

PORTLAND TRANSIT MALL
Urban Design Analysis & Vision



March 2004

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CHAPTER ONE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Portland Mall Revitalization Project proposes to incorporate a new light rail transit function into the prevailing pedestrian and bus oriented function of Portland's Fifth and Sixth Avenue Transit Mall.

Portland's Transit Mall was built in the late 1970s as a primary component of the *Downtown Plan*, which sought to revitalize the downtown through coordinated land use and transportation policies.

Specifically, these policies concentrate a high-density office core around a high-quality transit spine, serving the largest number of people with the region's highest level of transit service. The *Downtown Plan* also concentrates an east-west retail core, which intersects the Mall at SW Alder and Morrison streets (this focus has since shifted to Morrison-Yamhill). Clearly, strong retail uses play a prominent role in this location.

The proposed introduction of light rail into the existing system alters this current balance. It also offers an opportunity to re-evaluate existing Mall functions, assessing the contribution of the Mall to downtown's vibrancy on many levels.

A. BUILDING ON SUCCESS

The Portland Transit Mall has long been considered nationally as one of the more successful civic examples of a transit street. Part of that success can be attributed to the concentration of transit services on a single pair of avenues (Fifth and Sixth avenues). This structure has:

- Largely satisfied City policies to be the regional transit spine of Portland and become its defining and organizing element.
- Made transit a more attractive option by improving service efficiency and by providing clarity to users about how the system operates.



- Reflected an ongoing city and regional commitment to use transit to reinforce Downtown Portland's central role in the region.
- Successfully maintained high transit accessibility to the highest concentration of employment, cultural, residential, and recreational uses meeting mandated livability goals for both Portland and the region.
- Successfully implemented the 1988 *Central City Plan's* urban design strategy to use the Mall's design and function as a defining and organizing element for the downtown.

The concentration of transit on these two avenues has allowed improved vehicle flow on parallel north-south streets, reducing traffic congestion. The resulting improvements to transit operations and system clarity enhance transit's effectiveness and greatly reduce the likelihood that commuters, residents and visitors feel bound to driving to and from Downtown.

B. PERSISTENT ISSUES

Despite wide acknowledgement of the Mall's successes, there are issues that continue to impact the civic quality of the Mall. Many of these are a result of natural ongoing changes that encompass its economic, social and physical character:

- Retail and other ground floor uses have undergone changes over the last 25 years resulting in changes in the Mall's retail mix and locations. These changes periodically alter existing building edges along the Mall.
- Fluctuations in the real estate market have altered (and will continue to alter) the context of the Transit Mall, often changing



the dynamics of local development. For example, the Hotel-Financial district has changed dramatically with the downsizing or elimination of several former bank headquarters. Clear strategies for replacing these uses remain unclear.

- Several of the original Transit Mall design features considered to be “cutting edge” in the mid-1970s (granite edgework, for example), have not held up well to wear and tear, and now require frequent and costly maintenance.
- Sidewalk cafes and other active uses were expected to be features of the Mall. Noise levels created by frequent bus service and related factors have discouraged this activity.
- While opportunistic retail development has taken place over the length of the existing Mall outside the Retail Core, the hierarchy of retail functions is unclear.
- Public and private commitment towards Mall stewardship and management has been uneven and uncoordinated.

These and related shortcomings establish a case for more pre-emptive strategies to better manage the Mall’s public-private interfaces (i.e. building edges), related sidewalk and retail development, physical quality and overall attractiveness as both a key functional and orienting movement spine of downtown Portland.

C. OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

CHANGED USAGE PATTERNS

Presently only buses serve the transit functions of the Mall. The introduction of light rail transit service will increase overall transit ridership and access to the Central City. This change and the associated changed usage pattern offer unique opportunities to consider:



- A chance to improve the Mall’s

physical quality.

- Considering enhancements to the Mall that further its purpose as a key functional and the orienting movement spine of Portland’s downtown.
- Strengthening retail and other development along the Mall.
- Better management of the Mall’s sidewalks and storefront activities (edges).

The introduction of light rail on the Mall will change bus stop spacing while adding light rail stations. This will shift the pattern of where transit riders congregate. The resulting change in the Mall’s usage and activity patterns offers an opportunity to accommodate other civic uses (such as public art) in these spaces.

A MUCH LARGER MALL

The civic quality (look, feel and function) of the Mall changes with the number and behavior of vehicles traveling through it. The intensity of bus operations drops off considerably south of Madison due to current route configurations. Until Phase 2 of a planned South Corridor Project is implemented the current number of buses on the Mall will likely remain despite the addition of light rail service.

The introduction of light rail to the Transit Mall will extend and alter levels of activity on it due to the distribution of light rail stations along its entire downtown length. The original Mall was designed as 44 block faces and currently extends from SW Madison St. north to Union Station. A revitalized Mall with light rail will run south of Madison to I-405 thus encompassing over 117 block faces.

Such an expansion of a Transit Mall is without precedent in North American cities. Clearly, to successfully pursue such an extension requires careful consideration of both the character and ability of the Mall edges and adjacencies to sustain themselves or at the very least, properly respond to these new conditions.

By way of comparison, it should be noted that Minneapolis’ Nicollet Mall and Denver’s 16th Street Mall, (our most comparable systems), are 11 and 13 blocks long, respectively. Both are single two-way

streets. By contrast, the Portland Transit Mall currently occupies two avenues and travels eighteen blocks. Light rail will increase its length to 28 blocks with the southward extension to Lincoln Street.

The desire to fully capture future opportunities and varied functions on a greatly expanded Mall suggests that its revitalization should not be considered as merely an exercise in adapting its present form to accommodate light rail. This effort must therefore also address broader issues of civic place making along its extended length.

EXISTING POLICY & ANALYSIS FINDINGS

Clearly, an extension of the Transit Mall requires clearer recognition of the distinctive Downtown areas through which transit vehicles will pass. An analysis of existing conditions (described in Chapter 3) offered the following results:

- The *Downtown Plan* policy of concentrating office/employment uses along the Transit Mall has been very successful. The current three Central Mall station areas contain more than 50,000 employees. About 90,000 transit riders use these stations each weekday.
- The *Downtown Plan* policy for concentrating destination retail functions across the Mall at Morrison Street has also been successful. While the primary retail focus has shifted from Alder/Morrison to Morrison/Yamhill, the concentration remains clear.
- Hotels remain concentrated in the Hotel-Financial and downtown Retail Core (between SW Oak and Salmon Streets) areas. Overnight visitors who stay in these hotels are expected to become an increasingly important part of the retail mix of uses in this area.
- The Cultural District, just southwest of downtown's retail core concentrates most of downtown's cultural offerings in close proximity to the Transit Mall.

D. A VISION FOR MALL DEVELOPMENT

The existing Transit Mall is visually defined by a distinctive design that sets it apart from adjacent downtown streets and avenues. The resulting clarity and continuity contribute greatly to the Mall's prevailing and mostly congenial atmosphere.

The monolithic nature of today's Transit Mall has served the city well as a unifying downtown element. The extension needs to build upon this success but respond better to the differing scale, character and activity levels of the adjacent blocks and districts.

To accomplish this, the Mall must:

- Generate economic and social vigor, excitement and a sense of rejuvenation
- Acknowledge the difficulty in generating the economic energy to activate 117 block faces of retail or supporting active uses.
- Recognize the need for a context sensitive retail development strategy.
- Building on the strength of currently vibrant areas along the Mall, while focusing attention on weaker areas of Fifth and Sixth Avenues through capital improvements and private sector actions.
- Recognizing the transit user's need to not only be aware of presence on the Mall, but to also know where on the Mall a user might be.
- Better respond to future development opportunities and east-west growth perpendicular to the Mall

URBAN ROOMS

In light of the above issues, the concept of urban rooms is used both as means to better understand existing conditions but also to make any subsequent vision more context sensitive.

The June 25, 2003 *Conceptual Design Report* first introduced the idea of understanding the Transit Mall as a series of urban rooms.

This was done with a map that defined their boundaries and described their predominant land use and urban functions. This map also conveyed a more intricate set of relationships including areas that performed overlapping roles.

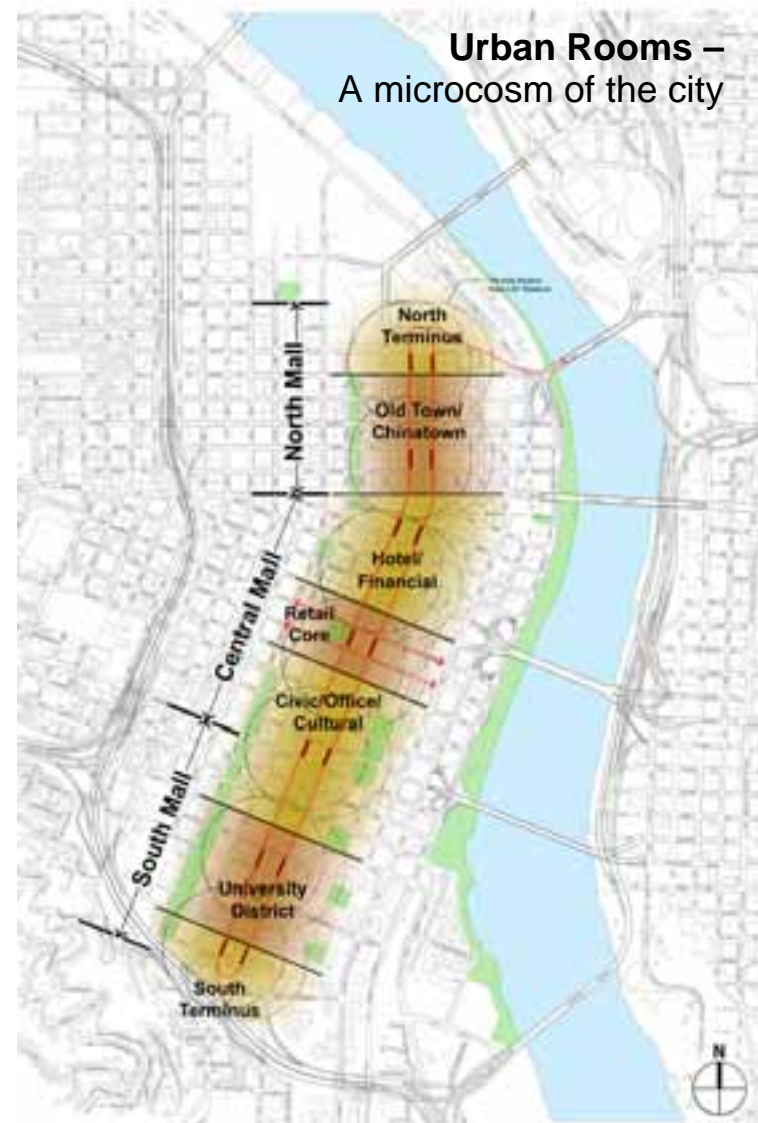
There is a unique ambient character defined primarily by the buildings on both avenues that tends to shift every four or five blocks. The edge-conditions analysis presented in chapter four supports the idea of thinking about the Transit Mall as a series of defined segments, or “urban rooms” as opposed to merely a continuous pair of transit streets.

The Transit Mall may be broadly considered to fall in seven large urban rooms, each with its predominant characteristics, opportunities and constraints. The seven rooms are distributed within three larger sections known as the North, Central and South Mall areas and are shown at right.

The primary vision for the Transit Mall is to maintain and further emphasize these urban rooms identified along the length of 5th and 6th avenues. To do so requires carefully considered flexibility in the design of the Mall’s various elements including sidewalks, intersections, transit shelters, and tree placement and species selection.

Within the larger context of the Central City and the prevailing character of each urban room within it, detailed existing conditions were analyzed. Results provided clarity on:

- The changing character of the urban fabric and the ground-floor edge conditions along each side of 5th and 6th avenues that indicate where urban rooms overlap and transition.
- The concentration of parcels most likely to redevelop over the next 20 years, visually indicating where significant changes to the retail environment and urban form will occur.
- How best to enhance the existing role and future potential of urban rooms in terms of their character, appearance and predominant function as well as inform appropriate retail and overall development strategies.



STATION AREA VISION & DESIGN STRATEGIES

Consistent with the concept of viewing the Transit Mall as a series of seven urban rooms is the idea that each station could become the defining “place” within that room. This implies a more complete integration of the station design at each location with its surrounding urban room. To be successful, this concept must respond to prevailing conditions in either of two ways:

- The light rail station location is in a prominent and recognizable destination that is already a known “place” or destination with character. To be successful, the station and its design must integrate rather than compete with the surrounding urban elements and buildings to become part of that context.

Alternatively,

- In instances where the station is in a location that does not have a well-defined sense of destination or “place” there is a unique opportunity for the station to help define a new destination or “place” on the Transit Mall. This could be fully accomplished through coordinated development strategies that better match private development with integrated design within the public realm.

Thus, a light rail station at City Hall could be designed to give the transit rider the impression of truly arriving at City Hall rather than at just another station in front of City Hall. Successful execution of this concept would involve creatively extending the use of surrounding building materials and the blending of pavement and vehicle movement areas. Such an integrated design approach might also include unique landscaping, lighting, and edge uses to better strategically blur the distinction between the transit platform and City Hall.



Each “urban room” on the Mall is thus reflective of its immediate surrounding context and potential. Each station within these rooms should be reflective of the general character of the room, but also designed to become part of the place where light rail stops.

Realizing the vision of each station being an integrated part of “the place” in which it resides, works best when there is a strategic placement of each station in locations that either already are destinations or readily lend themselves to becoming desired places of arrival and departure.

It is possible to establish station locations on the basis of optimal transit operational considerations. Considerations such as station area alignment also have a direct bearing on which locations are best suited for that alignment. Place making however requires careful trade-offs between optimal transit configurations and overall gains in civic quality. Ideally it should be possible to achieve both. The station areas described in this report focus on the best possible locations of “station as place”. To further understand the urban design trade-offs, a comparative analysis between station locations together with their associated alternate alignments is provided in this report (see chapter 5, section C).

E. INFORMING CURRENT MALL DECISIONS

This report also provides the background analysis to support its urban design vision. It is intended to be a useful reference to future decisions as they advance through preliminary engineering and beyond.

The collective evolution of understanding on the revitalized Mall's future potential has included the consideration of several variations of station alignments. Through their evaluation there has been a closer linkage between transit-optimal system design and urban place-making opportunities. In two instances there are shifts in station locations (the Retail and Hotel-Financial Urban Rooms) between the two alignment options currently being considered.

It is hoped that as the gap between transit operational issues and station-area civic quality considerations close, station locations may be located in areas that truly integrate with the city structure and fabric to become places.

G. INFORMING FUTURE MALL DECISIONS

Cities are not static entities. They change and evolve as their culture does.

The introduction of light rail to the Mall constitutes such a dramatic change. Clearly, patching the light rail into the current structure hoping it will succeed is an inadequate approach. This is a unique opportunity to build upon the Mall's current success and accumulated needs.

It is hoped that the analysis in this document will provide the basis for informed future decisions. The future vision of urban rooms and of strategically located stations is rooted in the desire to accommodate adaptability and responsiveness to change while ensuring unambiguous design and character. The Transit Mall needs to retain its status as an enduring city icon and amenity.

CHAPTER TWO

PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN CONTEXT

A. HISTORIC CONTEXT

THE CENTRAL TRANSIT MALL

The Portland Transit Mall was designed and implemented during the 1970s, a period of particular enthusiasm in Portland's downtown planning efforts. A downward trend in Downtown form and function had been clearly defined as a problem and consensus for actions necessary to spark revitalization broadly supported. The *Downtown Plan* process had been recently resolved, and both private and public efforts were well-coordinated and highly effective.

The Transit Mall was designed as a twin-avenue, eleven-block transit corridor through Downtown Portland. Inaugurated in 1978, the Mall was a central element in Portland's *Downtown Plan* strategies to safeguard and improve downtown's role as the economic and



Downtown transit operated on many streets and avenues before the Transit Mall's inauguration.



*SW 5th Ave at Pioneer Courthouse (1970s)
Prior to the Transit Mall, private vehicles
shared most downtown streets with buses.*



*Downtown transit was concentrated on vastly fewer streets
following the Transit Mall's inauguration.*

cultural center of the region. The concentration and improvement of public transit was a central step in achieving the desired downtown renaissance.

Transportation objectives were closely tied to land use and development goals which included co-locating the region's highest-quality transit with the its highest allowable densities. As a result, with their distinctive design and function, and the clear resulting identity, Fifth and Sixth avenues now belong among the handful of "signature streets" in Downtown Portland.

Concentrating previously decentralized downtown transit services on the Mall, and biasing both avenues toward transit and pedestrian functions has freed the rest of the downtown street network from conflicts between private vehicles and transit vehicles. Auto access on the Mall has been retained through a "circulator" vehicle access

system on 75 percent of Mall blocks that denies vehicle access on every fourth block.

A one-way circulation system built into the Mall design allows three-block long local circulation loops, with forced lefts every fourth block. This system permits “eyes on the street” and vehicle movement. Further, it narrows the possible private vehicle users on the Mall to those who were not seeking a through route. Functionally, the parallel Fourth Avenue and Broadway roadways provide a bracketing couplet for downtown core through vehicle movements.

While the Mall offers clear operational advantages relative to mixed traffic and transit operations, it also provides system clarity to transit riders both experienced and less experienced as virtually all radial transit lines in the Portland region traverse Fifth and Sixth avenues.

EXTENSIONS FROM THE CENTRAL MALL

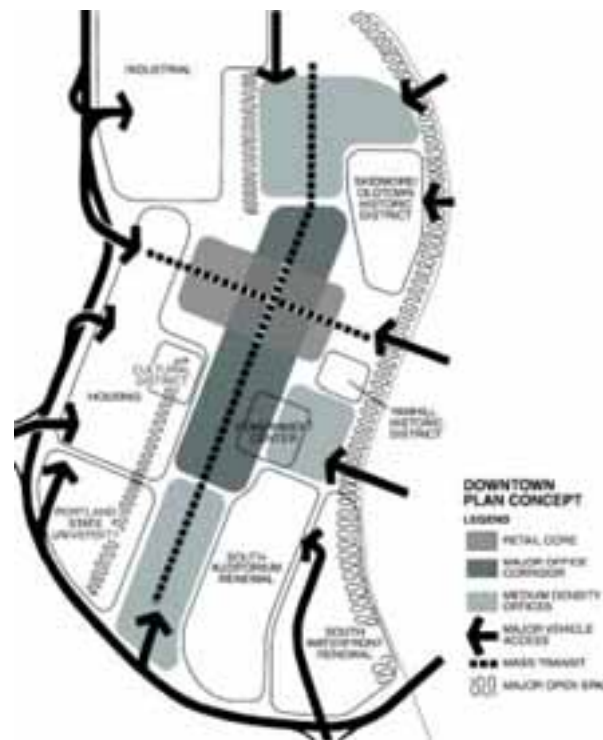
Implementing a strategy to extend the transit functions north to the Union Station-area Transportation Center, the Transit Mall design was extended seven blocks north along Fifth and Sixth avenues to Union Station in 1992. Design elements of the Mall now extend from blocks south of Burnside. Narrower rights-of-way north of Burnside however, have precluded the same allocation of space as on the original stretch.

Transit-oriented functions have also been extended south of the original Mall. The PacWest Center (1984) extended Mall sidewalk paving on its block between Madison and Jefferson. More recently, Portland State University’s Urban Center (2001) has extended Mall streetscape treatments an additional two blocks on both SW Fifth and Sixth Avenues between Mill and Harrison streets.

The Portland Mall Revitalization Project further proposes to extend the Mall’s existing transit-oriented function south to Portland State University and to the edge of the Interstate 405 freeway. Distinct from the North or Central Mall, private vehicles will maintain a greater presence on the South Mall even after the introduction of light rail. This can be attributed to two primary reasons:

- Both Fifth and Sixth avenues provide South Downtown connections to and from the I-405 Freeway.
- Transit operations currently decline south of SW Madison Street (almost a third of the buses traveling on the Mall north of SW Main Street cross the Hawthorne Bridge) thus allowing greater private vehicle volumes.

These reasons suggest that any design of the Mall extension between SW Madison Street and Interstate 405 (on Fifth and Sixth Avenues) is likely to remain significantly different from those of the Central and North Mall.



Downtown Plan Concept Diagram

B. PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN CONTEXT

TRANSIT MALL POLICY CONTEXT

The Transit Mall plays a key role in realizing City and Regional objectives for compact and high-quality growth, economic health, and a balanced transportation system.

The Portland Mall Revitalization Project hopes to provide Portland’s Central City with improved regional accessibility by further increasing transit capacity and service. The introduction of light rail significantly changes the current Mall dynamics both from an transit behavior perspective but also more significantly, its civic quality and performance. Such ramifications require a careful analysis to fully appreciate the extent to which the project fulfills the City’s considerable existing policy framework around these issues.

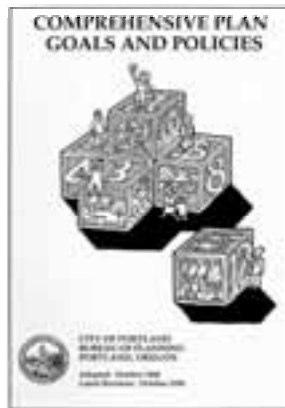
The following pages undertake this policy analysis, and find that the Portland Mall Revitalization Project does not conflict with them. A brief synopsis of the framework under which new development proposals are considered concludes this section.

REGIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Region 2040 Growth Concept, implemented by local jurisdictions through actions related to the Urban Growth Management Functional Plan, calls for Portland's Central City to retain and strengthen its role as the region's most dense concentration of jobs, housing and recreational opportunities. The Central City is expected to retain the 20 per cent share of regional employment, along with increased housing and improved recreational opportunities.



The regional transit system will play an increasingly important role in the success of Region 2040 efforts to focus growth in centers like the Central City and along main streets and corridors. To limit the negative consequences of increased reliance on the private vehicle, the Region 2040 growth concept connects centers to each other through high-capacity transit. By introducing a second light rail spine through the Central City, the Portland Mall Revitalization Project enhances Downtown Portland's role as the primary focus of the regional transportation network.



PORTLAND POLICY

FRAMEWORK

Portland's *Comprehensive Plan* includes guiding policy statements that apply citywide, as well as more geographically specific policies from the *Downtown Plan*, the *Central City Plan*, and the *Central City Transportation Management Plan*. A brief description of applicable City policies, with concluding statements in the context of the Portland Mall Revitalization Project, follows.

PORTLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (1980)

As the guiding policy framework for Portland development, the *Comprehensive Plan* contains broad policy objectives for Portland, and more specific statements about smaller geographies. Further, the *Comprehensive Plan* also includes other policy pronouncements from more local planning studies, such as the Central City Plan and others.

Policy 2.10: Downtown Portland

Reinforce the downtown's position as the principal commercial, service, cultural and high density housing center in the city and the region. Maintain the downtown as the city's principal retail center through implementation of the Downtown Plan.

Policy 2.26: Central City Plan

Encourage continued investment within Portland's Central City while enhancing its attractiveness for work, recreation and living. Through the implementation of the Central City Plan, coordinate development, provide aid and protection to Portland's citizens, and enhance the Central City's special natural, cultural and aesthetic features.

Policy 6.24: Public Transportation

(Re: Transportation System Plan)

Develop a public transportation system that conveniently serves City residents and workers 24 hours a day, seven days a week and can become the preferred form of travel to major destinations, including the Central City, regional and town centers, main streets, and station communities.

Objectives :

- A. Support light rail transit and bus connections as the foundation of the regional transit system, with completion of the system to connect all regional centers, downtown Vancouver, major

attractions, and intermodal passenger facilities as a high priority for the region.

Policy 12.1 Portland's Character

Enhance and extend Portland's attractive identity. Build on design elements, features and themes identified with the City. Recognize and extend the use of City themes that establish a basis of a shared identity reinforcing the individual's sense of participation in a larger community.

Objectives:

G. Extend urban linear features such as linear parks, park blocks and Transit Malls . . .

Policy 12.2: Enhancing Variety

Promote the development of areas of special identity and urban character. Portland is a city built from the aggregation of formerly independent settlements. The City's residential, commercial and industrial areas should have attractive identities that enhance the urbanity of the City.

Objectives:

A. Promote the use of strong design features located in distinct areas of the City that help to define the area's character. Developers should consider the character enhancing role of color and light.

Policy 12.4: Provide for Pedestrians

Portland is experienced most intimately by pedestrians. Recognize that auto, transit and bicycle users are pedestrians at either end of every trip and that Portland's citizens and visitors experience the City as pedestrians. Provide for a pleasant, rich and diverse experience for pedestrians. Ensure that those traveling on foot have comfortable, safe and attractive pathways that connect Portland's neighborhoods, parks, water features, transit facilities, commercial districts, employment centers and attractions.

