy is at 35% of pre-pandemic figures.

Park and Ride Occupancy in 2025

0 2½ 5 7½ 10 Miles

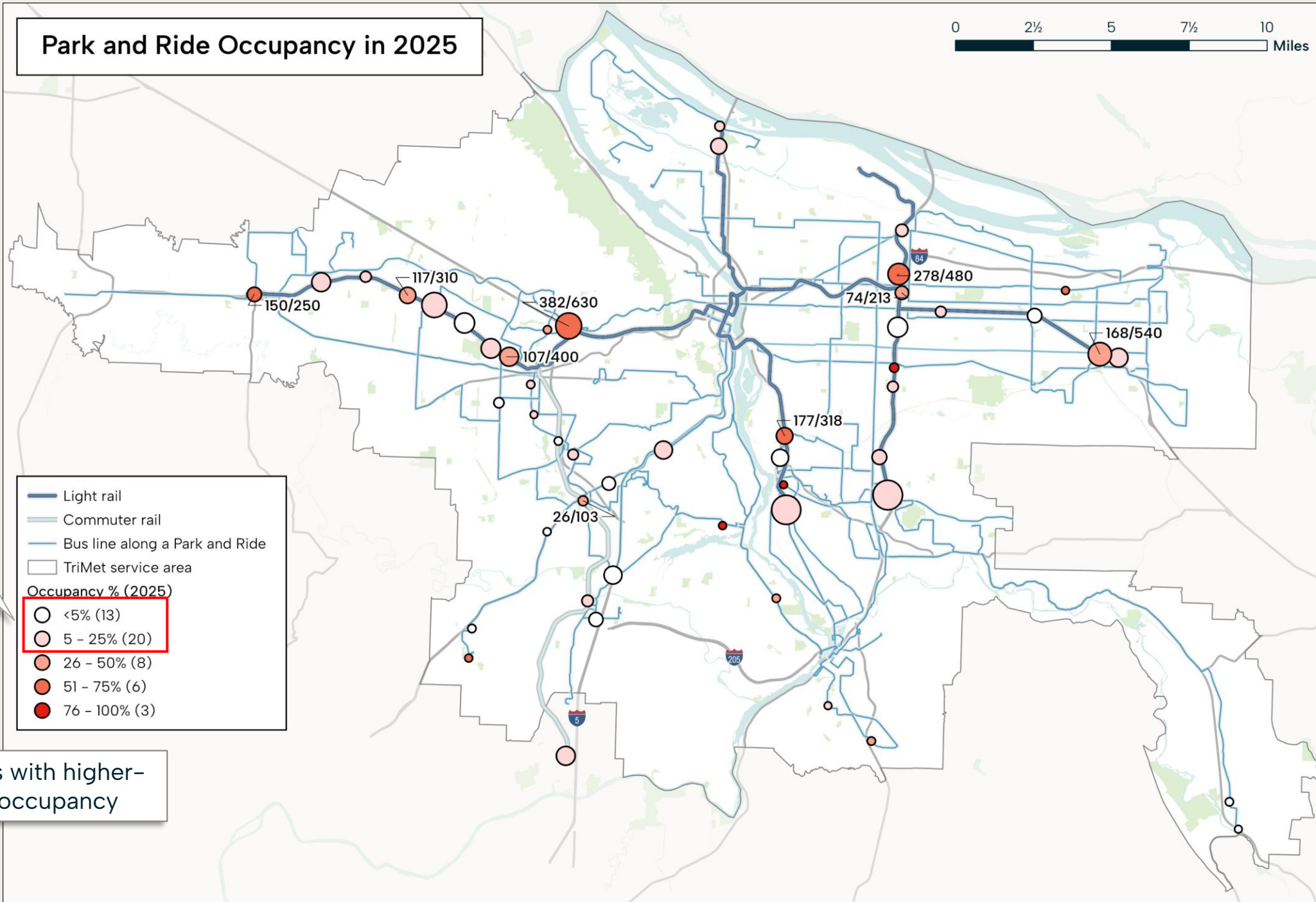
Most P&Rs saw low occupancy.

Very few P&Rs with higher-than-average occupancy

- Light rail
- Commuter rail
- Bus line along a Park and Ride
- TriMet service area

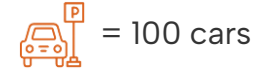
Occupancy % (2025)

- <5% (13)
- 5 - 25% (20)
- 26 - 50% (8)
- 51 - 75% (6)
- 76 - 100% (3)



Another Perspective on the Numbers

The number of empty parking spaces:



An estimate Providing each parking space takes up 360 sq. ft. 9,200 empty spaces occupy 75 acres, or about 4000 1-bedroom apartments in Portland.

Cost of maintaining P&Rs

Estimated \$5 million/year for TriMet

In comparison, TriMet made \$11 million in service cuts in its latest annual budget.

**Meanwhile, estimated
contribution of P&R users to
TriMet ridership and passenger
revenue**

< 3%

Why Underused P&Rs Need to be Urgently Addressed

Underused land equal to 38 soccer fields

Right next to transit

That no one pays for

At a time when,

The agency needs to increase ridership
and reduce expenditure,

And the region needs urgent,
affordable, accessible housing.

