

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF FINALIZING THE) RESOLUTION NO. 04-3403
DECISION TO ADD THE PORTLAND MALL)
ALIGNMENT TO THE LOCALLY PREFERRED) Introduced by Councilor Brian Newman
ALTERNATIVE FOR PHASE I OF THE SOUTH)
CORRIDOR LIGHT RAIL PROJECT)

WHEREAS, The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Metro published the South/North Corridor Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in February 1998, that evaluated several alternatives in the South/North Corridor; and

WHEREAS, On July 23, 1998 the Metro Council adopted Resolution No. 98-2674, For the Purpose of Adopting the Locally Preferred Strategy (LPS) For South/North Light Rail Project, and Resolution No. 98-2673, For the Purpose of Adopting the Land Use Final Order Establishing the Light Rail Route, Stations, Lots and Maintenance Facilities and the Related Highway Improvements For the South/North Light Rail Project; and

WHEREAS, FTA and Metro published the South/North Supplemental DEIS (SDEIS) in June 1999, amended the South/North LPS in June 1999 by adopting Resolution No. 99-2806A, For the Purpose of Amending the Locally Preferred Strategy For the South/North Light Rail Project to Define the Interstate Max Project as the First Construction Segment and to Amend the FY 2000 Unified Work Program, and published the North Corridor Interstate MAX Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in October 1999; and

WHEREAS, In June 1999 the Metro Council adopted Resolution No. 99-2795A, For the Purpose of Amending FY 00 Unified Work Program to Add the South Corridor Transportation Alternatives Study and Amending the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to Authorize FY 99 Surface Transportation Program (STP); and

WHEREAS, FTA, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Metro published the South Corridor SDEIS on December 20, 2002 that evaluated a number of alternatives in the South Corridor and on April 17, 2003 the Metro Council adopted Resolution No. 03-3303, For the Purpose of Amending the Locally Preferred Strategy For the South/North Corridor Project to Define a Two-Phased Major Transit Investment Strategy For the South Corridor, With the I-205 Light Rail Transit Project as the Phase 1 Locally Preferred Alternative Followed By the Milwaukie Light Rail Transit Project in Phase 2; and

WHEREAS, The FTA required that the downtown segment of the LPA be defined as “preliminary” until the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) evaluation and analysis was updated for the Portland Mall Alignment; and

WHEREAS, FTA, FHWA and Metro published the Downtown Portland Amendment to the South Corridor Project SDEIS in October 2003 and the public was invited to comment on the Amendment until November 17, 2003; and

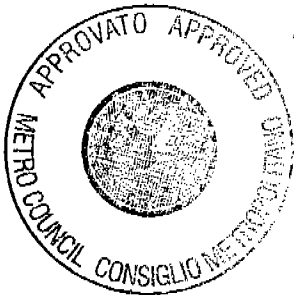
WHEREAS, The public comments received on the downtown Amendment to the SDEIS were received by Metro staff and compiled in the Public Comment Report, published on November 19, 2003; and

WHEREAS, The Mayor’s Committee, the South Corridor Steering Committee, the TriMet Board of Directors and the City of Portland have reviewed the NEPA document and the public comments and

made recommendations to the Metro Council as reflected in the Amendment to the Locally Preferred Alternative report dated November 24, 2003 and attached to this resolution; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council hereby; adopts the amendment to the LPA as described in the South Corridor Project Downtown Portland Mall Segment Locally Preferred Alternative Recommendation report (Exhibit A) and generally includes extending Light Rail Transit from the Steel Bridge to Union Station and then on 5th and 6th avenues along the Portland Transit Mall to the Portland State University Terminus at SW Jackson Street,

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 15th day of January, 2004




David Bragdon, Council President

Approved as to Form:


Daniel B. Cooper, Metro Attorney

South Corridor Project

Downtown Portland Mall Segment Locally Preferred Alternative Recommendation

*Mayor's Portland Mall Revitalization Steering Committee
November 21, 2003*

*South Corridor Policy Committee
November 24, 2003*



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The preparation of this report was financed in part by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The opinions, findings and conclusions expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the FTA. Printed on 30% recycled post-consumer paper.

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S. SUMMARY

S.1 Basis for the LPA Report

This report presents the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Downtown Segment of Phase I of the South Corridor Project. This document forwards the LPA recommendations made by the Mayor's Portland Mall Revitalization Steering Committee and the South Corridor Policy Committee to the Metro Council, which is charged with the final LPA decision. Two previous LPA decisions selected light rail on SW Fifth and Sixth Avenues (The Portland Mall, or transit mall) as the preferred alternative for the next downtown rail alignment. First was the South/North Corridor LPA in July 1998, which was followed by the South Corridor Preliminary LPA in April 2003. The 2003 South Corridor LPA was deemed "preliminary" by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) because the *South/North Corridor Draft Environmental Impact Statement* that covered the alignment was five years old and was in need of updated environmental and transportation analyses. Completion of the *Downtown Amendment to the South Corridor Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (ASDEIS) and the subsequent confirmation of the LPA selected in April 2003 will remove the preliminary designation from the LPA decision.

This LPA recommendation has been made based on technical information from the documents below and from public input received during the public comment period as documented in the *The South Corridor Downtown Amendment Public Comment Report* (Metro: November 2003). The documents below form the technical basis for the LPA recommendation:

- *Downtown Amendment to the South Corridor Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (Metro: October 2003)
- *Draft Conceptual Design Report* (TriMet: June 2003)
- *South Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative Report* (Metro, April 2003)
- *South Corridor Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (Metro: December 2002)
- *Downtown Light Rail Systems Analysis* (TriMet and Metro: December 2002)
- *South/North Corridor Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (Metro: February 1998)
- *South/North Transit Corridor Study Locally Preferred Strategy Final Report* (Metro: July 1998)

S.2 Downtown Portland's Context Within the South Corridor Project

The Metro Council adopted a two-phased major transit investment strategy for the South Corridor on April 17, 2003. Phase I, the I-205 LRT Project including the Portland Mall alignment in the Downtown Segment from the west end of the Steel Bridge to Portland State University (PSU) was selected as the initial Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), to be followed by Phase 2, the Milwaukie LRT Project. After discussions with the FTA and FHWA, the Portland Mall Alignment was designated as a "preliminary" LPA pending the revision of environmental and transportation analysis for the Downtown Segment. While the South Corridor strategy adopted the implementation of both the I-205 and Milwaukie light rail alignments, the two light rail projects would be constructed sequentially because sufficient local and federal dollars to construct both alignments concurrently

have not been identified.

Pursuant to confirming the Downtown Segment LPA decision, TriMet will work with the FTA and FHWA to advance the I-205 project including the Portland Mall alignment into Preliminary Engineering (PE) and to initiate the *South Corridor I-205 Light Rail Project Final Environmental Impact Statement* (FEIS).

Following completion of the South Corridor I-205 Project FEIS, adoption of a finance plan for the Milwaukie to Portland light rail project and the resolution of issues related to the Willamette River crossing, Metro and TriMet would prepare New Starts rating materials and an application to FTA to advance the Milwaukie project into Preliminary Engineering. This application will include any segment(s) of the Portland Mall not constructed with the I-205 project and also initiate the *South Corridor Milwaukie Project Final Environmental Impact Statement*.

S.3 Locally Preferred Alternative Recommendation for the South Corridor Downtown Portland Segment

Recommendations for this LPA decision are specific to the following aspects of the project:

- Mode and Alignment
- Terminus
- Station Locations

Each of these is described following the description of the recommended Locally Preferred Alternative.

S.3.1 Description of the Recommended Locally Preferred Alternative

The proposed South Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) is shown in Figure S1 and is described below.

North Entry. The alignment would proceed from the west end of the Steel Bridge where it would split from the existing MAX tracks in two-way operation and proceed northwest to NW Fifth and Sixth avenues at NW Irving Street where the alignment would turn south and split into two one-way alignments. The southbound tracks would be located on NW Fifth Avenue and the northbound tracks on NW Sixth Avenue.

North Mall. The northernmost stations would be located between NW Hoyt and Irving streets, which would serve Union Station, the Greyhound Bus Terminal and the eastern edge of the Pearl District. The alignment would then proceed south to stations between NW Couch and Davis streets, which would serve Old Town and the office core immediately south of West Burnside Street.

Central Mall. The alignment would continue on SW Fifth and Sixth avenues across West Burnside Street to stations between SW Stark and Washington streets. This station could potentially move one to two blocks north to SW Oak or Pine streets depending on the outcome of the urban design and station configuration analysis being undertaken by TriMet for the *Final Conceptual Design Report* that will define the project for advancement into Preliminary Engineering (PE). This station would serve the office core of downtown. The next station would be located between SW Yamhill and

Taylor streets, one block south of Pioneer Courthouse Square and the Cross-Mall light rail alignment. In addition to the retail core, this station would serve office buildings and events at the Square. Like the Stark/Washington Station, this station could also move north one block to Pioneer Courthouse Square depending on the outcome of TriMet's the *Final Conceptual Design Report* prior to PE. Further south on SW Fifth and Sixth avenues, stations would be located between SW Madison and Jefferson streets, with the Fifth Avenue Station being adjacent to City Hall on SW Fifth Avenue. Concerns raised by the community about the Sixth Avenue station have prompted consideration through the *Final Conceptual Design Report* process of a station one block south between SW Jefferson and Columbia streets. These stations would serve the southern office core, and government center area that includes the Justice Center, the Portland Building, City Hall, the Edith Green Federal Building and the Multnomah County Courthouse.

South Mall. The next stations would be located between SW Montgomery and Mill streets adjacent to the Portland State University (PSU) Urban Center Plaza. This would be the first of two PSU stations. The terminus station would be located between Jackson and College streets and would include a turnaround just south of Jackson. The alignment would connect to a future Milwaukie Light Rail Project via SW Lincoln Street, at which time the Jackson Street turnaround could be used for short-turning trains at the south end of the Portland Mall.