Objectives:

A. Providing for pedestrians should be a primary mode of transportation throughout the City. Ensure that the safety and convenience of pedestrians are not compromised by transportation improvements aimed at motor vehicle traffic. Movement patterns for pedestrians should contribute to Portland's sense of community and provide for connections between areas of the City.

- B Enhance the environment occupied by Portland's pedestrians. Seek to enrich these places with designs that express the pleasure and hold the pleasant surprises of urban living.
- C. Provide Portland's sidewalks with buffering from auto traffic and auto parking areas; provide trees that will shade sidewalks on hot days; provide sidewalks of adequate width to accommodate the pedestrians that future development is expected to generate; provide convenient connections from sidewalks to parks, developments, and attractions; and ensure that the pedestrian circulation system is safe and accessible to children, seniors and the disabled (including the blind).
- D. Reinforce commercial areas that include a storefront character and/or are on transit streets by requiring development to be oriented to pedestrians.

Comprehensive Plan Policy Framework Finding

The Transit Mall Revitalization Project proposes to enhance and extend the transit-oriented function of Fifth and Sixth avenues. Transit and pedestrian preference will remain the primary functions of the avenues. This project proposes to retain private vehicle movements where they exist today; a slight increase in through vehicle movements is under evaluation. Under the citywide elements of the Comprehensive Plan's policy framework, increased private vehicle movements, should occur only if pedestrian comfort and safety are not diminished.

DOWNTOWN PLAN (1972)

Downtown Plan planning guidelines were folded into the *Comprehensive Plan* by the *Central City Plan's* Goal 14, Downtown, in 1988. The *Downtown Plan* is structured differently than Portland planning documents adopted since the *Comprehensive Plan*. Following a series of Citizens' Goals, the *Downtown Plan's* objectives are described through planning guidelines, which are supported by a more detailed rationale that follows. This structural difference makes *Downtown Plan* read differently from other elements of the



Comprehensive Plan, but in no way diminishes the significance or applicability of *Downtown Plan* policies.

Citizens' General Goal: Commerce

Enhance Downtown's role as leading center for retail goods and consumer services.

Specific Goals

- A. Maintain a compact retail core.
- G. Provide a strong transit system to reinforce the retail core. Encourage uses not only by workers who do not need their cars, but also by shoppers.

Citizens' General Goal: Transportation

To design a balanced transportation system which is supportive of the other Downtown goals; and which recognizes that the transportation system should provide more efficient use of both right-of-way and vehicles. This means reducing reliance on the automobile, increasing the number of persons per car and increasing the number of persons moving through concentrated areas on multiple-passenger facilities.

Specific Goals

- A. Develop a mass transit system which provides a viable alternative to the private vehicle, i.e. fast, economical, convenient and comfortable.
- B. Give maximum accommodation to walking in the core.
 - 1. Reduce air and noise pollution and pedestrian-vehicle conflicts to provide a healthier, more pleasant atmosphere for walking.
 - a. Reduce and where possible eliminate private automobile traffic in the core. Traffic volume should be scaled down commensurate with the needs of the area and to a degree which reflects the viability of the developing mass transit system . . .

Plan Element Circulation Guideline: Pedestrian Circulation

The plan returns more of Downtown Portland to the man on foot . .

Pedestrian Circulation Planning Guideline 1

Develop major pedestrian ways in the following locations: . . . along the north-south Transit Malls on Fifth and Sixth Avenues.

Plan Element Circulation Guideline: Vehicle Circulation

The traffic system developed for Downtown is in large measure a response to land use and environmental objectives . . . In certain districts, vehicle traffic is reduced in favor of pedestrian movement

Vehicle Circulation Planning Guideline 1

Major north-south traffic couplets are . . . Fourth Broadway . . . “

Plan Element Circulation Guideline: Mass Transit

The Plan routes north south transit on Fifth and Sixth avenues . . . these streets will be developed as 'Transit Malls' with exclusive bus lanes and widened, landscaped sidewalks. Private vehicle traffic on these Transit Malls will eventually be eliminated in the Retail Core and Central Office District and partially restricted beyond as the level of bus service is further improved.

Downtown Plan Policy Framework Finding

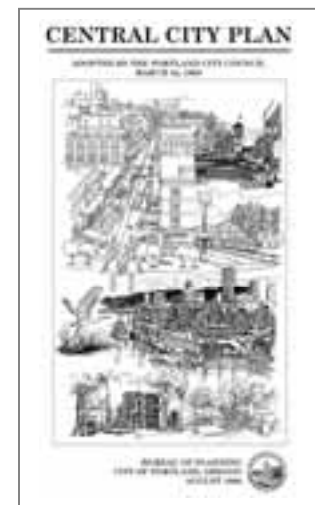
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CENTRAL CITY PLAN (1988)

The *Central City Plan* reasserts the role of Downtown, within a broader context that reached further in all directions. The Transit Mall's function in enhancing regional accessibility means that its role influences the success of *CCP* policies regarding economic development, land use, transportation, and urban form. The most specific policy language, within the transportation goal, follows:

Policy 4 (Transportation)

Improve the Central City's accessibility to the rest of the region



and its ability to accommodate growth, by extending the light rail system and by maintaining and improving other forms of transit and the street and highway system, while preserving and enhancing the City's livability.

FURTHER:

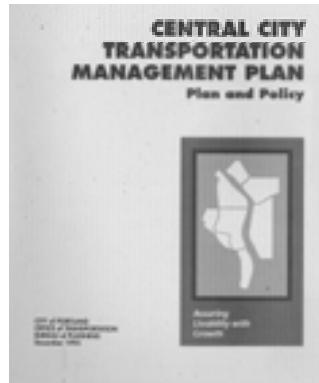
- C. Support transportation facility improvements that improve the flow of traffic to, within and through the Central City.
- J. Develop an integrated transportation system where each mode, and the system as a whole, is both efficient and practical.

Central City Plan Policy Framework Finding

The Transit Mall Revitalization Project, by introducing high-capacity transit onto Fifth and Sixth avenues, improves the Central City's accessibility. Like today's MAX trains on Morrison and Yamhill streets, Transit Mall trains are expected to operate within the one-way signal grid, which will retain existing flows for all vehicles.

**CENTRAL CITY
TRANSPORTATION
MANAGEMENT PLAN (1995)**

The *Central City Transportation management Plan (CCTMP)* further defined the role of the transportation system within the CCP boundaries. In addition to transportation policy statements, the *CCTMP* defines the role of each street and avenue, for all modes of travel. The following *CCTMP* policy statements are directly relevant to the Portland Mall Revitalization Project. Decisions must assure that the Transit Mall provides a high quality transit system that continues to increase its appeal (today, about 40 percent of Central City employment trips are made on transit; higher percentages are necessary in the future). Because new vehicle capacity will not be provided into the Central City, transit, along with pedestrian and bicycle trips, will play an increasing role in the future trips mix to and from the Central City.



Street Classifications for Fifth and Sixth avenues

Pedestrian-Transit Streets: “. . . high level of visible relationship between pedestrians and transit . . . accommodate high levels of pedestrian traffic, provide positive urban design features to promote pedestrian activities . . . provide visual signals to automobiles and trucks to respect the presence and priority of pedestrians and transit vehicles.”

Major Transit Priority Streets: “. . . provide exclusive transit lanes and/or transit priority measures . . . to facilitate operations for bus and light rail . . . other vehicles may be in the right of way . . . ”

Policy 2.3 Priority for Transit

Support transit as the preferred mode of moving people to increase transportation access to the Central City, with light rail and express bus routes providing the link to urban and suburban centers and urban transit routes connecting close-in city neighborhoods.

Policy 2.3 is further defined in the *CCTMP* text that follows it:

Explanation: The Comprehensive Plan designates transit as the preferred form of person trips to and from the Central City. Transit is not to be viewed simply as a method for reducing peak hour, work trip congestion on the motor vehicle network, but must serve all trip purposes. A reduction in transit travel times on the regional system, and in the Central City area, to levels approaching automobile travel times, is also required to make transit more appealing.

There is a need to operate the street system in a manner that benefits transit.

Policy 5.1: Transit Access

Improve transit access to the Central City to support its full development potential as envisioned in the Central City Plan.

Objective 5.1.3: Protect existing and adopted transit priority corridors (light rail and the Fifth and Sixth Avenues Transit Mall) rights-of-way to maximize public investments by ensuring its primary transit function, support a healthy pedestrian environment, and minimize adverse traffic impacts . . .

CCTMP Policy Framework Finding

The policy statements above indicate the primary roles that pedestrians and transit vehicles must play on Fifth and Sixth avenues. To the extent that pedestrian and transit priority are not compromised by the insertion of light rail vehicles or by prospective changes to the

PORTLAND TRANSIT MALL—URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS AND VISION

vehicle lanes that exist today on the Transit Mall, Central City Transportation Management Plan policies are upheld by the Transit Mall Revitalization Project.

RECENT INFORMATIVE AREA STUDIES

Three downtown area studies completed since 2001 also shed light on the role and future of the Transit Mall, and future character of the portions of Downtown nearest West Burnside Street both east and west of the Transit Mall.

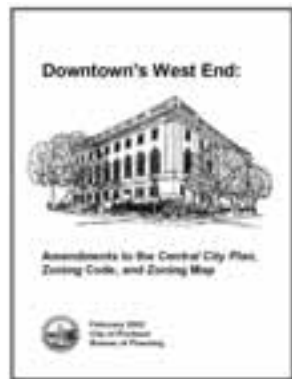
Since 1998, the future character of the West End, the Midtown Blocks, and the Downtown Waterfront have been examined in successive studies. Each study affirmed the desirability of downtown housing. New concentrations of housing within several blocks of the Transit

Mall are likely to add to the level of activity experienced along the Mall today, especially around the Stark/Washington stations nearest the opportunity areas of Skidmore-Old Town and the West End.



The Midtown Blocks Advisory Council of Experts (2001) completed a study in response to a private effort to connect the North and South Park Blocks in Downtown. The finding that's directly relevant to the Transit Mall is the desirability of downtown housing both around the Midtown Blocks and in the West End.

Downtown's West End study (2002) reasserts the importance of an urban residential district immediately west of the Downtown office core. The 5,000 new residences endorsed in the West End policy will create new demands for concentrated transit service.

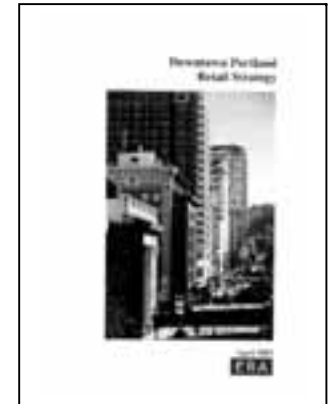


Downtown Waterfront Development Opportunities Project (2003) The DTWDOP determined that the blocks nearest SW/NW Naito Parkway can and

should support a residential infill strategy that will yield 1,000 new housing units. This direction, with successful implementation, this can be expected to spread west toward SW Fifth Avenue, with infill residential development replacing a number of underdeveloped properties between the Skidmore-Old Town Historic District and the Transit Mall.

Downtown Retail Strategy (2002)

The Association for Portland Progress (now known as the Portland Business Alliance) and the Portland Development Commission jointly sponsored the Downtown Retail Strategy, completed in Spring 2002. Among the report's findings were the general vitality and diversity of retail functions within Portland's downtown, as evidenced by retail square footage of approximately 1.9 million square feet and retail sales of approximately \$550 million (both 2001 figures). While the authors expect limited growth through 2005, retail demand by the year 2015 is likely to support sales increases of almost 70 percent, and space demand increases of about 75 percent.

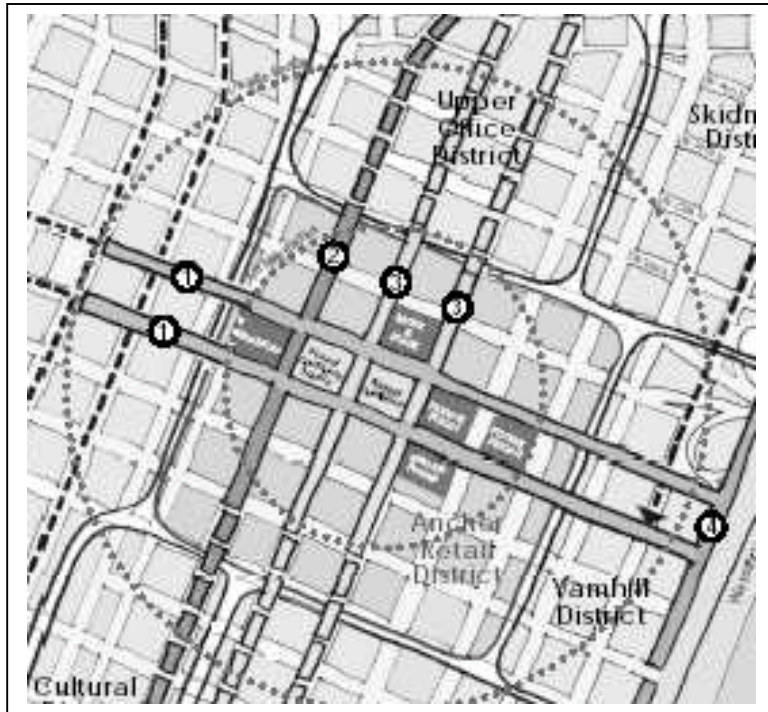


The *Downtown Retail Strategy's* primary recommendation was to "protect and enhance the existing retail core," bounded by Alder Street on the north, Taylor Street on the south, Third Avenue on the east, and Ninth Avenue on the west. Further, within this geography, the DRS identified a hierarchy of retailing streets:

- SW Yamhill and Morrison streets, as destination retail;
- SW Broadway as specialty retail; and
- SW Fifth and Sixth avenues, the Transit Mall, as transit-oriented retail.

The *DRS* also described the need to address certain Transit Mall conditions, including deferred maintenance and the lack of through vehicle access. Pedestrian safety, especially during off-peak hours, was of concern, as well as a lack of retail vibrancy on the Mall. The report recommends interim solutions for the Transit Mall that include through vehicle access and on-street parking, at least until decisions are made regarding light rail on the Transit Mall.

A year and a half since the completion of the *Downtown Retail Strategy*, light rail decisions are now pending, and increased vehicle access is among the project considerations. It is important to note that the DRS proposals were made in a context where light rail decisions were expected to be eight to ten years away. With these decisions now accelerated to the present day, a thorough reexamination of the proposal is justified.



C. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

New development proposals along the Transit Mall are subject to the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* as well as the development regulations in Title 33 of the *Portland Zoning Code*, among other criteria. Long-term livability policies embodied in urban design and land use goals and objectives are implemented through the combined effect of these regulatory tools.



Along the Transit Mall, most development proposals undergo the design review process, which implements the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines*. Of thirty-three guidelines that state design objectives for new development, at least ten inform the relationship between the ground levels of new development and the surrounding streets. New development must meet a range of expectations, including urban street enclosure, flexible ground-level spaces, visual connections to and from interior building spaces, and active building corners.

In addition to the guidelines, new development proposals must meet the development regulations stated in *Title 33 of the Portland Zoning Code*. Active building uses, required building lines, ground floor windows and parking access limitations requirements set minimum standards for the creation of pedestrian-oriented building spaces facing sidewalks. While retail uses are not required to fill the spaces, the spaces must be built to accommodate retail use when the market can support these uses. Each of these standards is applicable along the entire length of the Mall, and each may be modified as part of the design review process.

CHAPTER THREE

EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

A. PURPOSE OF THE ANALYSIS

Along with the addition of light rail transit to the existing mix of Transit Mall uses, the Portland Mall Revitalization Project proposes a Mall activation strategy. Activating the Mall means improving the Mall as a place for business as well as for transit users, pedestrians, shoppers and other downtown visitors.

Strategies for building on the Transit Mall's retailing strengths, as well as for addressing any shortcomings, must be based on an understanding of existing conditions. This section of the report summarizes data relevant to these issues for each of the station areas.

B. METHODOLOGY

Quantitative information has been compiled from a variety of sources to indicate the existing and potential market for Transit Mall-area retailing and other uses. With the exception of a July 2003 ground floor use survey conducted by the Portland Office of Transportation, the information has been assembled from outside sources, and has been combined to indicate three general characteristics:

- existing vitality;
- public safety; and
- potential for increased vitality.

EXISTING VITALITY

The presence and characteristics of ground floor retail is among the major indicators of existing vitality of the blocks along the Mall. Staff inventoried the quantity and mix of retail uses available today on the east and west block faces of both Fifth and Sixth avenues, and for the streets that intersect them, between Fourth and Broadway. The inventory gathered the following data.

- Retail Type and Amount: Each retail storefront was categorized into one of ten different types based on the good or service

offered. Since better information was not available, the length of individual storefronts was measured and used as a surrogate to approximate the square feet allocated to each use. This methodology undercounts multi-floor retailers such as Meier and Frank, Pioneer Place, the PSU Bookstore, Kitchen Kaboodle, and Office Depot.

- Retail Space by Hours of Operation: This information describes evening and weekend operations, and indicates the off-peak level of activity on and near the Transit Mall.
- Number of Retail Employees: Information regarding retail employment is based on the Portland Business Alliance's *Transit Mall Economic Impact Study*.
- Retail Entrances per Block: The urban design component of the July 2003 survey measured edge conditions, including pedestrian orientation and entrance locations. Retail entrances per block indicate the frequency of retail choices for pedestrians and other passers-by.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The perception of public safety is an important determinant of attractiveness and vitality. Information about public safety was inventoried for the same geography as for existing vitality – the blocks between (but not including) Fourth and Broadway.

- Reported Public Safety Incidents: The Portland Police Bureau chronicles the incidents to which they respond by block and by incident type. This data is captured for the twelve-month period beginning in October 2002 and ending in September 2003.
- Number of Buses: The Transit Mall is very active during commuter rush hours, with lots of buses and pedestrian activity. During other hours of the day, the Transit Mall feels less active, and is sometimes perceived as unsafe. To illustrate the cyclical nature of Transit Mall activity, the number of buses traveling past proposed station blocks were quantified for three different hours on weekdays and on Saturdays: the noon hour (12-1 PM); the

afternoon rush hour (4:30-5:30 PM), and a mid-evening hour (7:30-8:30 PM).

POTENTIAL FOR INCREASED VITALITY

Indicators of the potential market for retail and other transit-oriented uses were quantified within approximately three blocks of the proposed station platforms. This area indicates the distance from which a potential customer might choose to visit Mall retailers over those in areas of similar distance. Because several of the proposed Transit Mall stations are within four blocks of each other, employees on some blocks between stations are allocated twice, once to the station south, and again to the station north. This means employment numbers cannot be accurately summed for a Transit Mall length analysis.

- **Number of Employees:** The total number of employees within each station area is based on 2001 data from the Oregon Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). Raw information, captured through employee payroll reporting to the State of Oregon, is adjusted to compensate for underreporting of temporary and seasonal employees. While employment in the downtown (and elsewhere) has declined since 2001, the numbers capture a higher-employment/lower-vacancy situation that is more typical than the current economic downturn.
- **Number of Hotel Rooms:** Out of town visitors staying in downtown hotels represent an increasingly important part of the retail market. The authors of the Downtown Retail Strategy expect this segment to increase in importance due to a number of factors, including Oregon's lack of sales tax and Portland's national reputation for livability. Hotels that attract out-of-town visitors are concentrated especially in the Hotel/Financial and Retail Core urban rooms.
- **Cultural Facilities:** Downtown's cultural facilities draw people from Portland, the region, and beyond. Many of these patrons include a restaurant meal, shopping trip, and/or other itinerary with a visit to Downtown's core. In this report, these facilities are

portrayed qualitatively, as quantifying visits to the broad variety of cultural facilities is infeasible.

- **Transit Activity:** Transit riders are an key part of the retail market for the Mall. Ridership, measured by the number of "ons" and "offs," is provided separately for bus and MAX light rail trips. Portland Streetcar figures, applicable only to the Portland State University Urban Center area, are approximated, as boardings and deboardings are not systematically documented. Intercity transit trips, applicable at the Union Station area, are annual patronage figures divided into daily approximations.
- **Parking Spaces:** Like transit activity, parking spaces can be used as an indicator of retail potential. On-street and Smart Park spaces, because they are oriented to the short-term visitor, indicate the extent to which an area is attractive to "destination" shoppers. In contrast, long-term parking spaces are used almost exclusively by commuters; these spaces indicate an employment concentration, and a different sort of retail orientation.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY STATION AREA STATISTICS

(table under revision)

		PSU South	PSU Urban Center	City Hall	Pioneer Square	Stark-Washington	Couch-Davis	Union Station
Indicators of Retail Activity	Total Ground Floor Linear Feet	4,865	8,030	7,498	7,413	8,480	8,869	5,864
	Retail Storefronts as % of Total Ground Floor Space	18.5%	26.0%	26.8%	52.2%	53.1%	44.7%	31.2%
	Storefront Vacancy	4.1%	1.2%	1.9%	3.2%	8.7%	10.8%	11.3%
	Number of Retail Employees	218	256	462	1,678	1,377	575	147
	Retail Entrances per Block	0.61	0.21	0.46	1.34	1.63	0.71	0.28
	Retail Business Hours							
	Total Number of Retail Businesses	7	18	28	63	57	34	12
Open after 6 PM	86%	72%	46%	59%	49%	50%	67%	
Open on Weekends	71%	61%	46%	68%	67%	65%	92%	
Indicators of Safety	Reported Public Safety Incidents*	121	161	70	568	571	542	216
	Number of Buses**							
	Weekday	158	261	528	532	516	399	162
Weekend	108	163	336	336	336	263	119	
Indicators of Retail Potential	Employment	5,868	6,200	17,520	23,220	26,470	5,870	5,340
	Hotel Rooms	235	230	323	1,035	1,197	276	0
	Weekday Transit Activity							
	Bus	2,361	10,299	17,781	34,786	28,689	9,657	3,709
	MAX	0	0	0	20,715	10,187	0	0
	Streetcar	0	900	0	0	0	0	0
	Amtrak	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,280
	Intercity bus	0	0	0	0	0	0	593
Total Transit Activity	2,361	11,199	17,781	55,501	38,876	9,657	5,582	
Parking Spaces								
Total Available	3,656	4,435	5,361	4,942	4,677	2,611	1,235	
Percent Short-term***	9%	8%	9%	38%	28%	19%	24%	

* Portland Police Bureau information on burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, vandalism, and drugs crimes

