

## Snapshots

### Timeline

**1994** Portland City Council adopts the Central City Streetcar alignment

**1995** Portland Streetcar, Inc., is formed and chosen by the Portland City Council to lead the project

**June 1998** TriMet's Board of Directors approves funding for a portion of Portland Streetcar's operating costs—eventually agreeing to contribute up to two-thirds of the cost.

**1999** Construction begins

**July 20, 2001** Streetcars opens

**March 2005, October 2006 and August 2007** Streetcar extensions open

**August 2009** Construction begins on Portland Streetcar Loop Project

**October 2009** FTA signs Project Grant Agreement for \$75 million for the Loop Project.

### Facilities

**Length** 4 miles end to end or 8 miles roundtrip

**Stations** 46 platform stops

**Maintenance facility** Car barn at 1516 NW Northrup

### Annual ridership

**First year (FY02)** 1,365,000

**Second year (FY03)** 1,654,000

**Eighth Year (FY09)** 4,000,000

### Hours

**Monday–Friday** 5:30 a.m.–11:30 p.m.

**Saturdays** 7:15 a.m. – 11:30 p.m.

**Sundays** 7:15 a.m.–10:30 p.m.

### Frequency

**Weekdays** Every 12 minutes from 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., with morning and evening service every 15–20 minutes

**Saturdays** Every 12 minutes, 10:30 a.m.–7 p.m., with morning and evening service every 15–20 minutes

**Sundays** Every 14 minutes to 7 p.m. with evening service 20–24 minutes

### Travel Times

**60–70 minutes** Portland Streetcar does not stop at every station automatically—only when a passenger is waiting or if an onboard passenger signals a stop request.

For Streetcar transfer & Transit Tracker information call:  
503-238-RIDE (7433)  
TTY 503-238-5811



**Portland  
Streetcar**

[www.portlandstreetcar.org](http://www.portlandstreetcar.org)

## Portland Streetcar

*Modern streetcars returned to North America after nearly a half-century with the Portland Streetcar project in 2001. Serving as a catalyst for \$3.5 billion in transit-oriented investment, Streetcar has helped revitalize Portland's urban core with over 10,212 new housing units and more than 5.5 million square feet of office, institutional, retail and hotel construction, all within 2-3 blocks of the streetcar route and in some areas that were formerly home to industrial land in decline.*

### Background

Much of Portland's early development grew up around its original streetcar lines. By the 1950s the streetcar had disappeared from Portland, replaced by automobiles and buses.

Reviving the streetcars was first proposed in the 1972 "Downtown Plan," which called for a "supplemental transit circulator" to serve larger areas of the central city.

The "Central City Plan" evolved in the mid-1980s. It advocated for stimulating the city center by increasing jobs and housing in the downtown core while reducing traffic to less dense adjacent neighborhoods. Once again, a transit circulator was proposed, this time to augment bus and light rail service downtown. In 1994 the City Council adopted a streetcar alignment running from northwest Portland through downtown and Portland State University (PSU) to the Johns Landing area. By 1997, a funding plan had been developed and design work began on a shortened alignment ending at PSU. The first modern streetcar system in North America opened on July 20, 2001.

A 0.6-mile RiverPlace extension of the Portland Streetcar opened in March of 2005, followed by a 0.6-mile Gibbs extension in October of 2006 and a 0.4-mile Lowell extension into

the South Waterfront District in August 2007. The South Waterfront District extension offers a convenient connection with the Portland Aerial Tram and a possible future extension to Lake Oswego.

In August, 2009, construction began on the Portland Streetcar Loop Project. The Loop is a 3.3 mile extension of streetcar connecting the downtown alignment across the Broadway Bridge to the east side of Portland and south to OMSI. Future plans include closing the Loop south of OMSI via a planned Transit bridge.



## Design and construction highlights

### Contracted service

In 1995, the City of Portland contracted Portland Streetcar, Inc. (PSI), a single-purpose, nonprofit company to help the City design, manage construction and operate the Streetcar project. PSI consists of a group of interested citizens and property owners along the alignment.