S.3.2 Mode and Alignment Recommendation : *Light Rail on the Portland Mall*

Recommendation: The appropriate mode for high capacity transit in downtown is light rail. In keeping with 30 years of policy and two existing LPA decisions, light rail should be implemented from the west end of the Steel Bridge where it would diverge from the existing MAX tracks and head west to NW Fifth and Sixth avenues along NW Irving Street where the alignment would turn south along SW Fifth and Sixth avenues, crossing West Burnside Street to serve SW Fifth and Sixth avenues and the central and southern sections of the Portland Mall.

Rationale: The decision to serve downtown Portland with high capacity transit is rooted in three decades of downtown planning decisions beginning with the 1972 Portland Downtown Plan. The specific decision to add the light rail transit mode to the Portland Mall was made by the TriMet Board, Portland City Council and Metro Council in 1998 as part of the South/North Light Rail Project LPA decision and again in April 2003 as part of the South Corridor Light Rail Project LPA decision. Metro's 2040 Growth Concept envisions a hierarchy of centers connected by high capacity transit, with the downtown and central city depending on transit to provide access to housing and employment.

As with the transit mode selection, the alignment for light rail in downtown has received a great deal of study over the past three decades. The City of Portland's 1972 Downtown Plan and later the Central City Plan confirmed SW Fifth and Sixth avenues as downtown Portland's primary transit route. As mentioned above, the specific decision to add light rail to the Portland Mall was made by

the TriMet Board, Portland City Council and Metro Council in 1998 as part of the South/North Light Rail Project LPA decision and again in April 2003 as part of the South Corridor Light Rail Project LPA decision. The alignment adopted in 1998 and 2003 differ slightly (See Figure S-2.1).

During the public comment period, comments were received that advocated for different mode and alignment solutions for the Portland Mall. These included a subway and a shuttle bus system similar to Denver's 16th Street transit mall. For a full discussion of these options, please see Section 4.1.1 of this report. Neither of these options is recommended for inclusion in the locally preferred alternative. A subway alignment is not recommended to be advanced because of high cost, lack of need for the high level of capacity provided by a subway, extensive system modifications to make use of the multi-car trains that a subway makes possible, adequacy of a surface alignment to meet demand until 2040, and a long history of subway analyses that concluded with the finding that a surface alignment on the Portland Mall is the preferred place for a second downtown light rail alignment. The Denver 16th Street Mall Shuttle Bus concept is not recommended because it would delay the addition of needed light rail capacity and would put added strain on the Cross-Mall alignment. In addition, the strong preference of the Downtown community has been to have a light rail alignment that interfaced directly with the bus system the length of the Portland Mall. An earlier alternative considered in the *South Corridor* SDEIS, the First Avenue/Main Street terminus option, was rejected because of increased transferring and travel time and the public perception that the line would not take riders to the heart of downtown, both criticisms that could be made of a shuttle bus distribution system.

S.3.3 Terminus Recommendation: *Portland State University (SW Jackson Street)*

Recommendation: The Downtown Segment alignment on the Portland Mall should connect to the existing MAX tracks at the west end of the Steel Bridge and proceed west to the Portland Mall via NW Irving Street through Union Station and continue south along Fifth and Sixth Avenues to the Jackson Street turnaround at PSU, a distance of approximately 1.7 miles.

Rationale: The ASDEIS presents two terminus options, one at Main Street and the other to Portland State University (PSU) with a turnaround at SW Jackson Street. The extension to PSU provides access to an existing ridership base of 25,000 students, faculty and staff. The Portland Streetcar would also interface with the Mall alignment at the PSU Urban Center, providing enhanced transit connectivity. The Main Street Terminus would be less expensive than the PSU terminus, but would not reach the PSU ridership base and would result in reduced ridership compared to the PSU terminus. The Main Street Terminus would have significant traffic circulation impacts in the central mall area and would adversely affect building access, which was reinforced through public comment. The PSU Terminus would affect traffic circulation, loading zones and access in the south mall area. Mitigation for traffic impacts is more workable at the PSU terminus with a less constrained streetscape and more options than at Main Street in the central mall.

Caveat: If funding is not secured to complete the line to the PSU Terminus, the Main Street terminus or another yet-to-be-identified location may be considered as an interim terminus. Any such short terminus would be thoroughly documented in the *South Corridor I-205 Light Rail Project Final Environmental Impact Statement*. If a shorter terminus must be considered it would be with the understanding that the remainder of the Portland Mall alignment to SW Jackson Street would be constructed as part of the subsequent Phase 2 Milwaukie LRT project.

S.3.4 Station Locations Recommendation: As evaluated in the ASDEIS and Modified by Public Comment

Recommendation: LRT stations in the Locally Preferred Alternative are proposed at the following locations:

- NW Fifth/Sixth and Hoyt/Irving (Union Station)
- NW Fifth/Sixth and Couch/Davis
- SW Fifth/Sixth at Washington/Stark – evaluate locations one to two blocks north
- SW Fifth/Sixth and Yamhill/Taylor – evaluate location at Pioneer Square (Morrison/Yamhill)
- SW Fifth/Sixth and Madison/Jefferson – evaluate location one block south at Jefferson/Columbia
- SW Fifth/Sixth and Montgomery/Mill (PSU Urban Center Plaza)
- SW Fifth/Sixth and Jackson/College

Rationale: Station locations for the Portland Mall alignment correspond to the Mall’s unique physical and operational characteristics. In the ASDEIS, stations in the Central Mall (Burnside to Jefferson streets) were evaluated as if light rail shared the center lane with buses. Stations were assumed to be at blocks in the Central Mall with widened sidewalks and no auto lane, similar to the locations selected in the previous two LPA decisions. The Mayor’s Committee on Portland Mall Revitalization is studying a variety of specific station configurations that could affect the auto access pattern and that could potentially result in stations that would be moved one to two blocks from the locations selected for analysis in the ASDEIS. This type of design adjustment is typical as a project advances from conceptual to more advanced levels of engineering. TriMet’s *Conceptual Design Report* will document the station configuration analysis and will identify the final station platform locations prior to the initiation of Preliminary Engineering.

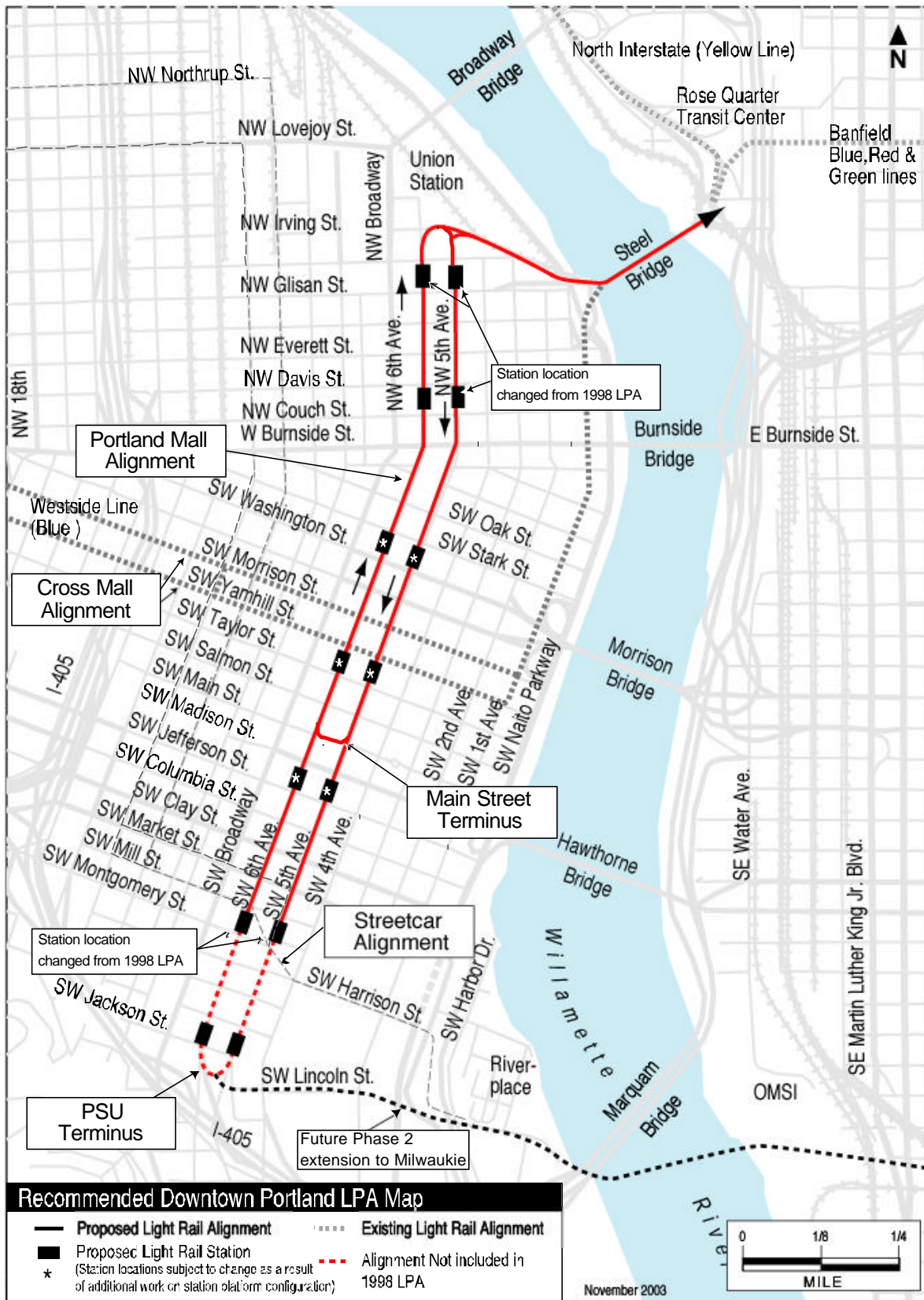
This LPA recommendation is more general in nature and does not make recommendations as to station platform configurations. The LPA is based in large part on the original South/North Light Rail Project station spacing pattern. Differences from the South/North alignment include different station locations at the north end of the Mall at NW Fifth/Sixth avenues between Hoyt and Irving streets and the additional stations along the alignment to PSU at the PSU Urban Center Plaza north of SW Montgomery Street and at the Jackson Street turnaround. In addition, study areas are recommended for the following station locations based on public comment as documented in Metro’s *South Corridor Downtown Segment Public Comment Document* and pending the resolution of station configuration design issues to be documented in TriMet’s *Conceptual Design Report* (see Figure S.2-1):

- SW Fifth/Sixth at Washington/Stark – evaluate locations one to two blocks north
- SW Fifth/Sixth and Yamhill/Taylor – evaluate location at Pioneer Square (Morrison/Yamhill)
- SW Fifth/Sixth and Madison/Jefferson – evaluate location one block south at Jefferson/Columbia

Overall, the number and location of stations analyzed in the ASDEIS provides an appropriate balance of transit coverage and speed. To integrate light rail with bus operations, bus stops would need to be re-organized to accommodate the light rail stations. Bus travel time across the length of the Portland Mall would be reduced as a result of longer stop spacing and fewer buses on the Mall.