** Buses traveling past station blocks between 12-1; 4:30-5:30, and 7:30-8:30

** Short Term parking is both on street and in Smart Park garages

FIGURE 1: RETAIL MIX AT TRANSIT MALL STATIONS *(graphic under revision)*

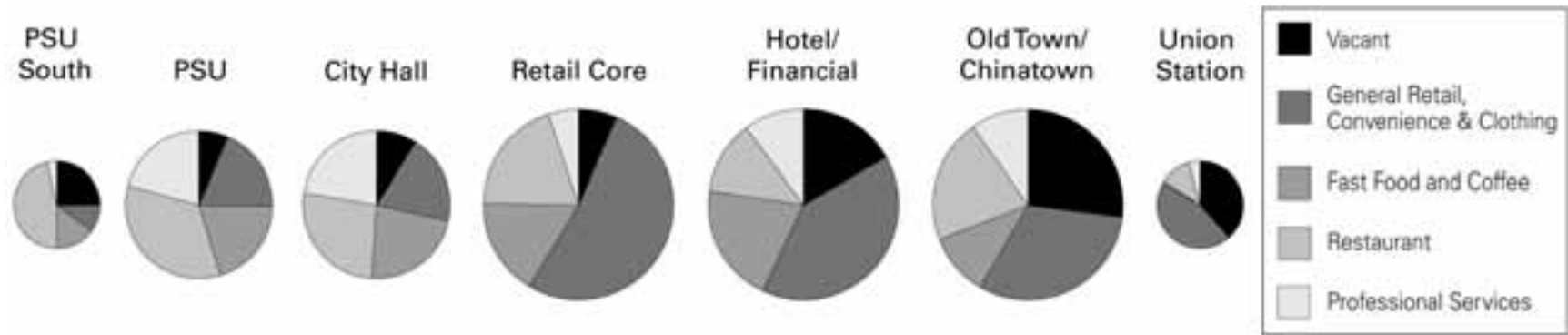
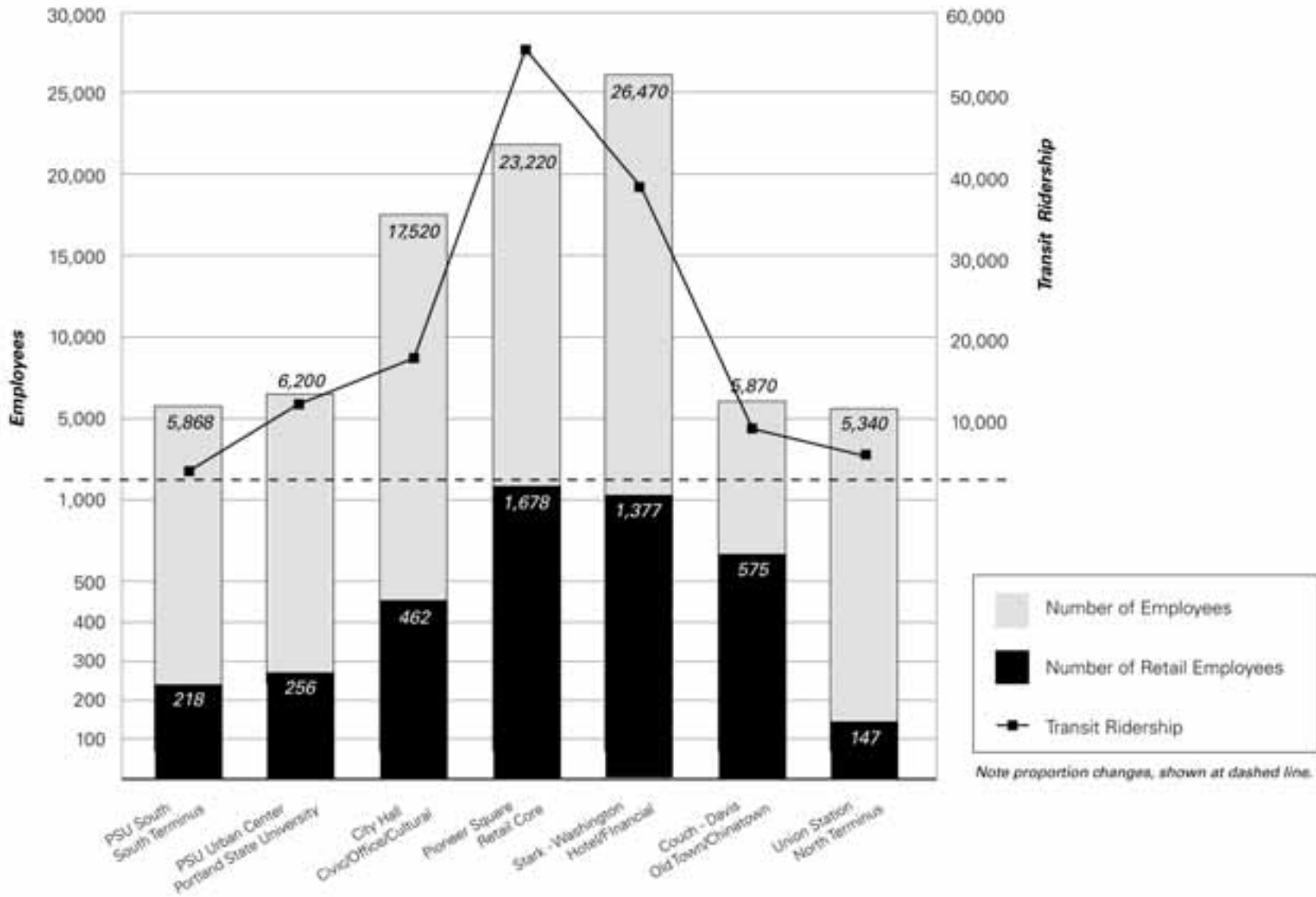


FIGURE 2: CRIMES AROUND TRANSIT MALL STATIONS *(graphic under revision)*



FIGURE 2: SUMMARY STATION AREA INFORMATION: EMPLOYMENT AND TRANSIT RIDERSHIP



C. FINDINGS

ATTRACTORS

The highest concentration of existing retail functions is in the Retail Core. The number of retail employees information supports this contention, though the ground floor use survey is not so clear. This clarity is lacking because the survey did not consider multi-level retail functions, which occur with greater frequency in the retail core.

SAFETY INDICATORS

Public safety incidents occur at the Retail Core room with markedly greater frequency, even than all the other six rooms combined together. This concentration of incidents, however, does not indicate that the Retail Core area is the least safe of the Transit Mall rooms; rather, it indicates the presence of very high numbers of people, drawn especially to Pioneer Courthouse Square.

GENERATORS

With a only a handful of exceptions, Class A office buildings built since the adoption of the Downtown Plan in 1972 have been concentrated near the Civic/Office/Cultural room.

D. SUMMARY COMPARATIVE FINDINGS

EMPLOYMENT CONCENTRATION ALONG THE CENTRAL MALL

The Downtown Plan strategy for concentrating employment adjacent to the Transit Mall has been very successful. The Central Mall's three distinct areas (Civic/Office/Cultural, Retail Core, and Hotel/Financial rooms) have approximately 17,500, 23,000, and 26,500 employees, respectively. The number of employees near the station with the highest employment concentration, Stark-Washington, exceeds the combined employment total for all four North and South Mall stations.

EMPLOYMENT ALONG THE NORTH MALL

The Central City Plan extended high-intensity development potential north of the Central Mall to Union Station, and eastward to the Steel Bridge, in an effort to connect the Downtown to the Lloyd District. High-intensity commercial development has not yet responded to this public aspiration.

CONCENTRATION OF CULTURAL AMENITIES AT THE CIVIC/OFFICE/ CULTURAL ROOM

Cultural functions are concentrated just west of the Transit Mall near the City Hall station pair. The Portland Center for the Performing Arts, along with other nearby Cultural District functions along the South Park Blocks, lend a distinct flavor to this southernmost area of the Central Mall.

HOTEL CONCENTRATION NORTHERN PORTION OF CENTRAL MALL

Downtown Portland includes a concentration of hotel rooms, most of them immediately west of the Transit Mall, in both the Hotel/Financial and Retail Core rooms. The presence of these visitors, and the spending power they bring, may help determine the most appropriate retail mix in this portion of the Transit Mall.

TRANSIT ACTIVITY

Total transit activity reaches a pronounced peak at the Retail Core. This can be attributed to a combination of factors:

- The concentration of employment here and immediately north;
- The destination retail functions that exert a pull from throughout the region;
- Pioneer Courthouse Square and other festival and cultural offerings, including the Multnomah County Library's Central Branch several blocks to the west; and
- Transfers between the existing cross-Mall (Morrison-Yamhill) light rail alignment and bus lines traveling along Fifth and Sixth avenues.

A closer look at the number of transit riders indicates an operational difference between MAX and bus service – light rail enjoys weekend ridership that is higher relative to weekday trips than is the case with the bus network. These weekend travelers are likely attracted by the fun nature of a train ride to downtown for discretionary spending.

CHAPTER FOUR

URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

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A. PURPOSE OF THE ANALYSIS

The introduction of light rail to the Mall will have significant impacts on the current balance of usage patterns, as also its resulting civic quality.

Consequently, the urban design analysis in this section seeks to provide greater clarity about how the existing Mall functions. It also seeks to better identify where successful and gaps in desired activity or character might exist. This analysis intends to not only provide an understanding of Mall's existing conditions, but also provide a basis from which to evaluate future ideas.

This urban design analysis undertakes this by focusing primarily on ground-floor edge conditions in order to understand the social dynamics of places along 5th and 6th Avenues where active and inactive uses occur. In addition, a mapping of the entire Mall was undertaken to highlight its changing nature.

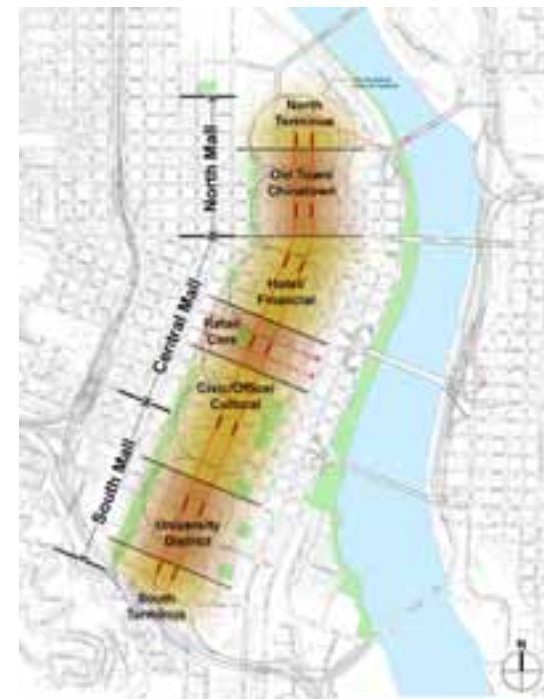
B. CURRENT CONDITIONS

The June 2003 Portland Mall Revitalization Conceptual Design Report, first introduced the idea of looking at the Transit Mall in terms of its distinct segments or "urban rooms". Running from north to south, these urban rooms can be identified to be the North Terminus, Old Town/ Chinatown, Hotel/Financial, Retail Core, Civic/Office/Cultural, Portland State University and the South Terminus rooms. The ambient character of each of these seven urban rooms can be described as follows:

- The **North Terminus** urban room is dominated by downtown's departure and receiving points for inter-city bus and train transportation and the two-and-a-half undeveloped blocks adjacent to them. It offers the greatest opportunity to develop into a truly integrated multi-modal transfer point for transit riders.
- The **Old Town/Chinatown** urban room straddles both the Old Town and China Town sections of the central city. It is characterized by a fine-grained historic fabric of commercial and

residential brick buildings typically three to five stories in height interspersed with surface parking lots.

- The **Hotel/Financial** urban room is the most dense part of downtown and contains a multitude of landmark mid-rise office buildings built to the sidewalk's edge with ground floor active uses, primarily retail. It is the long-standing financial center of the downtown.
- The **Retail Core** urban room remains the heart of central city activity. It is active from early morning to late at night and is defined by prominent department store, other regional-serving retail uses, Pioneer Courthouse Square and transfer opportunities to east-west light rail.



The Transit Mall divided into three segments, and seven "urban rooms"

- The **Civic/Office/Cultural** urban room functions as the transition from the historic urban fabric that formally addresses the street to the north and the full-block modernist office buildings from the 1960s and '70s that are object-like and ignore the surrounding public realm.
- The character of the **Portland State University** urban room is generated by the Urban Center Building and Plaza. It will be further enhanced by the streetcar's extension beyond Montgomery Street and a range of new academic and residential projects along 5th and 6th Avenues. A shift towards a more residential campus environment will also change the social character of this urban room.
- The **South Terminus** urban room lacks a definable character but will be shaped by new development projects on opportunity sites that sit immediately to the north and east. It also acts as a transitional gateway towards future light rail extensions and as a turn-around area in the interim.

C. ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

An analysis of the ground-floor edge conditions of all the block faces that front the Transit Mall and the perpendicular streets between 4th Avenue and Broadway confirms the notion that impact of adding light rail to the Mall will be significant. In this analysis, existing edges to the Mall were mapped using four different designations:

- Park and landscaped edges
- Retail storefront edges
- Partially fenestrated edges
- Blank building wall/parking lot edges

Each block edge also conveys three entry types:

- Retail entries
- Building lobby/office entries
- Loading areas/vehicle access entries.

The above analysis is further enhanced through the inclusion of the 20-year development probability of adjacent parcels along 5th and 6th Avenues.

A redevelopment potential of “likely,” “somewhat likely,” or “little to none” was assigned based upon both Improvement/Land Value



Full mall analysis of ground-floor edge conditions & development opportunities

ratios and a more subjective look at the type and condition of the current land use on the parcel.

Dead edges on parcels rated “likely” are expected to change over the short-term, whereas parcels with little or no redevelopment potential are likely to retain their dead edges over the long term.

Such an examination of the edge conditions and development opportunities together reveals where today’s parcels with dead edges might transform into tomorrow’s building projects with more active edges.

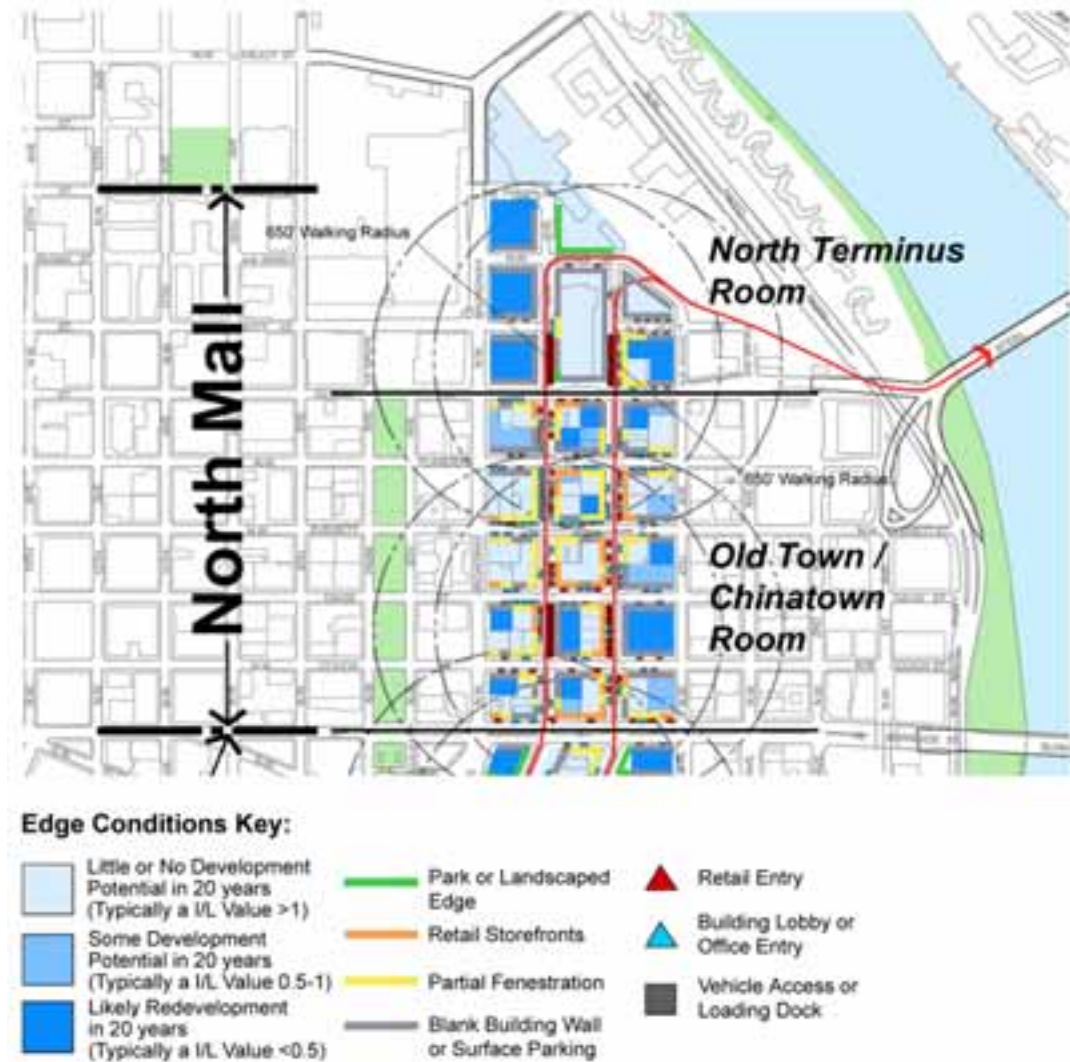
The analysis shows that these development opportunity sites are concentrated along the southernmost six blocks of 5th Avenue, on each side of West Burnside, throughout Old Town/Chinatown, and at the three undeveloped parcels south of Union Station.

FINDINGS BY MALL SEGMENT

The edge conditions analysis reveals a significant change in the ambient level of ground-floor active uses at two places along the Transit Mall. The dividing lines created at Burnside and Jefferson Streets partition the Transit Mall into North, Central and South segments.

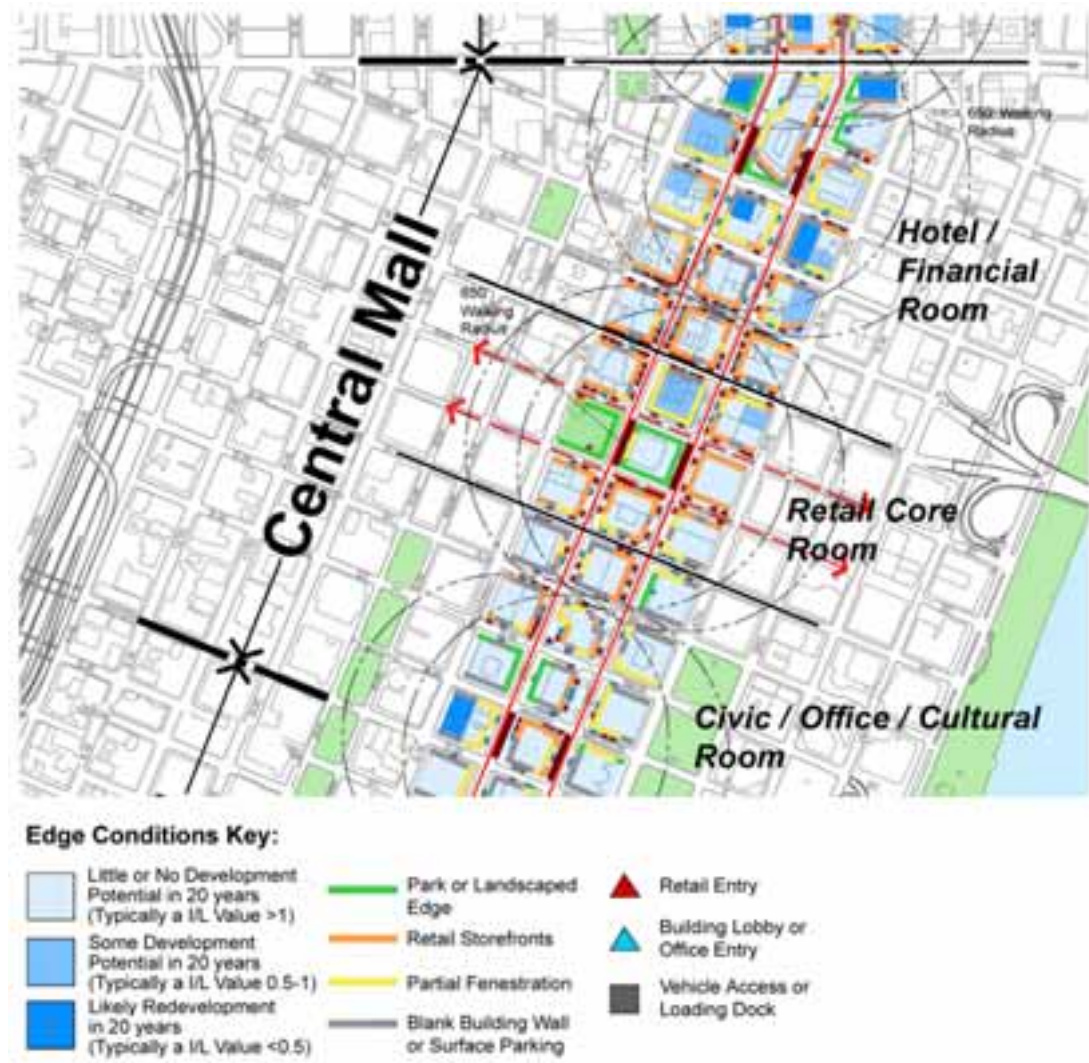
THE NORTH MALL

- North of Burnside, the mix of historic residential buildings of moderate density, small commercial buildings, and parking lots creates a hodgepodge of active storefront uses in some places and completely barren blocks in others. Recent development projects have included spaces for ground-floor active uses on parcels previously without them.
- Some of the underutilized parcels in the district show “likely” or “some” redevelopment potential and therefore will soon increase the level of pedestrian activity in the North Mall segment.



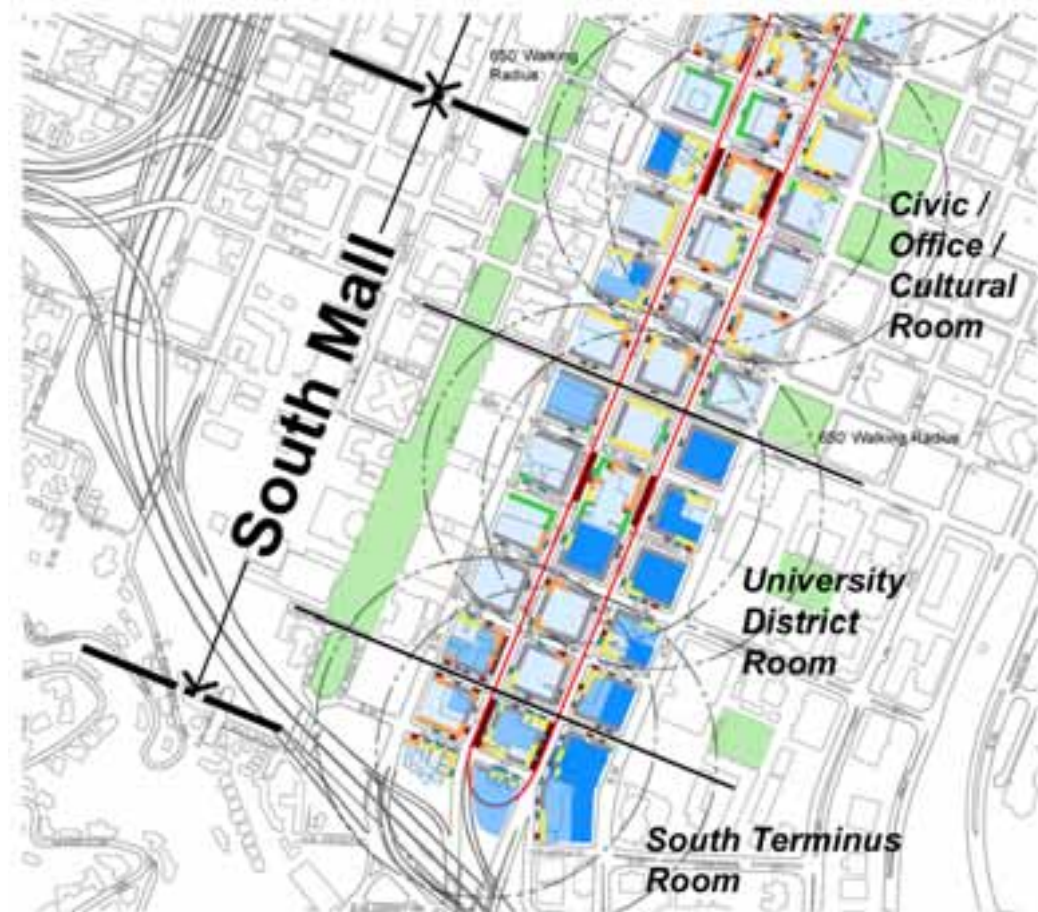
THE CENTRAL MALL

- Between Burnside and Jefferson Streets, the ground floors of most buildings contain storefront retail uses with only a smattering of dead edges.
- The highest concentration of active retail uses are found along 5th and 6th Avenues and the adjacent cross streets between SW Stark and Yamhill Street, contributing to an environment teeming with pedestrian activity. (Within this 15-block area are nearly 100 retail entries along nearly continuous storefront edges)
- South of Yamhill Street, most of the existing buildings without active uses on the ground floor are designed in a way that precludes activation in the near future.



THE SOUTH MALL

- South of Jefferson, ground-floor active uses thin out considerably where development projects from the '60s and '70s predominate and pedestrians are scarce despite the considerable density.
- Around the Urban Center Plaza and a few blocks of 6th Avenue near Portland State University there are some ground-floor active uses, a condition that will improve for the numerous soft parcels flanking 5th Avenue are redeveloped.



