

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC TRANSIT TO OUR COMMUNITY



A Summary of What We Heard and Recommended Next Steps
Better Eugene-Springfield Transit
Updated November 2016

Acknowledgements

Many people helped with BEST's conversations about the importance of public transit to our community. But a few deserve special mention, as this report would not have been possible without them.

Kaitlyn Grigsby-Hall, BEST's outreach coordinator, organized and assisted with most of the conversations.

Bree Nicoletto, as BEST's research associate, did most of the heavy lifting to turn the raw results of the conversations into this summary.

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Rob Zako, as BEST's executive director, is responsible for any errors.

Finally, a small Local Transit Coalition Grant from the **American Public Transportation Association (APTA)**, as well as numerous donations by local individuals, businesses and organizations, provided financial support.

Disclaimer

BEST has strived to ensure this report accurately reflects the views of the hundreds of people who participated in two-dozen conversations with a diverse collection of local community groups. We hope this summary will inform community decisions concerning public transit.

Moreover, BEST tried to reach out to as many different groups and points of view as our time and resources allowed.

But this report is not intended to be, nor should it be viewed as, a statistically valid survey of community opinions. Nothing in this report should be interpreted as *quantifying* the level of community support for various viewpoints.

About this Update

In 2014, BEST conducted conversations and substantially completed a version of this report. But BEST held off releasing it to the public, as we judged that the time was not ripe for the community to embrace the kind of large look at transit this report calls for.

Now the MovingAhead project in Eugene and the Main-McVay Transit Study in Springfield are looking at possible EmX and other improvements to our transportation system. Moreover, Lane Transit District is looking to develop a 10-year investment plan. And BEST and several partners are co-sponsoring a presentation on November 30 by transit consultant Jarrett Walker about how other communities are rethinking their transit systems (see page 45 in Appendix A).



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An advanced city is not one where even the poor use cars, but rather one where even the rich use public transport.

— Enrique Peñalosa, Mayor of Bogotá, Columbia¹

BEST Listened to the Community

Better Eugene-Springfield Transit (BEST) set out to ask a simple question:

Why is public transit important to our community?

More briefly: Why transit? Why have public transit at all? What purpose does it serve? What benefits does a strong transit system provide, both to individuals and to the community overall? How does transit support the things we value as a community and our vision for the future?

BEST asked over two dozen local groups—including business, social services, environmental, school, faith-based, community, and neighborhood organizations—about the importance of transit to the community. We listened to community members at the We Are Bethel Celebration, Eugene Saturday Market, and Marketplace at Sprout! We hosted a public forum open to all. For people unable to attend any of the in-person events, we also requested input through an online survey.



1. “Why buses represent democracy in action,” TEDCity2.0, Sept. 2013, www.ted.com/talks/enrique_penalosa_why_buses_represent_democracy_in_action



Transit Benefits Our Community

In these community conversations, BEST heard that public transit is essential to our community in multiple ways. Much of what BEST heard is backed up by others' research. Key themes include:

- People.** For those without access to a car or parking—including seniors, youth, University of Oregon and Lane Community College students and faculty, people with low incomes, and people with disabilities—public transit is often the only practical way to get to work, school, shopping, and appointments. For everyone, frequent and reliable transit provides a convenient option. Research shows that people who get exercise walking or bicycling to and from bus stops generally have longer and healthier lives.²
- Prosperity.** Transit gets workers to their jobs and customers to places of business. A typical family with one less car has roughly \$6,000 more per year to spend—often locally—on housing, food, and other basic needs.³ A higher percentage of money spent on transit (drivers, maintenance workers, administrative staff, etc.) stays in the local economy compared to money spent on personal vehicles (auto manufacturers, gasoline, insurance, etc.). Because many riders on a bus takes up less road space than if each drove separately, transit reduces traffic congestion for others who drive. Reducing congestion also helps transport goods and services more efficiently. Transit supports local plans to develop more compactly, reducing the costs of public infrastructure and road maintenance. Having an effective transit system and a community that is compact, walkable, and accessible attracts talented workers needed for a strong economy.
- Planet.** Public transit helps protect our environment, keeping our air cleaner and slowing climate change, as a bus carrying many people has fewer emissions per rider than the equivalent number of cars. Furthermore, transit assists efforts to develop in a compact manner, limiting sprawl and the loss of farms and forestlands.



2. Todd Litman, "Evaluating Public Transportation Health Benefits," Victoria Transport Policy Institute for American Public Transportation Association, 2010, 11-14. www.apta.com/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/APTA_Health_Benefits_Litman.pdf.

3. According to data from U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development and U.S. Dept. of Transportation, a typical family in northwest Eugene (near Echo Hollow Pool) spends \$13,215 per year on transportation, mainly for an average of 2.2 cars—more than they spend on housing! Source: www.locationaffordability.info/lai.aspx. See also: htaindex.cnt.org/total-driving-costs.

Transit Is Good But Could Be Better

BEST heard from many residents that there are significant barriers to entry for those interested in using transit and gaps in service for those who rely on it. A worker living in Bethel spends almost an hour and a half one-way getting to work in Glenwood, including walking to and from bus stops and a transfer. A rider who uses a wheelchair on River Road frequently has to wait for the next bus, as both wheelchair bays are taken on the first one. A University of Oregon student can get to and from campus but is limited in his ability to access grocery shopping and job opportunities without a car. A woman with developmental disabilities has to wait at an unlit, uncovered bus stop at night and in the rain. She feels unsafe and fearful that others will harass or treat her with malicious intent as a result of her disability. The frequent transit stop nearest to the Pearl Buck Center, a social service nonprofit that offers people with disabilities and their families support, is a mile away.

Meanwhile, some business owners struggle to keep up with Lane Transit District's tax on local payrolls and other requirements, unsure of why they are paying for a service they might not use.

Overall, community understanding of and support for public transit is mixed. Plans to expand EmX bus rapid transit continue to arouse some strong negative reactions. Many question how transit is funded, how public monies are invested, and who decides. Most importantly, we lack a clear and broadly supported vision for the kind of transit system we need—and can afford.⁴

Looking ahead, Eugene and Springfield are planning for roughly 50,000 additional residents over the next 20 years—within the existing land area. Neither city is currently planning to expand its urban growth boundary to accommodate residential growth. There are no large-scale plans to widen or build new roads: There is little funding to do so, and also the community wouldn't want to demolish broad swaths of existing development to make space for new roads. Thus, the reality is that in coming years, more and more of us will need to get from place to place using the same public rights-of-way we have available today.

In this not-so-distant future, BEST believes better public transit and other safe, practical and affordable transportation options will be essential to helping people get around our community.⁵



4. The “Bus Rapid Transit System” map in the adopted Central Lane Regional Transportation Plan, last updated in 2011, includes this disclaimer: “The intent of this map is to convey the general concept of a regional BRT system. Routes listed as ‘Fiscally Constrained’ or ‘Illustrative’ assume no specific alignment at this time. The actual location and type of future BRT investments will be determined once detailed corridor planning is undertaken.” www.thempo.org/564/Regional-Transportation-Planning.

5. One of the “seven pillars” of *Envision Eugene*, Eugene’s 20-year growth plan, is to “promote compact urban development and efficient transportation options.” www.eugene-or.gov/2979/The-Pillars. One of the goals of *Springfield 2030* is to “encourage a pattern of mixed land uses and development densities that will locate a variety of different life activities, such as employment, housing, shopping and recreation, in convenient proximity, to encourage and support multiple modes of transportation, including walking, bicycling, and transit, in addition to motor vehicles both within and between neighborhoods and districts.” www.ci.springfield.or.us/dpw/2030Plan.htm.



Let's Work Together To Improve Transit

BEST believes we are better when we speak together—when we listen to, learn from and respect different points of view. We can and must come together to understand our community's transit needs, to decide how to better address these, and to forge a broadly shared and clear vision for the transit system that balances concerns and interests.

Specifically, in response to what we heard, BEST believes the community needs to undertake three key related efforts:

1. **Learn:** There continue to be questions about transit service in our community and specifically about EmX bus rapid transit. Who does public transit serve? What are key differences between EmX and regular bus service? Who decides what kind of service we have? How is it paid for?
2. **Plan:** Our community has a “general concept” of a regional transit system built on the backbone of EmX service along major corridors, but lacks a clear, practical, and broadly supported plan for what such a system should someday look like—the system needed to supported 50,000 additional people in 20 years. The current MovingAhead effort in Eugene and Main-McVay Transit Study effort in Springfield are good steps in this direction. But it is essential to think about the entire regional transit network, including walking and bicycling connections to and from bus stops, to decide on a system that will move people safely, practically and affordably.
3. **Act:** Visions amount to little if they aren't realized. We need to work together to create plans and then use them to create a better community on the ground.

BEST looks forward to working with Lane Transit District, the cities of Eugene and Springfield, Lane County, and other community partners to improve transportation options for everyone.



INTRODUCTION

We are better when we speak together. By stepping back to ask the question “why transit?” we hope to find common ground we can build on to move forward together.

—Better Eugene-Springfield Transit (BEST)

Who Is BEST?

Better Eugene-Springfield Transit, or BEST for short, is a coalition of groups and individuals who all want to see better public transit in our community. We operate and are funded independently of Lane Transit District.

Our purpose is to educate the public about and promote a regional transit system that fosters prosperity, social equity, and a healthy, natural environment. More broadly, we believe good transportation options are good for everyone.

BEST came together in 2012 and formed as a 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit organization.

BEST is governed by a Board of Directors with advice from a Board of Advisors. Reflecting our triple-bottom-line⁶ mission, we include community leaders representing businesses, social services, the environment, schools, neighborhoods, people of faith, and other community groups. We strive to work together to find solutions that advance community interests, uniting people, the planet, and profit.

Intentionally, BEST’s 50 board members include a handful of former Lane Transit District board members and staff: We value and benefit from their firsthand knowledge of transit. But BEST generally makes decisions by the consensus of all our board members, aiming to advance broad public interests—not those of any single government agency or private business. BEST’s board members do not include any current government officials or staff.