Caveat: Prior to the initiation of Preliminary Engineering, additional analysis will be completed regarding the configuration of individual station locations. The results of this more detailed design and analysis may result in a slight shifting of station locations. Station locations and platform configurations will be thoroughly documented in the *Final Conceptual Design Report* to be prepared by TriMet prior to the initiation of PE. These changes would also be thoroughly documented in the *South Corridor I-205 Light Rail Project Final Environmental Impact Statement*.

Figure S.1 South Corridor Downtown Segment Locally Preferred Alternative Recommendation



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Locally Preferred Alternative Report Purpose

The purpose of the Locally Preferred Alternative Report is to provide documentation to confirm the Downtown Segment mode and alignment, terminus and station locations included in the South Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). The Metro Council selected the LPA in April 2003 and the Downtown Segment was designated as a preliminary LPA. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) required additional environmental analysis before a final LPA decision could be made. The *Downtown Amendment to the South Corridor Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (ASDEIS) updated the environmental analysis for the Downtown Segment that was adopted as part of the South/North Corridor LPA in 1998. The LPA is the basis of subsequent project activities including development of Preliminary Engineering for the I-205 LRT Project including the Downtown Segment, the preparation of the *South Corridor I-205 Light Rail Project Final Environmental Impact Statement* (FEIS), preparation of the project finance plan and amendment of the South/North Project Land Use Final Order (LUFO).

1.2 Project History

1.2.1 South Corridor Transit Investment Strategy

The *South Corridor Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (SDEIS) was prepared as a supplement to the original *South/North Corridor Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. The *Downtown Amendment to the South Corridor Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (ASDEIS) was required by FTA and FHWA to update the environmental analysis for the Downtown Segment, which was included in the project's LPA decision. This decision adopted a two-phased strategy for the implementation of light rail in the South Corridor. Phase 1 and 2 are illustrated in Figure 1.2-1.

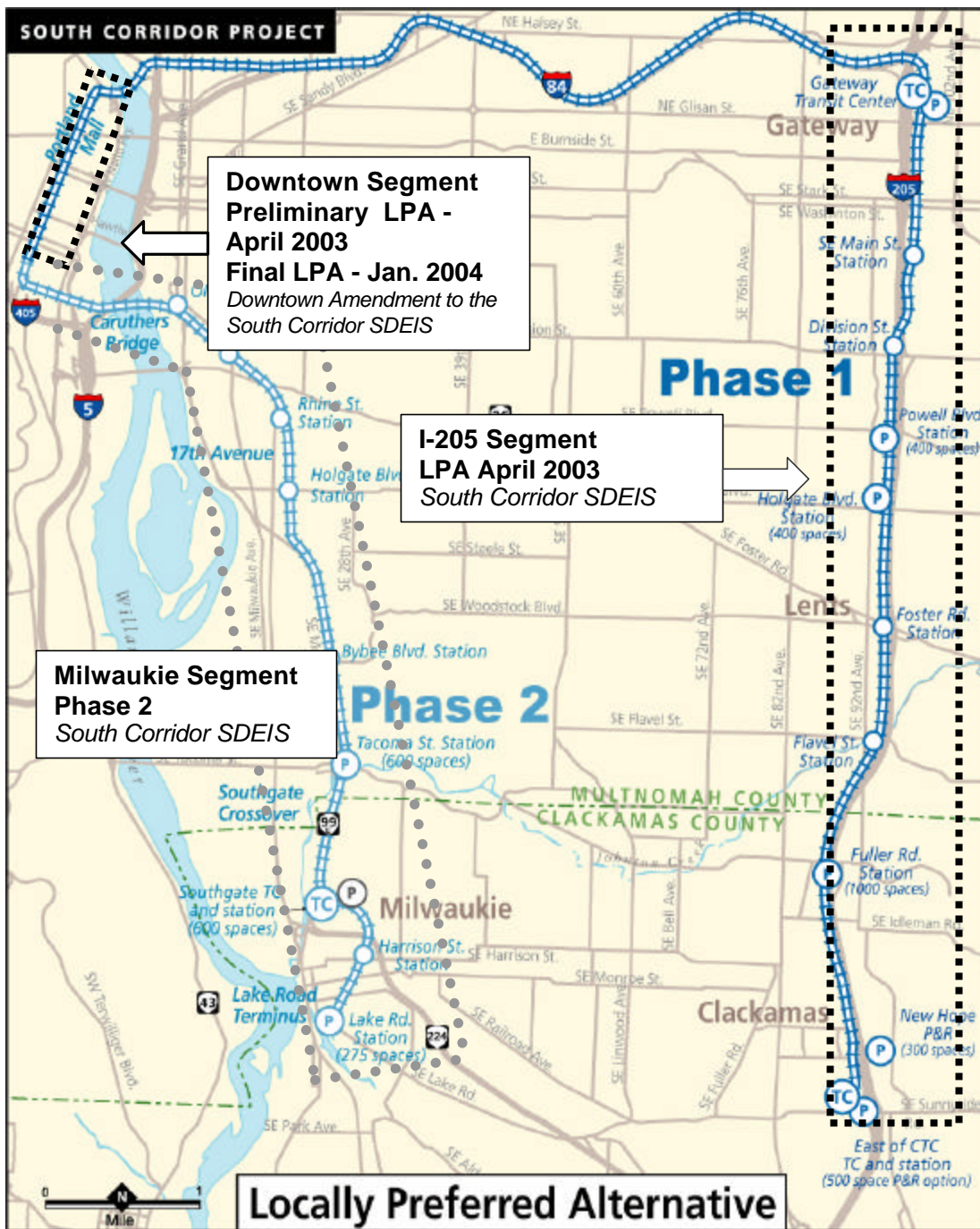
- **Phase 1: I-205 Light Rail Project** including light rail on the Portland Mall, as well as the following transit improvements in Milwaukie; 1) construction of a Southgate park-and-ride lot scheduled to begin construction in Fall 2003, and 2) relocation of the existing on-street Milwaukie transit center to the Southgate area pending resolution of design and environmental issues detailed in this report.
- **Phase 2: Milwaukie Light Rail Project**, which will be advanced following completion of the I-205 FEIS, adoption of a finance plan for the project and the resolution of issues related to the Willamette River crossing.

1.2.2 Evolution of the South/North Corridor

In July 1998, the Metro Council adopted the Locally Preferred Alternative for the South/North Corridor Project that included a light rail project from Clackamas Regional Center to downtown Milwaukie and then to downtown Portland on the Portland Mall via a new Caruthers Bridge. The South/North Project LPA alignment would have continued across the Steel Bridge and traveled through North Portland, then crossed over the Columbia River into downtown Vancouver.

In November 1998, local voters did not re-approve a 1994 funding measure that would have provided local funding for the South/North Project.

Figure 1.2-1 South Corridor Project Phasing Decision



In early 1999, community and business leaders requested that TriMet and Metro evaluate a new, lower cost light rail project on Interstate Avenue in the north part of the Corridor. The *North Corridor Interstate MAX Supplemental Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements* document the revised project. The South/North LPA was amended to reflect the changes for the Interstate MAX Project.

In the southern portion of the corridor, from 1999 to 2000, the South Corridor Transportation Alternatives Study (SCTAS) examined eight alternatives that intentionally did not include light rail in the South Corridor. Based on the findings in the *South Corridor Project Evaluation Report* (Metro: October 2000), the South Corridor Study Policy Committee (a committee of elected and appointed officials from jurisdictions within the corridor) narrowed the list of alternatives to be studied further in the South Corridor Project SDEIS. Most notably, after hearing from citizen groups from southeast Portland, Milwaukie and Clackamas County, the Policy Committee decided that the SDEIS should examine both a reduced cost Milwaukie Light Rail Alternative and an I-205 Light Rail Alternative. At the same time, the South Corridor Policy Committee directed staff to examine other potential river crossing options with the Milwaukie Light Rail Alternative and other downtown Portland alignments for both the Milwaukie and I-205 light rail alternatives. This analysis was documented in the *Downtown Light Rail System Analysis* (TriMet and Metro: December 2002).

1.3 South Corridor ASDEIS Distribution and Public Comment

The *Downtown Amendment to the South Corridor Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (ASDEIS) was distributed on September 22, 2003, and notice of availability was published in the *Federal Register* on October 3, 2003. Results of this document were also circulated and discussed at three community open houses (October 9, 14 and 15, 2003). The 56-day local public comment period ends on November 17, 2003 and has included numerous neighborhood meetings and a public hearing before the Mayor's Portland Mall Revitalization Steering Committee and the South Corridor Policy Committee on October 21, 2003. The Mayor's Portland Mall Revitalization Steering Committee and South Corridor Project Policy Committee will make the initial recommendation for the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Downtown Segment. TriMet, the City of Portland and Metro will endorse or modify the recommendation before it is reviewed by the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) and forwarded to the Metro Council for a final decision. This *South Corridor Project Downtown Segment Locally Preferred Alternative Recommendation* documents the rationale to affirm the South Corridor Project's Downtown Segment LPA.