Edge Conditions Key:

	Little or No Development Potential in 20 years (Typically a IL Value >1)		Park or Landscaped Edge		Retail Entry
	Some Development Potential in 20 years (Typically a IL Value 0.5-1)		Retail Storefronts		Building Lobby or Office Entry
	Likely Redevelopment in 20 years (Typically a IL Value <0.5)		Partial Fenestration		Vehicle Access or Loading Dock
			Blank Building Wall or Surface Parking		

CHAPTER FIVE

**TRANSIT MALL VISION &
URBAN DESIGN STRATEGIES**

A. THE OPPORTUNITY

The introduction of light rail into the existing downtown circulation system and particularly into the existing Transit Mall offers the city a unique and perhaps timely opportunity to re-evaluate existing Mall functions and to assess the contribution of the Mall to downtown's vibrancy on many levels.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

The Portland Transit Mall has long been considered nationally as one of the more successful civic examples of a transit street. Part of that success can be attributed to the concentration of transit services on a single pair of avenues (Fifth and Sixth avenues). This structure has:



- Largely satisfied City policies to be the regional transit spine of Portland and become its defining and organizing element.
- Made transit a more attractive option by improving service efficiency and by providing clarity to users about how the system operates.
- Provided transit system clarity (both operational and cognitive).
- Provided high-quality transportation to Portland's downtown – the state's area of highest-density employment.
- Provided traffic relief and improved development opportunities to other non-transit downtown streets.

CHANGED CONDITIONS

Despite wide acknowledgement of the Mall's successes, there are issues that continue to impact the civic quality of the Mall. Many of these are a result of natural ongoing changes that encompass its



economic, social and physical character:

- Changing context of existing building edges along the Mall.
- Changing dynamics of local development.
- Aging of various Mall components.
- Limited use of the public realm within the Mall (5th and 6th Avenues) due to higher levels of ambient noise and pollution.
- Random and unclear patterns of retail development over the length of the existing Mall.
- Lackluster public and private commitment towards adequate Mall stewardship and management.

OPPORTUNITIES

These and related shortcomings establish a case for more pre-emptive strategies to better manage the Mall's public-private interface, retail development, physical quality and overall attractiveness as both a key functional and orienting movement spine of downtown Portland.

Although the Transit Mall is currently served by buses only, the addition of light rail furthers the greater objective of increasing overall mobility and access to the Central City. Such change does impact the civic quality of the transit corridor itself. Any gains in regional movement efficiency thus need to be balanced against the resulting civic quality on the Mall itself. The balance between the civic quality of the public-private interface on the Mall (building edges) and the desire to maximize transit capacity through it, should therefore be carefully considered.

A CASE FOR CAREFUL CHANGE

The physical extent of Portland's Transit Mall may be thought of in terms of either the character of the building edges that front the Mall or by the intensity of the current bus operations on 5th and 6th Avenues.

Although the physical "feel" of the Mall (designed or consistent Mall treatments) now extends to the blocks between Mill and Harrison Streets, the intensity of bus operations drop off considerably south of Madison due to existing route configurations.

The introduction of light rail to the Transit Mall will extend levels of activity due to the even distribution of stations along its entire central city length. Whereas currently the Transit Mall runs only from Madison Street north to Union Station, the revitalized Mall will run south of Madison to I-405 and include 117 block faces.

Such an expansion of a Transit Mall is without precedent in North American cities. Clearly, to successfully pursue such an extension requires careful consideration of both the character and ability of the Mall edges and adjacencies to sustain themselves or at the very least, properly respond to these new conditions.

In order to better inform and direct an appropriate approach to these anticipated changes and growth, an urban-design analysis of existing conditions was undertaken as described in the previous chapter. Its findings provide adequate levels of information to help determine the best combination of actions for:

- Maintaining the quality of transit, pedestrian, and other facilities in the University District, the Downtown, and Old Town/Chinatown portions of the Central City.
- Building on the strength of currently vibrant areas along the Mall, while focusing attention on weaker areas of Fifth and Sixth Avenues through capital improvements and private sector actions.
- Identifying areas where redevelopment is likely to occur in short, medium, and long-range timelines.

B. URBAN DESIGN VISION

In light of the above issues, the concept of urban rooms is used both as means to better understand existing conditions but also to make any subsequent vision more context sensitive.

The June 25th Conceptual Design Report first conveyed the mappings of a series of urban rooms whose boundaries are best described by their predominant functions and those of their surrounding land uses and urban functions. This mapping reflects a more intricate set of relationships including areas that perform overlapping roles.

Experiences on the Mall endorse the findings of this mapping as undertaken in the previous chapter. A walk or bus ride along 5th or 6th avenues downtown reveals constantly changing scale, architecture, ground-floor uses and pedestrian activity. Character shifts can be quite pronounced as seen while crossing Burnside or subtler, as while moving through the retail core.

In either case, there is a unique ambient character defined primarily by the buildings on both avenues that tend to shift every four or five blocks. The edge-conditions analysis presented in chapter four supports the idea of thinking about the Transit Mall as a series of defined segments, or “urban rooms” as opposed to merely a continuous pair of transit streets.

The Transit Mall may be broadly considered to fall in seven large urban rooms, each with its predominant characteristics, opportunities and constraints. The seven rooms are distributed within three larger sections known as the North, Central and South Mall areas.

Our primary vision for the Transit Mall is to maintain and further emphasize these urban rooms identified along the length of 5th and 6th avenues. To do so requires carefully considered flexibility in the design of the Mall’s various elements including sidewalks, intersections, transit shelters, and tree placement and species selection.

Within the larger context of the Central City and the prevailing character of each urban room within it, detailed existing conditions were analyzed and presented in chapter four. Results provide clarity on:

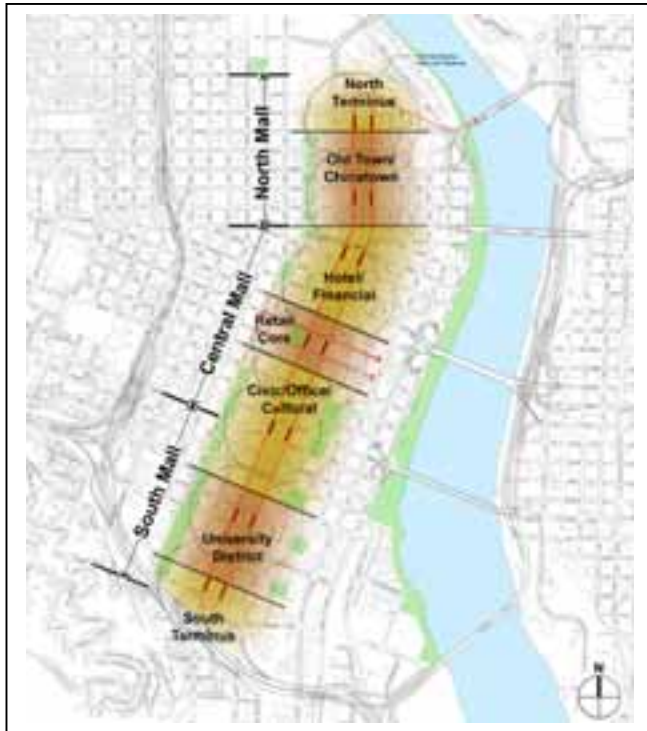
- The changing character of the urban fabric and the ground-floor edge conditions along each side of 5th and 6th avenues that indicate where urban room overlap and transition.
- The concentration of parcels most likely to redevelop over the next 20 years, visually indicating where significant changes to the retail environment and urban form will occur.
- How best to enhance the existing role and future potential of urban rooms in terms of their character, appearance and predominant function as well as inform appropriate retail and overall development strategies.

The urban rooms from north to south include the North Terminus, Old Town/Chinatown, Hotel/Financial, Retail Core, Civic/Office/Cultural, Portland State University and the South Terminus. The ambient character of each can be summed up as follows:

- The **North Terminus** urban room is dominated by downtown’s departure and receiving points for inter-city bus and train transportation and the two-and-a-half undeveloped blocks adjacent to them.
- The **Old Town/Chinatown** urban room is characterized by a fine-grained historic fabric of commercial and residential brick buildings typically three to five stories in height interspersed with surface parking lots.
- The **Hotel/Financial** urban room is the most dense part of downtown and contains a multitude of landmark mid-rise office buildings built to the sidewalk’s edge with ground floor active uses, primarily retail.
- The **Retail Core** urban room remains full of activity from early morning to late at night and is defined by the department stores,

other regional-serving retail uses, Pioneer Courthouse Square and transfer opportunities to east-west light rail.

- The **Civic/Office/Cultural** urban room is the transition from the historic urban fabric that formerly addresses the street to the north and the near wasteland of full-block office buildings from the 1960s and '70s that are object-like and ignore the surrounding public realm.
- The **Portland State University** urban room's character is generated by the Urban Center Building and Plaza and will be further enhanced by new academic and residential projects along 5th and 6th Avenues.
- The **South Terminus** urban room lacks a definable character but will be shaped by new development projects on opportunity sites that sit immediately to the north and east.



STATION-AREA VISION & DESIGN STRATEGIES

Consistent with the concept of viewing the Transit Mall as a series of seven urban rooms is the idea that each station could become the defining “place” within that room. This implies a more complete integration of the station design at each location with its surrounding urban room. To be successful, this concept must respond to prevailing conditions in either of two ways:

- The light rail station location is in a prominent and recognizable destination that is already a known “place” or destination with character. To be successful, the station and its design must integrate rather than compete with the surrounding urban elements and buildings to become part of that context.

Alternatively,

- In instances where the station is in a location that does not have a well-defined sense of destination or “place” there is a unique opportunity for the station to help define a new destination or “place” on the Transit Mall. This could be fully accomplished through coordinated development strategies that better match private development with integrated design within the public realm.

Thus, a light rail station at City Hall could be designed to give the transit rider the impression of truly arriving at City Hall rather than at just another station in front of City Hall. Successful execution of this concept would involve creatively extending the use of surrounding building materials and the blending of pavement and vehicle movement areas. Such an integrated design approach might also include unique landscaping, lighting, and edge uses to better strategically blur the distinction between the transit platform and City Hall.

Each “urban room” on the Mall is thus reflective of its immediate surrounding context and potential. Each station within these rooms should be reflective of the general character of the room, but also designed to become part of the place where light rail stops.

Realizing the vision of each station being an integrated part of “the place” in which it resides, works best when there is a strategic placement of each station in locations that either already are destinations or readily lend themselves to becoming desired places of arrival and departure.

It is possible to establish station locations on the basis of optimal transit operational considerations. Considerations such as station area alignment also have a direct bearing on which locations are best suited for that alignment. Place making however requires careful trade-offs between optimal transit configurations and overall gains in civic quality. Ideally it should be possible to achieve both. The station areas described in this report focus on the best possible locations of “station as place”. To further understand the urban design trade-offs, a comparative analysis between station locations together with their associated alternate alignments is provided in the rest of this chapter.

C. URBAN DESIGN CONCEPTS (ROOMS & STATIONS)

Beginning on the following page are a series of maps, diagrams, photographs and sketches that illustrate the urban-design concepts for each of the seven “urban rooms” that lie along the length of the Transit Mall.



NORTH TERMINUS URBAN ROOM & STATION

NORTH TERMINUS URBAN ROOM

EXISTING CHARACTER

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

- Union Station is the dominant architectural landmark, especially travelling north on 6th Avenue
- A handful of one-to-four story brick buildings between NW Everett and Glisan contribute to the historic character of the area

LAND USES

- The two dominant land uses are transportation related (bus and train station) and surface parking along the two blocks in front of Union Station
- A sundry mix of commercial, light industrial and housing make up the remaining blocks

RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

- Lack of retail or other active uses on the ground floor of most existing buildings.
- Lack of street edges at parking/vacant lots and lack of storefront windows create little pedestrian activity

ZONING/DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

- Zoned CXd, allowing a full range of uses and design review
- FAR of 6:1 or 9:1, not including bonuses
- 350' max. height stepping down to 75' within two blocks of Union Station

URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

REGULATORY OPPORTUNITIES

- Zoning and development standards south of Hoyt allow for significant intensification of both density and height

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- New development projects in nearby Chinatown and the Pearl District will encourage developers to look at the three block swath of the Transit Mall blocks
- Coordination of blocks Y, U and R's development (all owned by PDC) offer the potential for urban design coherency
- ¼ and ½ block parking lots and single story commercial buildings offer good development opportunities

ADAPTIVE REUSE OPPORTUNITIES

- The handful of historic brick structures possess high ceilings and storefront windows and may be ripe for new ground floor uses

STREETScape OPPORTUNITIES

- PDC's plan to create a landscaped median or "Garden Blocks" along 6th Avenue north of Glisan could help to revitalize the area
- Another PDC plan to connect NW Flanders to Waterfront Park will add an amenity to the area

URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

REGULATORY CONSTRAINTS

- Development standards north of Hoyt Street will limit some types of development

DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

- Despite improvements, the Old Town/Chinatown District still suffers from image problems
- Inadequate level of service at Union Station limits ability to sustain an anchor for adjacent retail development
- The north end of 5th and 6th Avenues represent the "end of the line" giving the area a bit of a "backwater" image for development
- The Greyhound bus station occupies a double block with no through access for pedestrians and has no active edges, discouraging redevelopment around it

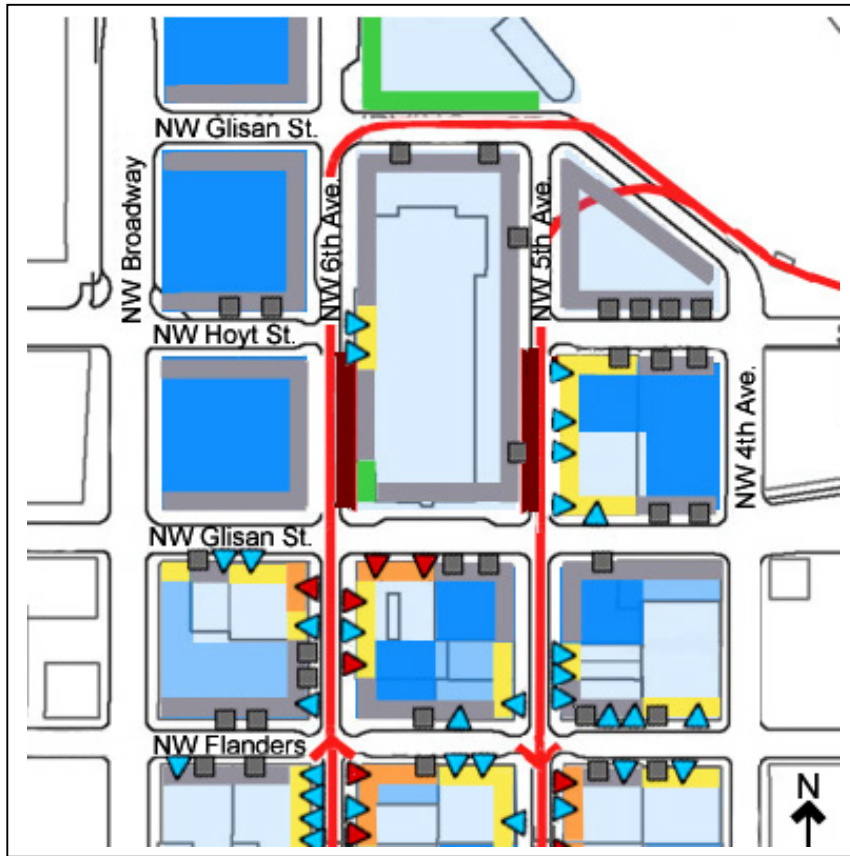
ADAPTIVE REUSE CONSTRAINTS

- Cost for seismic upgrade

STREETScape CONSTRAINTS

- The presence of Union Station, the railroad tracks, and the Post Office superblock create access problems and offer a confusing mix of streets that lead nowhere
- Lack of drive-by traffic, pedestrian activity, and curb-side parking has minimized retail activity on both 5th and 6th Avenues

NORTH TERMINUS EXISTING CONDITIONS DIAGRAM



Edge Conditions Key:

- | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Little or No Development Potential in 20 years (Typically a VL Value >1) | Park or Landscaped Edge | Retail Entry |
| Some Development Potential in 20 years (Typically a VL Value 0.5-1) | Retail Storefronts | Building Lobby or Office Entry |
| Likely Redevelopment in 20 years (Typically a VL Value <0.5) | Partial Fenestration | Vehicle Access or Loading Dock |
| | Blank Building Wall or Surface Parking | |



Union Station Tower as seen from NW 6th/Glisan



Greyhound Bus Station's southwest corner



NW 5th Ave looking north from NW 5th/Glisan

NORTH TERMINUS URBAN ROOM

This room represents the northern terminus of downtown's office core, benefiting from passenger rail and bus connections to multiple destinations in the Pacific Northwest. The room connects the mixed-use urban character of the Pearl District and the New China Japantown Historic District to the Willamette River.

NORTH TERMINUS STATION AS PLACE

The station in this room acts as the northern gateway into downtown Portland. It provides access to the northernmost extension of the office core, and has an evolving relationship between stately historic structures and contrasting sleek, contemporary buildings. Union Station organizes the room but is a visual anchor to and from the station at the end of 6th Avenue.

The redevelopment of Blocks "U" and "R" offer unique possibilities for station area interfaces and designs. The multi-modal nature of this station (interstate rail, regional rail, and a variety of bus options) ensures that the station's "place" will be a portal to the city.

STATION URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

Coordinate Transit Mall improvements with the redevelopment strategy for Blocks Y, U, and R, and potentially the 511 Building.

Develop this room's station as a "gateway" to downtown Portland.

Consider the potential for future redevelopment of US Post Office site.

STATION URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT

PUBLIC REALM

STREETSCAPE

Consider using a strong palette of streetscape elements to create strong pedestrian connections to and from Union Station.

Improve the pedestrian environment on Glisan to enhance connections from the Pearl District, North Park Blocks, and the New China / Japantown Historic District.

PUBLIC ART

Promote public artworks inspired by transportation modes.

TREES / LANDSCAPING

Maintain view on 6th Avenue of Union Station's clock tower by selecting narrower-profile street tree species.

PRIVATE REALM:

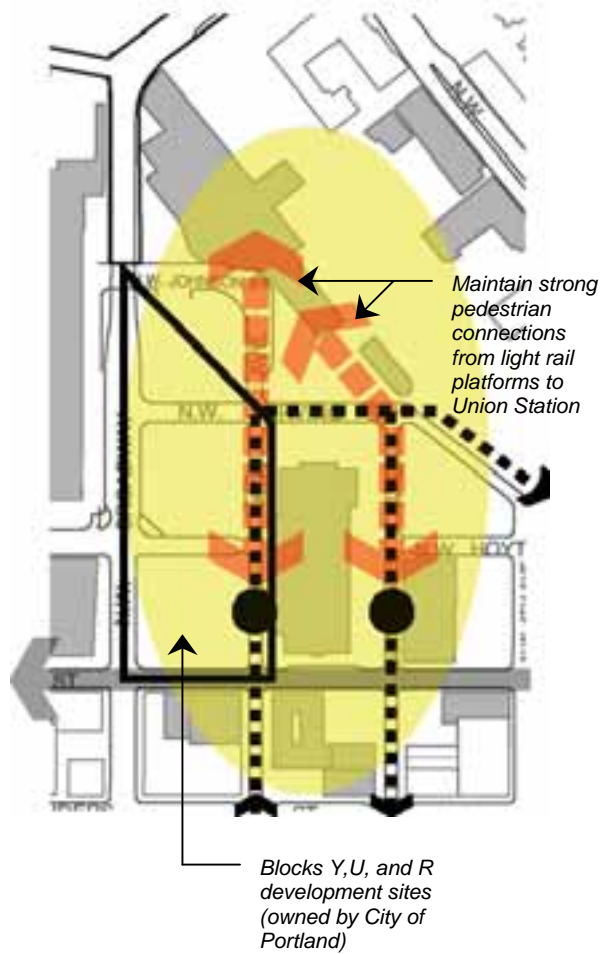
Consider the potential relocation or downsizing of Greyhound Bus Terminal. Alternatively, work to improve the transparency of the block's 6th Avenue façade.

Study potential of improved connections to flyover bridge at southern end of Union Station.

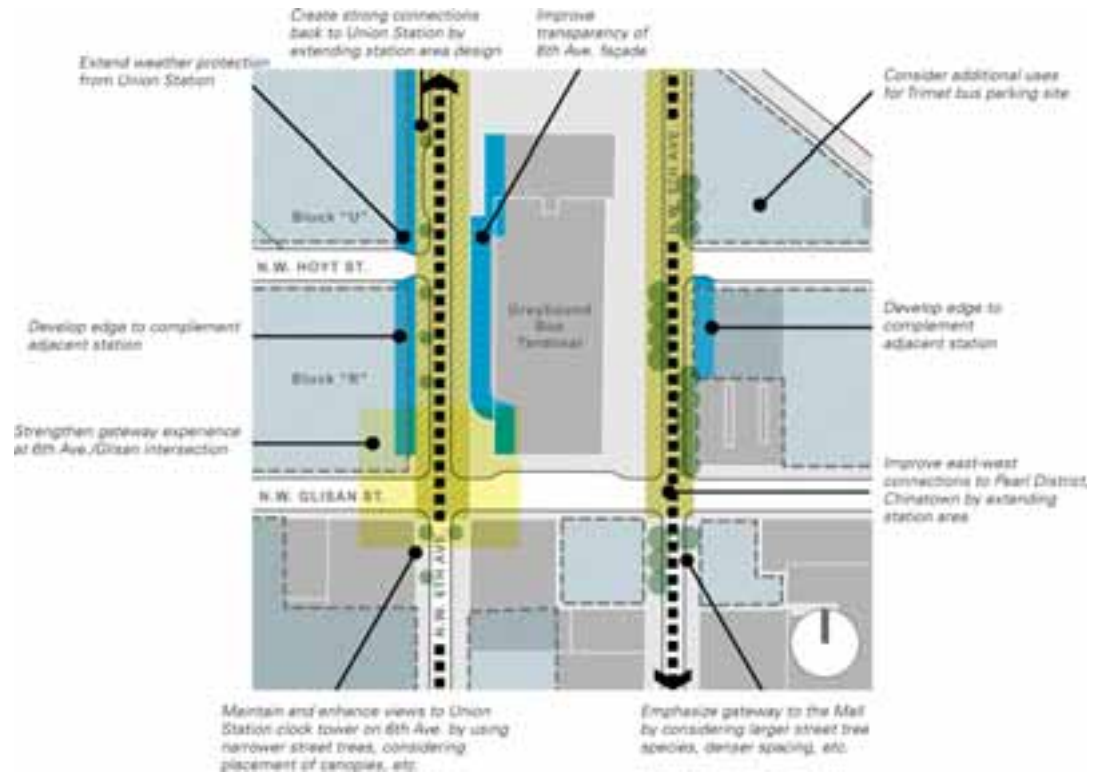
Integrate design of building on Block R with the adjacent light rail station.

NORTH TERMINUS URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT

NORTH TERMINUS CONTEXT DIAGRAM



STATION AREA ISSUES





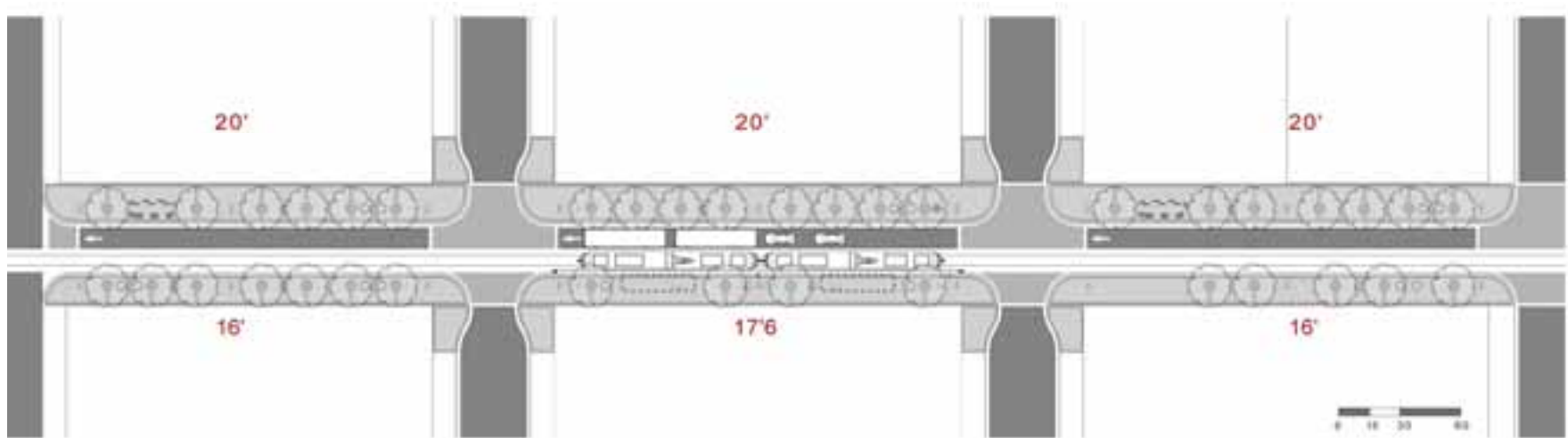
The final alignment and platform location should not preclude a long-term plan to integrate the redevelopment of the Greyhound bus station with the light rail platforms on each side of the building, similar to the transit stops adjacent to the Vienna Public Library, shown in the images above.



