

Date: June 26, 2019**To:** Board of Directors**From:** Doug Kelsey **Subject:** **RESOLUTION NO. 19-06-47 OF THE TRI-COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT OF OREGON (TRIMET) AUTHORIZING A THREE-YEAR REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE SKIDMORE FOUNTAIN MAX STATION****1. Purpose of Item**

This Resolution requests the TriMet Board of Directors (Board) to authorize the General Manager to conduct a three-year review and evaluation of the proposed closure of the Skidmore Fountain MAX station.

2. Type of Agenda Item

- Initial Contract
- Contract Modification
- Other: Review and evaluation of proposed MAX station closure

3. Reason for Board Action

Due to the public concerns expressed regarding the potential effects of the proposed closure of the Skidmore Fountain MAX Station, TriMet's intent to defer the closure pending further review and evaluation of ridership, station use and proposed property development in the Skidmore Fountain area.

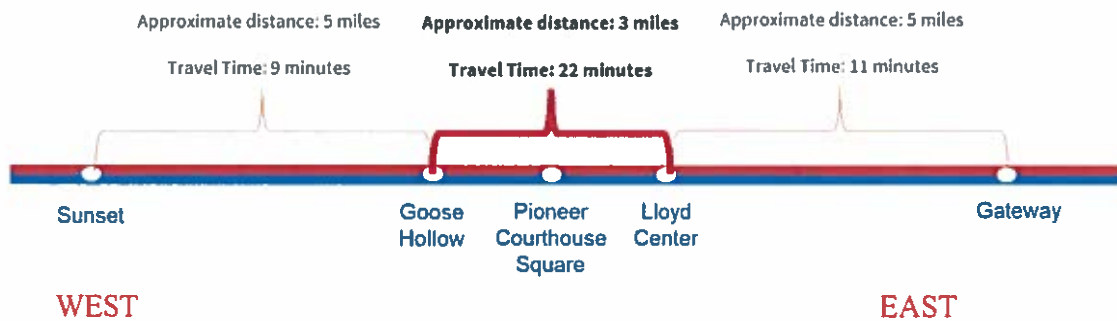
4. Type of Action

- Resolution
- Ordinance 1st Reading
- Ordinance 2nd Reading
- Other _____

5. Background

Shortly after the opening of the Westside MAX Red and Blue lines and as the transit system developed, TriMet began receiving comments and complaints about the excessive time it took for the MAX to move through downtown due to the close spacing of stations and frequent stops. Because some can walk faster than the MAX moves along these downtown stations, it was said not to be worthy of its name "Metropolitan Area Express." Potential riders have pointed to the slow travel times and number of stops downtown as discouraging use of the MAX.

A comparison of the travel time for the downtown MAX segment to other segments reflects this argument, as illustrated below:



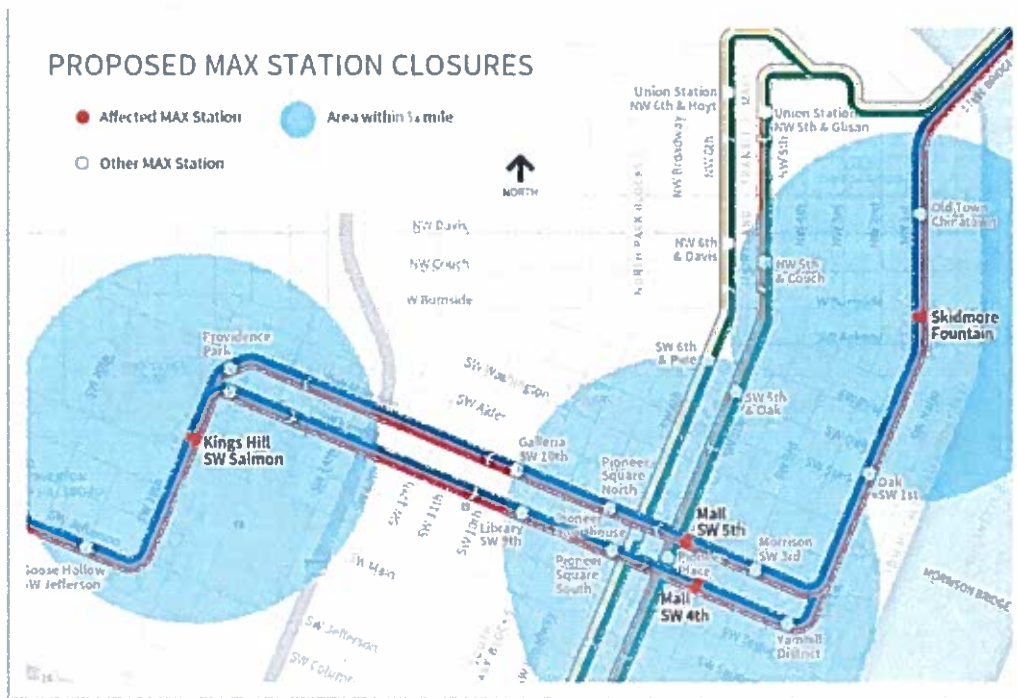
The best transit system design strikes the right balance between speed and access in order to maximize ridership and serve the community. If a light rail train is not moving quickly, the value of the investment in dedicated right-of-way and high capacity trains may be significantly eroded. At a time when commute times are getting longer (particularly for vulnerable populations), it became imperative to examine every opportunity to speed up MAX.