BEST is funded by contributions from local residents, businesses, other nonprofit organizations, and foundations. In particular, this work on the importance of transit was made possible in part by a Local Transit Coalition Grant from the American Public Transportation Association (APTA).⁷

6. The phrase “the triple bottom line” was first coined in 1994 by John Elkington, the founder of a British consultancy called SustainAbility. His argument was that companies should be preparing three different (and quite separate) bottom lines. One is the traditional measure of corporate profit—the “bottom line” of the profit and loss account. The second is the bottom line of a company’s “people account”—a measure in some shape or form of how socially responsible an organisation has been throughout its operations. The third is the bottom line of the company’s “planet” account—a measure of how environmentally responsible it has been. The triple bottom line (TBL) thus consists of three Ps: profit, people and planet. It aims to measure the financial, social and environmental performance of the corporation over a period of time. Only a company that produces a TBL is taking account of the full cost involved in doing business. www.economist.com/node/14301663.

7. “Local Coalition Advocacy,” American Public Transportation Association. www.apta.com/gap/advocacy/Pages/local-coalition.aspx.



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What Is the Purpose of This Effort?

BEST set out to ask a simple question:

Why is public transit important to our community?

More briefly: Why transit? Why have public transit at all? What purpose does it serve? What benefits does a strong transit system provide, both to individuals and to the community overall? How does transit support the things we value as a community and our vision for the future?



Of course, we could have asked other questions: What types of transit do we need? Whom should it serve? Where should it go? When should it run? How do we pay for it? And so on.

More to the point, we recognize that we are wading into the middle of a community debate over the EmX bus rapid transit system. We could have asked: Why EmX in west Eugene? Indeed, why EmX at all?

We understand people care deeply about public transit because how we get around affects our quality of life. We know citizens are concerned about taxes, appropriate use of public funds, and the proper balance between private and public property rights. But we also know the decision to proceed with EmX in west Eugene is four years behind us, and there is little value in rehashing old arguments.

Rather, our purpose here is to look forward. Decisions on whether and where to build other EmX lines envisioned in regional plans are coming up: Springfield is looking at possible transit improvements east along Main Street and south along McVay Highway to Lane Community College; Eugene is looking at possible improvements north along Highway 99, River Road and Coburg Road, east along MLK Jr. Blvd., and south to Lane Community College.

Oregon Values & Beliefs Project

What do we most value in our social and political lives? What do we think is working well, and what are our concerns? How do we view pressing issues such as governance and taxes, health care, education, jobs and the environment?

Pundits and politicians may think they know what people on the street have to say about these and other issues, but every once in a while it's a good idea to check in directly and find out. With a strong public policy orientation, the 2013 Oregon Values & Beliefs Project represents the third installment of the decennial effort, continuing and extending similar opinion research conducted in 1992 and 2002. The study reaches across a broad and representative swath of Oregon's adult population—making a point to include large groups that are typically not heard in other public forums or civic participation methodologies—to learn what residents think about important issues affecting our social and political lives. Findings show that Oregonians may not be as divided on many issues as is commonly perceived. There are differences, to be sure. But the survey finds surprising areas of consensus, even when examining the much-cited urban and rural divide within Oregon.

Source: oregonvaluesproject.org/about



72%

**SUPPORT ROAD
AND HIGHWAY
MAINTENANCE**



55%

**SUPPORT PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION
LIKE BUSES AND
TRAINS**



49%

**SUPPORT NEW
ROADS AND
HIGHWAYS**

Figure 1. Oregonian attitudes towards transit. Oregonians support road maintenance and transit investments but are less interested in supporting new road construction. Source: Oregon Values & Beliefs Project. oregonvaluesproject.org/ovp-content/uploads/2013/09/true_north_final_10_7_13.pdf.



By stepping back to ask the question of why transit, we hope to find common ground we can build on to move forward together in answering questions of what, who, where, when, and how.

We are encouraged by the much larger work of the Oregon Values & Beliefs Project, which concluded: “Oregonians across the state share a True North—a guiding set of values and beliefs—on many topics.” Specifically in regards to transportation, the 2013 survey of almost 4,000 Oregonians in all parts of the state found that “a majority of Oregonians support investment in public transit and consider such investment more important than investing in roads for cars.”

This report summarizes major themes of what people are saying about why public transit is important to the community. It also shares other questions and concerns we heard. Finally, we offer recommendations for next steps we hope can help the community move forward together.

Who Did BEST Hear From?

Between January and October 2014, BEST asked over two dozen organizations—including business, social services, environmental, school, faith-based, community, and neighborhood groups—about the importance of transit to the community. We listened to community members at the We Are Bethel Celebration, Eugene Saturday Market, and Marketplace at Sprout! We gathered several times over beer to talk about transit. We also hosted a public forum, open to all and publicized in a guest viewpoint in

Groups BEST Heard From

BEST held conversations with these organizations:

- Active Bethel Citizens (ABC) Steering Committee
- American Institute of Architects, Southwestern Oregon (AIA-SWO) Past Presidents
- Church Women United
- City Club of Eugene
- Community Behavioral Health Consortium
- Eugene Active Transportation Committee (ATC)
- Eugene Human Rights Commission
- Eugene, Springfield, Bethel & Portland school districts
- Friendly Area Neighbors
- Human Services Forum
- Jefferson Westside Neighbors
- Lane Community College
- League of Women Voters of Lane County Action Committee
- Oregon Supported Living Program (OSLP)
- Interfaith Clergy United (Formerly Progressive Clergy)

- River Road Community Organization (RRCO)
- Springfield Chamber of Commerce Government Issues Committee
- Springfield City Club
- Springfield Rotary Club
- University of Oregon

BEST also organized these public forums and tables:

- “Beer By Bus” at Falling Sky Deli
- “Beer By Bus” at Hop Valley in Springfield
- Eugene Saturday Market table
- Marketplace at Sprout! table
- Public forum at LCC Downtown Center
- “We Are Bethel” Celebration table

Learn more: www.best-oregon.org/2014/04/were-better-when-we-speak-together

See Appendix B to learn more about the work of these community partners.



the *Register-Guard*,⁸ to provide an opportunity to anyone we may have missed.

For people unable to attend an in-person event, we also requested input through an online survey.

Wanting to hear as many and diverse opinions as possible, we contacted many other groups, including groups openly critical of our public transit system. Due to scheduling difficulties and our own limited resources, we were not able to hear from all the groups we hoped to hear from.

In any case, our intent was not to conduct a scientifically valid survey of the entire community. Unlike the Oregon Values & Beliefs Project, we do not have the resources to conduct 400, let alone 4000, one-on-one interviews with a random sample of citizens. More to the point, our purpose was not to conduct *quantitative* research leading to conclusions, such as, “55% of respondents see public transit as somewhat or very important to a strong local economy.” Rather, we wanted to simply listen to people in informal discussions and hear what is important to them and why.

What Did BEST Ask?

Most discussions were conducted like informal focus groups, tailored to the interests of the group.

In almost every discussion, we began by asking why transit is important to the community—if indeed it is. Time permitting, we listened to other questions and concerns about transit.

The various public forums, tables, celebrations, and “Beer By Bus” events were generally more structured, asking a subset of questions from the online survey.

This report is a summary of what we heard from only those we were able to reach.

What we heard might reflect more widely held community beliefs. Indeed, based on how frequently we heard the same themes from diverse sources, with little disagreement on the importance of transit to the community, we strongly suspect this report does, in fact, reflect widely held community beliefs.

See Appendix C for the complete online survey.



8. Gerry Gaydos, Terry Beyer, Susan Ban & Rob Zako, “Transit plans better when we make them together,” *Register-Guard* (Eugene, OR), 6/10/2014. projects.registerguard.com/rg/opinion/31684433-78/transit-community-public-emx-eugene.html.csp.



IMPORTANCE OF TRANSIT

In all the community conversations, even in those with individuals that are critical of LTD, we heard that public transit is essential to our community for multiple reasons. These include transit's ability to impact people's daily lives and needs; the positive relationship between transit and economic development; the convenience of transit; the effects of transit on community-building, and the mitigation of population growth and climate change through sustainable transit.

In the following sections, we detail the many ways transit is import to our community.

For this report, we spoke to hundreds of community members, some of whom use transit daily and others who have only stepped foot on a bus to access University of Oregon football games. We spoke to those who are wheelchair-dependent, and are therefore also dependent on transit, as well as commuters who now ride the EmX to work daily.

A sample of responses:

I believe that good public transportation is a sign of a community that cares for the environment and its people, regardless of socio-economic status.

—Michelle Holdway, higher education administrator

Transit is important both [to me] personally and to the community, [and] ecologically—it's all important. It's my only form of transport.

—Stephen Sproul, stay at home father

People should be able to take getting to where you need to go via transit for granted. It doesn't just add to property value—it becomes a development amenity.

—Nan Laurence, senior planner with the City of Eugene

The importance of transit to the community can be grouped into five key themes:

- 1. The Impact of Transit:** Transit serves the needs of many, particularly “individual populations, whose needs for service are not always obvious to the public” (Community Behavioral Health Consortium). Bus service and proximity to transit are “very important for low-income job seekers,” emphasizes Opportunity Village. Some services, such as Goodwill, provide between “60–80 free bus passes monthly,” mainly to jobseekers who do not have regular access to a vehicle.
- 2. Transit and Economic Development:** The Interfaith Clergy United (formerly Progressive Clergy) states, “Many transportation options for each individual is successful and financially viable.” In addition, the American Institute of Architects of Southwestern Oregon (AIA-SWO) expressed that building “an efficient and well-connected transit system is a recruiting tool for businesses and the attraction of new young, talented staff.” Moreover, numerous studies have shown that corridors designated as transit-oriented development, or TOD, have a positive effect on economic development in that area.
- 3. Convenience of Transit:** The City of Eugene's Active Transportation Committee, also known as ATC (formerly Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee, or BPAC), emphasized that transit is



inexpensive, easy to use, and provides convenient access for multi-modal users. Furthermore, according to the Oregon Supported Living Program (OSLP), those who cannot drive “appreciate the ease and reliability of EmX service.” Transit also “allows for independence for those who are too young or old to drive, do not desire to drive, or are unable to drive for disability related reasons” (Springfield Chamber of Commerce).

