Transportation is about Places," according to the Project for Public Spaces and Portland's MAX Light Rail is about just that – places. The success of the MAX Light Rail is the combined efforts of a public oriented planning process, pedestrian oriented design, and recognizing the linkages between land and transportation during the implementation phases. The Pioneer Courthouse Square Stations are situated on the northeast (serving eastbound trains) and southwest corners (serving westbound trains) of the Square at @ S.W. Yamhill & S.W. Sixth Avenue (Stop ID 8334) and @ S.W. Morrison & Broadway (Stop ID 8383). These stations are 2 of 64 stations distributed along 44 miles of tracks and 3 train lines.

The Square, often cited as Portland's Living Room (1), is a downtown focal point, located at 612 S.W. Sixth Avenue host to major civic events, and a lively meeting and gathering place. Formerly the site of the Portland Hotel then converted to a 2-story parking garage by landowners Julius Meier and Aaron Frank (owners of Meier and Frank Department Store) the final redevelopment into a public square was driven by the Downtown Committee, a group of local business people, and the City Council's approval of the square in central downtown Portland in December 1972 (2). This decision to develop a public square comprised of one city block marked the beginning of a more vibrant and active downtown. The Courthouse Square was completed in 1984, in close relation to the opening of the MAX Light Rail system. Since the Courthouse Square and MAX Light Rail system openings, Portland has become a well recognized site for successful transportation improvement projects.
Planning Approach
The process of creating Pioneer Courthouse Square - the public debates, the fundraising, the grand opening - was designed to involve Portland's residents. Planning of the Courthouse Square was concurrent with the new MAX light rail system. The idea for a public square in Portland's downtown dates back to the 1950s. With the opening of the light rail system in 1986, Pioneer Courthouse Square became both the a central attraction and the bustling hub of transit for buses and light rail, as well as the main information center for Tri-Met, the tri-county transportation agency established in 1969 (3).

Design Features
Interaction is a main feature of the Courthouse Square. There are 12 features of the Square that make it a destination, an attraction, a facility for movement. Opportunities for watching, resting, playing, and gathering exist. There are public art displays, amenities, flowers, trees, walls, and stairs that allow people to engage and use the space. The Courthouse Square is also the scene of frequent public events, includes a coffee shop, food vendors, and information services for Tri-Met. It is designed to attract many different types of people for an array of reasons to use the Square.

Examples of amenities in the Square include:

a. Seward Johnson's *Allow Me* aka *Umbrella Man statue*, most recognized

b. Chessboards, added June 2003 and designed by Soderstrom Architects P.C.

c. Echo Chamber, a small amphitheatre that invites interaction

d. Mile Post Sign, distances to 9 sister-cities & other geographical destinations

e. Portland Hotel Gate, wrought iron gate & fence placed exactly where it once stood at the original hotel entry

f. Waterfall fountain, marks visitor information entrance

g. Keystone Lectern, offers best vantage point of the Square & designed as a focal speaking point for public gathering

h. Weather Machine, designed by Omen Design Group Inc. Each day at noon, the day’s weather is forecasted by a Helia, Blue Heron, or a Dragon to indicate sunny clear days, drizzle, or stormy weather with heavy rains and wind

i. Visitors Center, entrance is crated by the Waterfall fountain (4)
PIONEER COURTHOUSE SQUARE, INC.
715 S.W. Morrison Street, Ste. 702   Portland, OR 97205       Phone: (503) 223-1613      Fax: (503) 222-7425

G R O U N D S  M A P

1. Bronze Man With Umbrella
2. Bronze Chess Boards
3. Echo Chamber
4. Historic Tiles
5. Mile Post Sign
6. Named Bricks
7. Portland Hotel Gate
8. Waterfall Fountain
10. Weather Machine
11. Visitor’s Association*
12. TriMet*
13. Theatre on the Square*
14. Starbucks Coffee
15. Bank of America ATM

* Accessible via the Information Lobby or southeast entrance next to Powell’s Travel Store
Implementation

Tri-Met has a running history in joint development projects and has hired a joint development specialist to negotiate and craft successful public-private arrangements, one factor supporting the concurrent development and sustainability of their transit projects.

To attract riders and users of the transit, certain public facility magnets such as government office buildings and regional attractions were strategically located at or near MAX stations (e.g. Garden Sports Arena, Oregon Convention Center).

For the original opening of the MAX system, station area planning and investing in amenities for pedestrians that are not directly linked to rail infrastructure. Other tools used by Tri-Met for future development of the MAX system include station area planning, non-rail infrastructure investments that improve access and amenities for pedestrians, parking management and shared parking, zoning and rezoning, expedited permits and reviews, and direct public investment in projects.

Station area planning benefited from the link of Tri-Met to other regional plans and planning efforts, including the Metro regional government’s 2040 plan, the Regional Transportation Plan, and the LUTRAQ (land use, transportation, and air quality) project that the non-profit, 1000 Friends of Oregon sponsored (5).
“Transportation is about Places.” - Project for Public Spaces

Evaluation

Successes
(1) Accessible
   transit hub links light rail/bus lines
(2) Multifunctional
   resting, drinking, eating, meeting, playing, information gathering (photo D)
(3) Flexible usage
   seasonal activities (e.g. Christmas, markets, Thanksgiving events, sports-related events)(photo E,F)
   Multi-purpose destination (e.g. Tri-Met information center, Visitor’s Center, Starbucks, transportation link, people watching)
(4) Gathering people
   chess boards, space is host to public events, bounded by bus and LTR
(5) Opportunities to interact with space
   public art & detail design (e.g. sculptures, names of donors on bricks, water fountain, Starbucks, Tri-Met information center, visitor’s center, elevated areas/layered square)(photo G)
(6) Coordinated pavement materials, linking pedestrian street and intersections (photo H)

Critiques
(1) Experiences of feeling exposed(photo I)
(2) No protection against inclement weather (e.g. sun, rain)
(3) Traffic noises infiltrate the square
(4) Transients and homeless wandering through the area

Pioneer Courthouse Square is hands down a highly successful public space development, moreover redevelopment. The coordination of the Courthouse Square with the MAX system and public bus services provided a cornerstone for success. Activities were programmed for the square, namely activities that drew a diverse group of people for a multiplicity of reasons to enter, pass through, use, and occupy the Courthouse Square and the MAX system. Although there some locals criticize the Square for being too open and too inviting, to all persons, including socially undesirables, others cite the openness as a welcomed surprise in the middle of a built up urban environment.
References
(2) http://www.pdx.edu/usp/pioneer_square.html
(3) Tri-Met, www.trimet.org
(5) http://www.ulisacramento.org/documents/tod/5.Project%20Profiles/CaseStudies/Portland_MAX.pdf

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(F) http://www.yelp.com/biz_photos/_M4jmbS0zk3P9qf90sziTA?select=Ifg3DrbtsdJWcw9G2-TJTg
(G) http://www.yelp.com/biz_photos/_M4jmbS0zk3P9qf90sziTA?select=mft74qrsVQMdhJI8-IVeakQ
(H) http://www.yelp.com/biz_photos/_M4jmbS0zk3P9qf90sziTA?select=4YWmXudW_nU7UpdyzhhP_Q
(I) http://www.yelp.com/biz_photos/_M4jmbS0zk3P9qf90sziTA?select=4YWmXudW_nU7UpdyzhhP_Q