

What would bus rapid transit look like in the Southwest Corridor?

Southwest Corridor Plan partners are evaluating whether light rail or bus rapid transit is the best high capacity transit mode to serve Tualatin, Tigard, SW Portland and the surrounding communities. The project steering committee will decide at its February 29th public meeting. While many people in the region have seen or ridden on TriMet's MAX light rail system, fewer have experience with bus rapid transit systems.

Successful bus rapid transit systems are currently up and running in both Seattle and Eugene. Portland and Gresham-area planners are developing this region's first bus rapid transit system along the SE Powell-Division Corridor, expected to be in operation by 2020. The Vine bus rapid transit system in Vancouver, WA is currently under construction.

Bus rapid transit can describe a broad range of transit types, and the type of bus rapid transit system envisioned for the Southwest Corridor would have different features than other bus rapid transit systems in this region. Here are a few features you could expect if bus rapid transit is selected as the preferred high capacity transit mode for the Southwest Corridor.



Potential features of Southwest Corridor Bus Rapid Transit

- Longer, articulated buses that look distinct from regular buses and carry 86 passengers (compared to 51 on local bus)
- MAX-like stations with shelters, real time arrival estimates, trash cans, more places to sit, bike parking and information kiosks
- Fast loading with electronic fare options
- Boarding through all doors (not just the front)
- Operates mostly in its own dedicated bus lane (current design indicates 80% dedicated lane)
- "Level boarding" where the floor of the bus matches the height of the station platform, so there are no stairs to climb during boarding
- Routes are fixed like MAX, but bus rapid transit can navigate around obstacles, unlike MAX
- "Signal priority" allows bus rapid transit vehicles through intersections faster by using dedicated traffic lights with sensors that know when a vehicle is approaching, and whether it is on time
- "Curb extensions" widen the curb and narrow the road at stops, which allows vehicles to remain in the driving lane to unload and not wait for a break in traffic to re-enter the lane.