4. **Community Building:** Transit builds community and provides an opportunity for compact development to occur around transit stops. The Springfield City Club states, “Vibrancy is important to a community.” Encouraging mixed-use development along transit stops and key corridors allows for a wealth of families, individuals, and businesses to develop in a centralized area. In addition, transit also provides an “opportunity for diverse, accessible, and healthy social environments in a community” (Jefferson Westside Neighbors).
5. **A Sustainable Future:** Transit is also “beneficial to our environment” and is a valuable tool for handling growth management, according to participants in a public forum held by BEST in June of 2014. As Eugene and Springfield are expected to grow by tens of thousands of new individuals and families in the next ten to twenty years, having a system in place that can prepare for such expansive growth and possible congestion is essential. In addition, by “moving people with fewer vehicles, public transportation can reduce greenhouse emissions.”⁹

The following sections of this report detail what we heard.

Impact of Transit

Transit serves people’s needs by accommodating one’s financial values; acting as a form of social equity for both those who are low-income or who are unable to use or access a car; and providing accessibility to parts of the community for those who cannot afford or regularly access a vehicle. Those whose daily lives are affected by good transit, or in some cases, a lack of good transit service, include a group that is diverse in age, income, race, and physical ability.

Financial Values and Transit

According to the City of Eugene’s Active Transportation Committee (ATC), a citizen’s committee that advises transportation planning staff on project and policy decisions, “bicycling, walking, and transit are the least costly transportation options.” This view is echoed by the members of Church Women United, who state, “it is more financially viable to use transit than to drive.” Taking transit isn’t just less expensive for a household’s monthly budget; it also keeps money spent in the community local. Supporting and using your local transit authority is similar to shopping at a Mom and Pop store—it is an agency that is created by the community for the community. In fact, “only 16% of auto spending stays in the community.” On average, each American spends “an average of \$9,513 per year for their sedans,” of which approximately \$1,522 stays in the local economy.¹⁰ The rest is spent on items and services like gasoline and car insurance, which is not directly invested in the local economy.

9. Federal Transit Administration (FTA), “Transit’s Role in Environmental Sustainability.” www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/environmental-programs/transit-environmental-sustainability/transit-role.

10. American Automobile Association (AAA), “Your Driving Costs: 2016,” p. 8. publicaffairsresources.aaa.biz/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2016-YDC-Brochure.pdf.



The Interfaith Clergy United (formerly Progressive Clergy), a group of local clergy dedicated to advocating for social reform in the local community and at large, emphasized the need for transit on a practical level. For example, the University of Oregon cannot support parking for students if the majority of them drive to and from campus. Eugene and Springfield are home to a total of 24,548 students enrolled at the University of Oregon and to 16,739 students enrolled at Lane Community



College. That's 41,287 parking spots for students alone, not including faculty and staff. The need for proper transit service, as well as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, is critical, as neither of these educational institutions has the land or road capacity to accommodate such a large number of vehicles.

In addition, it is wise for us to advocate for land-use policies that emphasize livable, walkable, and aesthetically pleasing communities. Encouraging students, as well as faculty and staff, to use options such as carpooling, park and ride, bicycling, walking, and transit, allows for less surface parking and for that land to be used as it was intended—as a public space for all users. The Interfaith Clergy United emphasized that the free bus passes received by students at Lane Community College and the University of Oregon not only encourage less students to drive, but also introduces new riders to transit.

The Interfaith Clergy United also states, “some churches provide financial help for those in need—requests for gas money have surpassed requests for food, housing, and medical expenses.” According to *Consumer Reports*, the average American household spends \$4,155 annually on gas alone, which is 8.4% of the median household income.¹¹ Providing transit options that allow for choice, convenience, and cost-effectiveness takes pressure off of households that may be unable to afford the multiple, recurring expenses that come with owning a car. Instead, the money saved by carpooling, using park and ride, or driving less frequently can be saved or spent on other necessary goods and services. With over half of the children in our community eligible for free or reduced lunch, the positive impact of these cost savings could be significant for families.

Social Equity, Low-Income Families and Transit

According to the Human Services Forum and the Interfaith Clergy United, free bus passes have been a large help to residents of Opportunity Village, a widely acclaimed micro-housing community that seeks to assist unhoused individuals in transitioning to a permanent living situation. Discounted and free bus services is very important for low-income job seekers, particularly for those who are either currently unhoused or are transitioning to stable housing. Goodwill provides 60-80 free bus passes monthly, largely to job seekers. Daily, Goodwill receives approximately 20 requests for free bus passes.

11. “2011 Is Priciest Year Ever for Gasoline: \$3.53 Per Gallon, Over \$4K Spent Per Household,” *Time*, 12/20/2011. business.time.com/2011/12/20/2011-is-priciest-year-ever-for-gasoline-3-53-per-gallon-over-4k-spent-per-household.



A key historical precedent to consider is the trend towards providing discounted transit. As a tenth of Lane County residents do not own or have access to a car, organizations like Church Women United emphasize the importance of recognizing a transit system as a public good. It is essential to maintain the current level of access that low-income families and individuals have to transit and there is certainly space to bolster the ease of access and level of service provided. Those who rely on transit use it “to get to work, businesses, shopping, and school,” according to Jefferson

Westside Neighbors. They also strongly affirm the need for young families to access transit services, especially when traveling with small children.



The Interfaith Clergy United also shared that recently released prisoners are heavily reliant on LTD as a primary mode of transportation. An accessible bus and EmX system is “essential for helping former felons get back on their feet.”

Moreover, the Interfaith Clergy United told us that it is “important for LTD to service west Eugene and low-income neighborhoods.” In fact, these areas are perhaps the most essential areas for transit to serve, as the most dependent populations should have the greatest access to transit services and different parts of the community. Catholic Community Services assisted one out of five Springfield residents last year, providing direct services to those in need. Many in poverty use bus passes, purchased by social service nonprofits at half price from LTD, in order to reach doctor appointments, jobs, and even emergency medical services. The Springfield City Club remarks, “Transit allows people of limited means to be a part of the Springfield community. Poverty and disability both impact access to social services and the community.”

The Interfaith Clergy United states that there is also a need for “reliable transportation for school children,” as many families either don’t have access to a car or own a car that needs to be utilized by working parents, who may not be able to afford after or before school childcare. Programs like Willamalane’s deal on summer bus passes is a “great opportunity for families,” according to the Springfield City Club, as it may alleviate some of the pressure on working parents to find childcare.

Furthermore, many elderly individuals depend on the bus, especially if they are no longer physically able to drive. Access to transit service provides senior residents access to their community and independence, regardless of their driving ability or physical ailments. Moreover, the Interfaith Clergy United states, “transit can bring up vital discussions about class and how we perceive those who use transit.” Often, we perceive public transportation as a means of travel only used by those who are low-income. Yet, public transportation is perhaps the greatest form of equity there is. The bus transcends social stratification and is a public good for all to use. The Springfield City Club emphasizes, “All residents should be able to access different parts of the community.” Individuals and families of all backgrounds can use the bus and EmX to travel from one place to another.

Accessibility, Safety, and Transit

Students at Lane Community College state, “transit allows for accessibility,” meaning that transit is a tool for individuals to access and engage with different parts of the community.

Church Women United shared that some members of their group have given up their cars for age-related reasons. They are reliant on transit that not only provides appropriate coverage, but also accessible service for elderly or people with disabilities, and other individuals who have trouble boarding a bus, standing at bus stops, and walking to bus stops. In particular, “kneeling buses [when a bus lowers itself by letting air out of its suspension system to deploy a wheelchair ramp] are very helpful, as is LTD when you call for directions. Transit is also helpful for medical visits, especially with family members who are not mobile.” The Springfield Chamber of Commerce remarks that park and ride services are essential for aging Americans and can allow for independence.

The Coalition for a Smarter Growth recently released a set of recommendations for the Washington D.C. Transit Authority and how they interact with elderly riders. Although the recommendations are made for a larger transit system than LTD, their suggestions can readily be applied to transit in the Eugene-Springfield area. In order for elderly riders to safely and comfortably interact with transit, it is advised that transit authorities improve pedestrian conditions, including sidewalks and crosswalks. The walk to and from a transit stop is equally as important as one’s experience riding transit itself. In addition, all transit stops should be in accordance with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards and preferably, have an area for users to sit with cover from the elements.¹²

Furthermore, it is important for transit agencies to easily direct elderly users to bus schedules and services like RideSource through “one-call, one-click.” Providing easy directions over the phone and online tremendously adds to overall ease of access for users. Another means of simplifying or demystifying transit use may be to offer free travel trainings to groups and individuals on how to ride the bus, a tactic successfully employed by the Municipality of Anchorage Public Transportation Department.¹³

Oregon Supported Living Program emphasizes that as it is “easier for wheelchairs to access EmX than regular buses; expanded EmX services would be beneficial.” While the Springfield City Club discusses “LTD paratransit is great for those with mobility issues,” there was also community agreement that RideSource is satisfactory, but can be problematic due to scheduling and eligibility requirements. However, many of the individuals with disabilities we spoke with are pleased with their EmX experience and desire more EmX service. Although the EmX has only one wheelchair bay, it is often more accessible than RideSource.

The Human Services Forum told us that residents in housing programs value choice, which comprehensive transit options can address. The Springfield City Club echoed this claim by establishing that “LTD allows many to access services we take for granted.” When expanded transit service allows for individuals to make choices about how they get around our the community, it allows them to feel empowered and connected to the community.

12. Coalition for Smarter Growth, “DC can do more to help seniors age in place,” 9/12/2014. www.smartergrowth.net/news-parent/news/dc-can-do-more-to-help-seniors-age-in-place.

13. Municipality of Anchorage (AK), “People Mover Travel Training,” www.muni.org/Departments/transit/Anchor-Rides/Pages/TravelTraining.aspx.



Transit and Economic Development

Public transit not only creates and maintains jobs, it takes people to and from their jobs.