Aerial view looking north at the Broadway Bridge, showing a new intermodal station on the Greyhound Bus Terminal site and new development on Blocks U and R, as well as along 5th Avenue. The intermodal station would facilitate connections among Greyhound, Amtrak, and city bus routes and services, as well as the light rail lines and intercity train traffic stopping at Union Station.

NORTH TERMINUS URBAN ROOM ALIGNMENT COMPARISON

GLISAN/HOYT LEFT-SIDE ALIGNMENT



Graphic courtesy of ZGF Architects

Urban Design Pros:

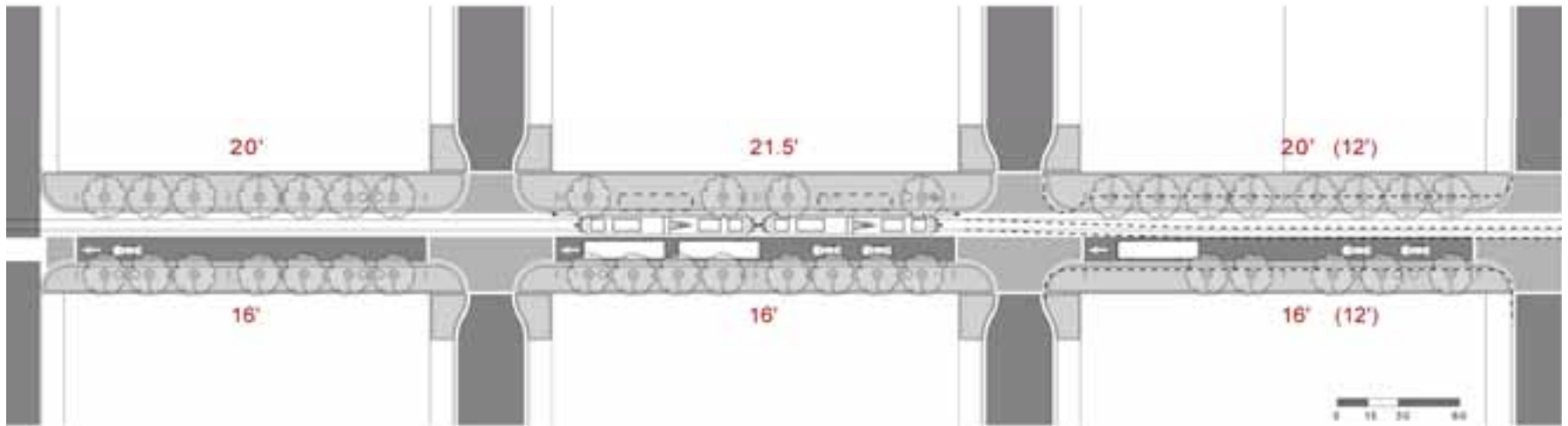
- *The development site at block R can integrate the building's design with the future light rail station along 6th Avenue*
- *With light rail on the left, the right side's 20' sidewalks can allow limited pockets of curb-side parking on blocks without bus stops, aiding retail development*
- *The left-side platforms will increase the level of activity that currently exists on those blocks*

Urban Design Cons:

- *Cyclists will be forced to share a lane with both cars and buses*
- *Transit riders' ability to understand the system and make easy transfers is compromised by having bus and light rail stops on opposite sides of the street*

NORTH TERMINUS URBAN ROOM ALIGNMENT COMPARISON

GLISAN/HOYT RIGHT-SIDE ALIGNMENT



Graphic courtesy of ZGF Architects

Urban Design Pros:

- With all transit stops on the right side, sidewalk space on the left can be animated with outdoor café seating without conflicts with waiting transit patrons
- If the Greyhound Station block redevelops, a significant opportunity will arise to integrate the two stations into the architecture of the new building
- Access to the bus and train station are enhanced as both light rail and bus stops will be on the right side of the street

Urban Design Cons:

- Moving light rail to the right side creates the potential need for an additional bus lane between Davis and Everett, leaving 12' sidewalks, insufficient width for a transit street in an urban area
- Expected light rail and bus operations will leave the two blocks between Everett and Glisan without any transit stops, reducing the level of activity on the two blocks
- The development site at block R will not be able to integrate the building's design with the future light rail station along 6th Avenue



OLD TOWN/CHINATOWN URBAN ROOM & STATION

OLD TOWN/CHINATOWN URBAN ROOM

EXISTING CHARACTER

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

- Dominant architectural landmarks include the US Bank Tower at the south end and the Union Station tower at the north end of 6th Avenue
- A very fine grain of building parcels, some only 5000 sf in size
- A handful of one-to-four story red brick buildings contribute to the historic character on many of the streets
- New development along 5th and 6th Ave. has been respectful to the scale and character of the neighborhood

LAND USES

- A sundry mix of parking, commercial, retail, light industrial and housing

RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

- Lack of retail or other active uses on the ground floor of some existing buildings.
- Lack of street edges at parking/vacant lots and lack of storefront windows reduce pedestrian activity

ZONING/DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

- Zoned CXd, allowing a full range of uses and design review
- FAR of 6:1, 9:1, and 15:1 not including bonuses
- 460' max. height stepping down to 100' along Chinatown's historic 4th Avenue

URBAN DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

REGULATORY OPPORTUNITIES

- Zoning and development standards allow for significant intensification of both density and height

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- New development projects along 4th and 5th Avenues, the Classical Chinese Garden and a lowering of the Old Town/Chinatown's crime rate have improved the area's image
- Key site at NW Broadway and Burnside
- Full and half-block parking lots offer good opportunities for housing and possibly a new open space

ADAPTIVE REUSE OPPORTUNITIES

- The handful of historic brick structures possess high ceilings and storefront windows and may be ripe for new ground floor uses

STREETSCAPE OPPORTUNITIES

- PDC's plan to improve NW 3rd and 4th Avenues and some of the streets between them will improve Chinatown's image and potentially catalyze investment
- The City's adopted plan to split Burnside's traffic onto a Burnside/Couch couplet will radically alter the look and feel of both streets

URBAN DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

REGULATORY CONSTRAINTS

- Sensitivity to the historic context must be considered

DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

- Despite improvements, the Old Town/Chinatown District still suffers from image problems
- Gas station at 4th and Burnside
- The traffic, noise and types of people and activity on W Burnside
- Fine-grained nature of the area's properties make consolidation more difficult

ADAPTIVE REUSE CONSTRAINTS

- Cost for seismic upgrades

STREETSCAPE CONSTRAINTS

- Lack of drive-by traffic, pedestrian activity, and curb-side parking has minimized retail activity on both 5th and 6th Avenues

OLD TOWN/CHINATOWN EXISTING CONDITIONS DIAGRAM



Edge Conditions Key:

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Little or No Development Potential in 20 years (Typically a I/L Value >1) | Park or Landscaped Edge | Retail Entry |
| Some Development Potential in 20 years (Typically a I/L Value 0.5-1) | Retail Storefronts | Building Lobby or Office Entry |
| Likely Redevelopment in 20 years (Typically a I/L Value <0.5) | Partial Fenestration | Vehicle Access or Loading Dock |
| | Blank Building Wall or Surface Parking | |



US Bank Tower from NW 6th Avenue



Union Station tower from NW 6th Avenue

OLD TOWN/CHINATOWN URBAN ROOM

This room extends downtown's office emphasis up to the North Terminus. It serves as the core of the River District's office development and establishes connections between the New China / Japantown Historic District and residential neighborhoods in the North Park Blocks and Pearl District.

OLD TOWN/CHINATOWN STATION AS PLACE

The design of the Old Town / Chinatown station presents a unique opportunity to offer Portland a glimpse into its future, while retaining a strong grasp on its history. Many of the renovated historic buildings provide rich visual texture emphasized by the contemporary aesthetic of new buildings. The station in its design should assume this design approach and vocabulary.

This room offers a special opportunity to design two different station areas – one emphasizing the rich ethnic heritages of the Asian communities to the east, and the other emphasizing portions of Old town to the west. This duality can be linked by shared streetscape elements and connections made on east-west cross streets.

STATION URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

- Develop a design strategy to bridge across Burnside, linking this room to the Hotel / Financial room.
- Enhance connections west to the Pearl District, and east to the New China Japantown Historic District.
- Take advantage of multiple opportunity sites to provide a new redevelopment direction for this room and its station.

STATION URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT

PUBLIC REALM:

STREETSCAPE

Integrate Transit Mall improvements with those related to implementation of the Burnside / Couch couplet.

Extend the design palette of street furniture north from Hotel / Financial room, integrating elements from the New China / Japantown Historic District character.

Extend and integrate "festival street" configurations west from 3rd and 4th Avenues, especially NW Davis.

PUBLIC ART

Promote public artworks that reflect Asian cultural links to Portland (traditional & contemporary).

TREES / LANDSCAPING

Maintain views on 6th Avenue of Union Station's clock tower by selecting narrower-profile street tree species.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Seek to integrate the design vocabulary and proportions of existing historic structures in the station design.

PRIVATE REALM

Consider upgrading or renovating significant historic buildings to offer Class B or C office space to improve station environment and strengthen room character.

Work with social service facilities to coordinate future development.

Encourage transit rider supporting ground-floor uses other than retail, such as daycare, office, or institutional facilities.

Consider consolidating development parcels into potential half-block sites to allow for larger more articulate street edge development.

Encourage the redevelopment of the full-block surface parking lot bounded by NW Couch, Davis, 4th and 5th Avenues.

OLD TOWN/CHINATOWN URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT

OLD TOWN/CHINATOWN CONTEXT DIAGRAM



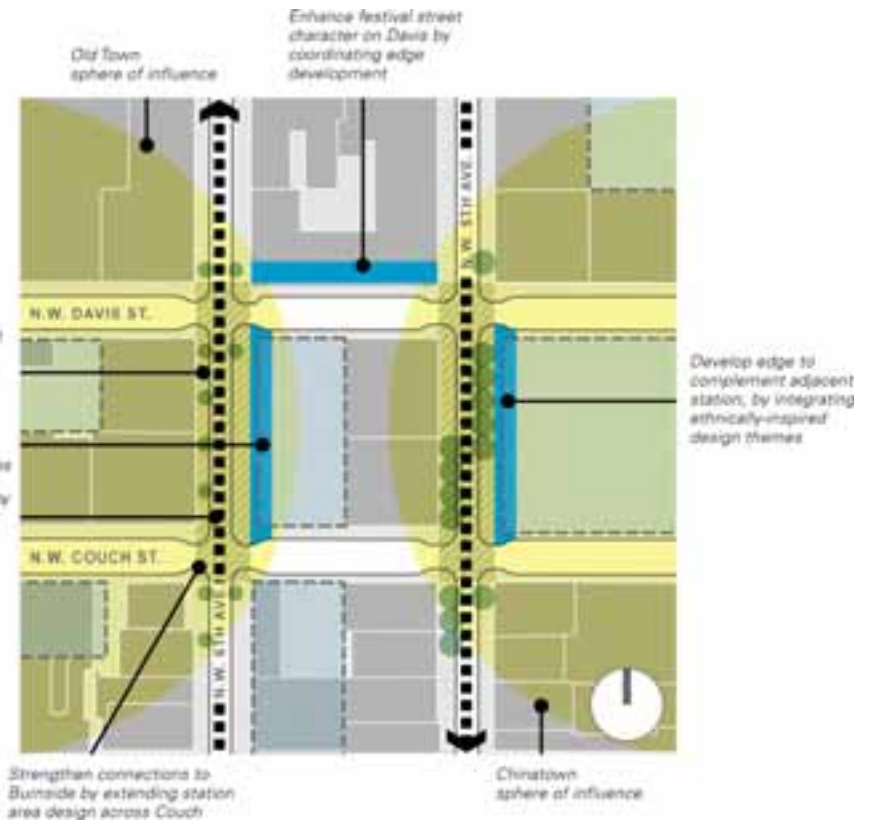
Development opportunity sites between Broadway and SW Park

Maintain views to Union Station clock tower by using narrower street trees, considering street furniture, awnings, etc.

Develop edge to complement adjacent station by integrating Old Town-inspired design themes

Contrast existing darker tones by using materials of lighter colors in the station areas

STATION AREA ISSUES





Consider platform paving materials such as those found in Portland's Chinese Garden (above) that evoke the character of Chinatown (source: <http://www.pavingexpert.com/stonpv02.htm>).



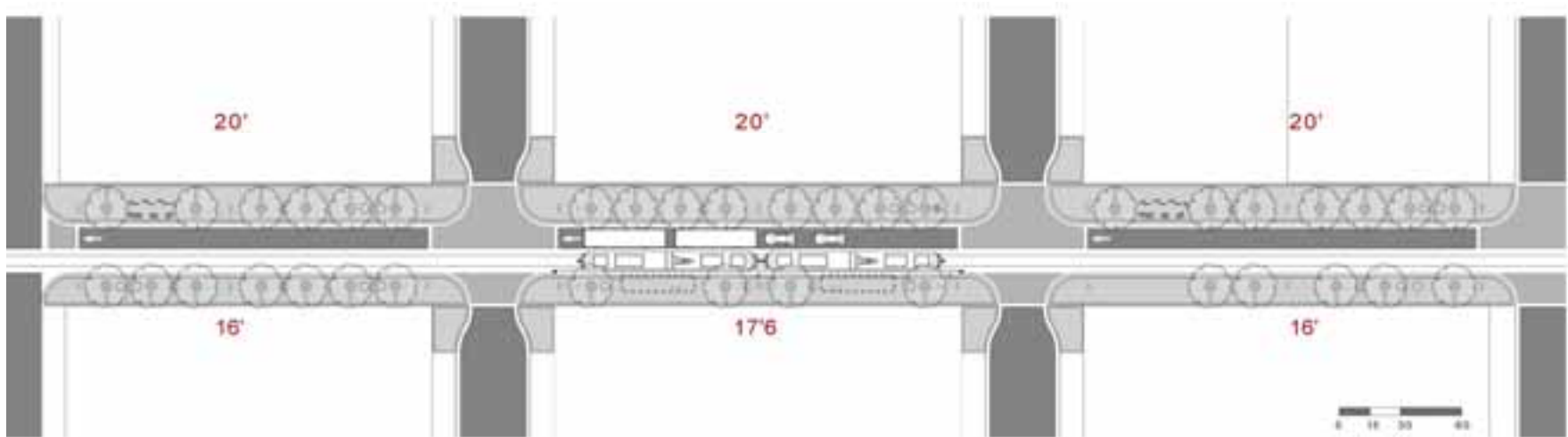
A transit platform lighting strategy, such as the series of lanterns in Kuming, China, could help to create a unique sense of place at the Old Town/Chinatown station



View looking north on 5th Avenue from NW Couch. Juxtaposing traditional elements of the different Asian cultures with contemporary examples of street furniture, signage, lighting, shelter designs, etc., can effectively bridge the gap between old and new in this eclectic neighborhood along the mall.

OLD TOWN/CHINATOWN URBAN ROOM ALIGNMENT COMPARISON

COUCH/DAVIS LEFT-SIDE ALIGNMENT



Graphic courtesy of ZGF Architects

Urban Design Pros:

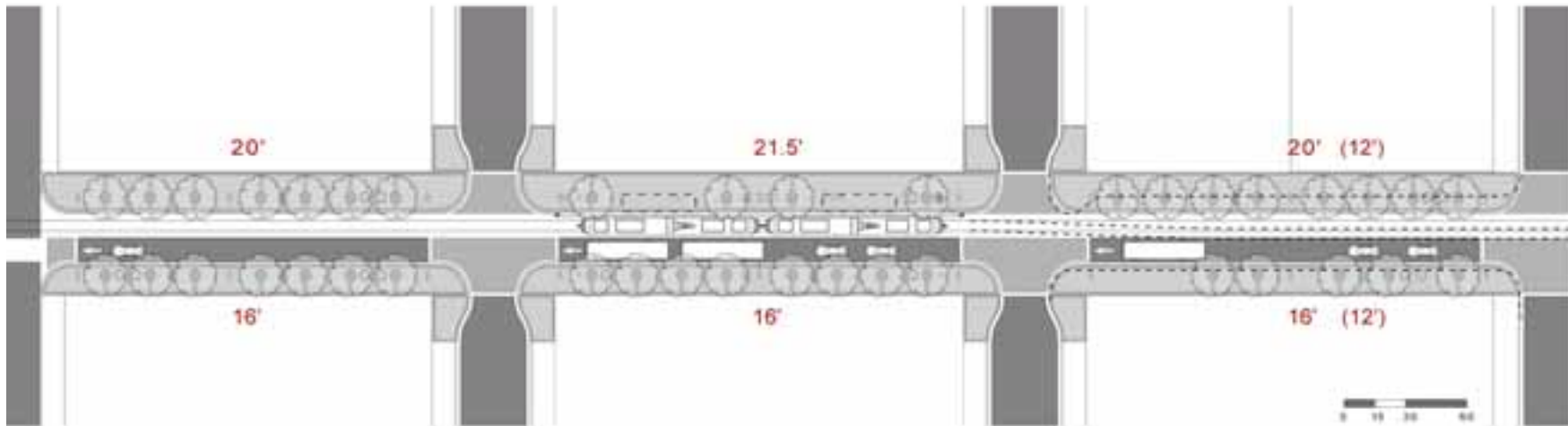
- The development site at the block bounded by 4th, 5th, Couch and Davis can integrate the building's design with the future light rail station along 5th Avenue
- With light rail on the left, the right side's 20' sidewalks can allow limited pockets of curb-side parking on blocks without bus stops, aiding retail development
- The left-side platforms will increase the level of activity that currently exists on those blocks

Urban Design Cons:

- Cyclists will be forced to share a lane with both cars and buses
- Transit riders' ability to understand the system and make easy transfers is compromised by having bus and light rail stops on opposite sides of the street

OLD TOWN/CHINATOWN URBAN ROOM ALIGNMENT COMPARISON

COUCH/DAVIS RIGHT-SIDE ALIGNMENT



Graphic courtesy of ZGF Architects

Urban Design Pros:

- *With all transit stops on the right side, sidewalk space on the left can be animated with outdoor café seating without conflicts with waiting transit patrons*
- *The right-side platforms will increase the level of pedestrian activity that currently exists due to the location of the bus stops*

Urban Design Cons:

- *Both existing and new retail uses on the block flanked by light rail stations become somewhat isolated due to the street furniture requirements at each platform*
- *Moving light rail to the right side creates the potential need for an additional bus lane between Davis and Everett, leaving 12' sidewalks, insufficient width for a transit street in an urban area*
- *Expected light rail and bus operations will leave the two blocks between Everett and Glisan without any transit stops, reducing the level of activity of the two blocks*



**HOTEL/FINANCIAL URBAN ROOM & STATION
U.S. BANK TOWER LOCATION**

HOTEL/FINANCIAL URBAN ROOM

EXISTING CHARACTER

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

- Primarily early 20th-century commercial buildings of 5-15 stories, many of which are Historic Landmarks
- Both historic and more contemporary buildings employ stone, terra cotta, or buff-colored brick in their façades. Few buildings of red brick
- Post-War buildings do not offer the same level of architectural detailing and pedestrian-friendly ground floors as their historic counterparts

LAND USES

- Many office buildings and hotels with ground-floor retail and a number of vault-like banks

RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

- Most new and old office buildings and hotels offer ground-floor retail
- A number of blocks along 6th Avenue, Alder and Washington Streets include continuous, two-sided retail with multiple entries, creating a very active pedestrian environment

ZONING/DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

- Zoned CXd, allowing a full range of uses and design review
- FAR 15:1 not including bonuses
- 460' max. height

URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

REGULATORY OPPORTUNITIES

- Zoning and development standards allow for an intensification of both density and height

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Some underutilized parcels within the area
- Nearby hotels on Broadway provide a steady stream of customers for new retail development
- 20,000 sf parking lot on 5th Avenue between Oak and Stark is the most promising opportunity

ADAPTIVE REUSE OPPORTUNITIES

- Meier and Frank building
- Quarter-block buildings at Oak and 6th and Oak and Broadway

STREETSCAPE OPPORTUNITIES

- Imminent renovation of US Bank Tower plaza will improve streetscape in the area and add a better defined and more-easily activated gathering place
- All sidewalks in the area are at least 12' wide and curb-side parking exists on most side streets

URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

REGULATORY CONSTRAINTS

- None

DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

- Most parcels are occupied with either Historic Landmarks or more recent Class A office buildings
- The relocation of the multiple lunch trailers in the parking lot on 5th Ave. between Oak and Stark

ADAPTIVE REUSE CONSTRAINTS

- Cost for seismic upgrades

STREETSCAPE CONSTRAINTS

- Lack of street trees on SW Broadway, 4th and some of the cross streets

HOTEL/FINANCIAL EXISTING CONDITIONS DIAGRAM



Edge Conditions Key:

 Little or No Development Potential in 20 years (Typically a ML Value >1)	 Park or Landscaped Edge	 Retail Entry
 Some Development Potential in 20 years (Typically a ML Value 0.5-1)	 Retail Storefronts	 Building Lobby or Office Entry
 Likely Redevelopment in 20 years (Typically a ML Value <0.5)	 Partial Fenestration	 Vehicle Access or Loading Dock
	 Blank Building Wall or Surface Parking	



Zero lot line buildings along SW 6th Avenue



US National Bank Building at SW 6th/Stark

HOTEL/FINANCIAL URBAN ROOM

This room acts as a transition from Portland's downtown office core across Burnside into the River District. It continues to connect the city with its commercial and financial history. Its vitality is maintained through its ability to continue to adapt ground-level spaces for a variety of retail uses. Development within this room has also been able to capitalize on available redevelopment opportunities with good success.

HOTEL/FINANCIAL STATION AS PLACE

This station is a gateway to the downtown marking the Transit Mall's transition across Burnside, the city's dividing arterial. The station design should continue to express the strong institutional character of Portland's commercial core. It should also seek to accommodate (and inspire) through its design vocabulary, the changing character of dense new office buildings.

The station area designs in this room should reflect the grandeur and formality associated with Portland's historic national financial institutions. The timeless elegance of the US Bank Building (in the vicinity) provides a great reference for station shelter and associated landscape design thinking. Additionally, the platform's design should attempt to integrate itself with the redesign of the US Bank Tower's plaza along SW Oak Street.

STATION URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

- Encourage development that reinforces the predominant uses in this room, i.e. office, hotel, or financial institutional uses.
- Consider the effects of adjacent high-density residential development to the west and east (West End and Downtown Waterfront, respectively).
- Employ a coordinated design approach to the design of redevelopment sites near Burnside to complement the station's function and design.
- Emphasize the "gateway" role of the station through extension of design vocabulary to Burnside.
- Consider integrating the design of the station with the US Bancorp plaza (this room's central gathering place).

STATION URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT

PUBLIC REALM

STREETSCAPE

Wrap and extend Mall streetscape environment onto the adjacent plaza and east-west streets that offer connections to other transit routes.

Emphasize the existing historic palette of street furniture to compliment surrounding historic structures.

PUBLIC ART

Promote public artworks inspired by financial institutions (such as New York City's Financial District bear and bull).

TREES / LANDSCAPING

When planting new trees, use larger species to help break down the scale of the smooth-skinned modernist tower.

PRIVATE REALM

Improve east-west pedestrian connections through the US Bank Tower, roughly along SW Ankeny alignment and to its plaza.

Consider creative design to accommodate or relocate the food vendor trailers located in surface parking lot between Stark and Oak Streets within the US Bank Tower plaza.

Work to reconfigure existing ground-level spaces to better accommodate a variety of retail floor area requirements to better support street level activity.

Enhance the visual connections between the 6th Avenue platform and the ground floor use at the adjacent US Bank Tower annex building (currently a health club with screened out windows)

Create ground-level setbacks along appropriate east-west streets to offer "eddies" or places of refuge from the effects of bus operations (noise and pollution) on the Mall.