### Design specs

- Portland Streetcar generally runs on either two-way streets or on opposite one-way streets, with a single track on each street.
- Track is paved throughout with a shallow section girder rail encased in a rubber boot that is set in a reinforced concrete pavement slab eight feet wide and 14 inches thick.
- Track and power systems are generally compatible with the light rail system so major maintenance can be done in TriMet's maintenance facilities.

### Fitting into its surroundings

A design priority for the Portland Streetcar alignment was that it preserve the integrity of the neighborhoods it runs through. As a result, the Portland Streetcar fits the scale and traffic patterns of its surroundings:

- Shelters are small and fit within the neighborhood's architecture.
- Most of the Portland Streetcar's alignment is shared with other traffic, and as a result the Streetcar can preempt traffic signals in only a few places.
- To the extent possible, the trackway conforms to existing street grades.
- Stops are placed every two or three blocks with a low platform extension from the

street curb.

- Streetcars have low floors for wheelchair accessibility and are air-conditioned.
- Except at platforms, the Portland Streetcar's alignment maintained existing curbside parking and loading.

### Minimizing construction impacts

With much of construction occurring in Portland's city center and densely populated neighborhoods, minimizing construction impacts along the entire line proved especially important. Street construction was confined to the trackway itself and adjacent parking to minimize disruption to traffic and businesses. The construction activity was also sequenced so that track could be paved with a single pour, reducing the time needed to construct each segment.

## Technical highlights

### Vehicles

In 1999, streetcars from Inekon-Skoda in the Czech Republic were ordered. They are 66-foot-long, four-axle, double articulated cars with low floors for accessible boarding. Streetcars use basically the same technology as light rail, but are smaller to fit into an urban landscape. A car barn for storage and daily maintenance was constructed under the I-405 Freeway. The system currently has 10 streetcars.



With the construction of the Loop Project, Portland Streetcar will be purchasing six new vehicles. These vehicles will be manufactured by United Streetcar located in Clackamas, Oregon.

### Fares

Portland Streetcar honors all valid TriMet tickets & passes and Portland Aerial Tram annual passes. TriMet and Streetcar fares are valid all day on Streetcar. Tickets sold onboard Streetcar are valid on TriMet for two hours. The annual Streetcar-Only pass is available at TriMet's Ticket Office, the PSU Information Office at the Urban Plaza, Umpqua Bank at South Waterfront and at Streetcar's maintenance facility. Streetcar-Only annual passes can be purchased online at [Portlandstreetcar.org](http://Portlandstreetcar.org). Streetcar service is free in Fareless Square.

### Transit-oriented development

The Portland Streetcar is part of the City's growth management strategy and travels through the heart of the Pearl District—the gem of pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented development in the region. Since 1997, over \$3.5 billion has been invested near the Streetcar line, including over 10,212 new housing units and more than 5.5 million square feet of office, institutional, retail and hotel construction—all within 2-3 blocks of the Streetcar route, formerly home to mostly decaying industrial buildings adjacent to the downtown core. New parks, employment and retail have made the Pearl a major destination and key source of rides for Portland Streetcar.

### South Waterfront development strategy



The extension of streetcar into the heart of the South Waterfront District is an integral part of the North Macadam Urban Renewal Plan adopted by the Portland City Council in 1999. The district

has approximately 130 acres of land, much of which is in the development process.

Streetcar is seen as a key catalyst to the development of housing, neighborhood retail and office space with plans calling for 10,000 new jobs and 5,000 housing units.



### Funding

The total capital project cost to date for Portland Streetcar is \$103 million. The principal funding sources included revenues from City-owned parking facilities, a local improvement district, tax increment financing, City transportation and general fund. Average cost of construction (4.0 miles end to end, double track) was \$12.9 million

The Portland Streetcar Loop project, which is currently under construction, adds \$148 million to the total capital project cost. The principal funding sources for this extension include \$75 million from the FTA, \$20 million from the State of Oregon with the remainder from local sources similar to those on earlier construction.