—Partners for Transit

According to a 2009 report from the American Public Transportation Association, every \$1 invested in public transportation generates \$4 in local economic activity.¹⁴ This is because public transit can provide travel and vehicle ownership cost savings, leading to more consumer spending in other areas. In addition, transit allows for local businesses to have access to an expanded labor pool, while also increasing their consumer base.

Transit as a Sign of Economic Vitality

The Interfaith Clergy United (formerly Progressive Clergy) states, “A sound and robust transit system is attractive to employers, especially tech companies.” The Springfield Chamber of Commerce followed up on this claim, remarking, “There are far fewer young people driving, as cars are expensive.” This statement is in line with the growing trend of those in the 18-34 demographic and those who are 65 and older moving to urban centers. For younger adults, there is less of a desire to drive from suburban areas to the central business district (CBD) and more interest in being immediately near the areas they wish to traverse daily. Elderly individuals echo many of the same wants and needs, especially as driving grows more difficult with age. The Springfield City Club remarks, “Transit is a recruiting tool and key to economic vitality.” When an area has strong transit service and accessibility, it encourages people to move to that community. With both young and elderly adults, there is a satisfaction associated with being located in a walkable, livable neighborhood, where employment, goods and services, and social spots (like parks and cafés) are readily accessible.

The Springfield Chamber of Commerce added that the bus is “financially viable for those on a fixed income, such as seniors.” Those over the age of 65 can ride the bus for free, which allows for more income to be either saved or spent at the many growing businesses in the community. The Interfaith Clergy United states that not only are “many transportation options for each individual practical and financially viable, but transit is convenient and cost-effective.” For those wishing to access key areas, such as downtown Springfield or downtown Eugene and soon, west Eugene, frequent transit provides a timely and comfortable way to access those places. In addition, the Springfield City Club emphasizes, “Transit is an economic



14. American Public Transportation Association, “Public Transportation: Moving America Forward,” p. 3. www.apta.com/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/APTABrochure_v28%20FINAL.pdf.

development tool and is important for attracting commerce and jobs. The transit center in Springfield has businesses.” Currently, Los Faroles, a restaurant and ice cream store, as well as Cricket Wireless, are located immediately next to the Springfield Station property. Downtown Eugene has also seen an increase in businesses and new growth in recent years, particularly within walking distance of Eugene Station.

Nan Laurence, a senior planner with the City of Eugene said:

Downtown development causes a city’s economic identity to change. We saw \$244 million, in approximately five years, during a recession, in private investment go into downtown. However, overall investment, including BRT and the new library has added a lot. Transit going downtown does not immediately raise adjacent property values, but it raises the overall development potential of the area. Access allows for housing prices to go up ... people should be able to take getting to where you need to go via transit for granted. It doesn’t just add to property value—it becomes a development amenity.

It is possible to see the effect that transit indirectly has on an area each time one drives by Lane Community College’s downtown campus or grabs a cone from Red Wagon. A resident or tourist can visit Marketplace at Sprout! in Springfield and then walk less than a block to Plank Town Brewing. These neighborhoods are noticeably growing and changing into mixed-use, livable, walkable areas, enhanced by the rich cultural history of the space and the community that calls it home. This same residential shift may happen in west Eugene according to the Interfaith Clergy United. They said, “West Eugene EmX will bring customers and employees to west Eugene, as well as improve business in both west Eugene and downtown [Eugene].” There is already a strong desire, especially from transit-dependent individuals and students to access west Eugene businesses more easily. While the EmX construction may slightly affect automobile commuters, the finished project will create four bicycle pedestrian bridges, as well as make needed changes to sidewalks for both safety and aesthetic purposes. Hundreds of new trees will be planted in the area, in addition to plants and landscaping around EmX stations. Over time, the industrial west Eugene area will likely become a corridor that accommodates people who utilize all modes of travel. Similar to the appearance of new businesses and housing along the Broadway/Franklin corridor, such as Elkhorn Brewery and a new apartment complex on East Broadway and Ferry Street, the community may see new businesses and opportunities along the West Eugene EmX corridor.

Convenience of Transit

Critical to the success of any transit system is that users have options, choice, and freedom. A basic transit system isn’t enough—a good transit system is one where a rider can get to where they need to in a quick, affordable, and comfortable manner. There are three key aspects of convenience, those being multi-modal transportation and connectivity, barriers to entry, and gaps in service. A system must be easy to use and understand, enhance connectivity between modes of travel, and provide consistent service.



Multi-Modal Transportation and Connectivity

According to the City of Eugene’s Active Transportation Committee (ATC), “Transit permits flexibility and provides options for those who do not want to commit to having a car or are facing other factors, such as inclement weather. Transit is important because people use different modes of travel.” A well-connected transportation network is one where a user can bike to a bus station, take a bus to work, and then walk safely from the bus stop to their place of employment. A trip does not end until one reaches their destination, so all aspects of travel must work successfully in conjunction with one another. It is an unsuccessful trip if one takes a bus and gets off at a stop near their destination, but has to then cross four lanes of traffic with no crosswalk. Part of an effective transit route is how it emphasizes efficiency and comfort when switching between modes of travel. The Active Transportation Committee states, “every single rider is a pedestrian and transit is part of the pedestrian experience.” Feeling unsafe or uncomfortable while traveling is a possible barrier to entry for both potential and current users.



Jefferson Westside Neighbors echoes the importance of having “transit that improves each mile of the route.” In other words, transit routes need to enhance surrounding neighborhoods, being mindful of the necessity for vibrancy, revitalization, and connectivity. Sidewalk and aesthetic enhancements, such as landscaping and covered bus shelters with benches and bicycle racks, as well as design that allows for all modes of travel to safely pass through an area, are essential to the success of community transit. Connectivity and ease of access attracts new riders and ensures that current users of transit have a satisfactory experience.

Community Building

A livable community is almost entirely contingent on a transportation infrastructure that allows for a plethora of ways to get around, regardless of mode of travel. A transportation infrastructure that allows for ease of access is one that increases the overall quality of life of those using the area. Neighborhoods increase residents’ quality life when they provide:

- both single and multifamily housing;
- access to retail businesses and needed goods and services;
- access to convenient transportation and complete streets that are safe for individuals of all ages and ability levels to use; and
- a safe place for a diverse array of residents.



Community Building Through Transit

Jefferson Westside Neighbors state, “Transit produces diverse and healthy social environments in the community ... neighborhood strength is not hurt by transit.” In fact, transit builds community through the sheer fact that it requires people to be out and about in a neighborhood in order to reach their destination. Walking and biking through a neighborhood is often a far more interactive and social experience than driving from one location to another. There is a greater chance of encountering one’s peers, as well as an opportunity to truly immerse oneself into a community. Jefferson Westside Neighbors said that their neighborhood is “a close-in neighborhood [within three miles of Eugene’s central business district], so many walk or bike to work. One can build community by walking through the neighborhood to transit stops and other parts.” The Human Services Forum added to this, noting, “transit service permits the elderly to be independent and encourages them to spend time with other people.” When neighborhoods provide social interaction and community building through smart and user-friendly design, improving the quality of the life of community members and livability of an area.

The Springfield Chamber of Commerce remarks, “a loss of transit is equal to a loss of quality of life, as mass transit is part of livability.” The City Club of Springfield echoes this sentiment, stating, “vibrancy is important to a community and transit brings this. Transit is a broad-based opportunity to help the community change and grow.” The kind of vibrancy that transit can bring to a community is known as Transit-Oriented Development, or TOD. The kind of development that proponents of TOD seek is one that prioritizes social equity, sustainability, economic and individual financial success, as well as access. Ideally, mixed-use areas develop within a half-mile radius of a transit hub, integrating into the already existing community and revitalizing it. The benefits of integrating public transportation into community development approaches include:¹⁵

- expanded access to businesses and more economic opportunities;
- lessened dependence on the automobile due to more travel options. This reduces overall transportation costs and allows those savings to be used elsewhere;
- a less isolated neighborhood with more access to services and diverse community;
- walkable neighborhoods that encourage active lifestyles;
- reduced vehicle miles traveled and dependence on foreign oil, both of which have significant impacts on lowering greenhouse gas emissions; and
- added value through investment in growing areas with an expanded consumer base, reflected in increased and/or sustained property values. This money can be invested back into the community, which promotes economic sustainability.

When community development is approached with the purpose of supporting neighborhoods and connectivity, it is possible to create successful communities that are permanent and can provide its residents with a high quality of life for decades to come.

15. Allison Brooks, “Weaving Together Vibrant Communities through Transit-Oriented Development,” *Community Investments*, Volume 22, Issue 2, (2010), p. 7. www.reconnectingamerica.org/assets/Uploads/abrookstod082010.pdf.



A Sustainable Future

Basic transit and good transit are not the same. Basic transit is having a minimal amount of transit service. Good transit is getting to where you need to go in a timely manner.

—Interfaith Clergy United (formerly Progressive Clergy)

Transit and the Public Mindset

Danni Sempere is a 21-year-old student at the University of Oregon studying Education. She hopes to become a teacher one day and has already begun her student teaching with preschool-aged children. However, such a busy schedule means that it can often be difficult to effectively travel between school, work, and home using transit alone:

I drive 75% of the time. It is far from our house in Springfield to school. The #79x runs frequently enough [directly from housing nearby Autzen Stadium and bordered by Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard] but I have to leave way early to get to class. Parking passes are expensive (\$125/term), so it's easier to drive and get tickets.

The expected cost of attending school as an in-state undergraduate at the University of Oregon is \$9,918 for each academic year, based only on tuition and school fees. Add the cost of housing, books, and food, an additional \$10,000–\$11,000 per year¹⁶, and a parking pass becomes far less feasible. Living in Springfield is less expensive than living near campus, where monthly rent upwards of \$600 per person has become commonplace. But the trade-off for living in an area with more affordable housing is that travel becomes more difficult and oftentimes, more expensive. Although travel to campus and back is relatively easy during the school year, getting to other destinations, especially on a busy student schedule, is difficult.