1.4 South Corridor LPA Decision Process

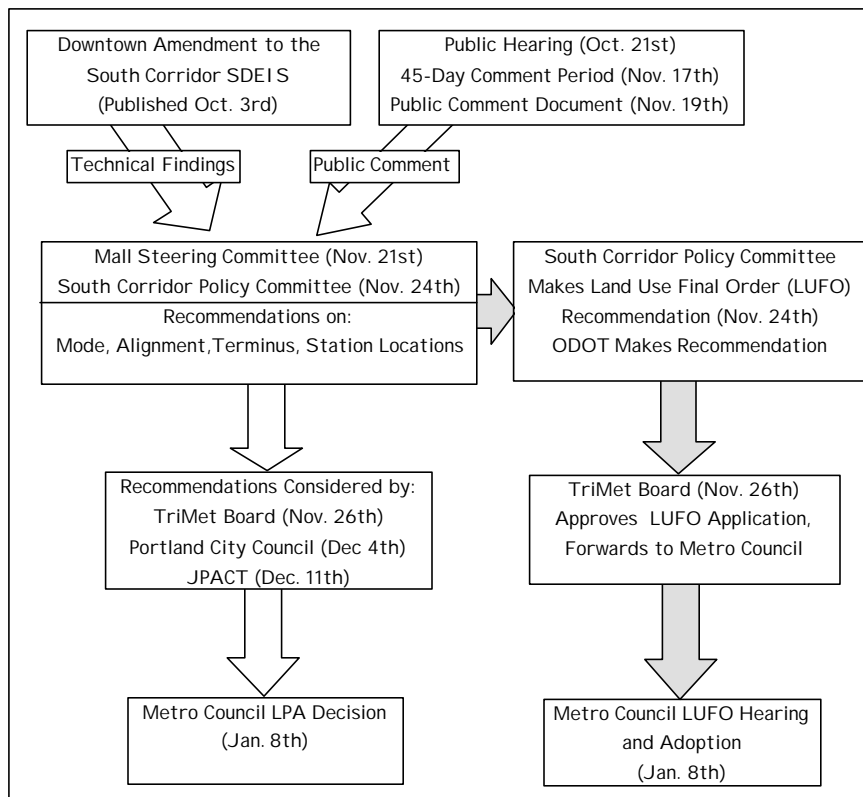
The South Corridor Downtown Segment LPA recommendation will be made by two policy-level committees, the Mayor's Portland Mall Revitalization Committee and the South Corridor Policy Committee. The South Corridor Policy Committee consists of elected officials and agency executive staff participating in the South Corridor Project. The Mayor's Committee is made up of Portland and Metro elected officials, the TriMet Board President and downtown business and community representatives. They have been charged by the Mayor to develop a plan to revitalize the Portland Mall not just from a transportation standpoint, but also to foster retail activity, a healthy pedestrian environment, office development, urban design and the continuing maintenance and stewardship of the Mall. After the Mayor's and South Corridor committees make their recommendations on November 21, 2003 and November 24, 2003 respectively, the recommendation will be considered by the Portland City Council, TriMet Board, the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) and by the Metro Council (See Figure 1.4-1). The Metro Council will

consider the final LPA decision on January 8, 2004, after consideration of:

- A. Public comments on the *Downtown Amendment to the South Corridor Project SDEIS* made during the public comment period and at the public hearing and as documented in the *South Corridor Project Downtown Amendment Public Comment Report* (Metro, November 2004);
- B. Data and analysis included in the *Downtown Amendment to the South Corridor Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (Metro, October 2003),
- C. Consistency with the study purpose and need and the project’s adopted goals and objectives, and
- D. Consideration of recommendations from the following committees and jurisdictions, on the following dates (scheduled):
 - The City of Portland Council on December 4, 2003
 - The TriMet Board of Directors on November 26, 2003
 - The Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation on December 11, 2003
- E. A letter of support for the project from the ODOT Region 1 Administrator.
- F. Public comments received at the Metro Council hearing and prior to the hearing, after the close of the ASDEIS public hearing and prior to the Metro Council hearing.

The resolutions and letters of support from the jurisdictions and agencies listed above will be contained in Appendix B of this report.

Figure 1.4-1 Locally Preferred Alternative and Land Use Final Order Process



2. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The purpose of this section is to provide a brief description of the alternatives that were examined in the *Downtown Amendment to the South Corridor Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (ASDEIS) (Metro: October 2003). For a complete description of these alternatives, refer to the South Corridor Project ASDEIS: Chapter 2 Alternatives Considered.

2.1 South Corridor Project ASDEIS Alternatives

The alternatives evaluated in the ASDEIS include a No-Build and Light Rail Alternative.

2.1.1 No-Build Alternative

The transit service network, related transit facilities and roadway improvements included in the No-Build Alternative are consistent with the *2000 Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) 2020 financially constrained transit and road network (Metro: adopted August 2000). The transit capital improvements in the No-Build Alternative would be included in all other alternatives. The No-Build Alternative also includes a 1.5 percent per year annual systemwide transit service increase, which would result in approximately 27 percent more transit service hours in 2020 than in 2000. In much of the South Corridor, buses would continue to operate in mixed traffic on increasingly congested streets and highways, except in downtown Portland, where most of the buses would operate in generally exclusive right-of-way on the Portland Mall. Light rail service would be provided with three interconnected lines. Two of those lines, the Blue Line and the Red Line, are currently in revenue service and the third line, the Yellow Line, is under construction. Under the No-Build Alternative, all three light rail lines would operate on the Cross Mall alignment through downtown Portland, which would result in 26 trains per hour operating in each direction during the peak period.

2.1.2 I-205 Light Rail Alternative with the Portland Mall Alignment

Figure 2.2-1 illustrates the proposed improvements that would be made within the Downtown Portland Segment with I-205 Light Rail Transit (LRT) with Portland Mall Alternative. The I-205 Light Rail Alternative would include all of the transit capital improvements in the No-Build Alternative, as well as additional light rail and bus-oriented capital improvements. The addition of the I-205 LRT line (or Green Line) would provide light rail service for the South Corridor. Light rail capital improvements would be made in the Downtown Portland and I-205 segments of the South Corridor. While the Green Line would operate through all three segments of the corridor (including the I-84 Segment), there would be no capital improvements made to the I-84 Segment – the Green Line would use the existing light rail alignment and stations. In addition to the Green Line, the Yellow Line would operate on the Portland Mall alignment, instead of the Cross Mall alignment under the No-Build Alternative.

Within the Downtown Portland Segment, the Portland Mall Alignment would branch off from the existing Cross Mall light rail alignment at the west end of the Steel Bridge, transitioning to a new structure that would lead to NW Irving Street. The alignment would return to grade at NW 4th Avenue and would then turn onto NW 5th and 6th avenues. Bus stops on the Portland Mall would be relocated to approximately every four blocks with the I-205 Light Rail Alternative, compared to approximately every two blocks as exists now and is assumed for the No-Build Alternative. Light rail stations would be located approximately every four blocks and other modifications would be made to the Portland Mall to accommodate the joint operation of buses and light rail vehicles. At station blocks in the Central Mall, two design options are being considered: the Sidewalk Station and

the Island Station design options. The Portland Mall alignment would terminate at SW Jackson Street (i.e., the Portland State University (PSU) Terminus), with a turn-around facility for light rail trains. In the case of inadequate financial resources, the I-205 Light Rail Alternative could use a lower-cost terminus located at SW Main Street, which would be located eleven blocks north of the PSU terminus. The Main Street Terminus would eliminate station pairs at SW Madison and Jefferson streets, SW Mill and Montgomery streets and at SW College and Jackson streets and would eliminate the ability to lay trains over for schedule recovery.

3. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT RECEIVED

3.1 Introduction

The letters, e-mails, voice messages, comment cards and testimony received during the forty-five day public comment period were submitted by individuals, business owners and representatives, agencies and organizations as part of the community participation program for the *Downtown Amendment to the South Corridor Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (ASDEIS)* and the *Draft Conceptual Design Report for the Portland Mall Revitalization Project (DCDR)*. The goal of this community participation process was to assess community opinions about the affirmation of the Locally Preferred Alternative for the downtown Portland segment of the South Corridor Project and to document the community discussion of urban design and mall function for the Portland Mall Revitalization Project.

The *South Corridor Downtown Amendment Public Comment Report* serves as an important component of a comprehensive outreach program that began with the development of the South/North Corridor in the early 1990s. Public comment related to the *South/North Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement*, the *North Corridor Interstate MAX Supplemental Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements* and the *South Corridor Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement* are documented in public comment reports for those projects. Public comments on the South Corridor scoping process, including the downtown Portland segment, were compiled in May 2000 and February 2003.

3.2 Public Involvement Activities

In an effort to provide opportunities for early and continuing involvement of the public, staff used a variety of outreach methods and materials. The public participation plans for all phases of the project detail a proactive involvement process to provide comprehensive and understandable information, timely public notice, full public access and involvement in key actions and decisions, outreach to communities that typically do not become involved in transportation project planning and the use of innovative and participatory outreach tools. Chapter 6 of the ASDEIS provides a detailed summary of the public involvement program.

Though the Portland Mall Revitalization Project and the ASDEIS processes resulted in separate documents that address varying levels of design and different technical analysis, the public involvement program for these projects was seamless and unified. Allowing the public to learn about and comment on both projects simultaneously simplified the process for community members and allowed better utilization of resources for the agencies and jurisdictions involved. As a result, comments were received on both the choices contained in the ASDEIS (mode, alignment, station location and terminus) and in the *Draft Conceptual Design Report* (station design, mall design and mall operations as well as mall revitalization and a mall management plan).