HOTEL/FINANCIAL URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT

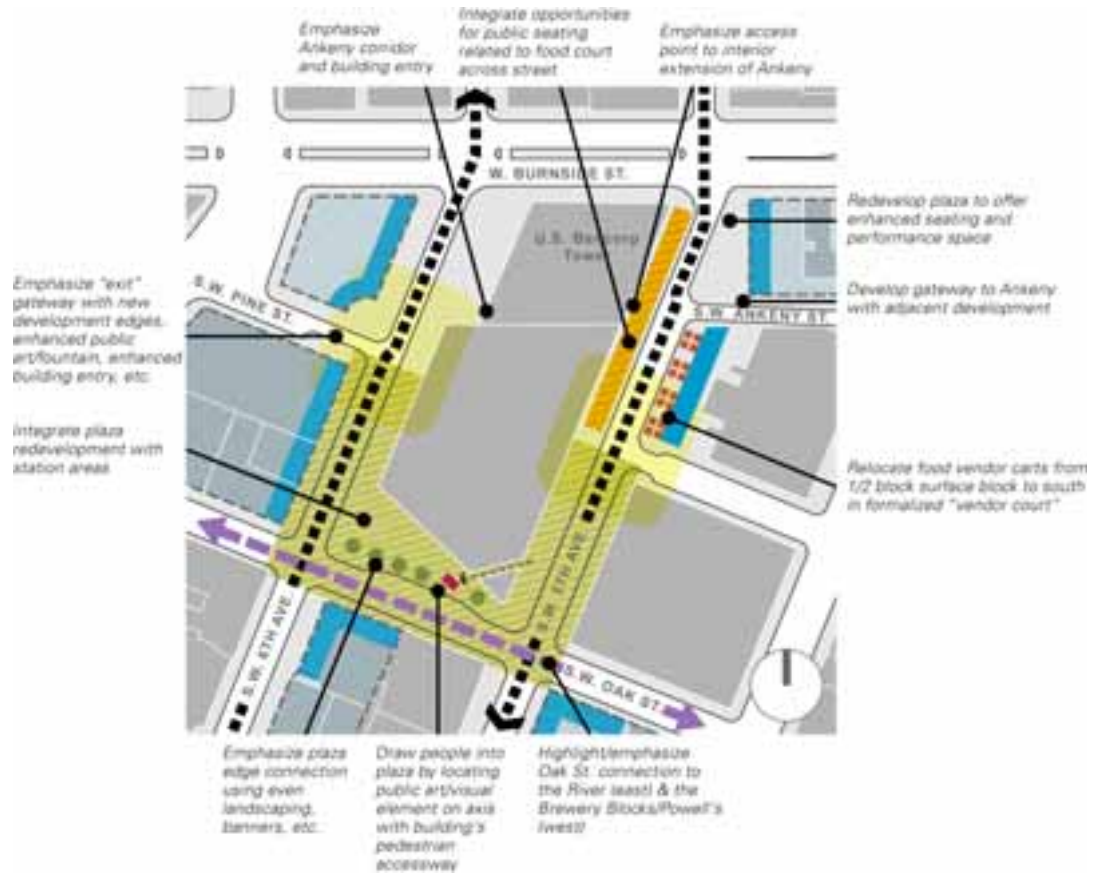
HOTEL/FINANCIAL CONTEXT DIAGRAM



Enhancing the Station as Place concept

- Locating the stations closer to Burnside facilitates north-south / east-west pedestrian and transit connections
- 5th Avenue station at the US Bancorp tower / Ankeny terminus creates an anchor and strengthens the focal point at the northern end of a potential pedestrian pathway to the river (Ankeny)
- Station on 6th Avenue offers a potential activator to a large redevelopment site (shown in black box)

STATION AREA ISSUES





Dramatically-scaled public art such as Louise Bourgeois' "Spider" can enhance the character of the 6th Avenue station sandwiched between two tall office buildings built to the property lines (source: <http://www.norbiton.com/ukdave/bilbao/12guggenheimA.htm>)



Uniquely designed and more sculptural light rail shelters would contrast with the staid facades of nearby buildings and can enhance the vibrancy of the adjacent plaza (source: Big Ideas, Small Buildings, by Phyllis Richardson)

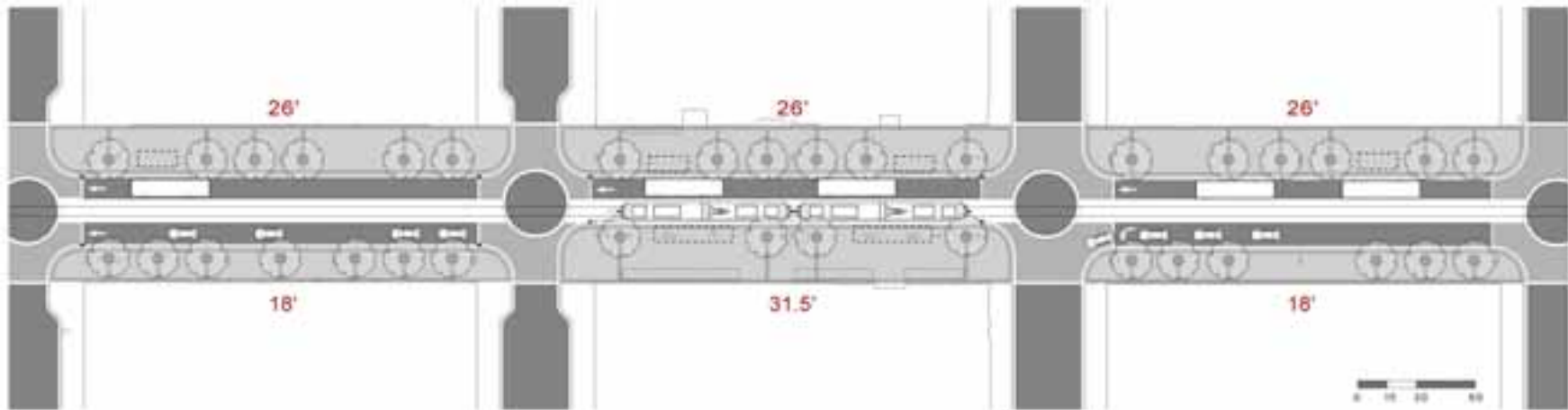


View looking west on Oak Street at 6th Avenue station, illustrating the potential visual and spatial connections between the US Bank Tower Plaza and the station, enhancing the sense of "place" and capitalizing on the opportunity presented by the existing plaza space.

HOTEL/FINANCIAL URBAN ROOM ALIGNMENT COMPARISON

STARK/WASHINGTON LEFT-SIDE ALIGNMENT*

* - If the left-side alignment is the preferred option, platform spacing and vehicle turning movement requires the station location to lie between SW Stark and Washington, rather than at the US Bank Tower plaza



Graphic courtesy of ZGF Architects

Urban Design Pros:

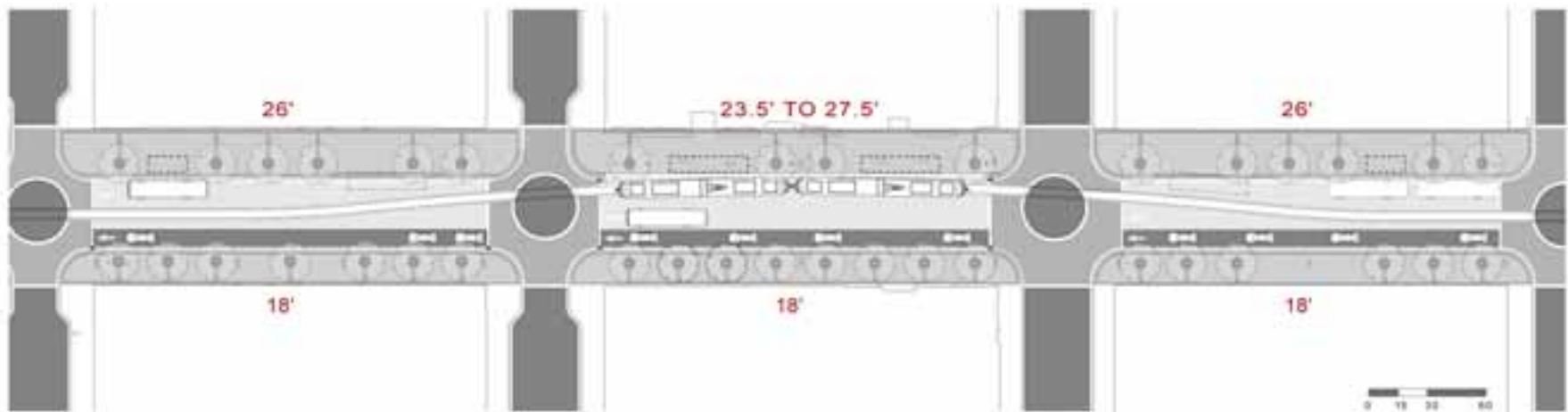
- *By disallowing vehicle movement through the block, clear priority is given to pedestrians and transit movement, maintaining the identity of the Mall as a place for alternative modes of transportation*
- *The left-side platform creates a generous waiting area for transit users, permitting adjacent eating establishments to easily spill out on to the platform*
- *The Stark/Washington location is central to the Hotel/Financial urban room that stretches between Burnside and Morrison*

Urban Design Cons:

- *Continuous vehicle access is not permitted, possibly isolating the potential development sites along 6th Avenue between Stark and Burnside*
- *A shared-left platform leaves transit users to wait on a somewhat-isolated platform in the middle of the street at all times other than the peak hour*
- *Transit riders' ability to understand the system and make easy transfers is compromised by having bus and light rail stops on opposite sides of the street*

HOTEL/FINANCIAL URBAN ROOM ALIGNMENT COMPARISON

PINE/OAK RIGHT-SIDE ALIGNMENT



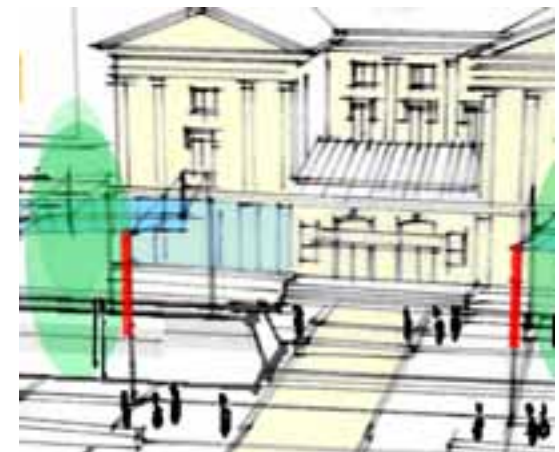
Graphic courtesy of ZGF Architects

Urban Design Pros:

- *The transit platform can become an extension of the US Bank Tower plaza, increasing the level of activity in the plaza and easing pedestrian access from the US Bank Tower to each light rail platform*
- *Placing the platform directly adjacent to the plaza creates a more identifiable “place” and enhances the identity of the light rail station in transit users’ minds*
- *Continuous vehicle access could enhance the marketability of the potential development sites along 6th Avenue*
- *Vehicle access may potentially be added between Washington and Stark, bringing additional visibility to the adjacent retail businesses and enhancing the perception of security*

Urban Design Cons:

- *Pedestrian access to sites east and west of the Transit Mall require crossing three traffic/transit lanes*
- *The extra-wide sidewalks between Washington and Stark are able to be reduced for an additional vehicle lane, eliminating public art and a row of street trees on each block*



**RETAIL CORE URBAN ROOM & STATION
– PIONEER COURTHOUSE LOCATION**

RETAIL CORE URBAN ROOM

EXISTING CHARACTER

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

- A mix of early 20th-century commercial buildings (5-15 stories) and modern high-rise buildings (mostly stone or terracotta).
- Pioneer Courthouse Square, Pioneer Courthouse and Pioneer Place create spatial relief to the mid and high-rise urban structures in this room.

LAND USES

- The highest concentration of regional-serving retail space in the city including Pioneer Place Mall, Saks 5th Avenue, and the Meier and Frank Department Store
- Other primary land uses include Class A office buildings and hotel (Hilton)

RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

- The retail environment along Morrison and Yamhill is very strong
- Pioneer Place offers active retail uses along all of its edges
- 5th and 6th Avenues function as secondary, locally-oriented retail streets relative to the regional-oriented nature of Morrison and Yamhill

ZONING/DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

- Zoned CXd, allowing a full range of uses and design review
- FAR 12:1 not including bonuses
- 250'-460' max. height

URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

REGULATORY OPPORTUNITIES

- Zoning and development standards allow for an intensification of both density and height

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- No underutilized parcels within the area

ADAPTIVE REUSE OPPORTUNITIES

- Meier and Frank building

STREETSCAPE OPPORTUNITIES

- All sidewalks in the area are at least 12' wide and curb-side parking exists on most cross streets

URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

REGULATORY CONSTRAINTS

- None

DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

- Few development opportunities: nearly all parcels are occupied with either Historic Landmarks or more recent Class A office and retail buildings

ADAPTIVE REUSE CONSTRAINTS

- Cost for seismic upgrade to Meier and Frank building

STREETSCAPE CONSTRAINTS

- Lack of curb-side parking on Morrison and Yamhill streets
- Ongoing maintenance problem with the special street designs on bus and light rail Malls



Pioneer Courthouse Square as viewed from the potential platform location on 6th Avenue

RETAIL CORE EXISTING CONDITIONS DIAGRAM



Edge Conditions Key:

	Little or No Development Potential in 20 years (Typically a <i>IL</i> Value >1)		Park or Landscaped Edge		Retail Entry
	Some Development Potential in 20 years (Typically a <i>IL</i> Value 0.5-1)		Retail Storefronts		Building Lobby or Office Entry
	Likely Redevelopment in 20 years (Typically a <i>IL</i> Value <0.5)		Partial Fenestration		Vehicle Access or Loading Dock
			Blank Building Wall or Surface Parking		



5th Ave. office towers as seen from potential light rail platform adjacent to Pioneer Place



5th Avenue façade of Pioneer Place

RETAIL CORE URBAN ROOM

This room contains the city's most significant downtown transfer point where transit riders connect between north-south and east-west light rail and bus lines. Reinvigorated storefronts and landmark structures continue to reinforce this already strong location around Pioneer Courthouse Square and downtown's retail core.

RETAIL CORE STATION AS PLACE

The station in this room must be configured to enhance bus and light rail transfer opportunities as well as to spatially mesh with Pioneer Courthouse Square across 6th Avenue. The immediate area is the nexus of light rail and bus lines as well as the retail and office cores. This station will be defined by its relationship to Pioneer Courthouse, the Square, and Pioneer Place. The activity and movement on adjacent streets contributes to an energized environment that exudes the character of a European multi-modal transfer station.

The design of the station areas in this room must emphasize the visual and physical connections to the public buildings and spaces on each side of the platforms as well as the transfer opportunities. The uniqueness of these particular station locations, and the potential to connect transit riders, is unique to the city and along the length of the Transit Mall. A station design that is integrated with its surrounding elements will enhance this vitality.

STATION URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

- Seamlessly integrate the 6th Avenue station with Pioneer Courthouse Square to the west while enhancing the views of Pioneer courthouse to the east.
- Emphasize the importance of the pedestrian environment and prioritize the transit connections and movement through the center of downtown.
- Develop arrival and departure elements at the intersections of 5th and 6th Avenues with Morrison and Yamhill Streets to underscore the significance of the place.
- Consider the integration of the station area with the redevelopment of the Meier and Frank Building and Pioneer Courthouse.

STATION URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT

PUBLIC REALM

STREETSCAPE

Blend the landscape and streetscape elements from the adjacent Hotel / Financial room with the Civic / Office / Cultural rooms.

Use paving materials and patterns to emphasize and visually extend connections to and between Pioneer Courthouse Square and Pioneer Place.

Maximize sidewalk space for pedestrian movement.

Seek to integrate the design of the Square, Courthouse and Place with that of the stations.

PUBLIC ART

Promote public artworks that compliment the civic spaces and functions of the station area and room. (E.g. Klaus Oldenburg, Jeff Koons, Bruce Nauman, or Andy Warhol)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Take advantage of the redevelopment energy at Pioneer Courthouse and the Meier and Frank Building to link public realm improvements to private realm renovations.

PRIVATE REALM

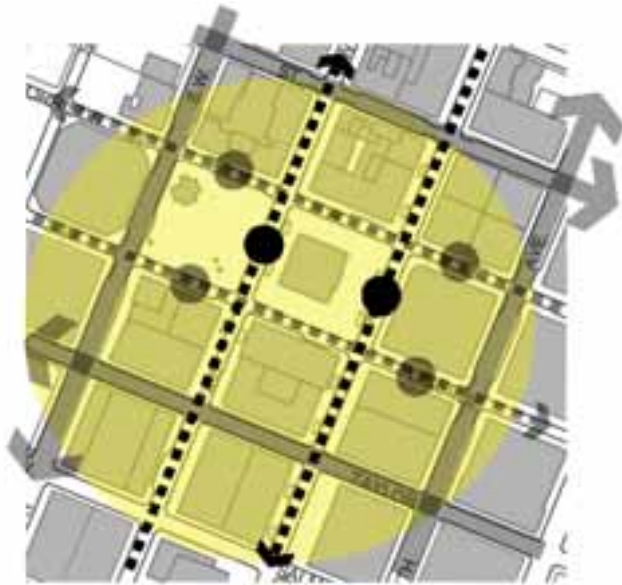
Elevate the importance of the Meier and Frank Building's renovation, and reestablishing entries on 5th and 6th Avenues.

Consider relocation (and/or downsizing) of Washington Mutual and Wells Fargo bank tenants at prime retail sites on Pioneer Courthouse Square to better utilize and activate its corners.

Work to activate blank walls, with an emphasis on increased nighttime pedestrian safety.

RETAIL CORE URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT

RETAIL CORE CONTEXT DIAGRAM



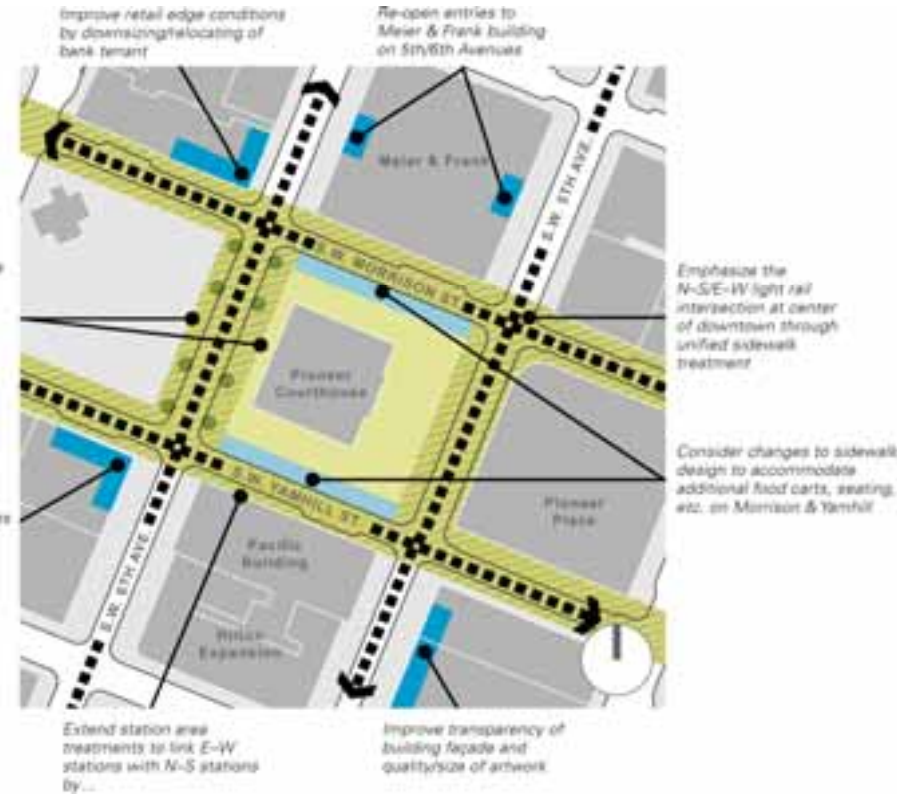
Emphasize connections between Pioneer Courthouse and Pioneer Courthouse Square by considering changes to paving material, landscaping, street furniture, etc.

Improve retail edge conditions by downsizing/relocating of bank tenant

Enhancing the Station as Place concept

- Locating the Transit Mall station one block north would facilitate connections to red and blue line trains for both north and southbound MAX riders
- Station locations adjacent to the Pioneer Courthouse would give more identity to the station, and add to a pattern of station locations at historic structures
- Station locations between Morrison and Yamhill would offer opportunities to strengthen connections across 5th and 6th Avenues to Pioneer Courthouse Square and Pioneer Place

STATION AREA ISSUES

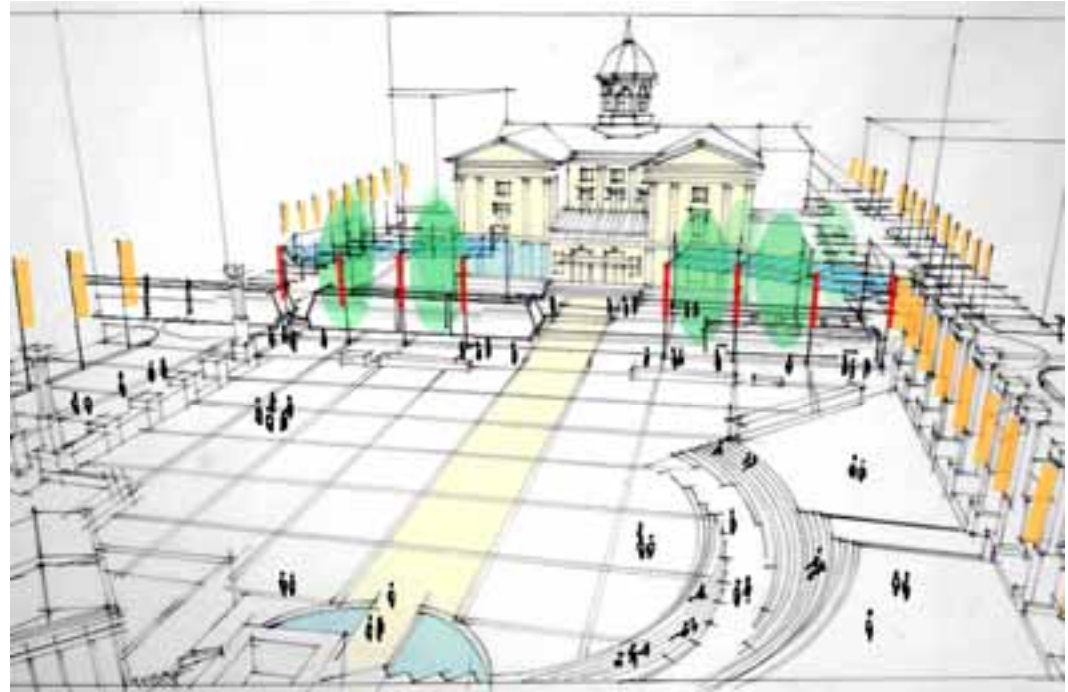




To help unify the north-bound transit platform with Pioneer Courthouse Square, consider a continuous canopy structure over the entire width of 6th Avenue, similar to the structure found along the Dallas light rail system (source: DART web site)



At the south-bound platform—and north-bound as an alternative—a transparent steel and glass light rail shelter may be appropriate so as not to compete with the architecture of historic Pioneer Courthouse (source: *Big Ideas, Small Buildings*, by Phyllis Richardson)

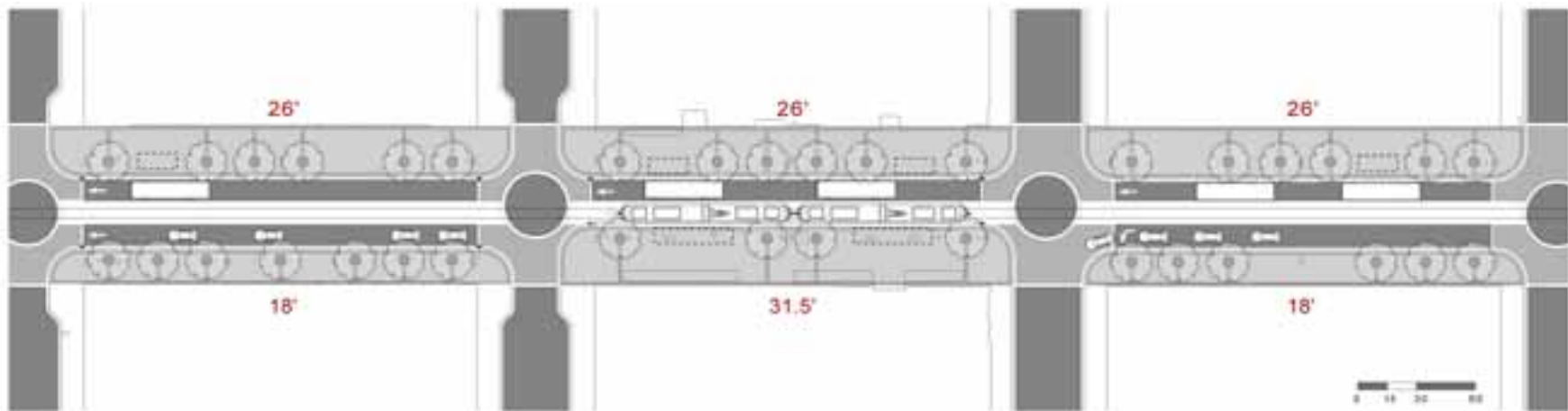


View of 6th Avenue station at Pioneer Courthouse Square, illustrating the enhanced visual and spatial relationships between the Pioneer Courthouse and the square.