Gail Gould, a Pleasant Hill farmer who sells her produce at Springfield's Marketplace at Sprout! cited similar concerns. She “would like to use transit, but can't. There is poor service to Pleasant Hill. The bus is infrequent and not available on weekends.” A trip to Sprout! usually takes 14 minutes by car and just 30 minutes by bus. But, the bus only runs three times a day. David Erickson, a Dexter-area software salesman, also expressed the same frustrations, as traveling from Dexter to Springfield by the #92 bus is only a 40 minute trip, yet it only leaves Dexter twice daily and does not provide weekend service. Infrequent service and lack of weekend service makes it difficult for not only commuters and students to use transit, but also leaves elderly individuals, those too young to drive, or otherwise unable to drive without travel options. These deficiencies reveal the critical need for transit a system that can support excellent service and allow all members users convenient and regular access to locations throughout our community.

Yet, such a system is much easier said than done. Because of the costs attached to each service increase, our community is limited in our ability to have dynamic transit service. When service is bolstered, we are forced to take into consideration costs that include fuel, paying for drivers, bus maintenance, administrative fees, and many more. We have collectively stated as a community that there is an obvious need for transit and as many such as Gail state, “it's essentially a basic human right.”

16. “University of Oregon Financial Aid.” financialaid.uoregon.edu/cost_of_attendance.



Yet, transit does not receive the same government subsidies and private funding that automobiles do. If we truly find transit to be essential, this is something that must be reflected through our willingness to contribute financially as a community. Church Women United state that there is a “need for a national conversation around transit, surrounding values and desire. There needs to be a shift in the mindset around driving.” We know that we need to modify our habits of travel, in order to mitigate climate change and to diminish the effects of population growth, which could lead



to greater congestion and more vehicular emissions. While the state is working towards increasing transportation funding, our personal investment in the transit system, both through voicing our support and through investing in transit and the areas it runs through, steadily remains important. The Interfaith Clergy United remarks, “transition to a transit-based system will take time, but it is critical to invest in transit systems.” The Springfield City Club adds, “Across the country, main streets are changing. Young people are living differently. Driving is not the future.” To be successful in the future, we must change our habits and invest in the next generation now. This means creating a strong transit network and as a whole, a transportation infrastructure, that can last our children and their children for years to come.

Such a change in public mindset is already slowly happening across our community. The Community Behavioral Health Consortium observes, “the demographics of those who ride transit, especially during and post-recession with the addition of high gas prices, has seen an increase in workforce commuters.” While cost-effectiveness is one of the primary drivers of mode-shifting, convenience also plays a large role in an individuals transportation decisions. The Springfield City Club elaborates:

Those who have a choice between driving and transit will choose whatever is the most convenient. Time and distance limits the ability to walk or bike. Even as a fledgling system, LTD provides convenience. Rapid transit is different than regular bus service. It is fast, convenient, and easy to understand. It also extends range and as a result, permits spontaneity.

As a community, we have the opportunity to contribute to a growing system and to enhance the way we, and our children, move around our community.

Transit and the Environment

While the traditional bus may lack the glamour and sex appeal of a Tesla or other electric cars, its impact on the world is far more vast and disruptive. According to the American Public Transportation Association, 5.36 billion people traveled by bus in 2012.¹⁷ However, many of these buses, despite their capacity to move dozens of people at once and heavy usage, get an average of 4.71 miles to

17. American Public Transportation Association (APTA), “Ridership Report Archives.” www.apta.com/resources/statistics/Pages/RidershipArchives.aspx.



the gallon. In July 2016, Lane Transit District received for funding for five new electric buses, in order to better reflect the community's commitment to sustainability and the environment.¹⁸

Church Women United states, "buses can be more energy efficient, particularly with more electric buses. In the long run, cars are not as efficient as transit, both environmentally and population/congestion-wise." While we have made monumental steps forward in developing energy efficient bus rapid transit and light rail systems through the United States and particularly here



in Oregon, conventional bus trips still easily outstrip the number of riders of these newer systems. However, as these new systems grow, it is not remiss to upgrade current buses and allow for transit to have an even larger impact than it already does on decreasing climate emissions.

The Springfield City Club told us that, "Private vehicle use is the single largest contributor to climate emissions per household. Each person who switches from cars to transit reduces their annual carbon output by 2.5 tons."

The Springfield City Club went on to say "that climate change is affecting Oregon today, through the collapse of the oyster industry, lower timber sales due to tree diseases, and lower snowpack." The effects of climate change in Oregon can also be seen in more extreme temperature swings and increased wildfires, droughts storms, and flooding. The state of Oregon is known for its fertile soil, lush forests and striking deserts, imposing mountains, and stunning coast. Our environment is important for a healthy community and we have already taken significant steps forward, such as recycling and commercial composting. Lane Community College said they have "pledged to become carbon-neutral by 2050," meaning that they will reduce their fossil fuel and additional greenhouse gas usage to the point where effects of those emissions can be offset through tactic like vegetation growth and purchasing green power from local utilities. Transit plays a powerful role in climate change mitigation plans, as it provides an alternative for travel, taking more cars off of the road. The Springfield City Club states, "Many residents claim that 'environment' is one of the biggest reasons to move here. Springfield has innovative recycling programs and [residents] are active recyclers. But transit has more potential to protect the environment than does recycling."

Public transportation reduces greenhouse gas emissions in several key ways. First, public transportation provides an alternative to driving that has a lower emissions output. Sixty-four percent of greenhouse gas sources can be attributed to SUVs, pickups, and cars. While traditional buses emit an average of 0.65 pounds of carbon per passenger mile, single occupancy vehicles release a whopping 0.96 pounds of carbon per passenger mile. Despite the heavy diesel use and low gas mileage of traditional, non-hybrid buses, their ability to move dozens of people and get more cars off of the road

18. Lane Transit District, "Lane Transit District Receives Federal Grant to Purchase Five Electric Buses" (media release), 7/21/16. www.ltd.org/latest-news/lane-transit-district-receives-federal.



drastically affects their emissions savings. Further, their impact on overall community health. In other words, the more people riding the bus and taking the EmX, which has even better emissions savings than the traditional bus, the higher the amount of emissions savings.

Second, public transportation lends itself to compact land use, facilitating more compact development. Although Oregon requires Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) to prevent sprawl, public transportation ensures that travel can be done effectively without or with limited use of a car. Emphasizing compact development conserves land, decreases the need for surface parking and multiple travel lanes, and reduces overall trip times. Public transportation encourages greater foot and bicycling traffic, access to shopping and services, and housing that is near key areas in the community. In addition, living in a compact, mixed-use area also leads to trip-chaining, where errands are combined and done on the way home from a transit stop. This is extremely conducive to the nature of a community's economic identity and overall success, particularly as car use tends to be very "one-stop." When one drives to a grocery store, they seldom walk around the area to explore before moving on to their next errand. When we facilitate growth through transit and support multi-modal access to an area, we create a community that is exciting for residents and visitors and that can more easily be explored and valued.

Lastly, transit agencies are very active in their reduction of emissions. As we discussed earlier, LTD has received funding for five electric buses, in addition to their efforts with EmX. When they build new stations, adding in trees and other plants is an essential part of their efforts. Park and ride as well as bike and ride stations can be found throughout our community that ensure that if one wishes to drive or bike part way, they have a place to park their car or bike before taking public transportation. Although funding limits innovation at times, transit agencies are often some of the first to adopt new environmental standards and create positive changes and requirements. Lane Transit District was named the American Public Transportation Association's 2014 Outstanding Public Transportation System in part because of their sustainability efforts.¹⁹ Their high ridership numbers also demonstrate our community's commitment to moving forward and decreasing our carbon footprint in the world. We have always been a community that desires to be extraordinary, from our dogged pursuit of environmental action to our growing business sector, which emerged victorious despite a crippling recession.

We are better when we speak together. What do we want to accomplish next?

Transit Around the Country

After the events of the past decade, Better Eugene-Springfield Transit (BEST) felt it necessary to ask the question, "Why is transit important?" Since the proposal of the West Eugene EmX extension, transit is an increasingly polarizing and charged topic throughout Lane County. Many who moved to the Eugene and Springfield metro area voiced that "the environment"²⁰ and "affordability"²¹ were one of the reasons they moved here. Many of those in the community are aware of climate change and the need

19. American Public Transportation Association, "Top Public Transportation Organizations and Leaders Honored By the American Public Transportation Association," (2014). www.apta.com/mediacenter/pressreleases/2014/Pages/141014_APTA-Awards.aspx.

20. Springfield City Club, interview by Kaitlyn Grigsby-Hall, Springfield, OR, May 15, 2014.

21. Jefferson Westside Neighbors, interview by Kaitlyn Grigsby-Hall, Eugene, OR, May 13, 2014.



to reduce sprawl through compact development, in addition to a public obligation to provide affordable means of transportation to residents.

Transportation infrastructure must be examined as a cohesive and comprehensive network in which an individual has many options for traveling from one place to the next, including walking, biking, driving, carpooling, and riding transit.

Once one looks past the debate for or against the type of transit system that Lane County needs, one can arrive at the conclusion that transit is necessary and important to many residents in the region. The arguments regarding transit do not focus on the removal of the transit system. Rather, opponents of high-capacity transit often have valid points about a lack of comprehensive transportation vision and the cost of building and operating a more robust system. For Lane County to be successful in their implementation of high-capacity transit, there must be a conversation with stakeholders and the community at large about the long-term growth and development of the transit system.



Commuting Trends and Impacts

In communities across the United States, transit is a critical tool for urban success. The ability to equitably access different modes of transportation is not only a civil right, but also a human right. Typically, residents choose whichever mode of transportation they perceive as most convenient, often taking one or two modes of transportation to get to their destination. If a community has poor transit and is unfriendly to those who bike or walk, commuters are often forced to drive.

