

# Portland, Oregon Transportation Fact Sheet

## Basic Facts:

- ✓ Current metro area population is approximately 1.5 million.
- ✓ Downtown Portland is roughly 652 acres.
- ✓ Downtown population, including the River District and the Pearl District is approximately 20,000; downtown employment is approximately 82,750.
- ✓ Portland has 17,350,000 square feet of office space downtown.<sup>1</sup>

## Land Use Controls:

- ✓ All new development and significant renovations must be reviewed for design by the planning department.
- ✓ Density is controlled through the use of floor area ratios (the ratio of the site square footage to the gross building square footage) and height restrictions. Floor area ratios in the CBD range from 6.0 to 15.0. Base permitted heights range from 35' along the Willamette River to 460' within the financial district.
- ✓ FAR bonuses and height increases are used to encourage and lock-in desirable uses in specific locations. Bonuses are granted within specified areas for the inclusion of residences (1.5 additional square feet to 1 square foot developed in a residential use), retail (0.5 to 1), day care facilities (3 to 1), rooftop gardens (1 to 1), including a theatre on Broadway (2 to 1), 1% of construction budget devoted to public art (+1 times site area), bicycle locker rooms (40 to 1), underground parking (2 to 1), donation to the Affordable Housing Replacement Fund (+2 square feet for every \$10 in 1990 dollars contributed), publicly accessible open space (1 to 1), etc. Height increases are scaled to floor area bonuses with a floor area increase of 1 permitting a height increase of 15 feet. However, if the additional floor area is used for housing, up to 75 feet of additional height may be permitted (thus encouraging upper floor setbacks to maximize light, air, and views).
- ✓ Allowed floor area may be sold to other property owners if the originating owner is preserving an historic structure, preserving an existing housing development, or dedicating a park to the city.
- ✓ Obtaining approval for a parcel master plan allows an owner to reallocate floor area on a larger parcel.
- ✓ Some areas of downtown require housing as part of new development.
- ✓ Most areas of downtown require that 75% of the building frontage be at least 15' tall and within 12' of the property line. Any set-back areas must be developed as useable sidewalk space.
- ✓ Some areas of downtown require that ground floors be constructed to accommodate active uses. These areas include the downtown retail district as well as the streetcar corridor.
- ✓ Drive through facilities are prohibited.

## Parking:

- ✓ 4% of downtown employees carpool to work and 48% drive alone.
- ✓ All on-street parking downtown is metered.
  - \* There are 6,215 on-street parking spaces.
  - \* There is one parking meter per 200 foot block face. The meters produce a receipt which is put on the dashboard to verify payment. Payment receipt can be used at another parking space until time expires.
  - \* Meters operate from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday.
  - \* Meters accept SmartMeter Parking Cards (refillable debit cards) and cash.
  - \* Meter parking costs \$1.25 per hour.

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<sup>1</sup> Grubb & Ellis Company, Research Reports at [www.grubb-ellis.com](http://www.grubb-ellis.com)

- ✓ Portland has 35,650 off-street parking stalls. 12% (4,200 stalls) of the off-street parking is in seven publicly owned parking structures which are located to support downtown retail. They operate under the SmartPark moniker.
  - \* Parking rates in the public structures are the same as on-street parking. Rates are higher for people who stay more than four hours. The SmartPark garages accept payment in cash, validations, and credit cards.
  - \* Over 700 businesses provide validations for the public parking structures. A 2-hour validation is offered for a minimum \$25 purchase. For each validation, SmartPark charges the business \$2.50.
  - \* Beginning in the 1970's, public parking garages were built using bonds secured by the meter revenue downtown.
  - \* The public garages offer limited monthly parking as needed to operate at 90% occupancy during the peak. Monthly parking is provided to carpools at a reduced rate. Disabled patrons are provided free parking in the publicly owned garages. (There are no on-street disabled parking stalls.)
- ✓ Zoning recognizes several different parking types each with its own criteria, restrictions and regulations. These types include: new parking related to new commercial floor area; existing parking serving existing uses; non-affiliated visitor parking; residential/hotel parking; other parking not associated with a particular development. In general, new parking to serve auto commuters has low maximums permitted and new visitor/short-term parking is allowed only if a demand analysis identifies a need within specific activity areas.
- ✓ Zoning imposes parking maximums on all development downtown:
  - \* Office—0.7 to 0.8/1,000 sf in commercial core; 1.0 to 2.0/1,000 sf in residential mixed-use area
  - \* Retail—1.0/1,000 sf in commercial core; 1.0 to 2.0/1,000 sf in residential mixed-use area
  - \* Residential—1.35 to 1.7/unit depending on location
- ✓ Surface parking lots are limited in size and forbidden adjacent to a light rail corridor
- ✓ All parking within the CBD must provide annual reports to the city's parking coordinator indicating hours of operation and number and percentage of stalls for short-term, long-term daily, monthly, and carpool parking.