The *Draft Conceptual Design Report* was distributed in July 2003. Public comments for the *Draft Conceptual Design Report* have been collected from July to the present. Notice of Availability of the ASDEIS was published in the Federal Register on October 3, 2003, beginning the 45-day formal public comment period that concluded on November 17, 2003. This document summarizes the

comments received from October 3 through November 17, 2003. A newspaper ad was published in *The Oregonian* on October 2, 2003 notifying the public of the availability of the Downtown Amendment, open houses and public hearing. Notice was mailed to property owners within 200 feet of the Portland Mall Alignment as well as others included on the Downtown Amendment mailing list. Open houses were held on October 7 at Portland State University, October 14 at the Portland Building and October 16 at the Port of Portland Building. A public hearing was held on October 21, 2003 at the Portland Building.

Throughout the public comment period, project staff met with neighborhood, community and business groups, individual businesses owners and citizens and local advisory groups. Maps, video simulations and PowerPoint presentations were used at many meetings. The ASDEIS and *Draft Conceptual Design Report* served as a source for technical information for many citizens. The ASDEIS and *Draft Conceptual Design Report* were available for review at all meetings and were distributed to all who requested it. Both documents were also available on the web.

Every effort has been made to include comments received at any meeting held during the public comment period as well as letters received before the start of the official public comment period. This report also includes a summary of comments received through the project hotline, e-mail, fax or letters. A total of 115 comments were received during the public comment period.

3.3 Public Comment Summary

3.3.1 Public hearing: October 21, 2003

Thirty-one people testified and eighty attended the hearing. Most people testified in support of light rail on the mall. Six people testified in support of a subway option. All testimony regarding the terminus supported extending light rail to Portland State University

3.3.2 Comments received at Open Houses in October 2003

More than 100 people attended the three open houses held in October. Twenty-eight people filled out comment cards. Fifteen comment cards included support for light rail on the mall and six opposed it. Four comment cards stated a preference for a subway option.

3.3.3 Comments received by email and telephone

Forty-eight comments were received by e-mail and telephone. Nineteen comments were in support of light rail on the mall. Ten opposed light rail on the mall and five preferred a subway

3.3.4 Comments received by mail

Twenty-five written comments were received. Eight comments supported light rail on the transit mall and eight opposed it. All comments with reference to the terminus option supported light rail to Portland State University.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

4.1 Description of the Recommended Locally Preferred Alternative

Recommendations for this LPA decision are specific to the following aspects of the project:

- Mode and Alignment
- Terminus
- Station Locations

Each of these is described following the description of the recommended Locally Preferred Alternative, which is shown in Figure 4.1-1.

4.1.1 North Entry.

The alignment would proceed from the west end of the Steel Bridge where it would split from the existing MAX tracks in two-way operation and proceed northwest to NW Fifth and Sixth Avenues at NW Irving Street where the alignment would turn south and split into two one-way alignments. The southbound tracks would be located on NW Fifth Avenue and the northbound tracks on NW Sixth Avenue.

4.1.2 North Mall

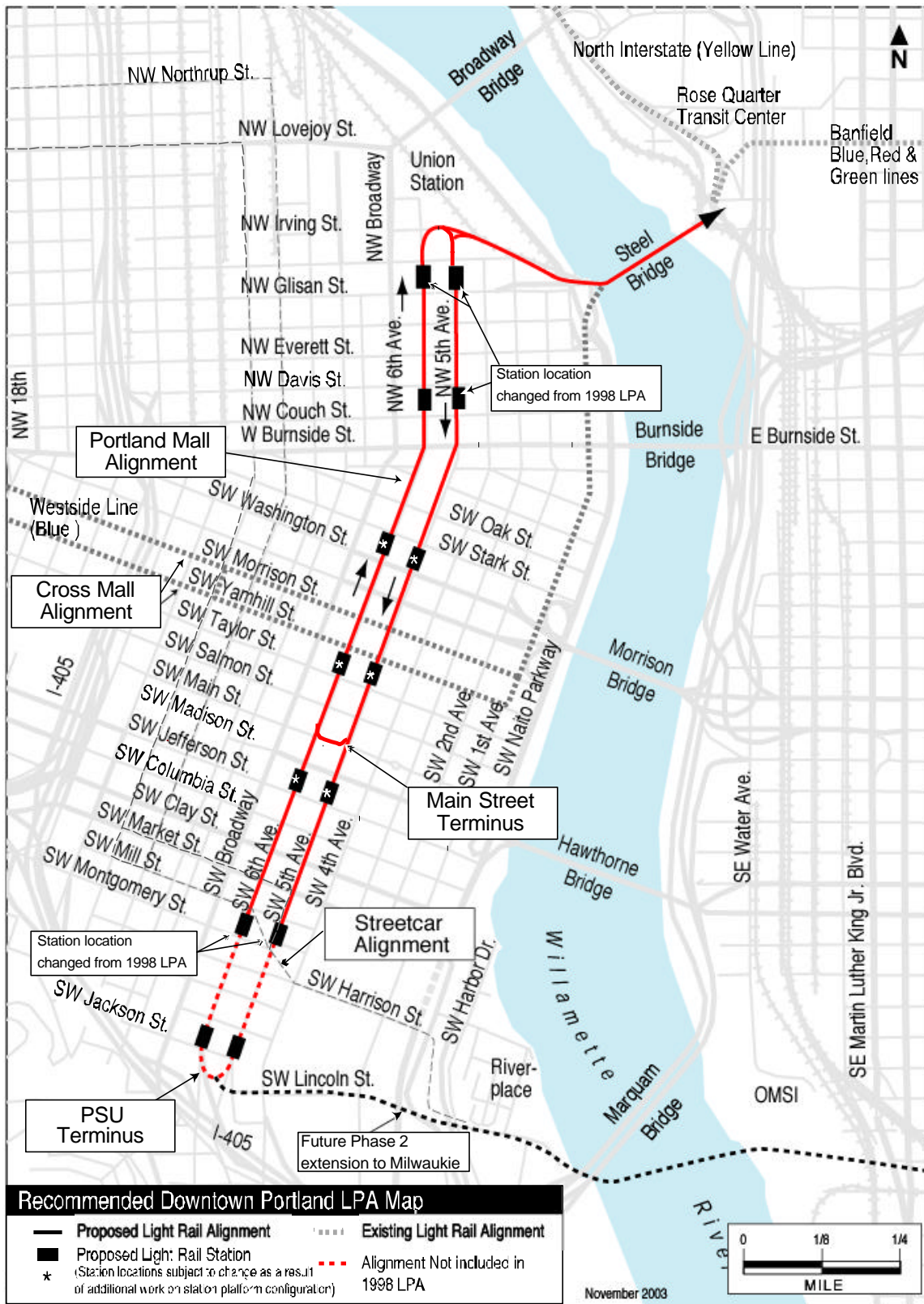
The northernmost stations would be located between NW Hoyt and Irving, which would serve Union Station, the Greyhound Bus Terminal and the eastern edge of the Pearl District. The alignment would then proceed south to stations between NW Couch and Davis, which would serve Old Town and the office core immediately south of West Burnside Street.

4.1.3 Central Mall

The alignment would continue on SW Fifth and Sixth avenues across West Burnside Street to stations between SW Stark and Washington streets. This station could potentially move one to two blocks north to SW Oak or Pine streets depending on the outcome of the urban design and station configuration analysis being undertaken by TriMet for the *Final Conceptual Design Report* that will define the project for advancement into Preliminary Engineering (PE). This station would serve the office core of downtown. The next station would be located between SW Yamhill and Taylor streets, one block south of Pioneer Courthouse Square and the Cross-Mall light rail alignment. In addition to the retail core, this station would serve office buildings and events at the Square. Like the Stark/Washington Station, this station could also move north one block to Pioneer Courthouse Square depending on the outcome of TriMet's the *Final Conceptual Design Report* prior to PE.

Further south on SW Fifth and Sixth avenues, stations would be located between SW Madison and Jefferson streets, with the Fifth Avenue Station being adjacent to City Hall on SW Fifth Avenue. Concerns raised by the community about the Sixth Avenue station have prompted consideration through the *Final Conceptual Design Report* process of a station one block south between SW Jefferson and Columbia streets. These stations would serve the southern office core, and government center area that includes the Justice Center, the Portland Building, City Hall, the Edith Green Federal Building and the Multnomah County Courthouse.

Figure 4.1-1 South Corridor Downtown Segment Locally Preferred Alternative Recommendation



4.1.3 South Mall.

The next stations would be located between SW Montgomery and Mill adjacent to the PSU Urban Center Plaza. This would be the first of two PSU stations. The terminus station would be located between Jackson and College streets and would include a turnaround just south of Jackson. The alignment would connect to a future Milwaukie Light Rail Project via SW Lincoln Street, at which time the Jackson Street turnaround could be used for short-turning trains at the south end of the Portland Mall.

4.2 Mode and Alignment: *Light Rail on the Portland Transit Mall*

4.2.1 Recommendation

The appropriate mode for high capacity transit in downtown is light rail. In keeping with 30 years of policy and two existing LPA decisions, light rail should be implemented from the west end of the Steel Bridge where it would diverge from the existing MAX tracks and head west to NW Fifth and Sixth avenues along NW Irving Street where the alignment would turn south along SW Fifth and Sixth avenues, crossing West Burnside Street to serve SW Fifth and Sixth avenues and the central and southern sections of the Portland Mall.

4.2.2 Rationale for Decision

In downtown Portland, numerous light rail alignments have been investigated over the last 30 years. Below is a short description of these studies and alignments that provides the rationale for reaffirming the South/North Corridor and South Corridor LPA decisions to implement light rail on SW 5th and 6th avenues.