The Oregon Commuter

Americans' dependence on auto travel has produced a 75.7% single occupancy vehicle (SOV) commute mode share and peak occupancy of 1.08 individuals per vehicle. In addition to significant financial costs to individuals and families, this also leads to increased congestion and travel times. Americans spent "an astronomical 175 billion hours in transit, which averages out to about 100 minutes per day for each and every American."²²

On average, 70% of commuters in Eugene, Springfield, and Coburg drive alone to work.²³ Carpooling is less commonplace than driving alone, but is still higher in Lane County than in comparison with the national average of 10%.²⁴ According to the Lane Livability Consortium:

22. Clifford Winston, "On the Performance of the U.S. Transportation System: Caution Ahead," Brookings Institution, Sept. 26, 2013. www.brookings.edu/articles/on-the-performance-of-the-u-s-transportation-system-caution-ahead.

23. U.S. Census Bureau, "State and County Quick Facts." www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/LFE305214/00.

24. Brian McKenzie and Melanie Rapino, "Commuting in the United States: 2009," U.S. Census Bureau. www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/acs-15.pdf.



Less people drive alone to work around the University area (17.8% to 39.9% of commuters) and may have chosen alternative transportation or carpooling. Around the University area and west of the University in mid-central Eugene and northwest Springfield around Gateway, a medium percentage (40% to 62.9%) of workers drive alone to work.²⁵

Twelve percent of those living in the Eugene, Springfield, and Coburg area carpool, with numbers as high as 15% to almost 21% in the areas of east Springfield, southwest Eugene, and Gateway.

Just under nine percent of residents commute by bike, particularly in the Eugene neighborhoods of West University, mid-central, Downtown, and Trainsong. Commuting via bicycle has grown exponentially throughout the United States and the Eugene and Springfield metro area is widely considered a leader in creating spaces that are bicycle friendly.

The number of Americans commuting by bike has grown by 47%, the number of trips doubling from 1.7 billion in 2001 to 4 billion in 2009 alone.²⁶ The number of cyclists continues to increase in Lane County and Eugene now has the fourth largest share of bicycle commuters in the country.²⁷ As Lane County designates more neighborhoods as bicycle friendly and commits to creating and maintaining infrastructure that incorporates all forms of transportation, more and more individuals will use alternative modes of transportation. It is important for transit authorities to create spaces that accommodate the multi-modal aspects of transportation, creating park and ride and bike and ride facilities that accommodate users through every step of their journey.

Alternative methods of commuting such as transit, biking, walking, and carpooling are essential for the 10% of residents in Eugene, Springfield, and Coburg who do not have regular access to a vehicle. Access to proper transportation infrastructure, which includes methods alternative to driving alone, is critical to the way that residents engage with their community. A high frequency, multi-modal transportation infrastructure provides the means for greater access to opportunities, including jobs, medical care, grocery shopping, and more.

The Green Dividend

For some households, particularly those who choose to live in affordable suburbs over the more expensive urban core, transportation costs can absorb between 19% to 25% of a household's budget. Research shows that living in an area with a strong transit network may allow a two-car family to reduce down to one car, saving more than \$9,000 a year.²⁸ When those transportation dollars remain in the local economy, it permits for more economic vitality and development in a community. In addition, families are able to use these savings on necessary goods, investments, and services.

25. Lane Livability Consortium, "Equity and Opportunity Assessment, Transportation Access," 2014, 181. www.livabilitylane.org/files/EOA_report/LLC%20EOA%20Report%207AUG14_FINAL_sm.pdf.

26. League of American Bicyclists, "Bicycling Commuting Data," www.bikeleague.org/commutingdata.

27. League of American Bicyclists, "American Community Survey Data Report for 2012," 2013, p. 13. bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/ACS_report_forweb.pdf.

28. "AAA: Your Driving Costs 2016," American Automobile Association, 2016. <http://publicaffairsresources.aaa.biz/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2016-YDC-Brochure.pdf>.



Portland, Oregon: A Case Study

To put the savings associated with less vehicular usage into perspective, the city of Portland, Oregon found that driving 20% less per day led to tremendous savings and spending within the local economy. On average, the median commute is 24.3 miles in the 33 most populous U.S. metro areas. However, the average Portlander commutes only 20.3 miles a day. As a result of strong land-use policies and other environmental policies, Portlanders actually have a shorter commute than residents of other metro areas throughout the United States.

The accumulation of economic gains derived from these policies is known as the green dividend. These savings don't just benefit individuals and their families—they also extend to public agencies that maintain roads and infrastructure.

With two million people, the Portland metro area saved \$1.1 billion in transportation and infrastructure costs and 2.9 billion miles traveled with just the small change of driving four miles less each day. Typically, 73% of the retail price of gas and 86% of the retail price of cars immediately leaves the region, in the form of profit for multinational corporations and their partners. The mere four-mile decrease in residents' commute length can be seen as \$800 million dollars that are now remaining in Oregon and promoting the thriving Portland business sector.²⁹

Investing in the Future

The Eugene-Springfield metro area has 362,895 residents, in comparison to Portland metro's approximately 2.4 million citizens.³⁰ Yet, the Eugene-Springfield area is expected to continue growing, particularly as the economic sector gains more power and attractive resources are put into place to encourage individuals and families to move to the region.

This change can be seen in the growth rate of Eugene's population, in which the growth rate was 6.6% in 1980-1990, 22.3% in 1990-2000, and 12.8% from 2000-2010.³¹ While the Great Recession contributed to a decline in overall population growth, the Eugene, Springfield, and Coburg areas are expected to grow by 20%, a 51,000-person increase, in the next 15 years.³² Making necessary improvements and investing in the regional transit system now, will set a foundation for accommodating additional population growth and will eliminate the effects of future congestion.

As light rail and subway systems are extremely expensive and difficult to build, bus rapid transit (BRT) is known for its versatility and convenience, with the ability to mimic the ease of rail systems. It is far simpler for transit agencies to move and switch routes when using the BRT model, as the route is not fixed like traditional track systems. Should the Eugene and Springfield metro area continue growing and require even higher capacity transit, such as light rail, using right of way already acquired by BRT

29. Joe Cortright, "Portland's Green Dividend," CEOs for Cities, 2007. <http://bikeportland.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/07/pdxgreendividend.pdf>.

30. U.S. Census Bureau, "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population, April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2015," 2013 Population Estimates. www.census.gov/popest/data/metro/totals/2015/index.html.

31. Envision Eugene, "Eugene's Population Growth." www.eugene-or.gov/768/Eugenese-Population-Growth.

32. Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization, "2031 Regional Transportation System Plan." www.central-lanertsp.org/ProjectInformation.



will greatly decrease the cost of switching.

BRT can run in dedicated, semi-dedicated, and queue jump lanes or run in mixed traffic, depending on the needs of the community and the capacity of existing infrastructure. For a mid-sized, growing region such as Lane County, the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the BRT system allows for transit authorities to easily invest in a comprehensive and expansive system. As Lane County develops and neighborhoods flourish, the transit system will evolve as well.

Transit-Oriented Development

Transit is also used to recruit both younger generations and echo boomers who have less of a desire to depend on driving and wish to live in a community that meets all of their needs. As a result of a form of land-use known as Transit-Oriented Development, or TOD, housing and businesses that are located near transit stops or central hubs are often highly successful and attractive, especially to these demographics.

The impact of TOD is wide—areas identified as TOD saw an 18% reduction in auto trips and were also generally considered by residents as more aesthetically pleasing, safe, and services were made to be more accessible.³³ High-capacity transit—light rail, subways, streetcars, and BRT—is the primary driver of transit-oriented development. The key to success for a TOD-designated neighborhood is to have frequent and efficient transit, a walkable community, and businesses that cater to various needs and provide job opportunities.



The effects of TOD are observable in both downtown Eugene and downtown Springfield, as well as along Franklin corridor. BRT, in particular, is seen as a stimulant for economic growth in these areas, as its quick and fast-paced service allows for spontaneity and convenience among users.

Job Opportunities in TOD-Designated Neighborhoods

While Eugene and Springfield saw decreases in jobs between 2004 and 2010, the job market actually grew 10%, by approximately 3000 jobs, within 0.25 miles of a BRT station. Employers located within 0.25 to 0.50 miles of a BRT stop found themselves with far more expanded access to the labor force. While jobs fell in the manufacturing, construction, and wholesale sector, they increased in the fields of: arts, entertainment, food, accommodation, health care, social assistance, public administration, professional, scientific, retail, and technical services.

33. Federal Transit Administration Livable Communities Initiative, “Building Communities with Transit: Planning, Developing, and Implementing Community-Sensitive Transit,” pp. 3–4. [contextsensitivesolutions.org/content/reading/building_livable_communities_wi/_resources/Building_Livable_Communities.pdf](https://www.contextsensitivesolutions.org/content/reading/building_livable_communities_wi/_resources/Building_Livable_Communities.pdf).



During the Great recession, jobs decreased by five percent, a loss of almost 5,000 jobs.³⁴ Yet, 710 jobs were shifted to areas within 0.5 miles of a BRT stop, of which 698 were within 0.25 miles of a BRT stop.

It is observable that the BRT system may have a resilient effect on areas near transit stops, where the job market is relatively safe from external economic trends. As Downtown Eugene and Springfield enter into a new period of growth, in which TOD is a key tool for fostering revitalization and economic activity, a continuous increase in jobs and spending is expected.

Transit as a Development Amenity

Nan Laurence, senior planner for the City of Eugene, told us that, “Land value is much more than mere dollars of associated parcels on transit lines. It’s the overall effect that transit has on access to an area, which causes development to happen. Transit itself is not lucrative; it’s the indirect effects that transit has on an area.”³⁵

An indirect effect is a factor that creates or enhances the conditions for development. Transit is a significant influencer of development, as it is considered to be an amenity and an almost necessary component of new development and revitalization. Transit ridership is the highest it has been since 1956, with the baby boomer and millennial generations using public transit the most. According to the American Public Transportation Association, 10.65 billion passenger trips were taken via transit systems in 2013. From 1995 to 2013, transit ridership rose 37%, exceeding the pace of a 20% increase in population. Today’s users of transit are community members who wish to have choice in how they move about a region, wishing to live nearby their work and useful goods and services, saving both time and money. When cities strive to create livable, accessible, and walkable neighborhoods, there is an improvement to residents’ quality of life.