Therefore, as part of undertaking numerous initiatives to be more reliable and reduce travel time, TriMet conducted a study of station optimization to determine whether closure of some downtown stations could improve system efficiency while retaining convenience, and if so, which stations would be most appropriate to close. In doing so, TriMet conducted community outreach and engagement, performed a Title VI equity analysis, and obtained a systems engineering report.

TriMet's informal survey of other light rail systems found that no other city in North America has stations that are as close or closer to another station as the downtown MAX stations. Indeed, most transit stations in North America are at least ½ mile apart to balance speed and accessibility. Portland Streetcar, which serves more of a local circulator function, has only one station within 500 feet of an alternative. TriMet's bus system has more than 6,600 stops, but less than seven percent of those stops are within 500 feet of an alternative.

As a result, TriMet identified the Kings Hill/SW Salmon, Mall/SW 4th Ave, Mall/SW 5th Ave, and Skidmore Fountain MAX stations as the best candidates for closure. These four stations were selected because of their proximity to other stations and ridership. TriMet determined that consolidation of these four MAX stations with nearby alternatives would help optimize the balance of speed and convenience in the system.

The four MAX stations proposed for closure (shown in red) and their proximity to other downtown MAX stations are illustrated on the map below.



After the four proposed station closures were announced, TriMet and the Board received a significant amount of public comment, most of which objected to the closure of the Skidmore Fountain station. Some also objected to the closure of the Kings Hill/SW Salmon station. There were relatively few objections to the closure of the Mall/SW 4th Ave and Mall/SW 5th Ave stations.

Many of those who objected to the Skidmore Fountain closure argued that it was heavily relied upon by the immediate neighborhood, had greater use than other stations due to the importance of the Saturday Market, location of nearby important social services, Mercy Corps and the University of Oregon facility, and that extensive new development was projected to occur within the next three years which would dramatically increase ridership and demand for the station. If, during the three years after adoption of this Resolution, riders do not appear to be relying on the Skidmore Fountain station more than nearby alternatives and the projected new property development in the neighborhood does not occur, TriMet staff will re-evaluate the closure of the station.

6. Diversity

As part of its review of the MAX station optimization plan that proposes closing four MAX stations in downtown Portland, including the Skidmore Fountain station, TriMet staff performed a Title VI analysis of the potential impact of the closures on minority and low income populations. The Title VI analysis found there is a lower than average concentration of minority residents in the areas served by the four stations and that within a half mile of each station slated for closure there are alternative stations available, therefore, the proposed closures would have no disparate impact on minority populations.

Further, while the areas surrounding each of the stations have higher than average concentrations of low income residents, because there are alternative stations available within a half mile of each station slated for closure, the proposed closures would have no disproportionate burden on low income populations.

7. Financial/Budget Impact

Because this Resolution defers the proposed closure of the Skidmore Fountain station pending further review and evaluation of ridership, station use and proposed property development in the Skidmore Fountain area, it is not anticipated to have a budget impact. Further, during the review and evaluation period, the additional ridership projected as a result of the closure due to speedier travel may not be realized.

8. Impact if Not Approved

If the TriMet Board of Directors chooses not to adopt this Resolution, TriMet will seek further guidance from the Board regarding options for the potential closure of the Skidmore Fountain MAX Station.

RESOLUTION NO. 19-06-47

RESOLUTION NO. 19-06-47 OF THE TRI-COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT OF OREGON (TRIMET) AUTHORIZING A THREE-YEAR REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE SKIDMORE FOUNTAIN MAX STATION

WHEREAS, TriMet's riders have long advocated for improved speed, reliability and convenience on the MAX light rail system, and there is strong support among MAX riders for closures of some downtown stations in favor of increased transit speed; and

WHEREAS, TriMet has undertaken a comprehensive program to improve speed and reliability throughout the MAX system, which has significantly improved overall on-time performance; and

WHEREAS, the program includes additional improvements to reduce delays; and

WHEREAS, the four stations proposed for closure are within easy walking or rolling distance of alternative stations which would remain open, and the stations remaining open would be closer than the standard in the transit industry even after the proposed closures; and

WHEREAS, TriMet's Title VI analysis showed that the proposed closures would have no disparate impact on minority populations and no disproportionate burden on low income populations; and

WHEREAS, decreasing travel time through downtown would support TriMet's equity goals by improving transit service for low income and minority populations who have moved to east Portland and Multnomah County, but who must cross downtown for work in Washington County and other destinations; and

WHEREAS, much of the public opposition to the proposed closure of the Skidmore Fountain MAX station argued that it was heavily relied upon by the immediate neighborhood, had greater use than other stations due to the Saturday Market, nearby social services, Mercy Corps and the University of Oregon facility, and that extensive new development was projected to occur that would dramatically increase ridership and demand for the station;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That TriMet's proposed closure of the Skidmore Fountain MAX station shall be deferred for a three-year period and re-evaluated after the date of this Resolution.
2. That during the three-year period, TriMet shall further review and evaluate the proposal to close the Skidmore Fountain MAX station, considering the use of the station, the effect on ridership, and the effect of projected significant new development of nearby property on the demand for the station.

3. That the General Manager shall report to the Board on the conclusions of this additional review and evaluation prior to proceeding with closure of the Skidmore Fountain MAX station.

Dated: June 26, 2019

Presiding Officer

Attest:

Recording Secretary

Approved as to Legal Sufficiency:



Legal Department