Guidelines for returning deferred project elements

In July 2010, the Federal Transit Administration stated that it would provide a 50 percent funding match for the Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Project. This level of match required a reduction in the project budget and scope, a recalibration process that took place in summer and fall of 2010.

As a result, several elements originally slated for inclusion in the project were placed on a deferral list. As project design and cost estimates advance, the deferred items can be considered for return to the project if feasible. In March 2011, the project entered the Final Design phase and project partners can begin making determinations of what elements, if any, can be brought back into the project's scope.

How project partners decide
Project partners agree that elements returned to the project should also support regional transportation and land use policies and goals as detailed in Metro’s High Capacity Transit System Plan and the 2040 Growth Concept. Decisions about returning items to the project will be based on those regional objectives and the project’s guiding principles established during the recalibration process:

Enhance project’s safety, security and quality
System safety, security and the quality of the project are a priority. This includes providing safe and reliable access for all riders traveling by all modes to and from the station areas.

Maintain project schedule
In order to maintain efficiencies of cost and remain within its budget, the project must remain on schedule. Elements brought back cannot negatively impact the schedule.

Maximize resources
The more efficiently the project budget is managed, the more opportunity there is for returning deferred elements to the project. For a deferred element to be returned, it must add value to existing project or help minimize long-term operational and maintenance costs for the region. It should also leverage regional land use and transportation investments along the alignment.

Consider the Total Transit System
Elements considered for return to the project must contribute to some aspect of the Total Transit System, and will seek to balance the objectives of jurisdictional partners with infrastructure needs that ensure safe, reliable, quality light rail service over the long-term.

These elements also must benefit the regional transportation system as a whole, such as bike and pedestrian access, roadway and crossing improvements, transit-oriented development, and freight mobility.
The Total Transit System is outlined in TriMet’s Transit Investment Plan, to provide –
- A safe and secure trip
- Optimizing ridership
- Quality service that is frequent, reliable and comfortable
- Access to transit via walking, bicycling or driving
- Amenities at transit stops
- Customer information regarding TriMet service
- Transit equity and environmental justice
- Progress toward sustainability

**Timing**
Deferred elements with time-sensitive issues, such as lead time needed to design, order or create the element, will be considered first, but with the same principles and goals as a guide. Elements that have the flexibility to be added back later or even outside the project via new funding opportunities will have those factors taken into account.

With the guiding principles, as well as regional consensus on transportation and land use goals, project partners will carefully consider each deferred element’s ability to meet these criteria.

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