**Streets:**

- ✓ Streets are 64' wide.
- ✓ Most downtown streets are one-way.
- ✓ In the Central City transportation plan, each street is given a classification in each of the following categories:
 

* Traffic	* Transit	* Bicycle	* Pedestrian Character
* Freight	* Emergency Response	* Urban Design Character	

**Pedestrian Environment:**

- ✓ 4% of downtown employees walk to work.<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ The downtown blocks are 200 feet on a side.
- ✓ In the 1970's, Portland eliminated a freeway along the waterfront and created the Tom McCall Waterfront Park, a significant pedestrian corridor.
- ✓ Portland's approach to pedestrian street life has been multi-pronged since the 1970's:
  - \* Design review for private investment that guides what happens at the pedestrian scale

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<sup>2</sup> 2005 Downtown Portland Business Census and Survey, Portland Business Alliance, 2005.

- \* Zoning that addresses how the building meets the street; first floor uses in buildings by district, with a “retail core” district delineated; and spacing of parking garage entrances, among other concepts
- \* Investment in the public pedestrian environment
- ✓ Portland adopted a city-wide pedestrian master plan and pedestrian design guidelines in 1998 and created a pedestrian planner position in 2000.
- ✓ The design guidelines identify four sidewalk zones:
  - \* Frontage Zone, next to the building
  - \* Through Pedestrian Zone
  - \* Furnishings Zone
  - \* Curb Zone, next to the street