- The **Downtown Plan** completed in 1972 called for a high-capacity transit spine in downtown Portland to help focus and serve high-density development along SW 5th and 6th avenues. Southwest 4th Avenue and SW Broadway Street were designated auto and truck access streets, providing access for all types of vehicle trips in the Downtown core area.
- The **Portland Mall** on SW 5th and 6th avenues between SW Madison and West Burnside streets opened in 1978. These streets were reconfigured from major traffic streets with on-street parking to streets where buses and pedestrian activity are the major focus.
- During the planning phase for the **Banfield Light Rail Project** in 1979, numerous downtown light rail alignments were investigated including SW 4th, 5th, 6th avenues and Broadway and Yamhill/Morrison streets (Cross Mall). The Cross Mall alignment was selected to avoid impacting the newly constructed Portland Mall and conflicts with autos and trucks on SW 4th Avenue and SW Broadway Street. The Portland City Council conditioned that the next light rail alignment should be placed on the Portland Mall. The Banfield Light Rail Project opened in 1986.
- The **Central City Plan** completed in 1988, reaffirmed the Portland Mall as the preferred location for light rail transit and strengthened zoning allowing for the highest land use densities along SW 5th and 6th avenues to be supported by transit. Private enterprises continue to utilize SW 4th Avenue and SW Broadway Street for auto and truck access.

- During the planning phase for the **Westside Light Rail Project**, the Portland Mall and Cross Mall alignments were reinvestigated. The Cross Mall was selected. This decision was the result of input from the **Downtown Rail Advisory Committee (DRAC)** in 1989, which noted that enough capacity existed on the Cross Mall to accommodate the Westside LRT Project and advised that the next north-south line be located on the Portland Mall. The Westside LRT opened in 1998.
- The **Downtown Rail Advisory Committee** was reconvened during the **North/South Light Rail Analysis** in 1993 to advise on light rail alignments. Numerous surface alignments were reexamined and a light rail alignment on SW 5th and 6th avenues was reconfirmed as the best surface alignments. The SW 4th Avenue and Broadway Street subway options were also investigated but were dropped from further consideration. The significantly higher cost of a subway led decision makers to recommend the Portland Mall alignment. A six-month study was undertaken to refine the Portland Mall alignment by the Downtown Oversight Committee.
- The **Downtown Oversight Committee** was comprised of elected officials and business leaders. This group investigated various bus, light rail and auto configurations for the Portland Mall and entries to the Portland Mall on the north and south ends of downtown. Configurations included four, three and two lane combinations on SW 5th and 6th avenues. The recommendations from this committee were developed into plans that were examined in the South/North DEIS and were selected as the downtown alignment as the *South/North Locally Preferred Strategy* (Metro: July 1998).
- During the **South Corridor Project** the Policy Committee directed staff to develop lower cost alignments for light rail which resulted in the I-205 Light Rail Alignment proposal to operate on the Cross Mall. During the public comment period for the South Corridor Project SDEIS (Metro: December 2002) many concerns were raised about the feasibility of adding more trains to the Cross Mall and SW First Avenue, particularly the effects on reliability. Based on these public comments and technical concerns, the Metro Council directed in the *South Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative Report* (Metro: April 2003) that a Portland Mall alignment with the I-205 Light Rail Alternative be included in the Locally Preferred Alternative. The following rationale to add the Portland Mall alignment to the I-205 LRT project was cited in the *South Corridor LPA Report*:
 1. ***The Portland Mall alignment would ensure improved service quality on both downtown LRT alignments*** by providing greater capacity and reliability on the second alignment in downtown Portland in addition to the Cross Mall.
 2. ***Light rail on the Portland Mall reinforces 30 years of transportation and land use policy.*** Since the adoption of the 1972 Downtown Plan, the Portland City Council and downtown business community have continuously reaffirmed that the Portland Mall is the preferred location for a light rail alignment. Public and private investment decisions have been made in downtown over the last 30 years that support transit access on SW 5th and 6th avenues and auto and truck access along SW 4th Avenue and SW Broadway Street.

3. ***The Portland Mall alignment would directly serve two important downtown destinations*** including Union Station and Portland State University;
4. ***The Cross Mall alignment would limit service expansion ability*** and would eventually decrease service quality with the addition of trains needed for system growth;
5. ***The Portland Mall was selected as the South/North Corridor Project LPA in 1998*** after significant public and technical analysis;
6. ***The Portland Mall alignment received considerable public support*** during the South Corridor Project public comment period, especially from the downtown community;
7. ***Construction of light rail on the Portland Mall would be concurrent with the Mall Rehabilitation Project***, which is needed to facilitate the City of Portland's desired retail strategy.

4.2.3 Other Transit Modes or Alignments Suggested Through Public Comment

During the public comment period, comments were received that advocated for different mode and alignment solutions for the Portland Mall. These included a subway and a shuttle bus system similar to Denver's 16th Street transit mall.

- **Subway.** A subway alignment was not advanced because the *Downtown Light Rail Systems Analysis* (TriMet and Metro: December 2002) indicated that the Portland Mall and existing Cross-Mall light rail alignments provide sufficient capacity until approximately 2040. In addition, preliminary estimates show that improved cross-mall subway travel time (11 minute improvement over the existing surface Cross-Mall) and the resultant ridership increases through downtown are not sufficient to offset the estimated \$1.3 billion (current year dollars) price tag. Subways have been studied off and on ever since the 1972 *Downtown Plan* and every group that has considered subway has recommended that light rail remain on the surface on Fifth and Sixth Avenues because the added capacity of the subway is not needed, surface alignments encourage a vibrant street environment, and that the cost of a subway is not justified if it would be used by two-car trains. Additional platform retrofit costs and environmental and traffic impacts for the rest of the light rail system would occur if train lengths in excess of two cars were desired to make maximum use of a subway investment.
- **Denver-Style Bus Shuttle System.** The Denver 16th Street Mall is served by dedicated shuttle buses in a two-way operating environment at a frequency of 65 buses per hour during peak periods. In Denver, light rail riders entering downtown stop at a terminal at the south end of the 16th Street Mall where passengers transfer to shuttle buses for distribution through downtown. This is not unlike light rail riders transferring from the Cross-Mall light rail alignment to buses on the Portland Mall, which is arguably better than the Denver system because light rail to bus transfers occur in the heart of downtown as opposed to one end of downtown. Even if additional dedicated shuttle buses were added to the Portland Mall to minimize transfer wait time, the capacity problem for light rail on the Cross-Mall would remain. The downtown community was instrumental in eliminating an option in the *South Corridor SDEIS* where transfers would have been required approximately six blocks outside of the heart of downtown (Pioneer Courthouse Square) at SW First and Main. The Hawthorne Bridge to First Avenue light rail alignment was dropped from consideration and the Portland Mall added because of community dissatisfaction

with the prospect of transferring at SW First and Main and not being able to access the Mall directly. Also, operational constraints on the Cross-Mall would make addition of I-205 and Milwaukie trains problematic. Addition of a transfer to most downtown trips, failure to increase LRT capacity and the need to maintain the downtown grid signal system make a Denver-style shuttle operation impractical.

4.3 Terminus: Portland State University (Jackson Street)

4.3.1 Recommendation

The Portland State University (PSU) Terminus at Jackson Street is the recommended terminus for the Portland Mall alignment. Today, PSU is a major downtown activity center and trip generator as well as the state's largest university with over 25,000 students, faculty and staff.

4.3.2 Rationale for Decision

A shorter Main Street Terminus was also considered, but although the Main Street Terminus was less expensive, it would have less ridership and would not connect to a major activity center. It would also have disrupted auto circulation, building and loading access in the vicinity of the turnaround and was opposed by representatives of buildings in the area.

- Delaying the extension to PSU would cost more if added to a future project.
- The PSU Terminus would provide direct (no-transfer) light rail access in 2020 to PSU from Clackamas regional center, Lents town center and Gateway regional center via the Green Line, and from Vancouver and north Portland via the Yellow Line. Single-transfer light rail access would be possible on the Blue and Red lines from Hillsboro, Beaverton, Gresham and the Portland Airport. The Main Street Terminus would stop short of PSU by seven blocks to the PSU Urban Center Plaza and by eleven blocks to Jackson Street.
- Light rail ridership on the Green Line (I-205) would increase by 7,000 daily trips in 2020 compared to the Main Street Terminus.
- Ridership on the entire LRT system would increase by 8,285 in 2020 compared to the Main Street Terminus.
- The Portland Streetcar would interface with the Mall light rail alignment at the PSU Urban Center, providing enhanced transit connectivity that would not be possible with the Main Street option.
- Both the Main Street and PSU terminus options would have traffic circulation impacts. The impacts along the south mall from the PSU alignment could be more easily mitigated given the less constrained environment of the south mall compared to the central mall.
- Capital cost in year of expenditure dollars for the PSU terminus would be \$50 million more than for the Main Street terminus, however the addition of three stations in the downtown core, access to the state's largest university, the potential for funding partnerships with PSU and the prospect of 8,285 additional light rail riders in 2020 offsets the added cost.

4.3.3 Caveat

If funding is not secured to complete the line to the PSU Terminus, the Main Street terminus or another yet-to-be-identified location may be considered as an interim terminus. Any such short terminus would be thoroughly documented in the *South Corridor I-205 Light Rail Project Final Environmental Impact Statement*. If a shorter terminus must be considered it would be with the understanding that the remainder of the Portland Mall alignment to SW Jackson Street would be constructed as part of the subsequent Phase 2 Milwaukie LRT project.