Nan Laurence adds, “Fifty percent of the kids in our [Lane County] area are eligible for a free or reduced lunch. Transit is a key piece of our vision for our sustainable, livable future.” According to the Lane County Department of Health and Human Services:

*53.7% of schoolchildren were eligible to receive free/reduced price lunches during the school year. On average, 20,063 children ate free/reduced price lunches on a given day, while 141,187 lunches were served to children during the summer.*³⁶

For many families with children in school, transit is essential to saving both money and time. Children with two working parents, a single parent, parents with disabilities, or whose family does not own a vehicle, are wholly reliant on transit. Mixed-use and walkable areas assist in helping families save money, as well as allowing for more time to be spent with children and friends.

34. Arthur Nelson, Bruce Appleyard, Shyam Kannan, Reid Ewing, Matt Miller, and Eskic Dejan, “Bus Rapid Transit and Economic Development: Case Study of the Eugene-Springfield BRT System,” *Journal of Public Transportation* 16, no. 3 (2013), 41-57. doi:10.5038/2375-0901.16.3.3. www.nctr.usf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/JPT_16.3.pdf.

35. Nan Laurence, interview by Bree Nicoletto, Eugene, OR, September 8, 2014.

36. Lane County Department of Health and Human Services, “Status of Oregon’s Children 2010,” p. 35. www.lanecounty.org/departments/hhs/hsc/documents/lc_childrens_health.pdf.



A Shift in Downtown Identity

In a 2012 report to the U.S. Senate Committee regarding BRT, Lane Transit District, one of the few American transit agencies that had operated a BRT line for over a year, cited their expectations to the Government Accountability Office as such:

City officials informed us [GAO] that \$100 million worth of construction projects are under way downtown near the Franklin EmX line, including a boutique hotel, office space renovations, and expansions to a community college [Lane Community College]... Although these officials expect land values to increase along Franklin Ave. they noted it is hard to measure the extent to which BRT is contributing to the increase.³⁷

Laurence emphasized that transit and the EmX system in particular, “doesn’t raise property values for parcels immediately adjacent to transit. But, access allows for housing values to go up. People say, ‘Wow, it’s easier for me to get to work or go to school.’ Transit going downtown does not immediately raise adjacent property values, but it raises the overall development potential of an area.”

This shift in economic identity is already happening now in Eugene’s downtown. In 5 years, despite a crippling recession, the downtown area saw \$244 million in private investment. The 13th and Olive apartment complex, Lane Community College’s downtown campus, and the relocation of Northwest Credit Union have had a significant impact on downtown growth, which is vital to regional prosperity. A successful downtown can contribute to and can be improved by a healthy, connected region.



Urban Housing

There is a strong inverse relationship between housing and transportation costs. According to the Location Affordability Calculator, a tool provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, housing in the Eugene area is typically 33% of a household’s budget and transportation is allocated 21%.³⁸ Members of the Interfaith Clergy United state, “some churches provide financial help for those in need—requests for gas money have surpassed requests for food, housing, and medical expenses.”³⁹ Although housing is less expensive as a household moves further away from the urban core, the trade-off comes in the form of higher transportation costs and an almost singular reliance on vehicular usage.

The success of regional transit systems, such as BRT and light rail, have an enormous effect on one’s decision to live in the urban core, as opposed to more suburban and rural areas. In fact, well-implemented BRT typically results in a significant increase in ridership. After one year of operating

37. Government Accountability Office (GAO)-12-811, “Bus Rapid Transit: Projects Improve Transit Service and Can Contribute to Economic Development,” p. 33. www.gao.gov/products/GAO-12-811.

38. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), “Location Affordability Portal.” www.hud.gov/program_offices/economic_development/location_affordability.

39. Interfaith Clergy United, interview by Bree Nicoletto, Eugene, OR, April 22, 2014.



the EmX route along Franklin Boulevard, transit saw an 80% increase in ridership.⁴⁰ In similar regions, such as southern Nevada; Cleveland, Ohio; Livermore, California; and northern Arizona, a 20% to 70% increase in ridership was seen after a year of operation. When a mixed-use area is complemented by a strong transit network, those who live in the neighborhood are more likely to use multi-modal transportation, as it is convenient and comfortable. Real-time information on bus arrival times, accessible bus stops, raised boarding for the elderly and people with disabilities, lighting at bus shelters, available route information, plentiful seating, and opportunities for both bike and ride and park and ride are key elements of strong transit networks.

Property values within walking distance of train stations were typically 41.6% higher than other parcels within the same region. Furthermore, consumers are willing to pay more for housing in livable and walkable neighborhoods, particularly if it is located near a transit line. On average, buyers paid 4.1% to 14.9% more for housing in areas that exemplify these characteristics.⁴¹

40. Government Accountability Office (GAO), “Bus Rapid Transit: Projects Improve Transit Service and Can Contribute to Economic Development,” 7/25/2012, p. 22. www.gao.gov/products/GAO-12-811.

41. American Public Transportation Association & National Association of REALTORS®, “The New Real Estate Mantra.” www.apta.com/mediacenter/pressreleases/2013/Pages/130321_Real-Estate.aspx.



QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

While our Community Conversations centered on the importance of transit, we quickly learned that it was simply not possible to have a conversation about the need for transit in our community without discussing the needs that weren't met. Although this report is intended to focus on the importance of transit, BEST felt it was essential to address unmet needs and gaps in service brought up by those we interviewed.

Impact of Transit

Accessibility, Safety, and Transit

Much of the response from the community focused on an issue of transit accessibility, connectivity, and safety at both bus stations and at bus stops. In this section, BEST primarily heard from elderly residents, students, and people with disabilities.

Friendly Area Neighbors state that there is a “lack of connectivity with the current transit system.” It is difficult to get to areas that are not within the jurisdiction of the Eugene-Springfield Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), such as Marcola, Pleasant Hill, and Coburg. Natalie Reitman-White, a food business manager, states, “There are too many transfers to my work 10 miles away.” Even within the UGB, connections to well-traversed areas such as the Valley River Center, Gateway, and River Road often require multiple transfers or only leave every 30–45 minutes. The Human Services Forum states, “River Road and Santa Clara neighborhoods need more service and accessible bus stations.” With the addition of new businesses at both Valley River Center (H&M) and at the Gateway Mall (Walmart, Burlington Coat Factory), as well as the large number of people who live in the River Road area, having a transit system that is efficient and require less transfers is ideal to attracting users. Consultant Jarrett Walker poses this question to those who dispute the importance of transit frequency—“What if there was a gate at the end of your driveway that only opens once an hour?” A lack of access or even a lack of ease of access is tantamount to a lack of individual freedom and mobility.

Church Women United added, “There are long waits at transit stops. Yet, there are not many resources at bus stops or amenities like lights, shelters, and etc.” Oregon Supported Living Program expanded upon this issue, suggesting that more lighting be added to bus stops and bus shelters. Lane Community College said, “There needs to be covered bus shelters by campus. Safety is an issue for students, including a lack of lighting and [safe] bus stops both on and off campus. Although LTD provides “Night Stop” service, which is available after 7 PM, seven days a week, many are unaware of this service. Night Stops allows a rider to ask the bus operator to let them off at any safe point along your bus route, even though it may not be a LTD stop. More services like this, in addition to improving transit stops with amenities that make users feel safe and protected, will greatly improve ridership experiences, even if increasing bus frequency isn't possible at the time.

Having transit stops that provide security and safety are especially important for vulnerable



populations such as people with disabilities and the elderly. The Community Behavioral Health Consortium says, “clients at both of their Direction Service locations rely on transit access. For people with disabilities, transit is essential. Transit has improved for those with disabilities, but not enough.” The Oregon Supported Living Program has stated that there is a “need for accessible seating in the front of each bus. Each bus only has space for two wheelchairs; the EmX only has space for one secured wheelchair.” Members of Oregon Supported Living Program state that clients and their aides have had to wait up to an 90 minutes to be able to board a bus with space for a wheelchair to be secured. This lack of accessible wheelchair space on the bus, coupled with transit stops that leave the rider completely exposed to both the elements and possible danger, create a climate that is not conducive to the experience of a rider with a disability. The Oregon Supported Living Program expresses “there are concerns about safety on the bus. There is especially a need for increased safety at stations, particularly Eugene Station. Some users experience abuse, exploitation, and bullying at Eugene Downtown Station.

