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Chapter 1. Introduction

Fareless Square is a fare-free transit zone in downtown Portland, which includes the Lloyd Center District on Portland’s Eastside. Passengers are allowed to board all TriMet buses, MAX light rail, and the Portland Streetcar during all hours of operation for no fee if their trip begins and ends in Fareless Square. Currently, the Square is comprised of 330 city blocks, which is approximately 1.35 square miles.

Portland’s Fareless Square was established over thirty-years ago and many of the original policy goals that led to fare-free rides have evolved or ceased to exist. For example, the goal to address carbon monoxide air quality problems may no longer be relevant as the Portland region is currently in attainment with the air quality standards that led to the Fareless Square program. Conversely, TriMet and the region are seriously addressing the global warming problem and the goal related to reducing downtown auto trips has also benefited from Fareless Square.

This paper reviews the background and current operating environment for Fareless Square and documents stakeholder opinions about its future. It identifies potential Fareless Square operational alternatives and their benefits and drawbacks. The introduction of MAX service on the transit mall in fall 2009 may facilitate potential changes to Fareless Square along with operational adjustments, and presents an opportunity for exploring Fareless Square at this time.

This paper commences with a review of Fareless Square in its current state. Chapter 2 explores the history of Fareless Square from a policy and operational perspective. It discusses the original purpose of Fareless Square, describes how its boundaries and regulations have changed since it was established in 1975, and provides an overview of the evolving policy framework. It also highlights ridership trends of Fareless Square and considers revenue impacts, operational issues, and security concerns.

Chapter 3 summarizes the input and feedback received from a series of community stakeholders. The study relied on two primary forms of stakeholder outreach including a Portland Business Alliance (PBA) special taskforce on Fareless Square; and stakeholder interviews conducted especially for this paper.

Chapter 4 presents a set of operational alternatives for modifying Fareless Square and reviews the benefits and drawbacks for each of the 13 proposed modifications. Some of these alternatives relate to service changes scheduled for the fall 2009.

Conclusions are presented in Chapter 5.
Chapter 2. Program Evaluation

This chapter discusses the original purpose of Fareless Square, describes how its boundaries and regulations have changed since it was established in 1975, and provides an overview of the evolving policy framework. In addition, it highlights ridership trends of Fareless Square and considers revenue impacts, operational issues, and security concerns.

Fareless Square is a fare-free transit zone in downtown Portland, which includes the Lloyd District on Portland’s Eastside. Passengers are allowed to board all TriMet buses, MAX light rail, and the Portland Streetcar during all hours of operation for no fee if the trips begin and end in Fareless Square. Currently, the Square is comprised of 330 city blocks, which is approximately 1.35 square miles.

Fareless Square Timeline

This section highlights important developments in the history of Fareless Square. These events are summarized in Figure 2-1. Figure 2-2 illustrates Fareless Square’s boundary and shows existing and proposed transit services in the Central City.

Figure 2-1 Fareless Square Timeline and other Significant Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Fareless Square is created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Transit Mall is established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>MAX light rail (Blue Line to Gresham) begins Proposal to eliminate Fareless Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Convention Center opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>North Mall Extension opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>MAX light rail (Blue Line to Hillsboro) extended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>MAX light rail (Red Line to PDX) extended Fareless Square extended to Lloyd District Portland Streetcar opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>MAX light rail (Yellow Line to the Expo Center) extended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>MAX light rail (Green Line to Clackamas) to open on the Transit Mall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Portland Streetcar Loop to open on East Side</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fareless Square (1975)

In 1974, a TriMet staff report recommended the creation of Fareless Square in Portland’s downtown to improve air quality and mobility in the central business district.

When Fareless Square was established in 1975, TriMet operated buses only and the Square’s boundaries were defined by NW Hoyt to the north, I-405 to the south and west, SW Market to the south, and the Willamette River to the east. In 1978, the boundary was extended in the north from NW Hoyt to NW Irving and in the south from Market Street to the Stadium freeway. The boundaries were then the Stadium Freeway to the west and south, the Willamette River to the east and Hoyt Street to the north. The boundaries were primarily selected based on easily understandable geographical barriers.

---

1 Downtown Fare Free Zone Proposal, TriMet Staff Report, Prepared by Gary Brentano, Donna Dunbar, and Rick Gustafson (July 1974).
Figure 2-2 Fareless Square

GIS Data Source: TriMet
Transit Mall (1978)
In 1978, the Transit Mall was established in downtown Portland, which provided exclusive rights-of-way for TriMet buses on 5th and 6th Avenues.

Fareless Square elimination proposal (1986)
In 1986, TriMet proposed eliminating Fareless Square in order to address revenue issues such as fare evasion and the cost of fare inspection. The proposal was not advanced due to public support for Fareless Square as it was meeting policy goals of providing downtown mobility and addressing regional air quality goals.

MAX Blue Line (1986)
In 1986, TriMet introduced passenger rail service with the MAX Blue Line between Portland and Gresham. This introduced a new mode of travel within Fareless Square.

Fareless Square elimination proposal (1988)
In 1988, modification of Fareless Square was considered again in order to address the real or perceived fare evasion issue, although ultimately only minor changes were made to Fareless Square.

Convention Center (1989)
In 1989, Portland’s Convention Center opened in the Lloyd District.

Transit Mall’s North Mall Extension (1995)
In 1995, TriMet extended the Transit Mall north to Irving Street. This extension provided a bus stop adjacent to Union Station. Since this stop was one block outside of the existing Fareless Square, the Square was extended from Hoyt to Irving Streets to allow passengers to travel from the bus and train stations into downtown.

MAX Blue Line Extension to Hillsboro (1998)
In 1998, the MAX Blue Line extended west to Hillsboro from Portland. After extending the service, the MAX Blue Line runs between Gresham and Hillsboro.

Fareless Square Extends to Lloyd District (2001)
In 2001, Fareless Square was extended across the Willamette River to the Lloyd District on Portland’s Eastside. Service was extended east to 13th Avenue via Holladay Street and Multnomah Boulevard.

The City of Portland, the Association for Portland Progress (now Portland Business Alliance) and the Lloyd District TMA formally requested that TriMet extend Fareless Square to the Lloyd District. The purpose was to support the Convention Center and businesses in the Lloyd District by enhancing mobility between the central business district and the Lloyd District. The agreement to extend Fareless Square to the Lloyd Center was based on the stipulation that the City of Portland, Multnomah County and TriMet would share the estimated cost of the extension.
MAX Red Line opens (2001)
Beginning in 2001, the MAX Red Line was introduced and began operating service from downtown Portland to the Portland International Airport. This greatly increased light rail service through the Lloyd District to downtown.

Portland Streetcar opens (2001)
In 2001, the Portland Streetcar began service between Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital in Northwest Portland and Portland State University. It is operated by Portland Streetcar Incorporated, a non-profit public benefit corporation whose board of directors report to the city's Office of Transportation. Since it is integrated with TriMet service, the Streetcar is also fareless with only 18 stops (of 42 stops) currently outside of Fareless Square. Funding for the streetcar operation comes primarily from TriMet, fares, city parking revenue, and a special property tax assessed on properties near the line.

MAX Extension to Rose Quarter (2004)
Beginning in 2004, the MAX Yellow Line, operating between Downtown Portland and the Portland Expo Center, opened. This provided additional service to Rose Quarter and Fareless Square.

Light Rail to open on Transit Mall (2009)
In 2009, a new MAX light rail line will operate between downtown and Clackamas County. It will run the length of the Transit Mall and connect Union Station and Portland State University. Importantly, this new line will add MAX service along the Transit Mall, north of Burnside Street.

Portland Streetcar Loop to open on East Side (2011)
The Portland Streetcar Loop will extend service from the Pearl District in Northwest Portland across the Broadway Bridge to Portland’s Central Eastside District. Portland Streetcar Inc. estimates that service that could begin in 2011 and that it would serve 18 new streetcar stops.

Evolution of Policy Framework
This section provides an overview of policies relevant to the establishment and extension of Fareless Square.