4.4 Station Locations: As evaluated in the ASDEIS and Modified by Public Comment

4.4.1 Recommendation

The LPA should include light rail stations as identified in the ASDEIS. This action reaffirms and modifies the South/North LPA alignment. These station locations provide a balance between regional throughput and local access. The stations also conform to the physical design of the Mall, with stations located on the left side at blocks with extended sidewalks and no auto lane. It is important to note that the stations as evaluated in the ASDEIS serve as a baseline upon which to develop more specific station configurations for individual station locations before and during Preliminary Engineering. The stations closely correspond to those selected for the South/North LPA alignment, with two exceptions. First, the northernmost stations would be located on NW Fifth and Sixth avenues between Hoyt and Irving streets as opposed to the “diagonal” location from the South/North LPA. Second, two additional stations would be added at SW Fifth/Sixth avenues and the PSU Urban Center Plaza and SW Fifth/Sixth avenues between Jackson and College streets. In addition, continued study of Central Mall station locations should continue through Preliminary Engineering in the locations noted below. Station locations are recommended as follows:

- NW Fifth/Sixth and Hoyt/Irving (Union Station)
- NW Fifth/Sixth and Couch/Davis
- SW Fifth/Sixth at Washington/Stark – evaluate locations one to two blocks north
- SW Fifth/Sixth and Yamhill/Taylor – evaluate location at Pioneer Square (Morrison/Yamhill)
- SW Fifth/Sixth and Madison/Jefferson – evaluate location one block south at Jefferson/Columbia
- SW Fifth/Sixth and Montgomery/Mill (PSU Urban Center Plaza)
- SW Fifth/Sixth and Jackson/College

4.4.2 Rationale for Decision

The changes to the northernmost station locations respond to follow-up actions adopted in the South Corridor Preliminary LPA decision. Staff was directed to undertake an analysis of station locations in the Union Station, or North Entry area to ensure that the station platforms would be responsive to changed development and land use conditions in the area. The new locations are the result of that study.

The Central Mall station locations fit with the unique physical design of the Mall, taking advantage of wide sidewalks for station platforms. The two previous LPA decisions also located stations at these blocks.

The station location pattern, coupled with the spreading of bus stops creates a more free-flow environment for buses and results in reduced travel times for buses traveling along the Mall, spreading reliability and travel time benefits to bus riders as well.

4.4.3 Caveat

The Mayor's Portland Mall Revitalization Committee is currently developing and testing a variety of station platform configurations and auto access patterns that could result in minor changes to station locations prior to Preliminary Engineering. These changes would be in support of an overall revitalization strategy and would be fully documented in the FEIS. The number and spacing of stations is not anticipated to change.

5. ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED BY STAFF

Subsequent to this LPA decision, project staff should continue to address several issues. As the LPA process progresses through the recommendation and adoption process, additional issues may be added to this list. Staff should:

1. Continue to work on finalizing station locations. Station locations to be further addressed include (see Figure S.2-1):
 - SW Fifth/Sixth at Washington/Stark – evaluate locations one to two blocks north
 - SW Fifth/Sixth and Yamhill/Taylor – evaluate location at Pioneer Square (Morrison/Yamhill)
 - SW Fifth/Sixth and Madison/Jefferson – evaluate location one block south at Jefferson/Columbia
2. Continue, through the preparation of the *Final Conceptual Design Report*, to focus on station platform configurations that balance light rail, auto, bus, pedestrian and urban design concerns in station blocks. The identification of appropriate station configurations will help determine if stations would need to be moved to adjoining blocks, as shown in Figure S.2-1.
3. Continue to solidify the finance plan for the Portland Mall and I-205 Light Rail Project.

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**Metro Council Resolution No. 04-3403 adopting the
South Corridor Project Downtown Segment Locally Preferred Alternative Report**

Adopted resolutions in support of the Locally Preferred Alternative

MEMORANDUM

Date: December 10, 2003

To: Board of Directors

From: Fred Hansen *Ful*

Subject: RESOLUTION 03-12-78 OF THE TRI-COUNTY METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT OF OREGON (TRIMET)
RECOMMENDING CONFIRMATION OF THE LOCALLY
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR THE SOUTH CORRIDOR I-205
LIGHT RAIL AND PORTLAND MALL REVITALIZATION
PROJECT

1. Issue or Purpose of the Item.

This resolution requests the TriMet Board of Directors (Board) approve a resolution recommending that the Metro Council amend the *Locally Preferred Alternative* ("LPA") for the South Corridor I-205 Light Rail Project to include the Portland Mall Revitalization ("Project").

2. Reason for Board Action.

Metro Council requests endorsement by TriMet and other local jurisdictions before adopting an amended LPA for Phase I of the South Corridor strategy. Demonstration of local support for the Project by TriMet and local jurisdictions is very important for moving the Project forward into Preliminary Engineering. Such support is necessary because it both ensures consensus for the Project at the local level, and demonstrates to the Federal Transit Administration ("FTA") that there is both local consensus and support for the Project.

3. Background.

The Metro Council adopted the South/North Locally Preferred Alternative ("S/N LPA") on July 23, 1998 and amended the S/N LPA for Interstate MAX on June 24, 1999. On March 26, 2003, the TriMet Board approved Resolution 03-03-22, recommending further amendment of the Locally Preferred Strategy for the South/North Corridor. That action was followed on April 17, 2003 by the adoption of an amended S/N LPA by Metro Council to include the I-205 Project as this region's LPA and a *Preliminary Locally Preferred Alternative* ("PLPA") for the

RESOLUTION 03-12-78

RESOLUTION OF THE TRI-COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT OF OREGON (TRIMET) RECOMMENDING CONFIRMATION OF THE LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR THE SOUTH CORRIDOR I-205 LIGHT RAIL AND PORTLAND MALL REVITALIZATION PROJECT

WHEREAS, TriMet is authorized by Oregon statute to plan, construct and operate fixed guideway light rail systems; and

WHEREAS, on October 3, 2003, Metro, TriMet, the Federal Transit Administration ("FTA") and the Federal Highway Administration published the Downtown Amendment to the South Corridor Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (the "SDEIS Downtown Amendment"), evaluating light rail on the Portland Mall between Union Station and Jackson Street on 5th and 6th Avenues; and

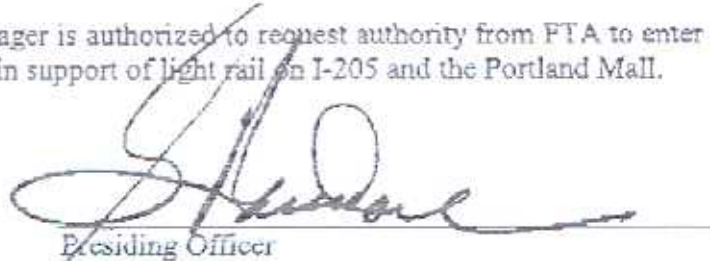
WHEREAS, the public was invited to comment on the SDEIS Downtown Amendment during the public comment period from October 3, 2003 through November 17, 2003, and comments received during the comment period, including at a public hearing and three open houses, are documented in the Public Comment Report on the Downtown Amendment to the South Corridor Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (November 2003), with comments favorable toward light rail and mostly favorable toward the alignment, stations and terminus proposed; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor's Downtown Advisory Committee and the South Corridor Policy Committee have recommended that the Locally Preferred Alternative ("LPA") for the South Corridor Light Rail and Portland Mall Revitalization Project be confirmed;

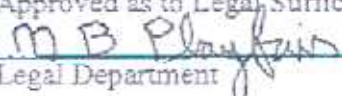
NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED:

- 1. THAT the Board of Directors recommends to Metro Council the adoption of a resolution confirming the LPA of light rail on the Portland Mall as shown in Attachment A, and that Metro Council amend the South/North Locally Preferred Strategy to reflect this change.
- 2. THAT the General Manager is authorized to request authority from FTA to enter into preliminary engineering in support of light rail on I-205 and the Portland Mall.

Dated: December 10, 2003


Presiding Officer

Attest: 
Recording Secretary

Approved as to Legal Sufficiency

Legal Department

- Data and analysis included in the *Downtown Amendment to the South Corridor Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (Metro, October 2003);
- Public comments on the SDEIS Downtown Amendment made during the public hearing and as documented in the *Public Comment Report on the Downtown Amendment to the South Corridor Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (Metro, November 2003);
- The project's adopted goals and objectives, and consistency with the study purpose and need; and
- The Mayor's Downtown Advisory Committee review and recommendation.

The South Corridor Policy Committee has recommended that the Board adopt the Final LPA as defined in the resolution and attachments. Attached are letters from that committee as well as the South Corridor Citizen Advisory Committee and the Mayor's Downtown Advisory Committee supporting this recommendation.

4. Options.

The Board could choose to amend language or choose alternative priorities. However, the proposed draft LPA is expected to be endorsed by other jurisdictions and substantial changes at this point would significantly slow any South Corridor project, jeopardizing optimal timing to seek federal funding for light rail construction.

5. Recommendation.

The General Manager recommends approval of the resolution.

Portland Mall Light Rail Transit alignment. That action also identified light rail to Milwaukie as a separate second phase South Corridor project.

Study of light rail operations with the addition of the I-205 Project has indicated a need to construct additional downtown Portland light rail capacity on the Portland Transit Mall, in order to include the Portland Mall alignment as part of the Final LPA. FTA required that additional environmental analysis be conducted, due to both changes in the south end of the alignment since it was last studied and the passage of time since performance of the original South/North environmental work. For the Project to include the revitalization of the Portland Transit Mall, Metro must again amend the S/N LPA. The Board's March 22, 2003 resolution contemplated this requirement.

The additional environmental analysis required by FTA has now been conducted and the *Downtown Amendment* to the South Corridor Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (the "SDEIS Downtown Amendment") was published on October 3, 2003. The formal public comment period for this document and the decision regarding the LPA closed on November 17, 2003. As a result, the Final LPA decision is now ready to be finalized.

The Final LPA includes light rail on the Mall for the following reasons:

- The Portland Mall was selected as the Preliminary LPA in April, 2003 after the cross mall capacity analysis was completed;
- The Portland Mall alignment would ensure improved service quality in downtown Portland by providing greater capacity and reliability on a second alignment in downtown Portland, and improving service quality on the existing Cross Mall alignment;
- Light rail on the Portland Mall reinforces 30 years of transportation and land use policy. Since the adoption of the 1972 Downtown Plan, the Portland City Council has continuously reaffirmed that the Portland Mall is the preferred location for a light rail alignment;
- The Portland Mall alignment would directly serve important downtown destinations including Portland State University, Pioneer Square and Union Station;
- Relying solely on the Cross Mall Alignment would limit service expansion ability and would eventually decrease service quality with the addition of trains needed for system growth;
- The existing Bus Transit Mall is over 25 years old and has experienced deterioration and is in need of rehabilitation;
- The Portland Mall alignment received considerable public support during the *Amendment* to the South Corridor public comment period, especially from the downtown community; and
- The Portland Mall Revitalization Project is needed to facilitate the City of Portland's retail strategy.