RETAIL CORE URBAN ROOM ALIGNMENT COMPARISON

YAMHILL/TAYLOR LEFT-SIDE ALIGNMENT

* - If the left-side alignment is the preferred option, platform spacing and vehicle turning movement requires the station location to lie between SW Yamhill and Taylor, rather than at Pioneer Courthouse



Graphic courtesy of ZGF Architects

Urban Design Pros:

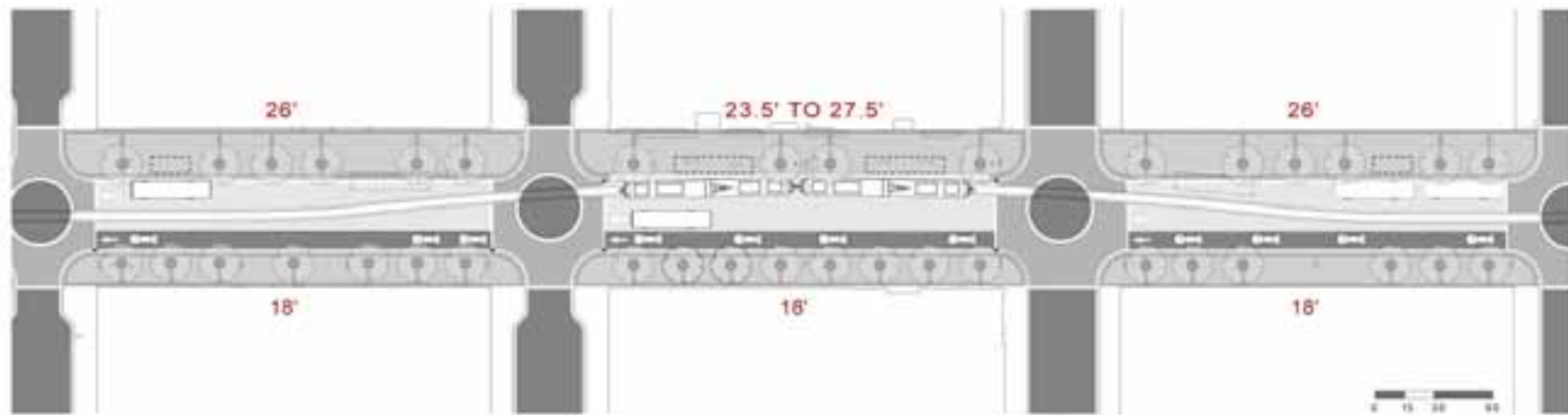
- *By disallowing vehicle movement through the block, clear priority is given to pedestrians and transit movement, maintaining the identity of the Mall as a place for alternative modes of transportation*
- *The left-side platform creates a generous waiting area for transit users, permitting adjacent eating establishments to easily spill out on to the platform*

Urban Design Cons:

- *The left side platform places the station a block away from Pioneer Courthouse, reducing the level of activity around the historic building and forcing transferring transit riders to walk an additional block*
- *Continuous vehicle access is not permitted, having a potentially negative impact on the ground-floor uses along the block*
- *Transit riders' ability to understand the system and make easy transfers is compromised by having bus and light rail stops on opposite sides of the street*

RETAIL CORE URBAN ROOM ALIGNMENT COMPARISON

MORRISON/YAMHILL RIGHT-SIDE ALIGNMENT



Graphic courtesy of ZGF Architects

Urban Design Pros:

- *The right-side platforms increase the level of activity around the Pioneer Courthouse which is needed due to the lack of ground-floor active uses on the block*
- *An appropriately-designed 6th Ave. light rail platform and street surface along with tree removal/pruning can help to spatially stitch together Pioneer Courthouse and Square*
- *Existing vehicle access in front of Pioneer Square and Pioneer Place will be maintained*
- *Vehicle access can be added between Yamhill and Taylor, bringing additional visibility to the adjacent retail businesses and enhancing the perception of security*

Urban Design Cons:

- *Light rail transfers to the Pioneer Square and Pioneer Place MAX stations will require pedestrians to cross three traffic/transit lanes on 5th or 6th Avenue.*
- *The location of a light rail platform across from Pioneer Square will drain some energy from the square, a potentially important consideration during the winter months*
- *The extra-wide sidewalks between Yamhill and Taylor are able to be reduced for an additional vehicle lane, eliminating public art and a row of street trees on each block*



CIVIC/OFFICE/CULTURAL URBAN ROOM & STATION

CIVIC/OFFICE/CULTURAL URBAN ROOM

EXISTING CHARACTER

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

- Primarily post-War office towers that set back from street edge forming plazas with varying levels of activity
- Historic buildings are all public institutions—two court houses and City Hall—occupying full block parcels

LAND USES

- Primary land use is Class A office with government buildings between 4th and 5th Avenues
- Both old and more recent buildings lack ground-floor active uses that front the street

RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

- Retail is erratic and does not form any two-sided retail blocks
- Plazas and dead edges interrupt continuous retail along many blocks
- Some office building include ground-floor retail that is only accessible internally

ZONING/DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

- Zoned CXd, allowing a full range of uses and design review
- FAR 12:1 not including bonuses
- 250'-460' max. height

URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

REGULATORY OPPORTUNITIES

- Zoning and development standards allow for an intensification of both density and height

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Very few underutilized parcels within the area
- Primary opportunity is the surface parking lot behind the University Club

ADAPTIVE REUSE OPPORTUNITIES

- None

STREETSCAPE OPPORTUNITIES

- All sidewalks in the area are at least 12' wide and curb-side parking exists on most cross streets

URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

REGULATORY CONSTRAINTS

- None

DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

- Few development opportunities: nearly all parcels are occupied with either Historic Landmarks or more recent Class A office buildings

ADAPTIVE REUSE CONSTRAINTS

- None

STREETSCAPE CONSTRAINTS

- Lack of curb-side parking on parts of SW Jefferson Street

CIVIC/OFFICE/CULTURAL EXISTING CONDITIONS DIAGRAM



Edge Conditions Key:

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Little or No Development Potential in 20 years (Typically a i/L Value >1) | Park or Landscaped Edge | Retail Entry |
| Some Development Potential in 20 years (Typically a i/L Value 0.5-1) | Retail Storefronts | Building Lobby or Office Entry |
| Likely Redevelopment in 20 years (Typically a i/L Value <0.5) | Partial Fenestration | Vehicle Access or Loading Dock |
| | Blank Building Wall or Surface Parking | |



Future platform location at City Hall/PacWest



PacWest Center from 6th Ave. and Jefferson



1950s and '60s buildings along SW 5th Ave.

CIVIC/OFFICE/CULTURAL URBAN ROOM

Where other rooms cling to the past, this room embraces the future. This room continues to grow and support a major concentration of the Mall's Class A office space. It connects the downtown office core with Portland State University. The predominant architectural style is defined by the "modern" (1960s – 1980s) architectural aesthetic.

CIVIC/OFFICE/CULTURAL STATION AS PLACE

This station design should accommodate the shift in the character of downtown development. Its location also suggests a transition to the Mall's southern rooms. Due to the unresolved public interfaces of many of the existing structures, the station design and that of the room will rely upon very deliberate public realm improvements to energize the pedestrian environment.

The station at City Hall offers the city's citizens a natural civic point of arrival, departure and visual reference. It is also an opportunity to link the city's heritage with its future. These station areas also have a unique opportunity to stitch the current iconic Transit Mall streetscape elements to a completely new set of visual and architectural components.

STATION URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

Emphasize and facilitate the ongoing development of large buildings offering Class A office space – seek to integrate their public interfaces better with the Transit Mall elements.

Enhance the transparency of the interior spaces of existing buildings not likely to redevelop to better indicate activity within.

Provide an increased role for public realm improvements to create a good sense of street enclosure and public orientation.

Examine and encourage opportunities for redeveloping building setbacks to better support or compliment Mall functions.

Emphasize through Mall and station design, transition to Portland State University at Market Street.

STATION URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT

PUBLIC REALM

STREETSCAPE

Develop a new palette of street furniture inspired by 1960s-era minimalism (refer the South Auditorium District).

Use paving materials and patterns, especially at intersections to emphasize connections to the downtown and retail core north of Jefferson Street and strengthen links to PSU south of Jefferson.

Wrap and extend the Mall streetscape environment onto east-west opportunity

streets, to create eddies or pedestrian refuges.

Where practical, design additional sidewalk space at intersections for vendor carts.

PUBLIC ART

Promote public artworks inspired by 1960s-era minimalism or abstraction. (e.g. Noguchi, Calder, or Bourgeois).

TREES / LANDSCAPING

When planting new trees, use larger species planted closer together, especially on blocks lacking active retail uses to provide visual interest.

PRIVATE REALM

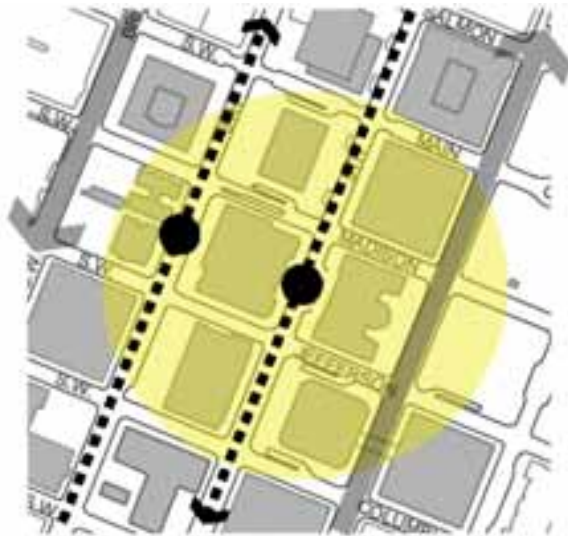
Consider alternatives for improving building setback areas to provide space for seating, vendor carts, artwork, newsstands, or other active use space.

Increase transparency to interior building spaces such as lobbies, hallways, or meeting rooms to increase visual activity.

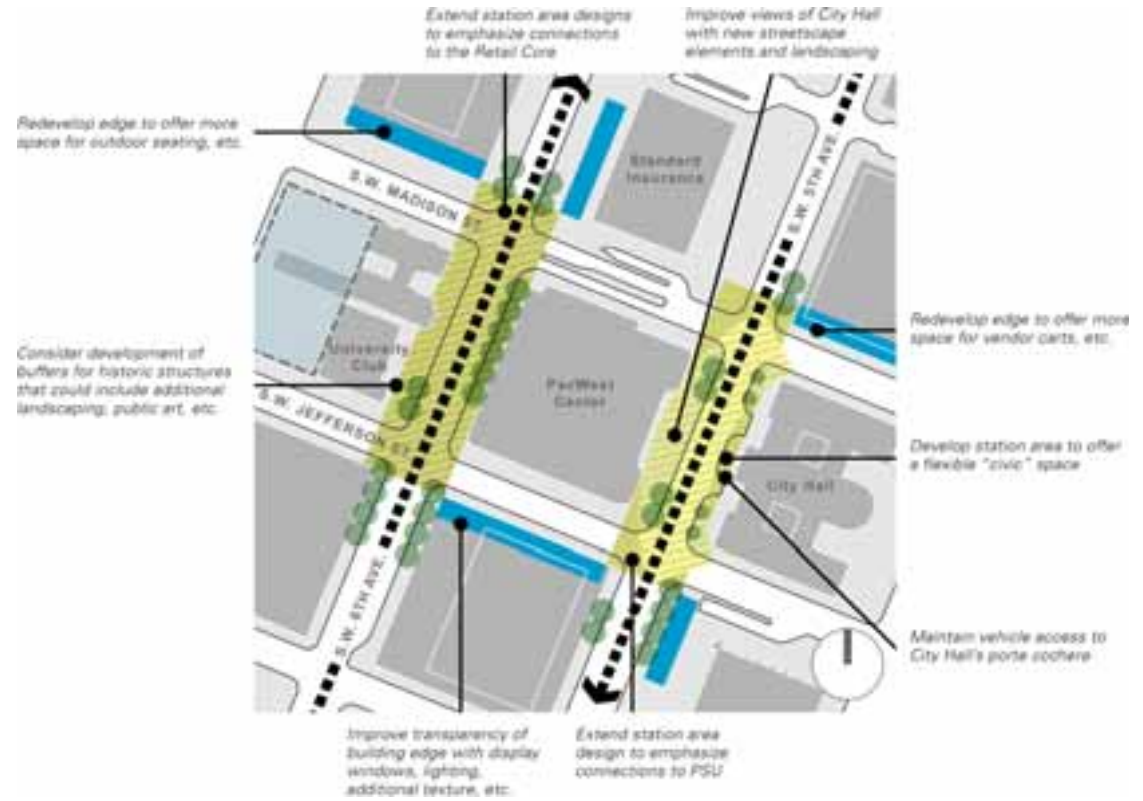
Provide opportunities for transit rider-supportive ground-floor uses other than retail, such as daycare or office related uses.

CIVIC/OFFICE/CULTURAL URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT

CIVIC/OFFICE/CULTURAL CONTEXT DIAGRAM



STATION AREA ISSUES

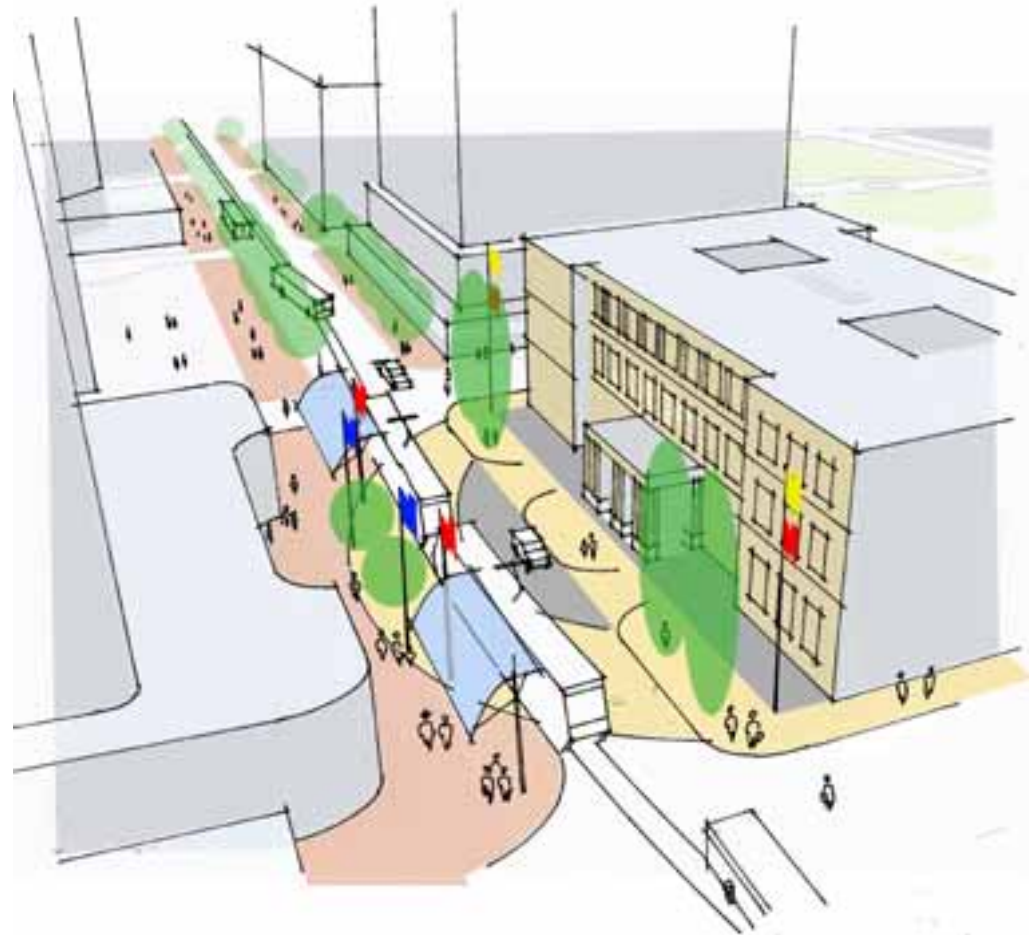




A curbless street—such as one in the Gastown District of Vancouver, BC-- adjacent to the 5th Avenue transit stop helps to spatially unite the platform area with City Hall and create a civic gathering space



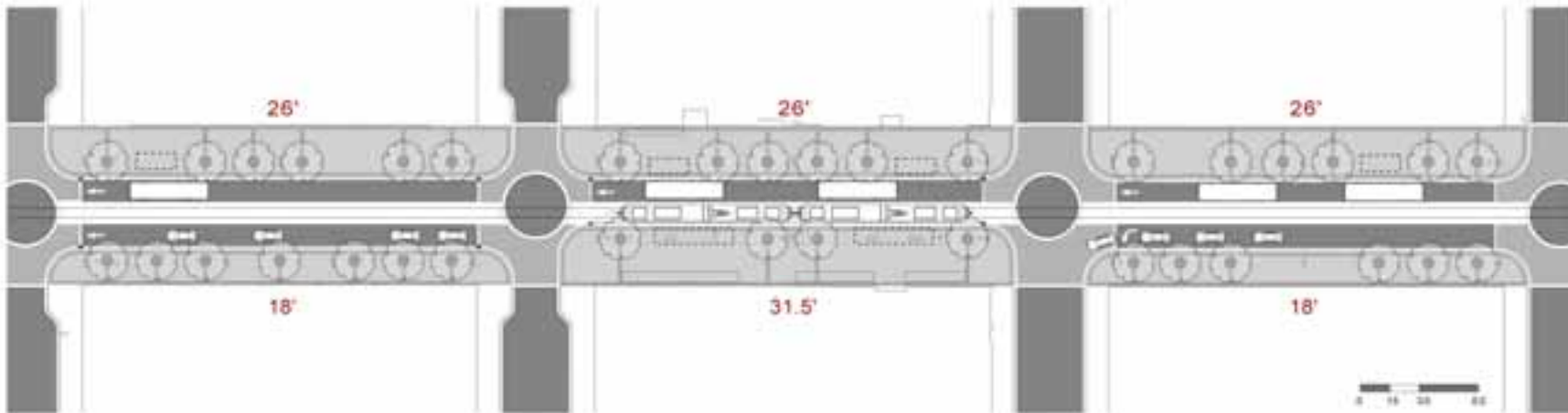
A transit shelter design such as this one in Hanover, Germany is very compatible with the architecture of the PacWest Center building adjacent to the light rail platform (source: Big Ideas, Small Buildings, by Phyllis Richardson)



View of the 5th Avenue station in front of City Hall illustrating design ideas to create a civic space by visually unifying the two side of the street with banners, street/sidewalk materials and landscape plantings.

CIVIC/OFFICE/CULTURAL URBAN ROOM ALIGNMENT COMPARISON

MADISON/JEFFERSON LEFT-SIDE ALIGNMENT



Graphic courtesy of ZGF Architects

Urban Design Pros:

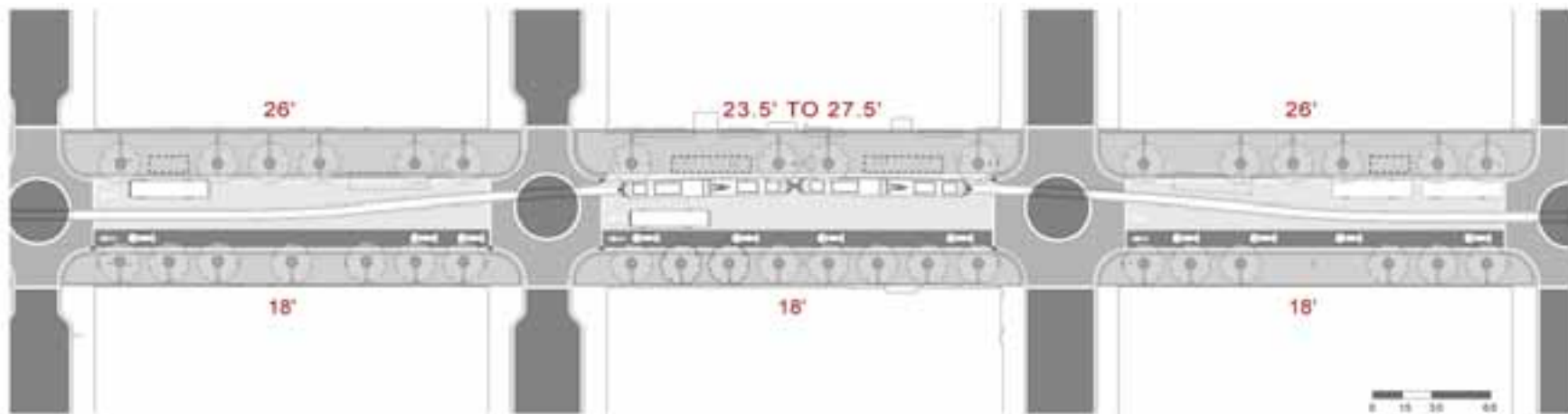
- *Transit patrons exiting the train on 5th Ave. receive an immediate frontal view of City Hall and only have to cross a single lane of traffic to access the historic building*
- *The design of the "Modified Left" platform can integrate the adjacent Porte Cochere, potentially creating a unity between the station platform and City Hall*

Urban Design Cons:

- *A standard, wide-left platform that does not allow vehicle access compromises the historic relationship between City Hall and the street in front of it and denies vehicle access to the Porte Cochere*
- *A shared-left platform forces transit users to wait on a somewhat-isolated platform in the middle of the street at all times other than the peak hour*
- *Transit riders' ability to understand the system and make easy transfers is compromised by having bus and light rail stops on opposite sides of the street*

CIVIC/OFFICE/CULTURAL URBAN ROOM ALIGNMENT COMPARISON

MADISON/JEFFERSON RIGHT-SIDE ALIGNMENT



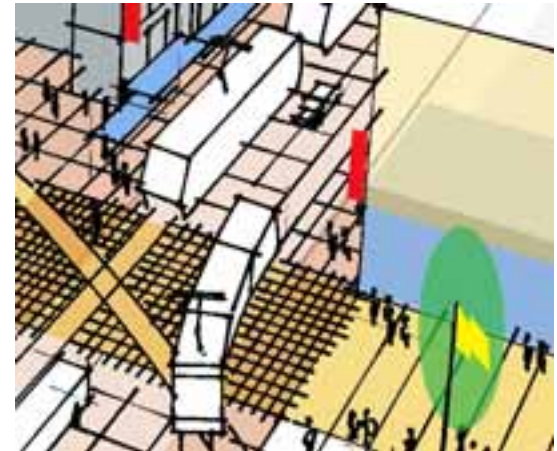
Graphic courtesy of ZGF Architects

Urban Design Pros:

- A right-side platform takes advantage of the existing mini urban plaza on 5th Ave. in front of the Pac West building
- Transit riders waiting for a train will be looking directly at historic City Hall from across 5th Avenue
- On 6th Avenue, transit riders waiting for a train will not be directly in front of a residential building, avoiding potential conflicts/complaints

Urban Design Cons:

- People hoping to access City Hall will have to cross three traffic/transit lanes to reach the building



UNIVERSITY DISTRICT URBAN ROOM & STATION

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT URBAN ROOM

EXISTING CHARACTER

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

- A relatively characterless collection of parking lots, garages, office and residential buildings from the 1960's and '70's
- Historic Catholic Church and PSU Urban Center building are the most significant works of architecture

LAND USES

- A mix of office, hotel, government, parking, educational and residential

RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

- The current center of retail concentration is the PSU Urban Center Plaza with additional retail on 6th Avenue between College and Hall Streets.