Establishment of Fareless Square
TriMet’s 1974 Downtown Fare Free Zone proposal cited the following benefits and objectives for Fareless Square:

- **Promote transit usage** by providing those who do not currently use transit an opportunity to try it.
- **Improve air quality** and lower carbon monoxide air pollution by reducing the number of short automobile-generated trips in downtown.
- **Provide higher level of mobility** and coordination for travel between governmental centers and offices in the downtown.
- **Facilitate travel within the downtown** and promote access to the central city (retail, financial, hotel and entertainment businesses).
Fareless Square’s inception is linked to three regional planning policies that identified the need for its creation:

- **The State Implementation Plan for Air Quality (Dept. of Environmental Quality):** In the 1970s, Portland’s air quality regularly violated federal health standards. In order to address the problem, the region adopted the Carbon Monoxide and Ozone State Implementation Plan (SIP) in 1977. Along with federal motor vehicle emissions control standards and Portland’s downtown parking lid, Fareless Square was a key element of the SIP. It was anticipated that the Square would lower air pollution by reducing short auto trips made within the central business district. It supported downtown parking policies by providing free trips within downtown and thereby increasing downtown mobility and access to downtown retail and offices.

- **Downtown Parking and Circulation Policy (Central City Plan):** The plan discussed methods for addressing air quality problems in the Portland airshed. In addition to introducing a downtown parking lid and staggered work hours, Fareless Square was promoted as part of a comprehensive plan to reduce air pollution. The Square was also promoted as an element of downtown revitalization.

- **Regional Urban Growth Goals and Objectives:** This document established a regional growth plan for the Portland area which emphasized the importance of a strong downtown as a method for avoiding the urban decay facing other American cities in the 1970s and 1980s. This plan promoted Fareless Square as a way of improving mobility within the core area.

Like its predecessors, **Portland’s Central City Plan (1988),** identified the need to stabilize the number of automobile trips coming into downtown in order to improve air quality and address peak hour demand on the transportation system in the Portland Metropolitan Area. Furthermore, it broadened the definition of downtown to include Portland’s Inner Eastside.

**Extension of Fareless Square**

An Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between TriMet and the City of Portland anticipating an extension of Fareless Square to the Lloyd District required that an expansion of Fareless Square meet the following criteria:

- The zone should develop strategies, including parking management, which will improve mobility and transit ridership both to and within the special fare zone.

- The area should generally charge fees for parking. Free, non-commuter parking should use tools to control usage.

- The area should develop a transportation and parking management plan, including but not limited to management of on-street and off-street parking. Incentives for transit-oriented development are also considered.

- The zone should have clearly recognizable boundaries, be of an appropriate size, have sufficient levels of transit service, and have a high potential for transit use within the zone.

- The aforementioned strategies should support the region’s goals for improved mobility, air quality, land development patterns, and reduced auto travel.

- An operational analysis should identify how the zone conforms with TriMet’s adopted service standards and fare policy.
• The financial impacts of the zone should be estimated, and a comparison of benefits and costs completed.

Lloyd Extension
The primary policy goals of extending Fareless Square to the Lloyd District were to:

• Reduce the number of auto trips, and increase transit ridership and other alternative transportation options, to and within the Lloyd District (especially between downtown and the Lloyd District).

• Increase the potential for new development in the Lloyd District and downtown.

• Increase shopping opportunities through an “extended downtown”.

Fareless Square Ridership Characteristics
This section discusses Fareless Square’s ridership characteristics and the impact of fareless policy on ridership, fare revenue, fare evasion, as well as security and safety. Findings are based on TriMet sources, including: the TriMet Passenger Census (2006), Fareless Square Market Profile (2003), Fareless Square Customer Survey (2006), and Origin and Destination Studies (2002). It also incorporates findings from two Parsons Brinckerhoff studies: Fareless Transit in the Portland Metropolitan Region (1998) and Extension of Fareless Square to the Lloyd District (2004).

Overview
There are 86,000 weekday riders in Fareless Square with 56% of the boardings along the Transit Mall. Of weekday bus trips beginning downtown, about 75% begin and end on the transit mall, while nearly all trips either begin or end on the mall. MAX riders boarding in Fareless Square are more than twice as likely to be traveling completely within Fareless Square (31%) than are bus riders (15%). Of those traveling completely within Fareless, bus riders are significantly more likely than MAX riders to have already paid for their trip (51% vs. 34%). Nearly two-thirds of riders access Fareless Square by transit which means they paid a transit fare as part of their trip. Less than one quarter of riders access Fareless Square by auto. Although it is very difficult to quantify lost revenue because of the complexity in determining trip making associated with free fares, TriMet has estimated lost revenue due to Fareless Square to be between $2.72 and $3.26 million.

Figure 2-3 (on the following page) highlights weekday boardings on the bus and MAX in Fareless Square.

---

2 Fareless Square Customer Survey, Fall 2006
3 2003 Fareless Square Market Profile
Figure 2-3  Bus and MAX - Weekday Boardings by Fareless Square Subarea
Fall 2006 Passenger Census

SOURCE: TriMet - N.Banks 8 March 2007
Fareless Square Riders
Fareless Square serves a number of different markets including:

- **Employees working downtown** are frequent users of transit in Fareless Square as they make business-related or other personal trips throughout the day.
- **Portland State University (PSU) students** utilize Fareless Square for personal, work-related and educational trips. PSU is located within Fareless Square, so students and staff traveling between the university and downtown can travel for free.
- **Homeless people** travel between downtown locations and homeless shelters in downtown. Fareless Square facilitates their travel within the downtown area.
- **Tourists** utilize Fareless Square for sightseeing and shopping downtown.

Fareless Square Boardings: Time of Day
About 78% of Fareless Square trips are made on weekdays (11,200 each weekday).

Figure 2-4 shows when “truly fare-free passengers” (those who did not have a transit pass or pay a fare) board buses or MAX trains within Fareless Square. The highest frequency of people taking a free trip on the MAX is during lunch time (24%) and at night (28%). For bus, the rate of people taking a “free” trip in Fareless Square stays relatively constant between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM (between 8-11% of trips during that time) and drops off during the p.m. peak and night time.

Figure 2-4  Fareless Square Customer Survey - Free Fareless Trips by Time of Day

Source: Fareless Square Customer Survey, 2006
*Note: The survey received a low number of responses from late morning and night bus riders.

* Interviewees for the 2006 Passenger Survey were only surveyed between 9:00 AM-9:00 PM.
Accessing Fareless Square

Mode of Access

The following section summarizes (also see Figures 2-5 and 2-6) how bus and MAX passengers making trips within Fareless Square accessed the Square:\n
- **Took transit:** About 41% of bus passengers and 30% of MAX passengers surveyed used transit to access the Square.

- **Drove:** Seventeen percent of MAX passengers traveling within Fareless Square drove while only 6% of bus riders drove to the Square before boarding a bus.

- **Walked:** Thirty-six percent of bus and MAX passengers walked to Fareless Square.

- **Biked:** Five percent of MAX passengers traveled to Fareless Square by bike, while only 1% of bus passengers did.

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\(^5\) Fall 2006 Passenger Census
Figure 2-5 Mode of Access to Fareless Square - Bus

- Transit: 41%
- Walked: 36%
- Drove: 6%
- Biked: 1%
- Dropped off: 2%
- Other: 14%

Figure 2-6 Mode of Access to Fareless Square - MAX

- Transit: 30%
- Drove: 17%
- Walked: 36%
- Biked: 5%
- Dropped off: 4%
- Other: 8%
Parking in Lloyd District

The considerable difference between bus and MAX with respect to the percentage driving to Fareless Square may be attributed to the role that the Lloyd Center plays as an informal park-and-ride lot. Morning intercept surveys conducted at the Lloyd Center MAX inbound platform show that approximately 25% of passengers drove to the area. Of those who drove, approximately 64% parked on the street and 36% parked in the Lloyd Center Mall lot or garage.

In addition to morning commutes, a significant number of MAX passengers drive and park in the Lloyd Center and board MAX to attend special events such as basketball games and downtown festivals and fairs.

The Impact of Fareless Policy

This section discusses the factors that affect passengers' decision to travel in Fareless Square.

Trip purpose

The primary trip purpose within Fareless Square, like those made system-wide, are most likely to be to home or work. However, Fareless Square trips (bus and MAX) are more likely to be made for shopping, dining, or personal business than are other system trips.

Figure 2-7 outlines the trip purpose for free and paid trips within Fareless Square for both bus and MAX.