The Final LPA was chosen based on:

RESOLUTION NO: **36188**

Adopting the South Corridor Project Downtown Portland Mall Segment Locally Preferred Alternative Report and Recommendations and the South Corridor Land Use Final Order. (Resolution)

WHEREAS, The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Metro published the South/North Corridor Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in February 1998, that evaluated several alternatives in the South/North Corridor; and

WHEREAS, the Council adopted Resolution No. 35704, approving the South/North Project's Locally Preferred Strategy (LPS) and Land Use Final Order on June 18, 1998, and recognizing the transportation needs in both the South Corridor to Southeast Portland and Clackamas County, and North Corridor to North Portland and Clark Co.; and

WHEREAS, FTA and Metro published the South/North Supplemental DEIS (SDEIS) in June 1999, amended the South/North LPS and defined the Interstate MAX Project as the first construction segment in the South/North Corridor and published the North Corridor Interstate MAX Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in October 1999; and

WHEREAS, the Council adopted Resolution No. 35800 designating the N. Interstate Avenue MAX alignment from the Steel Bridge to the Expo Center as the preferred alignment for the North Corridor in North Portland on June 16, 1999, and

WHEREAS, FTA, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Metro published the South Corridor SDEIS on December 20, 2002 that evaluated a number of alternatives in the South Corridor,

WHEREAS, the *Downtown Light Rail Systems Analysis Report* found that there is a limit on the number of trains that can operate per hour in each direction in the existing Cross Mall alignment, and an additional alignment in downtown Portland should be considered for the long-term growth of the system;

WHEREAS, the Council adopted Resolution 36130 that amended the South/North Locally Preferred Strategy to include a two phased approach to the South Corridor with the I 205 and downtown mall segments as the first phase and the Milwaukie segment as the second phase on March 19, 2003; and

WHEREAS, the FTA required that the downtown segment of the LPA be defined as "preliminary" until the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) evaluation and analysis was updated for the Portland Mall Alignment; and

WHEREAS, FTA, FHWA and Metro published the Downtown Portland Amendment to the South Corridor Project SDEIS in October 2003 and the public was invited to comment on the Amendment until November 17, 2003; and

WHEREAS, the public comments received on the downtown Amendment to the SDEIS were received by Metro staff and compiled in the Public Comment Report, published on November 19, 2003, and

WHEREAS, the Portland Mall alignment will connect the regional system to Downtown Portland to insure transit service quality, to provide transit capacity to meet future economic development needs; to reinforce 30 years of transportation and land use policy; to directly serve Portland State University and other important Downtown destinations; and received considerable public support during the amended South Corridor SDEIS public comment period; and

WHEREAS, the Portland Mall alignment will also be part of an overall revitalization strategy enliven the Mall, to restore the Mall, and to support downtown retail and office uses; and

WHEREAS, the Portland Mall Revitalization Steering Committee and the South Corridor Steering Committee have adopted the South Corridor Downtown Portland Mall Segment Locally Preferred Recommendations;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Portland adopts the amendment to the LPA as described in the Downtown Portland Mall Locally Preferred Alternative Report (Exhibit A) and generally includes extending Light Rail Transit from the Steel Bridge to Union Station and then on 5th and 6th Avenues along the Portland Transit Mall to the Portland State University Terminus. Amendments to the Land Use Final Order (Exhibit B).

Adopted by the Council, DEC 04 2003

Commissioner Jim Francesconi
Prepared by: Stephen Iwata/db
November 26, 2003
South Corridor-Downtown Mall.

GARY BLACKMER
Auditor of the City of Portland
By

Susan Parsons
Deputy

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF METRO COUNCIL RESOLUTION 04-3403 FOR THE PURPOSE OF FINALIZING THE DECISION TO ADD THE PORTLAND MALL ALIGNMENT TO THE LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR PHASE I OF THE SOUTH CORRIDOR LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

Date: [January 8, 2004](#)

Prepared by: Ross Roberts

BACKGROUND

This action is the latest in a series of actions that have defined light rail project segments for advancement in the South/North Corridor. The action requested would:

- 1) Reaffirm that light rail is the preferred transit mode for the Downtown Segment of the South Corridor,
- 2) Reaffirm the Portland Mall (SW Fifth and Sixth Avenues between the Steel Bridge and Portland State University) as the preferred alignment,
- 3) Select Portland State University (Jackson Street) as the southern terminus of the Portland Mall alignment, and
- 4) Identify 14 general light rail station locations (7 stations each on SW Fifth and Sixth Avenues) to be refined prior to Preliminary Engineering.

The actions leading up to this resolution are listed below:

- The South/North Corridor Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was published in February 1998, and evaluated several alternatives in the South/North Corridor.
- On July 23, 1998 the Metro Council adopted the Locally Preferred Strategy (LPS) for the South/North Project that included light rail from downtown Portland to the Clackamas Regional Center via Milwaukie as the initial construction segment (*Note: LPS was a term defined in the federal ISTEA legislation of 1998 and is essentially the same as a locally preferred alternative*).
- A local ballot measure that would have secured local funding for the South/North light rail project was defeated in November 1998.
- Metro Council directed staff to proceed with the development of the North Corridor Interstate MAX light rail project and to develop transportation alternatives for the South Corridor concurrently.
- FTA and Metro published the South/North Corridor Supplemental DEIS (SDEIS) and amended the South/North LPS in June 1999 to define the Interstate MAX Project as the first construction segment in the South/North Corridor
- The North Corridor Interstate MAX Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was published in October 1999.
- In June 1999 the Metro Council directed that transportation alternatives be developed for the southern portion of the South/North Corridor and initiated the South Corridor Transportation Alternatives Study. The study evaluated bus rapid transit, busway, high occupancy vehicle lanes, high occupancy toll lanes, two commuter rail alternatives and river transit.

- Following the narrowing of alternatives to busway, bus rapid transit and the addition of two light rail segments, Milwaukie and I-205, FTA, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Metro published the South Corridor SDEIS on December 20, 2002.
- On April 17, 2003 the Metro Council adopted the LPA to include a two-phased approach to the South Corridor with the I-205 and downtown segments as the first phase and the Milwaukie segment as the second phase.
- Because additional environmental analysis was required for the downtown segment, the FTA required the LPA designation be defined as “preliminary” until the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) evaluation and analysis was updated for the Portland Mall Alignment. The environmental analysis was updated and was published in the Downtown Portland Amendment to the South Corridor Project SDEIS in October 2003. The public was invited to comment on the Amendment until November 17, 2003
- Public comments on the downtown Amendment to the SDEIS were received by Metro staff and compiled in the South Corridor Downtown Segment Public Comment Report, published on November 19, 2003.

Based on the information contained in the Downtown Amendment to the SDEIS and the public comments, the Mayor’s Committee for Portland Mall Revitalization, the South Corridor Policy Committee, the TriMet Board of Directors, the City of Portland City Council and JPACT have made recommendations to the Metro Council to approve the attached resolution that adopts the November 26, 2003 Locally Preferred Alternative Report.

ANALYSIS/INFORMATION

1. Known Opposition

As reflected in the South Corridor Downtown Segment Public Comment Report, opposition has been voiced to various aspects of the proposed locally preferred alternative, although comments opposed made up about 15 percent of comments received. Generally, comments were supportive of light rail on the Portland Mall and serving Portland State University. Opposition to light rail on the Portland Mall was voiced by Association of Oregon Rail Transit Advocates (AORTA) and Citizens for Better Transit, transit advocacy groups that favored short-term implementation of bus shuttle service to be followed by a subway in the long term. Other comments voiced concern over cost, capacity and need for light rail on the Mall.

2. Legal Antecedents

The selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) is part of the project selection process mandated under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). An LPA is selected based on the technical findings contained in an environmental impact statement and the public comments received during a 45-day period that follows the publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement in the Federal Register.

At the regional level, there are the following Metro antecedents:

- a. Resolution No. 98-2673, For the Purpose of Adopting the Land Use Final Order Establishing the Light Rail Route, Stations, Lots and Maintenance Facilities and the Related Highway Improvements For the South/North Light Rail Project;
- b. Resolution No. 98-2674, For the Purpose of Adopting the Locally Preferred Strategy (LPS) For South/North Light Rail Project;

- c. Resolution No. 99-2806A, For the Purpose of Amending the Locally Preferred Strategy For the South/North Light Rail Project to Define the Interstate Max Project as the First Construction Segment and to Amend the FY 2000 Unified Work Program;
- d. Resolution No. 99-2795A, For the Purpose of Amending FY 00 Unified Work Program to Add the South Corridor Transportation Alternatives Study and Amending the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to Authorize FY 99 Surface Transportation Program (STP)
- e. Resolution No. 03-3303, For the Purpose of Amending the Locally Preferred Strategy For the South/North Corridor Project to Define a Two-Phased Major Transit Investment Strategy For the South Corridor, With the I-205 Light Rail Transit Project as the Phase 1 Locally Preferred Alternative Followed By the Milwaukie Light Rail Transit Project in Phase 2
- f. Resolution No. 03-3351, For the Purpose of Amending the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program to Include the Revised South Corridor Light Rail Transit Project and Demonstrating Conformity of the Project, the Amended Regional Transportation Plan and Amended Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program With the State Implementation Plan.

3. Anticipated Effects

Approval of this resolution would satisfy NEPA requirements for the selection of a locally preferred alternative and would fulfill FTA requirements that a project be selected as an LPA in order to be advanced into Preliminary Engineering.

4. Budget Impacts

None at this time. This project is included within the Financially Constrained System of the Metro Regional Transportation Plan and Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Plan. Preliminary engineering and a final environmental impact statement would have to be completed and, after the record of decision about the project is determined, a full-funding agreement with the Federal Transit Administration would need to be approved. Only then would the allocation of Federal and state funds and local matches be expended.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approval of Resolution No. 04-3403.