

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

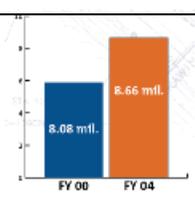
Table created from data found in [Oregonian December 15, 1988](#), [July 7, 1992](#), [July 13, 1999](#) (see below), the Trimet publication, [Westside MAX Blue Line](#);

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.