Figure 2-7  Fareless Square Trip Purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Weekday Bus Free</th>
<th>Weekday Bus Paid</th>
<th>Weekday MAX Free</th>
<th>Weekday MAX Paid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal business</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting friends</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<td>Medical appointment</td>
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<td>Recreation</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2006 Fall Customer Survey

Fareless transit policy

Parsons Brinckerhoff's 2004 study evaluating the benefits of the Lloyd District extension suggests that fareless transit policy does not have a significant impact on non-discretionary trips,

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6 Lloyd Center MAX platform intercepts were conducted by TriMet in September 2008.
7 Fareless Square data comes from Fareless Square Customer Survey (2006); system-wide data comes from the Origin and Destination Survey (2005).
such as work or school. This was found to be consistent with previous research on the effect of fare changes, which tend to influence off-peak (discretionary) more than peak ridership (non-discretionary). Fareless transit policies primarily affect MAX during off-peak trips (e.g., mid-day, evenings, and weekends), when more trips are made for shopping, recreational, and other personal business.

There are other factors that may affect non-discretionary ridership more than fareless transit. Possible factors include: level of service, traffic congestion, as well as parking restrictions, cost and convenience.

When Fareless Square passengers were asked how they would make their trip if TriMet didn’t offer free fares, over 80% stated that they would still take transit or walk. Fareless Square trips that would have been made by walking range from 12% for non-downtown residents to 41% for downtown residents. Roughly 5 to 10% of fareless trips would have been made by auto.9

**Fare Payment and “Free Travel”**

The following summarizes fare payment trends in Fareless Square and it is illustrated in Figures 2-8 and 2-9 on the following page10:

- Bus riders boarding in Fareless Square are much more likely than MAX riders to travel outside of Fareless Square and more likely to have already paid for their trip.

- Two-thirds (66%) of MAX trips traveling completely within Fareless Square are made for “free”, compared to less than half (49%) of weekday bus trips.

- About 7% of all bus trips are a true “free” Fareless Square trip and about 20% of MAX trips are a true “free” (without a pass or another fare) Fareless Square trip.

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9  Parsons Brinckerhoff’s Extension of Fareless Square to the Lloyd District analysis is based on TriMet’s 2003 Fareless Square survey.

10 Fareless Square Customer Survey (2006)
Figure 2-4  Fareless Square Customer Survey- Fall 2006 Weekday Bus

NOT Traveling within Fareless Square 85%

Staying within Fareless 15%

True Fareless Trip (Free) 49%

NOT Fareless (already paid) 51%


Figure 2-5  Fareless Square Customer Survey – Fall 2006 Weekday MAX

NOT Traveling within Fareless Square 69%

Staying within Fareless 31%

True Fareless Trip (Free) 66%

NOT Fareless (already paid) 34%

Cost and Revenues

This section discusses the costs associated with Fareless Square including those related to fare evasion and lost revenue. In addition, it presents information on the cost sharing agreement for the Lloyd District expansion.

Fare Evasion

TriMet estimates that it loses between $1 million and $2 million each year from Fareless Square-related fare evasion. Bus-related fare evasion results in losses between $820,000 and $1,066,000 and fare evasion on MAX ranges between $472,000 and $1,011,00011.

Lost Revenue

It is difficult to accurately calculate lost revenue associated with Fareless Square. This is in part because there is no reliable way to estimate how fare-free service affects transit demand. As previously shown, if Fareless Square did not exist, passengers may choose to drive, walk, or not take the trip at all. Many of the intra-downtown trips are short and those riders would likely walk if Fareless Square did not exist. The 2003 Intercept Study asked what mode people would use if their trip wasn’t free and a fare was required—61% said they would still take transit and 32% said that they would walk.

As stated earlier, not all trips that are taken completely within Fareless Square are truly fare free; 34% of MAX trips and 51% of bus trips are taken by passengers traveling completely within Fareless Square who have already purchased a weekly or monthly pass.

TriMet has estimated revenue loss associated with Fareless Square to be between $2.72 and $3.26 million.

Other Revenue

The City of Portland and Multnomah County together contribute about $700,000 each year to TriMet for the extension of Fareless Square to the Lloyd District. The contributors pay the following:

- The City contributes $338,000 from parking fees in the Lloyd District, of which $56,000 comes from the Lloyd District Business Improvement District (BID)
- The County pays $338,000 from a hotel tax on Lloyd District hotels and motels

These revenues are intended to cover approximately one-third of the fare revenue loss from extending Fareless Square to the Lloyd District.

Operational Issues

There are some operational issues associated with Fareless Square that contribute to customer confusion and add to bus operator duties.

TriMet passengers may be unfamiliar with the boundaries of Fareless Square and find it confusing about where and when a fare is required. This confusion may ultimately contribute to

11 TriMet estimated these costs by comparing the fare evasion rate at the Fareless Square boundary to that observed system wide.
intentional and unintentional fare evasion. Well-intending passengers may board in Fareless Square and alight outside of the square without paying a fare. The proof of payment system on the Portland Streetcar and MAX may assist those intentionally seeking to avoid fare payment. In addition to operating their vehicles, bus drivers are expected to monitor where passengers board and exit. Many may find it cumbersome, or a burden to other passengers, to identify or reprehend passengers.

It is particularly easy for those riding the Portland Streetcar, which has only 18 of 42 stops outside of Fareless Square, to think the service is free of charge regardless of where they travel and inadvertently overlook payment. However, both the Portland Streetcar and the MAX have announcements alerting passengers to pay as the trains leave Fareless Square. MAX passengers must alight the vehicle in order to pay their fare, which may mean waiting for the next train.

**Security & Safety**

There is some concern among Portland residents that Fareless Square facilitates crime in the central business district and in the Lloyd District. There is limited available data to assess security and safety issues within Fareless Square. According to Portland Police Chief Rosie Sizer\(^\text{12}\), Fareless Square may have the greatest impact on “quality of life” complaints. Quality of life complaints typically refer to panhandling as well as loud and disruptive behavior. She suggested that undesirable behavior on the transit system may be in part due to frequent and free access.

There is no strong evidence that the fareless aspect of Fareless Square results in increased criminal activity. Multnomah County Senior Deputy District Attorney Wayne Pearson\(^\text{13}\) agrees with Chief Sizer that the security issues have more to do with quality of life than actual criminal activity. He points to the openness of the MAX system, which does not require proof of payment when boarding and does not have onboard security which may be a more significant contributor to crime. The most notable crimes within the TriMet system have been on the MAX system and have occurred outside of Fareless Square.\(^\text{14}\)

Chief Sizer did indicate that Fareless Square facilitates an environment for drug dealing and frequent bus service allows them to evade police officers\(^\text{15}\). If these acts go undetected, they are not reflected in the crime statistics data.

\(^{12}\) Communication with Rosie Sizer, June 2008.
\(^{13}\) Communication with Wayne Pearson, August 2008.
\(^{14}\) Communication with Wayne Pearson, August 2008.
\(^{15}\) Portland Business Alliance Meeting, March 7, 2008
Chapter 3. Policy Identification

The policy goals equated with Fareless Square over thirty years ago may or may not still be appropriate. In addition, the current state of affairs warrants a review and refinement of the original goals for the program due to financial constraints facing TriMet and concerns about the safety and security of Fareless Square. This chapter identifies stakeholder opinions regarding potential policy goals for the future of Fareless Square. The two primary forms of stakeholder outreach included a Portland Business Alliance (PBA) special taskforce on Fareless Square; and additional stakeholder interviews conducted especially for this report.

