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Please contact:

Cascade Policy Institute
4850 SW Scholls Ferry Rd.
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

Phone: (503) 242-0900
Fax: (503) 242-3822

www.cascadepolicy.org
info@cascadepolicy.org

4850 SW Scholls Ferry Road
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

t: 503.242.0900
f: 503.242.3822
info@cascadepolicy.org
www.cascadepolicy.org

QuickPoint! Better Buses May Be the Transit Solution the SW Corridor Needs

By Rachel Dawson

TriMet may have found a better alternative to the proposed SW Corridor light rail project without realizing it.

TriMet is planning a 15-mile-long transit project on Division Street that will run 60-foot buses from downtown Portland to Gresham. The project is estimated to cost \$150 million and will include expanded bus stations that offer protection from the weather and signal priority for buses to cut down on travel times by 20%. Each bus is equipped with three doors and can hold 60% more passengers than the typical TriMet bus.

TriMet discarded the idea of continuing buses along the proposed SW Corridor route in favor of light rail despite decreasing transit ridership and increasing light rail costs. Instead of spending nearly \$3 billion on a new light rail line, TriMet could mimic the Division Transit Project and run high capacity buses along the route with upgraded stations for just 5% of light rail's cost. Running buses on an already built system will save hundreds of residents and employees from being displaced. TriMet can also decrease bus emissions by trading diesel for renewable or compressed natural gas for a cleaner ride.

It's time for TriMet to stop making excuses for light rail and do what is best for both taxpayers and commuters in Portland.

Rachel Dawson is a Policy Analyst at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.