

**Date:** June 26, 2019**To:** Board of Directors**From:** Doug Kelsey**Subject:** **ORDINANCE NO. 356 OF THE TRI-COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT OF OREGON (TRIMET) TO CLOSE THE MALL/SW 4<sup>TH</sup> AVE AND MALL/SW 5<sup>TH</sup> AVE MAX STATIONS (FIRST READING AND PUBLIC HEARING)****1. Purpose of Item**

This Ordinance authorizes the General Manager to close the Mall/SW 4<sup>th</sup> Ave and the Mall/SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave MAX stations.

**2. Type of Agenda Item**

- Initial Contract
- Contract Modification
- Other: Service Modification

**3. Reason for Board Action**

The closure of the Mall/SW 4<sup>th</sup> Ave and the Mall/SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave MAX stations is a service change effectuated by an ordinance, which will require a first reading and a public hearing, and a second reading.

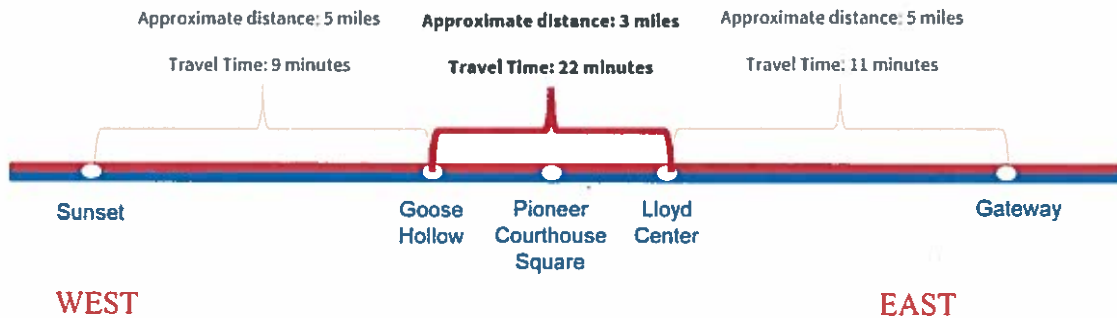
**4. Type of Action**

- Resolution
- Ordinance 1<sup>st</sup> Reading
- Ordinance 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 point, as illustrated below:



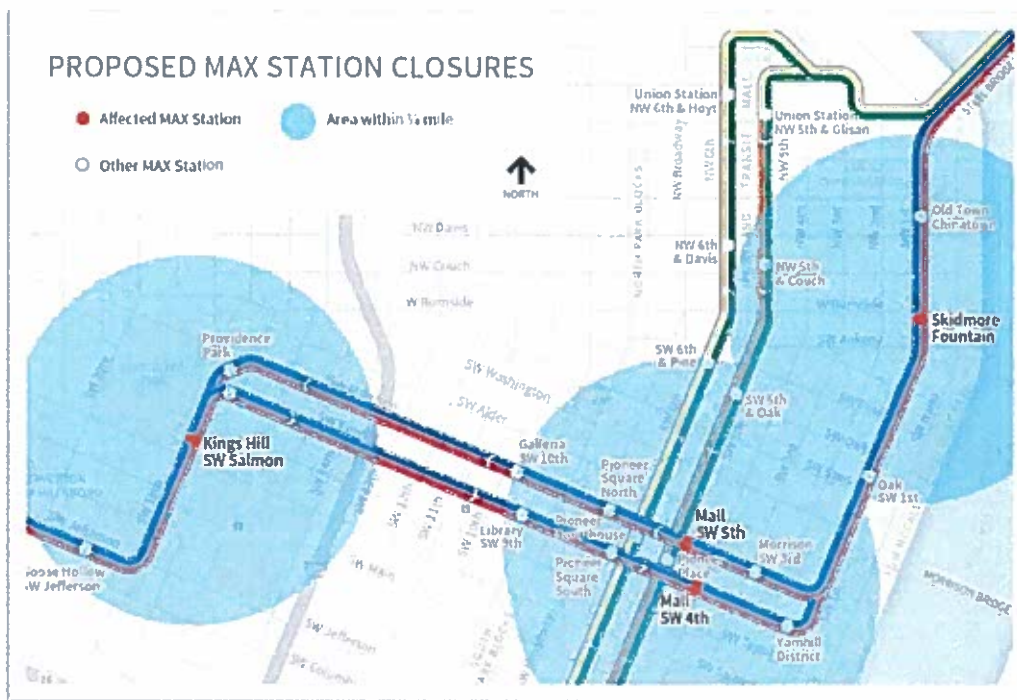
The best transit system design strikes the right balance between speed and convenience in order to maximize ridership and serve the community. If a light rail train is not moving quickly, the value of the investment in dedicated right-of-way and high capacity trains may be significantly eroded. At a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

Therefore, 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  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile apart in order 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 4<sup>th</sup> Ave, Mall/SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, and Skidmore Fountain MAX stations as the best candidates for closure. These four stations were selected because of their proximity to other stations, station access area, ridership, and safety. 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 4<sup>th</sup> Ave and Mall/SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave stations.

#### 6. **Diversity**

As part of its review of the MAX station optimization plan that proposes closing four MAX stations in downtown Portland, including the two Mall stations, 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**

TriMet is projected to incur \$460,600 in costs related to modifying the systems that manage train movements in order to support the closure of the two Mall stations and the closure of the Kings Hill/SW Salmon station. In addition, TriMet is projected to spend up to \$750,000 making modifications to the right-of-way to transition present platforms and appurtenances to different uses pending further study. Because additional ridership is anticipated as a result of this service modification, some of these initial costs will be offset. Further, some Operations and Maintenance cost savings may be realized.

**8. Impact if Not Approved**

If the TriMet Board of Directors chooses not to adopt this Ordinance, the two Mall stations will remain open. Anticipated travel time savings and any resulting increases in ridership will go unrealized.

**ORDINANCE NO. 356**

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TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT OF OREGON (TRIMET) TO CLOSE  
THE MALL/SW 4<sup>TH</sup> AVE AND MALL/SW 5<sup>TH</sup> AVE MAX STATIONS  
(FIRST READING AND PUBLIC HEARING)**

The Board of Directors of the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (Board), pursuant to the authority of Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 267, after having considered the public testimony presented and having reviewed, considered and approved the Title VI equity analysis concerning the effects of the MAX station closures, does hereby ordain and decree the following Ordinance:

**Section 1- Closure of the Two Mall MAX Stations**

The General Manager is authorized to close the Mall/SW 4<sup>th</sup> Ave and the Mall/SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave MAX stations no sooner than March 1, 2020.

**Section 2- Effective/Operative Dates**

This Ordinance No. 356 shall take effect thirty days after the date of its Second Reading.

Dated: June 26, 2019

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Officer

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary

Approved as to Legal Sufficiency:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Legal Department

