

How to choose the perfect TriMet app

a surprisingly straightforward guide for smartphone users, by BikePortland.org

THE TWO MAIN WAYS PEOPLE USE TRANSIT APPS

- 1 Trip planning.** This is for trips you don't take very often. You tell the app your starting point (or ask the app to detect where you are) and the end point, and the app tells you the quickest set of connections. This is a lot like the trip planner on the top of the trimet.org website.
- 2 Looking up arrivals.** This is for trips you take regularly. You tell the app which stop you're expecting to catch the bus or train at (or you ask the app to detect several nearby stops), and the app tells you when the next ride is expected to arrive. This is a lot like the Transit Tracker that you can reach by calling or texting TriMet.

THE FOUR BEST TRIMET APPS

BikePortland tested the 50 apps listed at trimet.org/apps. Lots of them are terrible. These are the gems.



“Portland Transit.” This is the best all-around TriMet app for Android phones. It gives you lots of flexibility in planning trips and uses a map to detect nearby arrivals. If you know the stop ID, you can very quickly pull up arrival times. **Downside:** It costs \$4.99. The free “lite” version doesn’t locate stops, so you have to know the system well before it’s useful.



“PDXtrian.” (Get it? It rhymes with “pedestrian.”) If you have an Android phone but don’t ride TriMet frequently, this free app is just fine at quickly detecting the next arrival at various nearby stops. **Downside:** This app doesn’t do trip planning or check distant arrivals.



“PDX Bus.” This free app (which also covers trains) does everything you could dream of: plans trips by address, looks up arrivals, bookmarks your favorite trips, saves trips for offline access when you don’t have a cell connection, even flashes a light to flag down the bus. **Downside:** The many options are intimidating at first.



“The Transit App.” This free app (also for Android) has fewer features than PDX Bus, but it does the basics (trip planning and arrival detection) better, thanks to its attractive and fairly intuitive visual interface. It also lets you search for destination by business name. **Downside:** It’s a national app, so you can’t look up arrivals by stop ID.