Portland Business Alliance Task Force

In association with this study, the Portland Business Alliance (PBA) convened a task force of central city stakeholders to analyze the original policies behind the formation of Fareless Square and determine their relevance today for the business community and the objectives of the central city. The task force met four times during the Spring 2008. The initial meetings included presentations from PBA members and invited community leaders to gain a greater perspective on Fareless Square. The community leaders that participated in these meetings and their affiliation are listed below. The task force identified the following goals and considerations for Fareless Square moving forward:

- Support central city business environment and promote economic development (seen as top priority, so should list first)
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote and improve transit use
- Reinforce land use and support parking management policies
- Support safety and promote an enjoyable experience for ridership
- Use transit to connect east and west sides of the river to support a greater downtown, and enhance tourism and convention industries
- Cost efficient service and effective use of TriMet funds
- Understandable fare structure
- Seamless system across all transit modes, fares and geographies
- Support equity through TriMet’s Special Consideration Policy

The following community leaders made presentations to the task force:

- Chief Sizer, Portland Police Bureau
- Commander Reese, Portland Police Bureau
- Captain Jarmer, Portland Police Bureau
- Ethan Seltzer, Dean, Nohad Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning
- Scott Andrews, Portland Mall Management Inc
- Justin Zeulner, Rose Quarter and Lloyd District Community Association
- Lindsay DesRochers, Portland State University
- Doreen Binder, Transition Projects, Inc.
Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder Interview Process

At the outset of this effort, the consultant team arranged individual interviews with key stakeholders identified by TriMet staff. The purpose of these interviews was to provide a forum for people to speak freely on Fareless Square. The majority of interviews were held at the individual's place of employment. Telephone interviews were conducted with Bruce Starr, State Senator and Tom Hughes, Mayor of Hillsboro. The length of the interviews varied tremendously, with some lasting only 20 minutes, while others lasted up to an hour. The results of the interviews are summarized in the following section.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted in the summer of 2008 with the following individuals:

- John Charles, Cascade Policy Institute
- Rick Gustafson, Portland Streetcar, Inc.
- Tom Hughes, Mayor of Hillsboro
- Rick Metsger, Oregon State Senator
- Jeff Miller, Portland Travel
- Lynn Peterson, Clackamas County – Commission and Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT)
- Wanda Rosenbarger, Lloyd Center Mall
- Rosie Sizer, Chief, Portland Police Bureau
- Bruce Starr, Oregon State Senator
- Rick Williams, Lloyd District TMA
- Dan Zalkow, Portland State University

Major Benefits and Drawbacks of Fareless Square

Five distinct themes emerged when stakeholders described major benefits. They are:

Unique Identity and “Green City”

Many stakeholders said that Fareless Square is a unique feature of Portland and that citizens feel proud of it. There is a sense that citizens feel entitled to free service downtown and embrace it as a special city benefit. This sentiment was revealed last winter when TriMet proposed discontinuing Fareless Square in the evenings and there were vocal opponents at public hearings. Some stakeholders feel that making some changes to Fareless Square may be rational but will likely be met with resistance because of the strong identity and sense of place people feel about Fareless Square.
Another related benefit voiced by stakeholders is that Fareless Square demonstrates Portland’s commitment to being a “green city.” As one stakeholder said, “It captures who we are and emphasizes our commitment to sustainability”. As many cities across the country are adopting initiatives to become greener, Portland serves as a model with its commitment to Fareless Square.

Facilitates Central City Mobility

Nearly all stakeholders agreed that Fareless Square makes downtown very accessible. With the high level of frequent service combined with free fares, commuters, visitors and shoppers can easily get around downtown. While some stakeholders acknowledged that Fareless Square is not a panacea for promoting commerce, it is “more good than bad.” Others said that several commuters have a monthly or annual pass through their employer and would be riding TriMet free of charge anyway.

A couple of stakeholders observed that Fareless Square contributes to a seamless connection that links Lloyd District to the downtown. It contributes to the goal of creating a sense of “a greater downtown” and is a key concept in the Central City Plan and the Central City Transportation Management Plan (CCTMP).

Transit Friendly City

A couple of stakeholders noted that Fareless Square reflects Portland’s commitment to transit. It eliminates the cost barriers to taking transit downtown especially for short trips. Fareless Square is important to Portland State University which encourages a car-free lifestyle and promotes transit usage.

Fareless Square is considered by many stakeholders to be a key element in creating a transit friendly environment for residents and visitors alike. It is one of several programs and policies that promote and enhance peoples’ decision to use alternative modes.

Reduction in Traffic Congestion

Nearly all stakeholders agreed that Fareless Square has had a positive impact in reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), traffic congestion and air pollution. One stakeholder felt that the presence of Fareless Square has encouraged housing in inner city neighborhoods, promoting a jobs/housing balance in the downtown area.

Tourist Attraction

Several stakeholders commented that Fareless Square is attractive to visitors – it encourages them to use public transit because it is easy to use and free of charge. Others noted that Fareless Square is critical to the development of the Oregon Convention Center (OCC) hotels and activity in and around the Rose Quarter.

The drawbacks identified by stakeholders fall in two major categories: They are described below.

Security Issues

Nearly all stakeholders mentioned security in some form. While some stakeholders stated that Fareless Square adds to the “crime problem” downtown, others felt that security issues are blown out of proportion. Many stakeholders said that security is an issue throughout the system, not
solely in Fareless Square. Still others felt that Fareless Square contributes to the sense of insecurity the public has riding throughout the TriMet system. Multiple stakeholders said that they believe Fareless Square attracts unruly riders (with one stakeholder referring to them as “riff raff”), potentially discouraging others from riding TriMet. Others felt that the majority of riders use the system properly; boarding in Fareless Square and exiting at the boundary.

A few stakeholders observed that security issues occur more frequently on buses than on light rail because they provide more overall service. According to one stakeholder, more security related issues especially related to drug dealing occur on buses within Fareless Square than on rail, in part, because buses run more frequently making it is easier for drug dealers to promptly leave the scene.

Many stakeholders noted that TriMet would benefit from a higher security presence throughout the system. However, the open and “porous” design of the MAX system creates a challenge from a public safety perspective.

According to the Portland Police,2 the vast majority of calls they receive about Fareless Square are complaints, not to report a crime. The complaints address hygiene issues, loud music, and other undesirable behavior. While many stakeholders recognized that there may not be criminal behavior in Fareless Square, undesirable behavior diminishes from the high quality of life Portland residents expect.

Conversely, an interesting observation made by one stakeholder is that TriMet carries passengers throughout the day which generates lots of pedestrian activity and, provides “eyes on the street” offering a sense of safety and security.

Financial Loss to TriMet

Several stakeholders said they believe that TriMet forgoes significant fare revenues as a result of Fareless Square. Though many acknowledged that they have not seen an accounting of “lost revenues”, they think it could be quite substantial. A couple stakeholders said they think fare evasion is a problem and that TriMet should make efforts to recoup those lost revenues rather than focus on Fareless Square.

Other Drawbacks

Although these are not big issues, there are two other considerations worth mentioning. They are:

- Parking was mentioned by only one stakeholder as a minor issue. They believe it is only a problem during the winter holiday season when there are a small number of people who drive their car and park at the Lloyd Mall and board the MAX to travel downtown primarily to shop and to a lesser extent, commute downtown. It was noted that parking in the Rose Quarter is not an issue except on a few occasions when there is a huge event. For additional information on parking, please refer to Chapter 2, page2-12.

- Equity was not a concern to stakeholders, except for one stakeholder who mentioned that if there was no Fareless Square then each jurisdiction would be getting the same benefit. While equity is not an important issue to stakeholders, TriMet passengers feel that

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1 Communication with Police Chief Rosie Sizer, June 24 2008.
2 June 24, 2008 communication with Police Chief Rosie Sizer
Fareless Square contributes to jurisdictions receiving inequitable benefits for their local residents. Finally it is worth noting that one stakeholder commented that there are no drawbacks to Fareless Square.

Opinions on Fareless Square Policy Considerations

Stakeholders were asked to state whether the original policy goals for Fareless Square are still valid or if new ones should be established to better reflect the current operating environment. The majority of stakeholders said that the current policy goals are still relevant and valid. Interestingly, several of the benefits of Fareless Square are also the goals. For example, several stakeholders noted that a benefit of Fareless Square is a reduction in traffic congestion and is also a policy goal.

Of critical importance to nearly all stakeholders is to encourage business and commerce in the downtown area and to increase mobility to ensure a viable shopping district. Several stakeholders commented that a valuable aspect of Fareless Square is that it helps to promote business throughout the Central City, benefiting downtown and the Lloyd District. One stakeholder said, “The River is a big divide” and that Fareless Square is one of several programs that help promote growth on the other side of the river. Another stakeholder suggested that if Fareless Square were modified or eliminated, conventioneers could have access to free transit through a pass program through the hotels and retail outlets. Still another stakeholder acknowledged that “It is hard to take away something that has been around many years and Fareless Square has received a lot of national publicity which is great for Portland’s image, carrying about the environment and doing what’s right.” But stakeholders did not support any expansion of Fareless Square to additional parts of the Central City citing concerns over the loss of revenue and increased security concerns.

Meeting security goals is imperative to TriMet’s future success observed one stakeholder. He acknowledged that it is an enormous challenge because TriMet is an open system and that security issues may be more perception than reality.

Another important goal identified by stakeholders is to minimize traffic congestion by keeping cars off downtown streets. Stakeholders also mentioned the value of encouraging residential development in the downtown area to reduce the number of cars per household.

