



## Design Commission Briefing

### SUMMARY MEMO

**Date:** June 30, 2025  
**To:** Portland Design Commission  
**From:** Tim Heron, Design / Historic Review Team  
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**Re:** June 5, 2025 BRIEFING – TriMet Light Rail Substation Replacements in the Central City

This summary memo is regarding the June 5, 2025 Briefing - TriMet Light Rail Substation Replacements in the Central City. All documents may be found here: [June 5, 2025 Design Commission BRIEFING – TriMet Light Rail Substation Replacements in the Central City](#) and includes presentation slides, Staff Memo and Zoom Webinar recording.

**Commissioners in attendance on June 5, 2025:** Chandra Robinson, Zari Santner, Tina Bue, Sarah Vaz, Joe Swank, Thomas Eldridge. *Absent:* Brian McCarter.

New substations in the design or historic overlays (or any ROW improvements that are not currently “standard improvements in the ROW” or adopted by the PBOT City Engineer) will trigger Land Use Design Review or Historic Review. TriMet seeks design advice from the Portland Design Commission to incorporate these new elements as standard improvements in the ROW and therefore exempt from the Land Use process as otherwise non-standard improvements in the ROW.

#### Design Commission Briefing Summary Comments

- Design Commission supported the proposed 4 Central City Plan District site locations to be considered “standard improvements in the ROW”, Design Commission supported the proposed public art component, and need to secure certain sites with fencing that also integrates public art.
- Commissioners greatly appreciated a thorough and well vetted design presentation for these substation structures.
- All Commissioners concurred that the public art component is critical and integrating the artist vision in all aspects of the substation is necessary.
- Commissioners agreed that artwork applied to all publicly visible frontages, including the roof at certain sites like the Steel Bridge and Morrison Bridge locations, would be successful.
- One Commissioner noted, and all Commissioners agreed, when fencing is critical to secure locations, the artist should be engaged to incorporate artwork into fencing design, color and pattern.