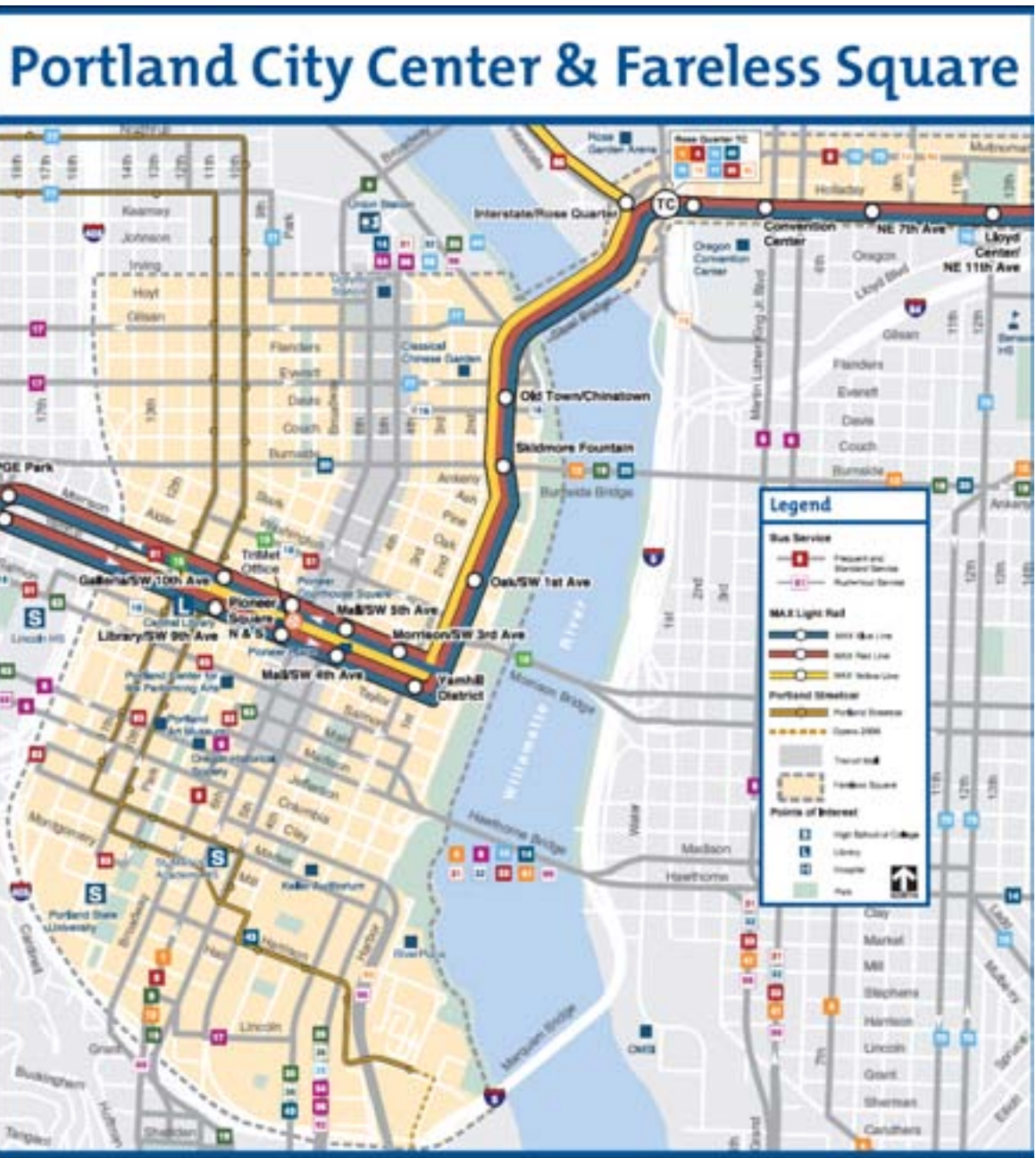
#### **Bicycle Environment:**

- ✓ 6% of downtown employees bike to work.<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ Portland first adopted a Bicycle Master Plan in the 1970's.
- ✓ The bike network in downtown Portland includes on-street bike lanes on a few streets with several other streets designated as “connecting streets.”
- ✓ The City of Portland installs free bike racks in front of businesses if requested to do so by the owner or bicyclists. To date, Portland has installed 2,000 bike racks, city-wide.
- ✓ The City rents a number of keyed, bicycle lockers downtown at a cost of \$25 for 3 months.
- ✓ Bicycle Central is a public/private partnership that arranges shower use for bicyclists on either a membership or pay-as-you-go basis with an athletic club downtown
- ✓ The zoning code includes bicycle parking requirements. There is a height bonus for developments that provide extra long-term bike parking and showers. New developments of more than 100,000 square feet must include locker rooms for bicyclists.
- ✓ The City provides extensive signage showing how bikes and motorists should interact in the shared street areas.

#### **Transit and Downtown Circulation:**

- ✓ 38% of commuters access downtown on transit.<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ In 1977, Portland introduced an 11 block (≈3,000 feet) bus Transit Mall on SW 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets to facilitate bus transfers. It was later extended to the north to the Greyhound Terminal and historic Union Station.
  - \* Bus routes are clustered into six groups according to the direction of the route after it leaves the Transit Mall (N, NE, S, SE, SW, W). Buses stop every other block at the stop for the cluster that includes the route.
  - \* All buses that serve downtown are on a five block section of the Transit Mall.
  - \* Some portions of the Transit Mall currently permit one lane of auto traffic for a one to three block segment.
  - \* The new MAX Light Rail line serving the Northwest portion of the City will come through downtown on the Transit Mall. When the construction is complete the Transit Mall streets will include MAX Light Rail, buses, and one lane of through auto traffic.
- ✓ The MAX Light Rail system crosses the Transit Mall in the center of downtown.
  - \* The MAX Light Rail/Transit Mall intersection is the retail center. Department stores within one block of the transit intersection include Nordstrom's, Meier & Frank, and Saks Fifth Avenue.

- \* The existing MAX Light Rail system has four segments, serving the western suburbs, the eastern suburbs, the neighborhoods of North Portland (poised to continue on at some point to Vancouver, Washington), and an airport line.
- \* Another set of projects, a line to serve the southeastern suburbs and a downtown north-south loop along the Transit Mall, are now going into construction..
- ✓ In 1995, the City of Portland created Portland Streetcar Incorporated, a not-for-profit corporation, to design, build and operate a rail transit connection between two up and coming new downtown residential neighborhoods (the Pearl District and the River District), major health facilities close to downtown but not within the downtown core (Good Samaritan Hospital and Oregon Health & Science University and Medical Center), and Portland State University.
  - \* The Streetcar parallels the Transit Mall on SW 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Streets and crosses the MAX Light Rail lines on the west side of downtown.
  - \* The Streetcar runs in mixed traffic at 13 to 20 minute headways (depending on the time of day). Daily weekday ridership is now nearing 10,000 per day.
  - \* Zoning for residential development in the Pearl District had increasing minimum building sizes as Streetcar construction progressed.
- ✓ All types of transit are free within Fareless Square downtown. All riders must board buses through the front doors in Fareless Square. TriMet agreed to provide Fareless Square in exchange for Portland placing price and quantity controls on downtown parking, thus allowing greater development density in the downtown core. The parking controls included:
  - \* A cap on the total amount of parking available in the downtown area, with no minimum parking requirements for individual developments (through 1995).
  - \* Metering all on-street parking.
  - \* All public and private parking garages open to the public are pay-to-park.
  - \* Fareless Square is Zone 1 in TriMet's three zone service area. In all zones, all passengers must enter the bus through the front door.
- ✓ All transit vehicles are accessible to the disabled.
  - \* Disabled passengers can obtain an "Honored Citizen" card which makes them eligible for discounted fares on regular transit service.
  - \* Bus operators announce major stops and transfer points; automated announcement system on rail announces all stops.



Source for Graphic: TriMet Website