

BRT. Pat, can I buy a vowel?

We have more acronyms at TriMet than any company could possibly imagine: OCS, LRT, MOW, REM, OCC. The list goes on and there's one more to add to your vocabulary: BRT. It's short for Bus Rapid Transit. The pace is quickly picking up as Metro and TriMet work together in studying the Powell-Division corridor to increase transit's capacity in this heavily traveled area. While no official mode has been selected – the confined right-of-way could lend itself to be our region's first BRT line. Transit geeks will give you a litany of possibilities when it comes to what a BRT line could look like. For us, while we're still exploring what could work, the line would have minimal stops that looked a lot like miniature light rail stations, larger – possibly articulated buses perhaps with doors on both sides, and signal prioritization, the use of the PMLR transitway (from SE 8th or so, across the bridge, and up the new connector from South Waterfront), and possibly dedicated lanes or 'queue jump lanes' in other areas to get ahead of traffic. The line we're studying would go from downtown Portland through the Powell-Division Corridor all the way out to Mt. Hood Community College. And again, this is all being studied very carefully but there's momentum to make it a reality.

A lot of people will question whether or not TriMet will actually want BRT given our past successes with light rail. The answer is wholeheartedly – YES! We would welcome BRT to our stable of bus, Frequent Service Bus, MAX and WES. (We might even have to find a name for the new service too – but let's not get ahead of ourselves.) We would approach BRT with the same creative and innovative thinking that we bring to each and every one of our extensions and services. We want to work with local stakeholders – like riders and neighborhood groups – to find the right tool for each transit corridor. We will study what's been done out there already in the transit community – and look to make it even better for our region.

We'll work to keep you updated on the study and where TriMet's headed. A new BRT line could mean a lot to our agency, our employees, and our riders. More to come.

Neil

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