Another area important to some stakeholders is in the funding arena. This relates to TriMet receiving its “fair share” of revenues from all possible sources. It also addresses farebox revenues—a few stakeholders mentioned it was important to consider fares in a comprehensive manner and at the same time to keep them simple for passengers to understand.

Costs and Funding of Fareless Square

When asked who should help subsidize TriMet for lost revenue due to Fareless Square, the most frequently cited answer was “the business community”, specifically those that directly benefit from it. A few stakeholders noted that the business community already subsidizes transit through the payroll tax and they should not be asked to separately contribute to Fareless Square. One stakeholder noted that if the business community is asked to financially contribute to Fareless Square, then the question arises, “What is this benefit worth?” Others said that the benefits of Fareless Square are shared by several different interests including government, private business and educational institutions which should be the basis of a partnership to share in the responsibilities of Fareless Square. Another stakeholder commented that it is not clear that TriMet
actually loses revenues because many people who ride fareless would not necessarily ride the system if there was a fare. Others noted that many who ride TriMet within Fareless Square already have a monthly or annual pass and wouldn’t be depositing cash in the farebox anyway. One stakeholder thought that any “lost revenue” should be part of TriMet’s funds, and not require outside funding contributions. What is more important according to this stakeholder is that beneficiaries of Fareless Square embrace the concept and take other initiatives to encourage transit use.

Stakeholders were also asked where TriMet should spend the additional funds if cost savings are realized as a result of changes to Fareless Square. The most common responses were to increase security and expand service. One stakeholder noted that TriMet needs a stable funding source to pay for enhanced security measures. Other specific suggestions for service enhancements include bus stop amenities such as bus shelters, lighting, and other features to make passengers more comfortable waiting for and traveling on the bus.

**Opinions on Operational Considerations**

Stakeholders were asked to give their opinion on a number of operational considerations. Chapter 4 provides more details on the operational alternatives. Stakeholder responses to these options are scored in Figure 3-1. It reveals that no one option is fully supported by all stakeholders and that there is interest in modifying Fareless Square in some way. The options worthy of further consideration are to institute a $1.00 fare in the Central City and limit Fareless Square to Rail only.
## Figure 3-1 Operational Considerations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operational Alternative</th>
<th>Stakeholder Response</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Change in Fareless Square</td>
<td>-/+</td>
<td>General feelings that some changes are necessary to address stakeholder concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate Fareless Square</td>
<td>-/+</td>
<td>Only a few stakeholders would like to completely eliminate Fareless Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modify Time of Operation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>This alternative would be difficult to monitor and enforce for passengers and drivers alike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute &quot;$1&quot; Fare in Central City (including Inner Eastside)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Considerable interest in charging a nominal fare throughout central city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit to Rail Only</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>Easy for passengers and drivers to understand and would increase passenger revenues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate Lloyd Center Stop</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>Improves quality of life issues around Lloyd Center stop, but still serves Convention Center. Support was to extend to 7th Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit to Transit Mall Only</td>
<td>-/+</td>
<td>Undesirable because doesn't include Lloyd District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit to MAX on Transit Mall Only</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Undesirable because doesn't include Lloyd District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit to new MAX Circulator Service</td>
<td>-/+</td>
<td>Creates system complexity and would incur new operating costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate Fare-Free Rides on Buses East of the River</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>This option was not discussed with stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit to Downtown in conjunction with Convention Passes</td>
<td>-/+</td>
<td>Some stakeholders support it but the convention industry opposes it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit to bus only (in Fareless Square)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Oppose this alternative because perception is that security issues are greater on bus than rail and more difficult to monitor and enforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute $2.00 All-Day-Fare in Central City</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>This option was not discussed with stakeholders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

++ Fully supports this option
+ Partially supports this option under special circumstances
- Opposes this option
Necessary Attributes to Support Changes

Stakeholders were asked to identify the necessary elements to support changes to Fareless Square. Responses to this question reveal three distinct areas:

More Security

There is strong sentiment that TriMet needs more security, not just within Fareless Square but throughout the entire system. Many feel that the presence of TriMet Security personnel is a huge deterrent.

Clarity of Fares and System Use

Stakeholders feel strongly that if there are going to be changes with Fareless Square, the new fares should be easy to understand and use along with a marketing and public information campaign so the public has ample time to learn and become familiar with the changes.

Fare Enforcement

Many stakeholders feel that it is extremely important to increase enforcement to collect fares throughout the system especially at the boundaries of Fareless Square.

Focus on Mobility

Of critical importance to all stakeholders is that downtown Portland continues to offer a vital and attractive business and tourist environment. Traveling in and around downtown should be easy for residents and tourists alike.
Chapter 4. Operational Alternatives

The fall 2009 commencement of the MAX Green line service and the introduction of light rail on the 5th/6th Avenue Transit Mall provides an opportunity for TriMet to introduce potential changes to Fareless Square. This chapter presents a set of operational alternatives for modifying Fareless Square. Some of these alternatives relate to service changes taking place in fall 2009 or to existing service. This chapter concludes with an analysis of each alternative’s ability to meet the policy goals proposed in Chapter 3.

Potential Fareless Square Modifications

A variety of potential changes to Fareless Square have been suggested to address the issues and concerns raised by stakeholders. Many of these address perceived security issues, the nature and magnitude of subsidies for fare-free rides, and the goal of simplifying operations and fare structure to improve customer understanding. Potential modifications include:

1. No change to Fareless Square
2. Eliminate Fareless Square
3. Modify time of operation
4. Institute “$1.00” fare in Central City (including Inner Eastside)
5. Limit to Rail only
6. Eliminate Lloyd Center Stop
7. Limit to Transit Mall only
8. Limit to MAX on Transit Mall only
9. Limit to new MAX Circulator Service
10. Eliminate fare-free rides on buses east of the river
11. Limit to CBD in conjunction with convention passes
12. Limit to bus only
13. Institute $2.00 All-Day-Fare in Central City

1. No Change to Fareless Square

This alternative retains Fareless Square as it is today. Bus, MAX and Streetcar rides would remain free within the current boundaries of Fareless Square.

Benefits

↑ Keeps Portland icon in place: This alternative retains a well known and beloved 30-year old institution in Portland. Current customers and businesses serving visitors and tourists are familiar with the current Fareless Square boundaries and operating parameters. They may be hesitant to welcome modifications, even if their primary needs will be met by the proposed changes. Portland residents may be resistant to changing or eliminating Fareless Square because it is seen as a Portland icon.

↑ Maintains Fareless Square coverage: All areas currently served by Fareless Square would still be served under this situation.
Fareless Square Policy Review • FINAL

Drawbacks

Does not address concerns: Keeping the current system in place does not address any of the problems associated with Fareless Square. However, some of the concerns related to security and revenue loss could be addressed with other actions.

2. Eliminate Fareless Square

This alternative eliminates Fareless Square and all fare-free rides in the Central City. All bus and MAX trips originating in the Central City would require at least a 1-2 Zone fare.

Benefits

Reduces subsidy to Fareless Square: TriMet would reduce Fareless Square subsidies in terms of lost revenues. These include the lost fares on trips within the Central City and the increased fare evasion seen for trips leaving Fareless Square. Portland Streetcar Inc. would also collect more fare revenue.

Reduces complexity: This alternative marginally simplifies use of the transit system. Many customers are not fully aware of the Fareless Square boundaries and/or procedures. This is especially a concern for streetcar riders.

Reduces conflicts between operators and customers: This option reduces operator and customer conflicts as drivers would not have to guarantee that only fare-paying customers remain on the bus when leaving Fareless Square.

Addresses security issue: Elimination of Fareless Square represents one course of action for those who see fare-free rides as negatively impacting system security.

Drawbacks

Does not promote mobility in the Central City: This alternative does not facilitate connections in the Central City, especially between the Oregon Convention Center/Lloyd District and the CBD. The convention industry believes free and convenient trips are needed between the Convention Center and downtown hotel rooms and attractions.

Totally eliminates Portland icon: The total elimination of Fareless Square will probably be seen as the loss of a Portland institution and generate a greater level of resistance, as compared to modifications to Fareless Square.

May reduce transit use: Charging even nominal fares will result in some level of reduced ridership. This would result from both the perceived financial impacts and the inconvenience of paying cash fare. It is likely to result in a mode shift to walking for shorter trips, as opposed to an increase in auto-based travel.