ZONING/DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

- Zoned primarily CXd, allowing a full range of uses with a few blocks zoned RXd, high-density residential, both with design review required
- FAR 6:1 and 9:1 not including bonuses
- 275' and 300" max. height north of Mill Street and 125' south of Mill Street not including bonuses

URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

REGULATORY OPPORTUNITIES

- Zoning and development standards allow for significant intensification of both density and height

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- The three underutilized blocks to the east, southeast and south of the Urban Center Plaza documented in PDC's Montgomery Blocks Redevelopment Strategy
- Full block parking lot in front of St. Mary's academy
- The proposed PCAT redevelopment and the NW and SW corners of 6th and Montgomery offer good opportunities for additional retail uses
- The demand for housing is expected to continue to grow in keeping with PSU's desire to increase residential opportunities for students, faculty and staff.

ADAPTIVE REUSE OPPORTUNITIES

- AAA building and parking lot is underutilized and likely for redevelopment
- A number of opportunities for future retail conversion on the ground floors of PSU's parking structures and facilities

STREETSCAPE OPPORTUNITIES

- Presence of streetcar line adds a unique dynamic to the life of the street

- Lack of traffic volume on southern end of 5th Avenue could present an opportunity for lane removal and/or sidewalk widening

URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

REGULATORY CONSTRAINTS

- Limitations for commercial/institutional use on the RXd-zoned parcels

DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

- No significant constraints

ADAPTIVE REUSE CONSTRAINTS

- No significant constraints

STREETSCAPE CONSTRAINTS

- Expense of improving the sidewalks to match the quality of the Transit Mall to the north
- Relative to the high-quality streetscape of the Transit Mall to the north, 5th and 6th Avenue south of Jefferson Street appear bleak
- Lack of pedestrian activity on 5th Avenue especially make the sidewalks feel desolate

UNIVERSITY/DISTRICT EXISTING CONDITIONS DIAGRAM



Edge Conditions Key:

- | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Little or No Development Potential in 20 years (Typically a IL Value >1) | Park or Landscaped Edge | Retail Entry |
| Some Development Potential in 20 years (Typically a IL Value 0.5-1) | Retail Storefronts | Building Lobby or Office Entry |
| Likely Redevelopment in 20 years (Typically a IL Value <0.5) | Partial Fenestration | Vehicle Access or Loading Dock |
| | Blank Building Wall or Surface Parking | |



PSU campus as seen from the Urban Center



PSU Urban Center Building from SW 6th Ave.



Lack of coherency along SW 5th Avenue

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT URBAN ROOM

This room links the southern end of the South Park Blocks with the South Auditorium District, offering Portland Streetcar connections to the River District, Northwest Portland, RiverPlace and South Waterfront.

The University room is defined by the pervasive presence of the Portland State University, and benefits from an increasing residential student population. The forms and characters of the buildings have not changed significantly, but the energy on the streets and sidewalks has.

The development of the Montgomery Blocks immediately south of PSU's Urban Center Plaza and Streetcar station offers a special opportunity to develop a strong link between the streetcar and light rail systems.

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT STATION AS PLACE

The station areas here offer the unique situation of light rail lines crossing streetcar lines, the only occurrence along the Transit Mall. This offers an opportunity to create a large truly integrated public space serving a high-density student population.

Station designs if properly integrated could encompass several blocks of university relate development becoming synonymous with the university.

STATION URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

Strengthen east-west connections between Portland State University and the South Auditorium District.

Encourage and facilitate a concentration of student and transit rider-supportive retail uses.

Highlight the intersection of light rail and streetcar lines.

Take advantage of redevelopment sites to expand institutional uses and residential opportunities.

Emphasize the Urban Center plaza and its extensions across to the Montgomery Block development as this room's and station area's central gathering place.

STATION URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT

PUBLIC REALM

STREETSCAPE

Wrap and extend Mall streetscape environment to adjacent streetcar stops to enhance transit connections.

Consider a unique palette of street furniture that best serves large student waiting and gathering needs that is integrated with the surrounding architecture.

Study feasibility of a signalized intersection (at least pedestrian-activated) at 4th Avenue and Montgomery.

PUBLIC ART

Promote public artworks potentially inspired by educational institutions.

TREES / LANDSCAPING

When planting new trees, use larger species planted closer together, especially on blocks lacking active retail uses to provide visual interest.

PRIVATE REALM

Work with the city to redevelop several city owned and/or controlled parcels in the vicinity.

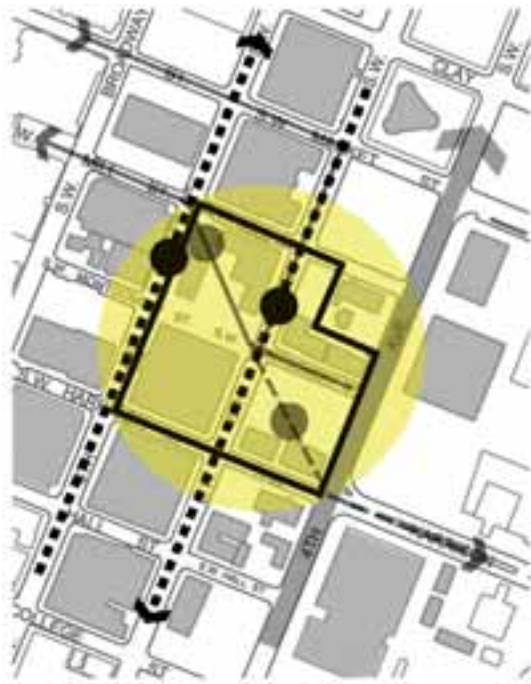
Support and facilitate the development of new high-density residential buildings within proximity to the stations.

Concentrate student-supportive retail uses around the Urban Center plaza and along 6th Avenue between Mill and Jackson Streets.

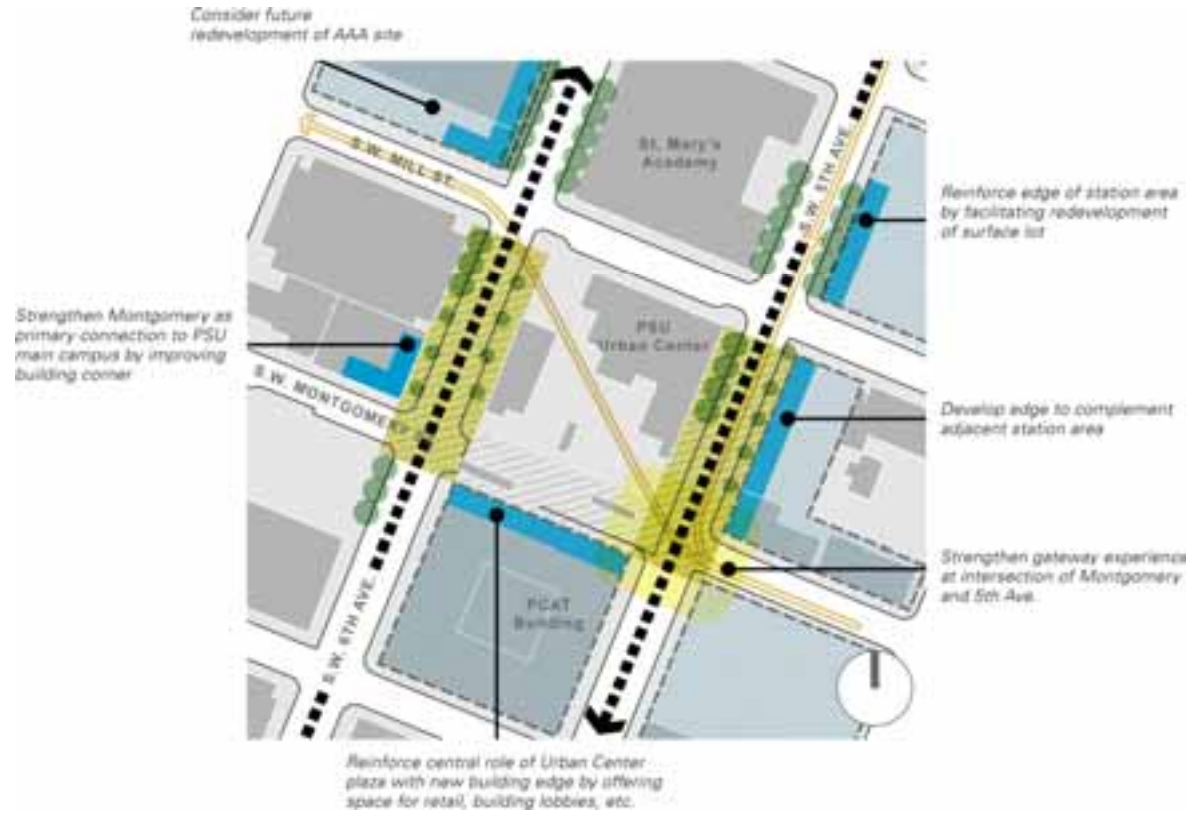
Continue to improve the ground-level transparency of parking structures and Ondine Hall along 6th Avenue (with active use spaces).

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT CONTEXT DIAGRAM



STATION AREA ISSUES

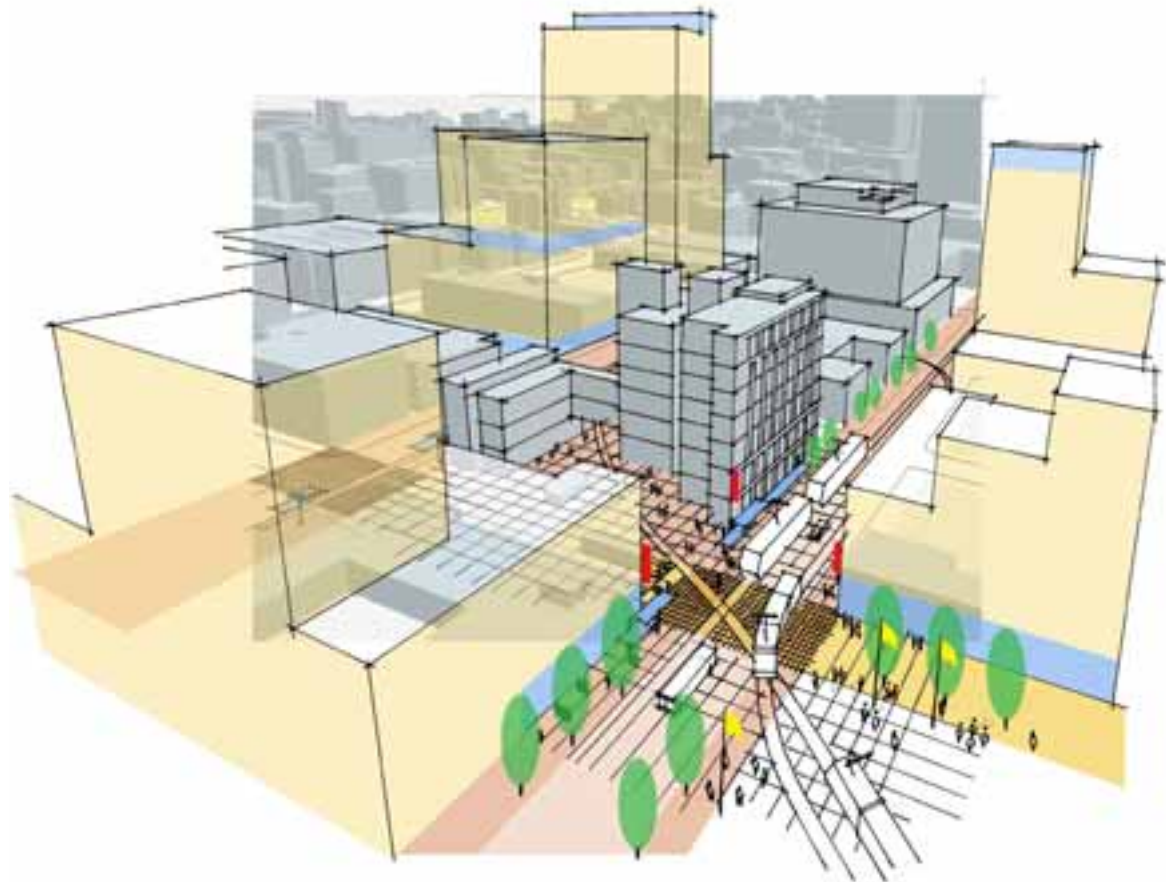




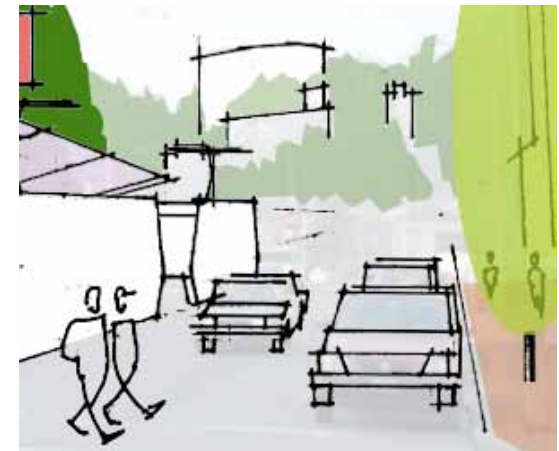
The light rail platform adjacent to the PSU Urban Center should be integrated with the building as well as the nearby streetcar stop or the American Plaza building in San Diego left (source: Murphy/Jahn Architects)



Celebrate the creative academic environment at PSU with bold and innovative transit shelter designs (source: Big Ideas, Small Buildings, by Phyllis Richardson)



View looking north along 5th Avenue, showing the potential for an active intermodal transportation hub at the PSU Urban Center. Several redevelopable parcels in the vicinity also offer designers and developers opportunities to strengthen the Urban Center plaza as the area's primary gathering place.



SOUTH TERMINUS URBAN ROOM & STATION

SOUTH TERMINUS URBAN ROOM

EXISTING CHARACTER

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

- Retail, institutional and residential buildings built in the 1960's and '70's are mixed in with vestiges of the old South Portland neighborhood (houses and three-story apartment buildings)
- Ondine Hall, the 14-story concrete housing slab, dominates the area due to its height and monolithic form
- PSU's new 10-story residential building at Broadway and Jackson will soon introduce a new scale and character to the Urban Room

LAND USES

- A mix of retail, educational, parking and residential

RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

- Active storefronts exist along two blocks of 6th Avenue between Jackson and Hall Streets
- Future development of a number of blocks along 5th Avenue will probably bring more retail to the area

ZONING/DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

- Zoned CXd, allowing a full range of uses, and RXd, high-density residential, both with design review required
- FAR 6:1 not including bonuses
- 125' max. height not including bonuses

URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

REGULATORY OPPORTUNITIES

- Zoning and development standards allow for significant intensification of both density and height

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- The demand for housing is expected to continue to grow in keeping with PSU's desire to increase residential opportunities for students, faculty and staff.
- Possible super-block development site between 4th and 5th and College and Jackson Streets

ADAPTIVE REUSE OPPORTUNITIES

- Possible upgrades of historic apartment buildings

STREETScape OPPORTUNITIES

- New light rail route will introduce much needed traffic signals at 5th/Hall, 5th/College, 5th/Jackson and 6th/Jackson

URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

REGULATORY CONSTRAINTS

- Limitations for educational uses on the RXd-zoned parcels

DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

- No significant constraints

ADAPTIVE REUSE CONSTRAINTS

- No significant constraints

STREETScape CONSTRAINTS

- Traffic volumes and speeds pick up significantly to the south ends of 5th and 6th Avenues adjacent to the freeway on and off ramps
- Expense of improving the sidewalks to match the quality of the Transit Mall to the north
- Lack of pedestrian activity on 5th Avenue especially make the sidewalks feel desolate

SOUTH TERMINUS EXISTING CONDITIONS DIAGRAM



Edge Conditions Key:

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Little or No Development Potential in 20 years (Typically a i/L Value >1) | Park or Landscaped Edge | Retail Entry |
| Some Development Potential in 20 years (Typically a i/L Value 0.5-1) | Retail Storefronts | Building Lobby or Office Entry |
| Likely Redevelopment in 20 years (Typically a i/L Value <0.5) | Partial Fenestration | Vehicle Access or Loading Dock |
| | Blank Building Wall or Surface Parking | |



SW 6th Ave. looking north from Jackson



SW 5th Ave. looking south from College



Existing stand of trees adjacent to I-405

SOUTH TERMINUS URBAN ROOM

This room serves as the entry point to the Mall for workers, students, residents and visitors arriving from destinations as far south as Milwaukee. It is at the southern end of 5th and 6th Avenues, and provides access to Portland State University, the South Auditorium District, the Lair Hill neighborhood, Terwilliger Parkway, and the West Hills.

The South Terminus is southern arrival and departure portal into downtown Portland. Combinations of dense landscape plantings, public art, and buildings offer opportunities to form expressive portals through which transit service enters or exits downtown.

SOUTH TERMINUS STATION AS PLACE

The station area on 6th Avenue will serve as the southern portal and gateway into downtown Portland. The adjacent turnaround site also offers a special opportunity to build upon an existing landscaped quality and create a densely planted transition zone. This zone could be reflective of the environment buffering the city and part of a potential “journey” along the Transit Mall.

Unlike the North Terminus, which is defined by Union Station, this end of the Mall can emphasize a transition from concentrated urban development to areas with greater integration with the natural landscape.

STATION URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

Design station to anticipate a future light rail extension south to Milwaukee.

Develop this room and associated stations as a “gateway” to and from downtown Portland.

Strengthen pedestrian connections across the I-405 Freeway to provide better pedestrian access to northern portions of the Lair Hill neighborhood.

Emphasize the proximity of the forested West Hills and access to Terwilliger Parkway.

STATION URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT

PUBLIC REALM

STREETSCAPE

Augment the palette of streetscape elements from adjacent northern rooms with more prominent “gateway” elements. (light rail transit/bus shelters, tree clusters, etc.).

Study the feasibility of developing a cover to I-405 to provide stronger link to Corbett-Terwilliger-Lair Hill.

Consider a new traffic signal at the intersection of 4th and College.

PUBLIC ART

Promote public artworks inspired by gateways, portals, and or native landscapes. (see Saarinen, Olmstead, Christo, Oldenburg)

TREES / LANDSCAPING

Develop a landscape-plantings palette (including trees) using the forests of the West Hills as inspiration.

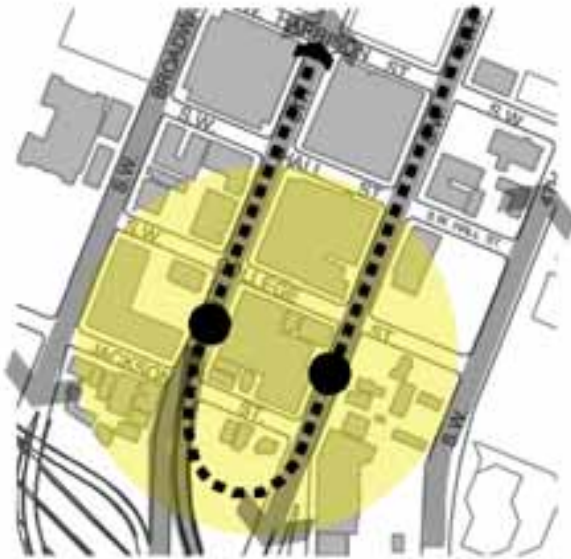
PRIVATE REALM

Study opportunities for the “gateway” redevelopment of large block roughly bounded by Lincoln, College, 4th and 5th, in conjunction with the turnaround project.

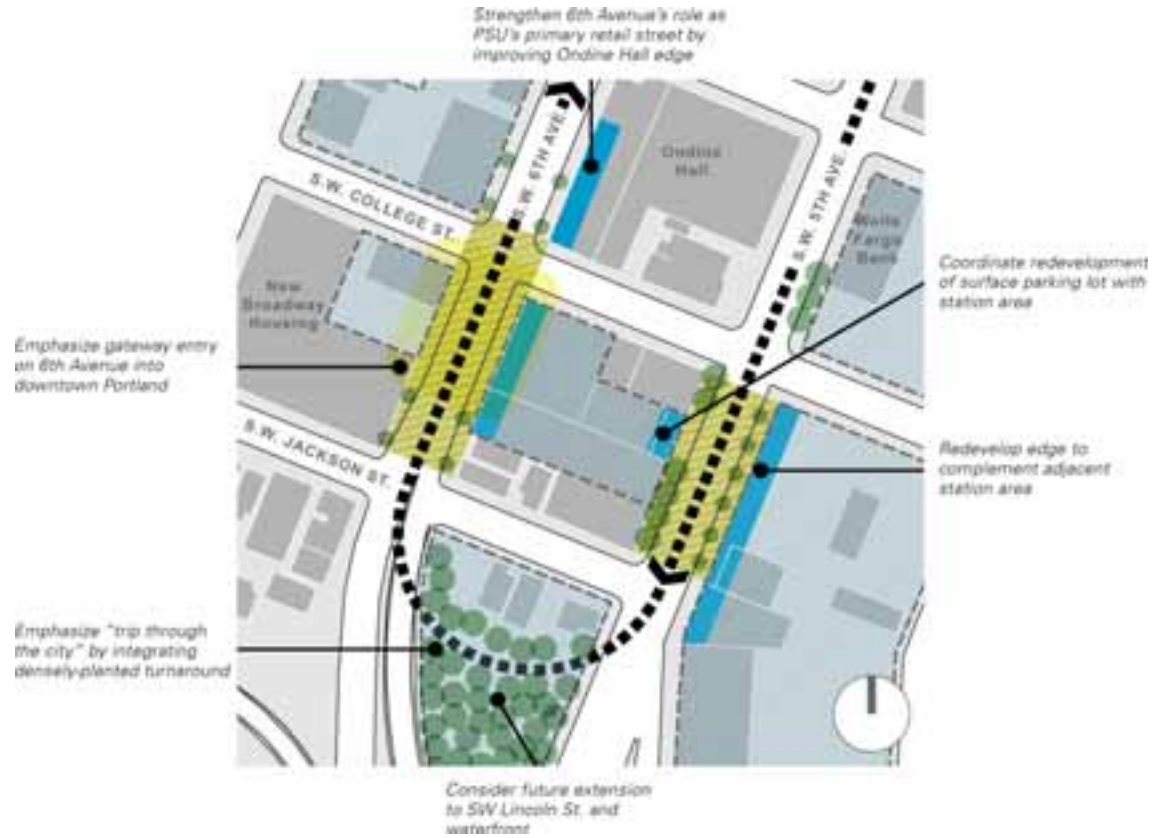
Consider different mitigation approaches to address proximity of I-405 Freeway (noise and emissions).

SOUTH TERMINUS URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT

SOUTH TERMINUS CONTEXT DIAGRAM



STATION AREA ISSUES





View looking south on 6th Avenue from SW College Street, showing new, “gateway” development projects on the underutilized blocks to the east and west of the platform

Highlight the light rail turnaround south of Jackson St. as the prime gateway into and out of downtown by including a large and dramatic work of public art similar to the Oldenburg at the SF waterfront (top, source: SF Chronicle Newspaper) or the Dubuffet sculpture in Manhattan (above, source: Fundamentals of Urban Design, Richard Hedman)

CHAPTER SIX

INFORMING TRANSIT MALL DECISIONS



A. INFORMING CURRENT MALL DECISIONS

This report is designed to provide the background analysis and a vision for what a new Transit Mall that incorporates light rail must accomplish. It is intended to be a useful reference to future decisions regardless of shifts in thinking or transit development options as they get refined.

There are three prevailing station alignment alternatives currently being considered. From an urban design point of view, the island platform has the net impact of Balkanizing pedestrian movement intensity away from the edges where activity is most desirable. Identifying a preferred choice between the remaining left and right side station alignments varies by location.

As previously mentioned, station locations as shown in this study have been determined by transit considerations. From a transit performance consideration, left side station alignments have been determined to be most optimal. The locations of stations as shown in this analysis thus work best with a left side alignment.

However, if transit operational issues for stations become more surmountable, urban design goals may be able to exert greater influence in determining desirable station locations. If the urban design vision of the "station as place" does become a major determinant to location, then the nature of the place would have significant bearing on which alignment option would be best suited. Clearly, such an approach would need also need to work from a transit perspective, but the willingness to strive for such a balance becomes a significant prerequisite.

Finally, while this analysis and vision does not directly address the issue of providing a continuous auto lane, it should be noted that there is inconclusive evidence of any added urban design value on the Mall itself.

B. INFORMING FUTURE MALL DECISIONS

Cities are not static entities. They change and evolve as their culture does.

The introduction of light rail to the Mall constitutes such a dramatic change. Clearly, patching the light rail into the current structure hoping it will succeed is an inadequate approach. This is a unique opportunity to build upon the Mall's current success and accumulated needs.

It is hoped that the analysis in this document will provide the basis for informed future decisions. The future vision of urban rooms and of strategically located stations is rooted in the desire to accommodate adaptability and responsiveness to change while ensuring unambiguous design and character. The Transit Mall needs to retain its status as an enduring city icon and amenity.

