

How did we get here?

A brief history of Southwest Corridor high capacity transit refinement

2009 to 2013

In 2009, Metro’s Regional High Capacity Transit (HCT) System Plan identified the Southwest Corridor as a near-term priority for new high capacity transit. With rapid growth in households and employment and increasingly cumbersome congestion, the Southwest Corridor needs a fast, reliable transportation option to improve access both within the corridor and to other parts of the region.

With this call to action, staff from Metro, TriMet, ODOT and the Southwest Corridor jurisdictions began evaluating a broad array of transportation investments for the area, including roadway, bike and pedestrian improvements in addition to several different high capacity transit types.

Since then, the HCT element of the Southwest Corridor Plan has been narrowed down to an alignment running between downtown Portland and Tualatin, via Tigard, using either bus rapid transit or light rail. The chart below shows the other HCT options that have been considered.



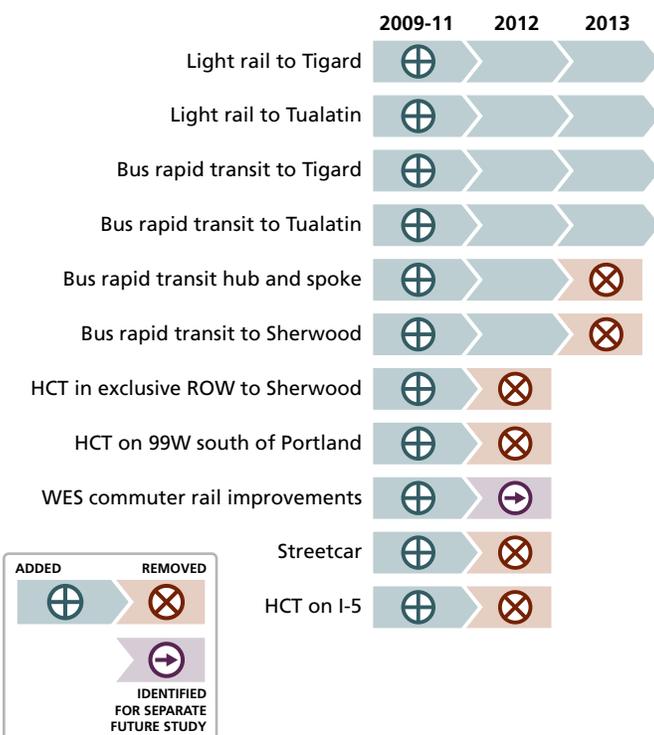
2013 to 2015

In 2013, the Southwest Corridor Steering Committee directed project staff to continue studying a light rail or bus rapid transit alignment between downtown Portland and Tualatin, via Tigard. Since then, project partners have been carefully evaluating a wide range of alignment options along that route.

Here are some of the alignment options the steering committee has removed from consideration since 2013 and why they were taken off the map:

SW Hunziker Street in downtown Tigard

The Hunziker Street downtown loop alignment in Tigard was removed first for light rail in March 2014 because the center-running trackway would have impeded truck access to the industrial businesses along the road. In June 2014, the alignment was removed for bus rapid transit as well because mixed traffic operations would have been necessary in order to maintain truck access, which would have resulted in slower and less reliable travel times.



Bored tunnels to Marquam Hill, Hillsdale and Multnomah Village

Three different bored tunnels have been considered to access Marquam Hill. The longest, which would have continued south under Hillsdale and Multnomah Village to emerge near the Barbur Transit Center, was removed in June 2014 largely because it failed to serve the historic highway portion of SW Barbur Boulevard. The two shorter tunnels, one just under Marquam Hill and the other extending under Hillsdale to emerge in Burlingame, were evaluated further and then removed in July 2015. The high cost and impacts of these tunnels did not justify the moderate gains in ridership and travel time compared to surface options, and the tunnels would not have served the South Portland neighborhood or provided bike and pedestrian improvements along Barbur Boulevard.

SW Hall Boulevard

Hall Boulevard alignment options were removed from consideration in June 2014 due to the residential character of the area and slower travel times compared to alignments adjacent to the WES tracks.

72nd Avenue

Alignments on 72nd Avenue were removed from consideration in March and June 2014 due to slow travel times and restricted access for industrial businesses along the street.

South Waterfront

In 2014, three South Waterfront alignments were evaluated and removed from consideration. All three options ran on the Portland-Milwaukie light rail tracks between downtown Portland and the South Waterfront, resulting in longer travel times than the more direct alignments along Barbur Boulevard and Naito Parkway. Two alignments used a combination of structures and tunnels to get from the South Waterfront to Barbur Boulevard, while the third entered a deep-bored tunnel along Moody Avenue to connect with the other Marquam Hill tunnel alignment options.



Key steering committee decision points

July 2013: Steering committee decided to study bus rapid transit or light rail between downtown Portland and Tualatin via Tigard.

March 2014: Steering committee removed less promising options prior to a detailed evaluation report to inform a June 2014 decision.

June 2014: Steering committee removed several alignment options and directed project staff to address questions about remaining options.

July 2015: Steering committee approved modifications based on information provided in response to the June 2014 questions and removed tunnel options in South Portland and Hillsdale.

December 2015: Steering committee will narrow alignment options in Tigard and Tualatin, and narrow options for possible terminus locations.

February 2016: Steering committee will determine whether to continue studying a light rail tunnel to PCC Sylvania campus, and select which high capacity transit mode, light rail or bus rapid transit, to continue studying.

April 2016: Steering committee will decide on a package of investments to study further, including HCT and supporting roadway, pedestrian and bike projects.