3. Modify Time of Operation

This alternative retains the current boundaries of Fareless Square but eliminates fare-free rides after an early evening cutoff time. This option is intended to provide the benefits of Fareless Square during busy times of the day and eliminate fare-free rides when a higher level of inappropriate behavior (e.g., panhandling, disruptive behavior, etc.) is expected. The only other cities that operate a fareless zone, Seattle and Pittsburg, both limit hours of free operation to daytime.
Benefits

**Partially addresses security issue:** Many of those citing security issues associated with Fareless Square say the problem is worse in the evening after dark when levels of inappropriate behavior are perceived to be higher.

**Reduces subsidy to Fareless Square:** This approach will marginally reduce the level of subsidy required as both lost fare revenue and fare evasion will be reduced during the evening and nighttime hours.

**Partially promotes CBD-Lloyd District mobility:** This approach modifies Fareless Square while still meeting the highest priority policy goals. It would still serve the most frequently used Fareless Square stops in downtown (with MAX on the Mall) and connect the CBD to the Convention Center and the Lloyd District during the busy midday and early evening periods. The convention industry’s desire for free and convenient trips between the Convention Center and downtown hotel rooms and attractions would terminate in the evening. The tourism industry and downtown restaurants/attractions would not support this change. But as detailed later, options exist to provide conventioneers with free transit passes in the evening.

**Maintains Fareless Square coverage:** This alternative serves all stops currently served by Fareless Square.

Drawbacks

**Increases complexity:** This alternative would increase complexity and customer confusion, requiring them to know Fareless Square hours of operation. It would likely require fares on return trips when the outgoing trip was free.

4. **Institute “$1.00” Fare in Central City**

This alternative would replace Fareless Square with a low-fare zone. This zone could include the Central Eastside District as well as other districts not currently in Fareless Square.

Benefits

**Promotes mobility in Central City:** A reduced fare for short trips within the Central City would promote the use of transit by offering an alternative to what is perceived as relatively higher fares for longer trips. The shortest trips within a single district would probably be made by walking.

**Partially reduces complexity:** This approach addresses customer confusion related to free-fare travel. However, this approach introduces a new fare zone into the system.

**Reduces subsidy to Fareless Square:** This alternative would generate some fare revenue. Similarly, fare evasion would likely be reduced if a fare is always required to board a transit vehicle.

**Addresses security issue:** Many of those citing security problems associated with Fareless Square tend to focus on the group of riders that are only using the system because it is free. Many of these stakeholders feel that charging even a small fare will improve security and reduce undesirable behavior.
Drawbacks

- **Does not fully promote CBD-Lloyd District mobility**: The convention industry believes free and convenient trips are needed between the Convention Center and downtown hotel rooms and attractions.

- **May reduce transit use**: Charging even nominal fares will result in some level of reduced ridership. This would result from both the perceived financial impacts and the inconvenience of paying cash fare. It is likely to result in a mode shift to walking for shorter trips, as opposed to an increase in auto-based travel.

- **Eliminates Portland icon**: The elimination of Fareless Square will probably be seen as the loss of a Portland institution.

5. **Limit to Rail Only**

This alternative limits fare-free rides to rail trips within the current Fareless Square boundaries. This includes the rail stops that are currently in Fareless Square (Lloyd Mall to Library/Galleria) and the new rail stops on the Transit Mall (Union Station to PSU), as well as streetcar stops currently in Fareless Square. All bus-based trips would require at least a 1-2 Zone fare.

Benefits

- **Promotes CBD-Lloyd District mobility**: This approach modifies Fareless Square while still meeting the highest priority policy goals. It would still serve the most frequently used Fareless Square stops in downtown (with MAX on the Mall) and connect the CBD to the Convention Center and the Lloyd District.

- **Partially maintains Fareless Square coverage**: This alternative serves every area within 3-4 blocks of the current Fareless Square boundary. Most fareless bus trips could be served by rail.

- **Reduces conflicts between operators and customers**: Eliminating fare-free rides on buses will simplify bus operator duties and should reduce opportunities for operator-customer conflicts.

- **Potentially reduces security issues**: Anecdotal information suggests that drug dealers tend to ride the bus rather than MAX because it provides more frequent service. By eliminating free fares on buses, it may cut down on drug deals in the central city. It also addresses the problems of inappropriate behavior and illegal activity on buses by those only riding because buses are free.

- **Partially reduces complexity**: this option addresses the need for bus passengers to determine and keep track of the Fareless Square boundary.

- **Reduces subsidy to Fareless Square**: This alternative reduces the subsidy to Fareless Square by eliminating the increased level of fare evasion on buses leaving the fare-free zone and increases fares for bus trips made in the Central City.

Drawbacks

- **Does not address MAX security issue**: This approach does not address perceived security issues on MAX, especially those associated with the Lloyd Mall stop.
6. Eliminate Lloyd Center Stop

This alternative is similar to the “Limit to Rail Only” alternative, but the fare-free zone ends at the Convention Center or NE 7th Avenue stops.

Benefits

- Partially addresses security issue: This alternative addresses stakeholder security concerns, especially with respect to complaints made about the level of inappropriate behavior at Lloyd Mall stop.

- Maintains CBD-Convention Center mobility: This approach also serves the most frequently used Fareless Square stops in downtown (with MAX on the Mall) and connects the CBD to the Convention Center.

- Reduces conflicts between operators and customers: Eliminating fare-free rides on buses will simplify bus operator duties and should reduce opportunities for operator-customer conflicts.

- Partially reduces complexity: This option eliminates the need for bus passengers to determine and keep track of the Fareless boundary.

- Reduces subsidy to Fareless Square: This alternative reduces the subsidy to Fareless Square by eliminating the increased level of fare evasion on buses leaving the fare-free zone and increases fares for bus trips made in the Central City.

Drawbacks

- Does not fully promote CBD-Lloyd District mobility: One drawback is that, although the CBD and the Convention Center would be linked, the Lloyd District would be excluded. Extending this option to the NE 7th Avenue stop addresses this concern while meeting stakeholder concerns from the Lloyd District.

7. Limit to Transit Mall Only

This alternative limits fare-free rides to MAX and bus trips on the Transit Mall (Union Station to PSU). All other trips would require at least a 1-2 Zone fare.

Benefits

- Promotes CBD mobility: This approach addresses the needs of those making short trips within the CBD. This includes the most frequently used Fareless Square stops in downtown.

- Reduces overall complexity: Limiting Fareless Square to the Mall provides a slight reduction in complexity as the fare-free zone is reduced in size and would have clearer boundaries (including a cleaner separation between MAX and Streetcar operations with respect to Fareless Square).

- Partially addresses security issue: This alternative addresses stakeholder security concerns, especially with respect to complaints made about the level of inappropriate behavior at Lloyd Mall stop.
Reduces subsidy to Fareless Square: Eliminating free-fare trips to the Lloyd district would increase fare revenue, but would also end city and county contributions toward the program. This results in net gain per current TriMet estimates.

Drawbacks

1. Does not promote CBD-Lloyd District mobility: This alternative does not facilitate connections between the Oregon Convention Center/Lloyd District and the CBD.

2. Creates new complexity for MAX riders: This approach results in some complexity for MAX riders as downtown customers have to differentiate between MAX lines (Red and Blue lines which would require fares versus Yellow and Green lines which will be free on the Mall unless limited to Mall and downtown MAX stations).

3. Reduces Fareless Square coverage: With this approach some areas currently served by Fareless would no longer be served.

8. Limit to MAX on Transit Mall Only

This alternative limits fare-free rides to MAX only trips on the Mall (Union Station to PSU). All MAX trips east of the river and all bus trips would require at least a 1-2 Zone fare.

Benefits

1. Promotes CBD mobility: This approach addresses the needs of those making short trips within the CBD. This includes the most frequently used Fareless Square stops in downtown.

2. Reduces overall complexity: Limiting Fareless Square to the MAX on the Transit Mall provides a slight reduction in complexity as the fare-free zone is reduced in size and would have clearer boundaries (including a cleaner separation between MAX and Streetcar operations with respect to Fareless Square).

3. Reduces conflicts between operators and customers: Eliminating fare-free rides on buses will simplify bus operator duties and should reduce opportunities for operator-customer conflicts.

4. Reduces subsidy to Fareless Square: This alternative reduces the subsidy to Fareless Square by addressing the increased level of fare evasion on buses leaving the fare-free zone. In addition, eliminating free-fare bus trips to the Lloyd District would increase fare revenue, but would also end city and county contributions toward the program. This results in net gain per current TriMet estimates.