Our Role as Consultants

1. **Collected all the knowledge** about the agency's P&R operations into one document – historic usage, ownership types, policies, finances, amenities.
2. **Reviewed** P&R management, improvement, and redevelopment methods and tools used by peer agencies.
3. **Interviewed** regional public agency stakeholders, private sector, non-profits in parking, transportation and land development.
4. **Prepared a draft framework for optimizing the P&R system systematically.**

Key takeaways

1. No centralized management of P&Rs at TriMet – difficult to track costs and benefits.
2. Lack of frequent and quality P&R usage data – big hinderance to implement parking management strategies.

Goals for the P&R System

Right-size.

- ☐ Shared parking arrangements
- ☐ Space activation
- ☐ TOD



Improve the remaining facilities.

- ☐ Creature comforts
- ☐ Physical safety
- ☐ EV charging



Manage demand.

- ☐ Curb unauthorized parking.
- ☐ Share more current occupancy info.
- ☐ Start charging for parking.



Inputs for Evaluating Each P&R

Can TriMet make changes to the facility or to the land?

- Yes / No: Does TriMet have ownership or long-term control/influence over the site?

Is the P&R supporting transit ridership after the pandemic?

- Yes / No: Is transit-supporting usage $\geq 50\%$ for a 3-year average?
- Yes / No: Is transit-supporting usage 25–50% for a 3-year average?

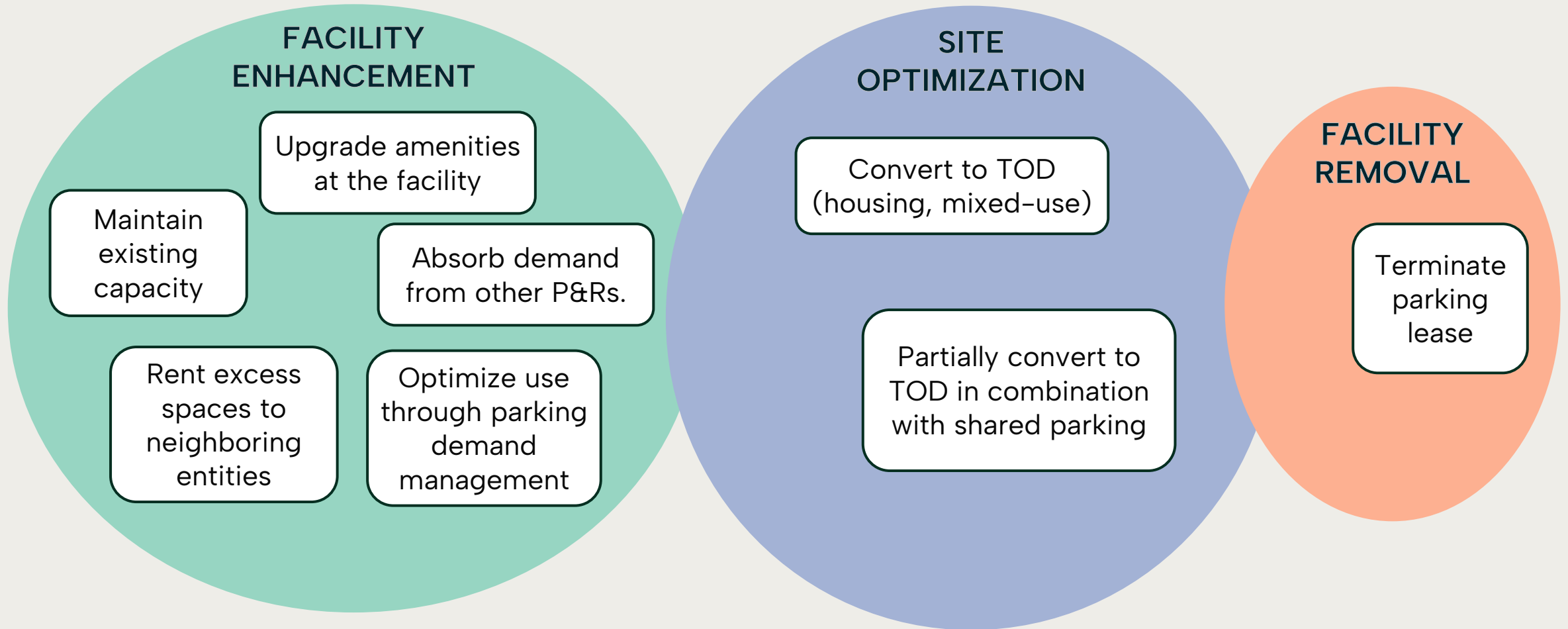
What type of facility is the P&R?

- Yes / No: Is the facility a structured form of parking?

Are the P&R land and its surroundings suitable for higher and better use than transit parking?

- Yes / No: Does it have a Walk Score ≥ 50 , and Bike or Transit Score ≥ 50 ?

Possible Actions for Each P&R



Example: Willow Creek P&R

- Completely owned by TriMet
- Surface lot with 600 spaces
- 3-year occupancy average: 20%
- Next to community college and walkable neighborhood

Owned by TriMet?	Medium use? (25-50%)	High use (>50%)	Parking structure?	Good land use for TOD?
Yes	No	No	No	Yes

Suggested

TOD
TOD with shared parking

Not suggested

Maintain existing capacity

Other outcomes were rated neutral or not applicable.

We intend to apply this framework at a system-wide level to address sub-regional needs.



Takeaways

P&Rs were moderately successful in increasing transit access → Less so after the pandemic.

Stars are aligned for transit agencies to transform them.

Need frequent and quality data to make defensible, informed decisions.

Next Steps

Apply the framework to the entire system.

Create a profile of each P&R to capture nuances.

Build an interactive, intuitive dashboard.

TriMet will officially adopt the plan!