Drawbacks

1. Does not promote CBD-Lloyd District mobility: This alternative does not facilitate connections between the Oregon Convention Center/Lloyd District and the CBD.

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1 Estimated lost revenues for Lloyd-CBD rides are $1,936,300 per year. This figure is based on extensive work done in 1994 on the revenue loss associated with the extension of Fareless Square to the Lloyd District. Revenue loss was estimated by capturing the number of persons who were paying a fare to travel between the Lloyd District and the CBD. Original work was based on Origin-Destination survey data and the Metro model. The 2007 estimated revenue loss takes the modeled 2007 revenue loss from the 1994 figure and increases it 86% to account for the rise in the average 22/youth/HC fare since 1994 (to FY2009 - based on September 2008 fares).
• Creates new complexity for MAX riders: This approach results in some complexity for MAX riders as downtown customers have to differentiate between MAX lines (Red and Blue lines which would require fares versus Yellow and Green lines which will be free on the Mall).

• Reduces Fareless Square coverage: With this approach some areas currently served by Fareless would no longer be served.

9. Limit to New MAX Circulator Service

This is a variation to “Limit to MAX on Mall Only” alternative except a new light rail line would be added to the Mall and operate as a free shuttle. Boarding on the Green and Yellow lines along the Mall would require a fare. The Circulator would require unique branding to differentiate it from other MAX lines.

Benefits

• Promotes CBD mobility: This approach addresses the needs of those making short trips within the CBD. This includes the most frequently used Fareless Square stops in downtown.

• Reduces subsidy to Fareless Square: A free circulator will prevent fare evasion on MAX as the shuttle’s cars would not leave Fareless Square. In addition, eliminating free-fare trips to the Lloyd District would increase fare revenue, but would also end city and county contributions toward the program. This results in net gain per current TriMet estimates.

• Reduces complexity for passengers: Limiting Fareless Square to the Transit Mall may make it somewhat easier to understand as the fare-free zone is reduced in size and would have clearer boundaries (including a cleaner separation between MAX and Streetcar operations with respect to Fareless Square).

• Addresses security issue: This alternative addresses stakeholder security concerns, especially with respect to complaints made about the level of inappropriate behavior at Lloyd Mall stop.

Drawbacks

• Increases costs and complexity of operations: The operation of a separate MAX circulator on the Mall will increase operating costs and system complexity and will probably create capacity problems on the Mall (for effective shuttle operation, the circulator would have to operate frequently along the Mall).

• Does not promote CBD-Lloyd District mobility: This alternative does not facilitate connections between the Oregon Convention Center/Lloyd District and the CBD. The convention industry believes free and convenient trips are needed between the Convention Center and downtown hotel rooms and attractions.

• Reduces Fareless Square coverage: With this approach some areas currently served by Fareless would no longer be served.
10. Eliminate Fare-free Rides on Buses East of the River

This alternative retains Fareless Square as it is today with the expectation that it would be limited to MAX-only trips east of the Willamette River. Bus, MAX and Streetcar rides would remain free within the CBD boundaries of Fareless Square.

Benefits

↑ Keeps Portland icon in place: This alternative retains a well known and beloved 30-year old institution in Portland. Very few fare-free boardings are made on the affected bus lines (operating between the Rose Quarter and Lloyd Mall).

↑ Partially reduces complexity: The Fareless Square boundary for buses reverts back to the river which is easier to comprehend for bus riders.

Drawbacks

↓ Does not address security and fare-related concerns: This alternative does not address any of the real or problems associated with Fareless Square such as disruptive behavior and fare evasion.

11. Limit to Downtown in conjunction with Convention Passes

This alternative would limit Fareless Square to downtown and set up a system where conventioneers would receive a free or low-cost pass to ride between the Convention Center and downtown. These passes could be regular TriMet fare media and special/dated convention name badges. Fareless Square downtown could be limited to Mall-only services or the entire Fareless Square zone west of the river.

Benefits

↑ Promotes CBD mobility: This approach would still serve the most frequently used Fareless Square stops in downtown and connect the CBD to the Convention Center for convention attendees.

↑ Addresses security issue: This alternative addresses stakeholder security concerns, especially with respect to complaints made about the level of inappropriate behavior at Lloyd Mall stop.

↑ Reduces subsidy to Fareless Square: Eliminating free-fare trips to the Lloyd District would increase fare revenue, but would also end City and County contributions toward the program. This results in net gain per current TriMet estimates.

Drawbacks

↓ Does not fully promote CBD-Lloyd District mobility: The tourism industry finds this option to be less convenient because it requires the administration of passes to convention goers. This approach does not connect the Lloyd District to the CBD for non-conventioneers.
Creates administrative complexities: This alternative would require the tourism industry to market and distribute the passes. It would require new marketing programs to inform visitors on how to obtain and/or use the passes. The use of fare media or special convention name badges would also create the need to procure, store and distribute the passes.

12. Limit to Bus Only

This alternative retains the existing Fareless Square boundaries with fare-free rides limited to bus service only. All MAX trips would require at least a 1-2 Zone fare.

Benefits

- Partially addresses security issue: This alternative addresses stakeholder security concerns, especially with respect to complaints made about the level of inappropriate behavior at Lloyd Mall stop.
- Helps to reduce fare evasion: Bus-only fare-free rides reduce the subsidy to Fareless Square by eliminating the increased level of fare evasion on MAX trains leaving the fare-free zone.

Drawbacks

- Does not promote CBD-Lloyd District mobility: The bus connections to the Convention Center and Lloyd District are not as timely or convenient as MAX connections.
- Does not address bus operation concerns: This approach does not address security or fare evasion concerns on bus operations.
- Reduces Fareless Square coverage: With this approach some areas currently served by Fareless would no longer be served via buses only.

13. Institute $2.00 All-Day-Fare in Central City

This alternative would recognize a single-ride fare as valid all day within the Central City. Under this option, validated tickets and transfers would be honored in the Central City for the entire day, even if more than two hours old. This alternative would eliminate all fare-free rides. This zone could include the Central Eastside District as well as other districts not currently in Fareless Square.

Benefits

- Promotes mobility in Central City: This approach reduces the costs for round-trips and multi-legged trips within the Fareless Square boundary by eliminating the need for additional fares after a transfer expires. It encourages passengers to maximize use of transit in a one day period.
- Reduces subsidy to Fareless Square: This alternative would generate some fare revenue in excess of what fare-free rides generate.
- Addresses security issue: Many of those citing security problems associated with Fareless Square focus on the group of riders that are only using the system because it is free. Many of these stakeholders feel that charging even a small fare will improve security.
Drawbacks

- **Increases complexity:** This approach creates a new fare category and may increase complexity for operators and customers.

- **Does not fully promote CBD-Lloyd District mobility:** The convention industry believes free and convenient trips are needed between the Convention Center and downtown hotel rooms and attractions.

- **Does less to promote transit use:** Charging even nominal fares will result in some level of reduced ridership. This results from both the financial impacts and the inconvenience of paying cash fare. This will probably result in a mode shift to walking for shorter trips, as opposed to an increase in auto-based travel.

- **Eliminates Portland icon:** The elimination of Fareless Square will probably be seen as the loss of a Portland institution.

- **May reduce transit use:** Charging even nominal fares will result in some level of reduced ridership. This would result from both the perceived financial impacts and the inconvenience of paying cash fare. It is likely to result in a mode shift to walking for shorter trips, as opposed to an increase in auto-based travel.

Combinations of Alternatives

Some alternatives focus on specific policy goals although they would result in a limited set of drawbacks. In some cases, combining compatible alternatives may address more policy goals than a single alternative and reduce the drawbacks.

- **Convention Pass & Transit Mall-only Alternatives:** The Mall-only alternatives promote mobility within downtown but do not facilitate travel between the Convention Center and downtown. The alternative to provide conventioners with free passes provides this connection from a customer point of view, but creates administrative overhead for the convention and hotel industries.

- **Convention Pass & Time of Day Alternatives:** Limiting fare-free rides in the evening restricts the mobility of conventioners and other visitors at time when they frequently travel between the Lloyd District and downtown. Convention or visitor passes address this concern for customers, but not for the tourism industry.

- **$1.00 Central City Fare & Convention Pass:** The $1.00 fare for short trips in the Central City increases mobility throughout the greater downtown area. Combining this alternative with the convention pass option addresses the need for free and convenient connections for conventioners, but increases the administrative tasks for the tourism industry.

Summary

The alternatives vary with respect to their benefits provided. Figure 4-1 summarizes the primary benefits for each alternative and combination of alternatives.
## Figure 4-1 Benefits Provided by Operational Alternatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternatives</th>
<th>Reduces subsidy to Fareless Square</th>
<th>Reduces complexity associated with fare system</th>
<th>Address security concerns</th>
<th>Provides mobility within Central City</th>
<th>Maintains Fareless Square coverage area</th>
<th>Reduces informal park-and-ride activity in Central City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. No Change to Fareless Square</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 (CBD-Lloyd Mall)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Eliminate Fareless Square</td>
<td>+ +</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Modify Time of Operation</td>
<td>0/+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>- (CBD-Lloyd Mall days/early eve)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Institute &quot;$1.00&quot; Fare in Central City (including Inner Eastside)</td>
<td>+ +</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>- (CBD-Inner Eastside)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Limit to Rail Only (in Fareless Square)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+ (Bus only)</td>
<td>0/- (CBD-Lloyd Mall)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Eliminate Lloyd Center Stop</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>- (CBD-Conv. Ctr. Or Lloyd District)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Limit to Transit Mall Only</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>--(CBD only)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Limit to MAX on Transit Mall Only</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>--(CBD only)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Limit to new MAX Circulator Service</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>--(CBD only)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Eliminate Fare-Free Rides on Buses East of the River</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0/+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 (CBD-Lloyd Mall)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Limit to Downtown in conjunction with Convention Passes</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>- (CBD only plus Conv. Ctr.)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Limit to bus only (in Fareless Square)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0/+</td>
<td>- (CBD – Lloyd Mall w/ Ltd. Service)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Good all day fare ($2.00) in Central City</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0/+ (CBD – Central City)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Combination of Alternatives**

- Convention Pass & MAX on Mall
  - + + + - (CBD-Convention Center) - - +
- Convention Pass & Time of Day
  - 0/+ - + 0/- (CBD-Conv. Ctr./Lloyd Mall) 0 +
- "$1.00" Fare in Central City & Convention Pass
  - + + + + - (CBD-Conv. Ctr./Inner Eastside) - - +

**Ranking System:**

- **++** Benefit relative to current system
- **+** Partially benefit relative to current system
- **O** Similar to current system
- **-** Partial drawback relative to current system
- **--** Drawback relative to current system
Chapter 5. Conclusions and Next Steps

This chapter summarizes major findings and conclusions about Fareless Square. It suggests that three of the 13 modifications to Fareless Square presented in Chapter 4 should be carried forward for further refinement and public review. These alternatives have the most promising potential for addressing public and stakeholder concerns about Fareless Square.

Major Findings

Fareless Square was created in 1975. Several major events have significantly impacted Fareless Square. They are summarized in Figure 5-1 below.

Figure 5-1 Fareless Square Timeline and other Significant Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Fareless Square is created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Transit Mall is established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>MAX light rail (Blue Line to Gresham) begins Proposal to eliminate Fareless Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Convention Center opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>North Mall Extension opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>MAX light rail (Blue Line to Hillsboro) extended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>MAX light rail (Red Line to PDX) extended Fareless Square extended to Lloyd District Portland Streetcar opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>MAX light rail (Yellow Line to the Expo Center) extended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>MAX light rail (Green Line to Clackamas) to open on the Transit Mall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Portland Streetcar Loop to open on East Side</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In its 30 year history, Fareless Square has experienced a number of changes with more on the horizon with the opening of the Green Line in 2009 and the extension of the Portland Streetcar in 2011.

There are 86,000 weekday riders in Fareless Square with 56% of the boardings along the Transit Mall. Of weekday bus trips beginning downtown, about 75% begin and end on the transit mall, while nearly all trips either begin or end on the mall. MAX riders boarding in Fareless Square are more than twice as likely to be traveling completely within Fareless Square (31%) than are bus riders (15%). Of those traveling completely within Fareless, bus riders are significantly more likely than MAX riders to have already paid for their trip (51% vs. 34%). Nearly two-thirds of riders access Fareless Square by transit which means they paid a transit fare as part of their trip. Less than one quarter of riders access Fareless Square by auto. Although it is very difficult to quantify lost revenue because of the complexity in determining trip making associated with free fares, TriMet has estimated lost revenue due to Fareless Square to be between $2.72 and $3.26 million.

1 Fareless Square Customer Survey, Fall 2006
2 2003 Fareless Square Market Profile
Summary of Stakeholder Feedback

There is general consensus that Fareless Square is viewed as a unique icon of Portland and demonstrates its commitment to being a green and sustainable city. A phrase often heard by many residents is that Fareless Square has become part of Portland’s “identity”. Its original goals to promote transit, improve air quality, and enhance the downtown business environment by providing a high level of mobility within the central city are still relevant and valid according to most stakeholders. However, there are two key issues that have become increasingly important to the continuation of Fareless Square. They are to increase the perception and reality that Fareless Square (as well as the entire TriMet system) is safe; and to address the financial losses due to fare evasion and lost revenue resulting from passengers riding free of charge within Fareless Square.

While there is no consensus on the best strategy for moving forward, there is general agreement that some changes to Fareless Square are desirable. All stakeholders think that more security is needed to ensure the public feels safe and comfortable riding TriMet. Many stakeholders also believe increased enforcement to collect fares throughout the system should be a high priority especially at the boundaries of Fareless Square where fare evasion is assumed to be particularly high. Stakeholders feel strongly that a vital and attractive business community is essential in downtown Portland and mobility for residents and tourists alike is a critical element to ensure its continued success.

Modifications to Fareless Square

Chapter 4 outlined a series of 13 modifications to Fareless Square. The major benefits and drawbacks of each were described as well as their ability to meet potential policy goals. Based on this evaluation, the following three alternatives are recommended for further consideration.

Limit to Rail Only

This alternative limits fare-free rides to rail within the current Fareless Square boundaries. It includes the MAX stops within Fareless Square (Lloyd Mall to Library/Galleria) and the new MAX stops on the Mall (Union Station to PSU), as well as the Streetcar. Bus service would no longer offer free fare trips.

The majority of stakeholders support this alternative because they believe it continues to promote mobility between the central business district and the Lloyd District. It also reduces the subsidy to Fareless Square as revenues lost to increased bus fare evasions would be recovered and some additional bus fare revenue would be generated.

A variation of this option is to extend free fares only to the Convention Center or NE 7th Avenue. This would eliminate the Lloyd Mall from Fareless Square and address some of the stakeholder security concerns while not greatly impacting mobility to the Lloyd District.

Maintain Fareless Square while Addressing Key Issues

This option is for Fareless Square to remain unchanged; however to make this option desirable and address stakeholder concerns, two added features should be further explored. The first would be to enhance security within Fareless Square and the entire TriMet system. The second element would be to investigate the development of a financial partnership with the downtown business community similar to the three party agreement between the City, County and the Lloyd District. It would supplement funding contributions and address stakeholder concern about lost
revenues. The major advantage of this option is that it maintains an important icon in Portland and reduces the complexity required in making a significant change.

**Institute $1.00 Fare in Central City**

This alternative would replace Fareless Square with a modest fare within a new Central City zone. This zone could include the Central Eastside District as well as other districts not currently in Fareless Square. This alternative is supported by many stakeholders because they feel it would reduce some of the undesirable behavior within Fareless Square by charging a nominal fare, yet is still low enough that it would continue to promote travel throughout the central city. It also would increase passenger revenues. It could reduce transit use as residents and visitors may choose to walk rather than ride transit.

The tourist industry may not support this alternative as tourists and conventioneers would no longer travel free of charge. One way of addressing the needs of tourists and conventioneers would be to issue a convention pass. The convention pass provides free rides without a real complexity for conventioneers. The convention & hotel industry would have to administer the passes and TriMet would have to recognize and honor them.

This alternative would be most appropriate to consider in the future when the Streetcar extends operation to the Central Eastside. The new streetcar tracks might form a logical boundary for a new fare zone.

**Summary and Conclusions**

Fareless Square is at a critical junction. There is a unique opportunity for making changes to Fareless Square in the near future with new MAX service scheduled to open on the Transit Mall in fall 2009 and extension of the streetcar in the following two years. Fareless Square is a key feature of downtown Portland and has become an important city icon. TriMet is working closely with the Portland Business Alliance (PBA) and other key stakeholders to understand their major issues and concerns about the future of Fareless Square.