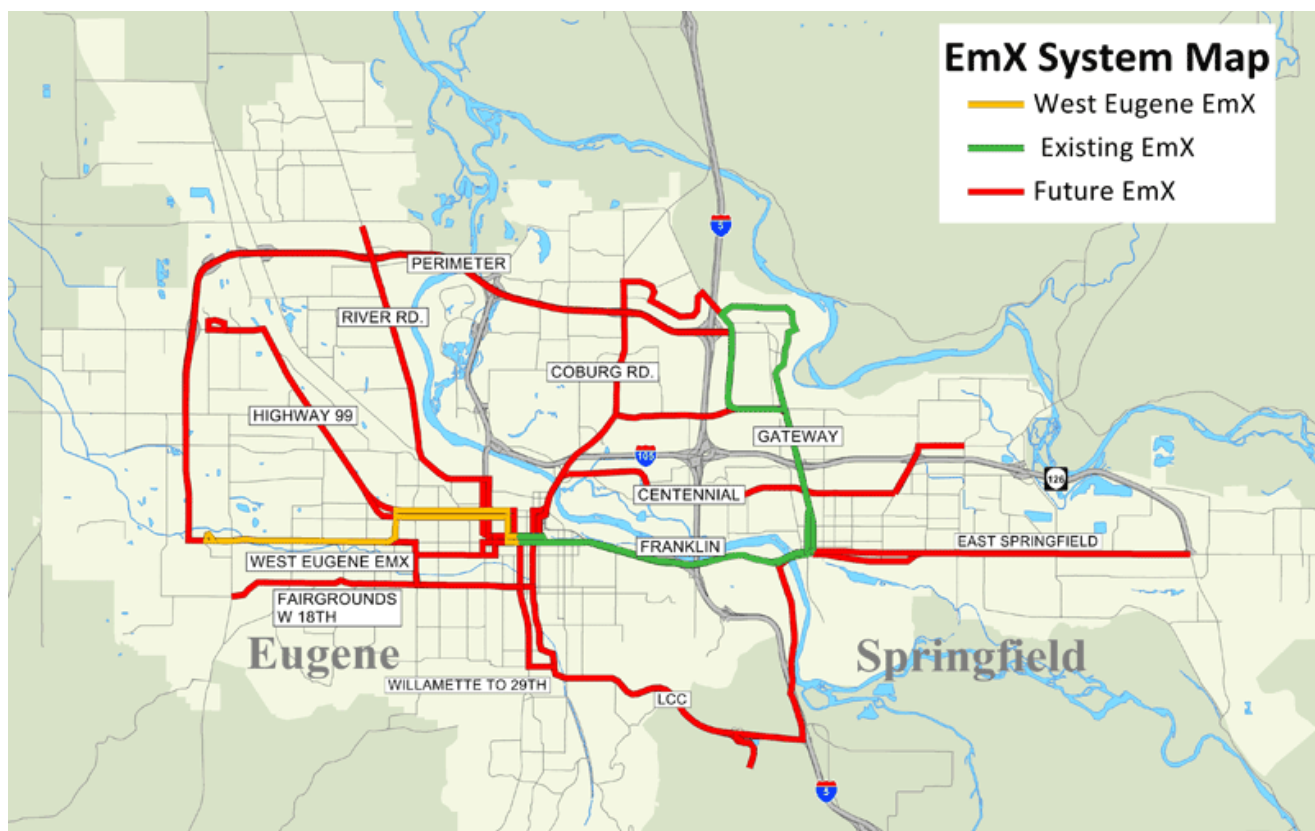


Figure 2. Proposed EmX System Map

Frank Wilson is the public safety manager at Lane Transit District. Although new to Lane Transit District, Mr. Wilson comes from decades of experience working on public safety issues for transportation agencies. You may have noticed some of his work already—Frank Wilson is responsible for the new uniforms that public safety officers wear on the bus and also changed the department’s name from the Office of Security to the Office of Public Safety. His vision for the Office of Public Safety is to be a “career rather than a job. The officers have a very strong cultural awareness of Eugene and Springfield and exercise tremendous compassion and understanding.” Wilson believes that all transit systems have the same problems, it is just a difference of scale. If “foundational issues are

addressed, then public safety issues do not grow into more serious issues. As a result, there is a zero tolerance policy for ORD. 36 violations.” Ordinance 36, or ORD. 36, addresses bus etiquette and addresses activities such as: not putting one’s feet on another’s chair, alcohol and smoking on the bus, profanity, and harassment. According to Wilson, the “role of a public transit agency is to provide safe, comfortable service to everyone within our capabilities.” This is largely solved through the practice of “crime prevention through environmental design. This tactic keeps the crime rate down without places looking austere and is complemented through video surveillance and public safety officers.”

Yet, there are outside differences that are beyond LTD’s control to provide a completely safe environment. Many of the issues that riders notice and experience typically happen on the sidewalk outside Eugene Station, specifically the Western corner of 10th Avenue and Olive on the northeastern side of Eugene Station. Although there is a strong level of collaboration between Lane Transit District and the Eugene Police Department, LTD’s lack of control over their sidewalks means that people can gather there at will. Recently, the Saturday Market released a Downtown Sidewalk Commercial Agreement for downtown shops. This agreement treats sidewalks as property that belongs to the owners and was an idea intended to help cut down on crime and other issues in the Downtown area. According to the Eugene Police Department and Lane Transit District, the agreement is working and the effect it has is visible on not just downtown shops, but also by the Eugene Library. The library was able to gain control of its sidewalks through working with Jon Ruiz, the Eugene City Manager, and there has been a remarkable difference for user friendliness getting to and from the library.

Wilson states, “there is a difference between issues in Eugene Station and transitioning to stations. LTD is very safe, according to the FTA and other authorities.” The on-bus safety is handled through consistent response and handling of issues by bus operators. If the operators call dispatch, the road supervisors are next responders. If of a severe nature, EPD is called immediately. Wilson also described what happens if one is banned from the bus and the process of appealing a ban. He said, “There are many forms of collaboration between LTD, EPD, the probation office, and other law enforcement. The bans that people reserve for violation of ORD. 36 are not permanent and are able to be appealed via administrative review [through Mr. Wilson and the Office of Public Safety]. The administrative review itself can also be appealed. LTD is part of the solution, not the problem.” In addition, Wilson emphasized the importance of the bus for certain populations, especially those who are on parole. Therefore, it is far more effective for LTD to pursue punitive action that is reformatory in nature. For example, a person who was banned but needs to access the bus to get to work may be banned for three months from all routes except those that go to their place of work. In particular, Mr. Wilson expressed the importance of the fact that “the transit system is going to transport anyone who has elected or is unable to use single passenger transportation, unless they are impinging upon someone else’s safety.”

As for Downtown Eugene, Sergeant Larry Crompton of the Eugene Police Department (EPD) discussed safety procedures for the downtown area and some of the policies that the EPD has adapted. The City of Eugene Active Transportation Committee said, “bicycle parking downtown can be inadvisable during certain times. The area around Eugene Station is not welcoming for new and casual users.” In response, Sergeant Crompton emphasized “there is a difference between Eugene Station and public space [the area between Eugene Station and the curb]. The LTD area itself is very safe—there are cameras and public safety officers. There is also one EPD officer whose first responsibility is the area by Eugene Station.” The downtown EPD office consists of nine officers supervised by Sergeant Crompton, who cover three shifts, seven days a week. There are two officers per shift. The challenge of the area



of 10th and Olive in Eugene is that there are very large portions of at-risk youth. A heavy majority attends alternative education. There is a “difficulty striking the balance between accountability and enabling behavior, despite the circumstances that caused it.” Sergeant Crompton went on to describe an instance where there was a large group of teens that were aggressive, rude, and obnoxious. Those who were elderly or using wheelchairs had to weave through the crowd that blocked the sidewalk, leading to the EPD receiving many complaints and as a result, issuing multiple citations. Those who generally congregate on that corner include: vulnerable youth, who use the area as a place to hang out; nomadic travelers; and twenty-five to fifty year-old adult males, some of which are sex offenders. This population can promise at-risk youth drugs and alcohol, often bartering for other services. Crompton expressed that, “it is important to get the Sidewalk Commercial Activity Agreement for LTD’s sidewalks, as literally any other place than LTD would be better for congregation. The vulnerable populations who go through this area absolutely must have a safe experience and should not have to go out of their way to not interact with populations such as those who are on the corner of 10th and Olive.”

The Springfield Chamber of Commerce states, “Basic bus service isn’t enough. EmX is more convenient and there are more people likely to use it.” But, what happens when one isn’t able to take the bus due to a disability? When one isn’t able to use the regular bus system, they are actually able to use a federally mandated paratransit service known as RideSource. This service picks up eligible passengers at the starting place of their trip and drops them off at the curb nearest to their destination. Rides are scheduled in advance, although there are services like the RideSource Shopper, a weekly grocery shopping service, and RideSource Escort, a door-to-door service. RideSource is funded through passenger fares, but mostly through local, state, and federal resources. RideSource runs seven days a week, from 5:30 AM to 10:30 PM on Monday to Friday, 7:00 AM to 10:30 PM on Saturday, and 8:00 AM to 7:30 PM on Sunday. Church Women United says, “the RideSource service is good, but there are many problems.” The Oregon Supported Living Program expressed frustration that “many citizens are in an odd area of being ineligible to use RideSource, but there is little to no available bus service in the early day or late night” and that “RideSource is a good idea, but it can be difficult to use. A user has to schedule in advance and RideSource does not arrive at a set time.”

Social Equity, Low-Income Families, and Transit

The Friendly Area Neighbors state, “Transit is an issue of social equity.” Church Women United expands on this adding that “those working minimum wage jobs can’t afford cars, which is a problem compounded by a lack of affordable housing. Free passes are not needs based, but age based. There should be free passes provided to veterans.” Goodwill provides 60 to 80 free bus passes monthly, primarily to job seekers. Yet, service providers have expressed interest to offer more discounted bus passes, rather than fewer free bus passes. According to the Springfield City Club, “the state of Oregon used to provide low-cost monthly bus passes to those in need, but this service was cut.” As a result, service providers have stepped up to fill that need. Yet, this can prove a tenuous task for local nonprofits, as organizations like Catholic Community Services provide “thousands of dollars in bus passes each year, there is still massive need in the community.” Furthermore, for local agencies and programs located in more rural areas around Eugene and Springfield, “there is no bus service. There are no routes that go to their programs in Marcola and staff is called upon to drive at times. Other times, parents simply cannot participate because there is no service” (Community Behavioral Health Consortium).



The Jefferson-Westside neighbors emphasized that their neighborhood “is not yet gentrified, but it is critical to set policies and programs into place that can provide a buffer for low-income individuals living there, to prevent displacement during growth.” Programs such as the school bus program help with this immensely. Although cut, there has been a significant effort on part of Eugene-Springfield area school districts to restore state funding to this program. Not only does providing youth with bus passes allow them a greater sense of responsibility and autonomy, it also takes the pressure off of parents to drive them to school and extra-curriculars. Furthermore, it allows homeless youth the ability to continue going to their old school. The Springfield City Club and Human Services Forum both expressed a very strong need to restore the school bus pass program, as did our conversation with the 4J and Bethel school districts. The Interfaith Clergy United emphasizes that “even the ‘poor’ are consumers. This is often forgotten.” This sentiment was echoed by the Human Services Forum, who state, “low-income families are stressed because they are constantly juggling bills and payments. This leads to many hard choices and sacrifices, which is ultimately unhealthy for families.”



Transit and Economic Development

The Interfaith Clergy United states, “We can show business owners that the economics of EmX makes sense.” However, this will require serious effort on the part of LTD to demonstrate the effects that transit can have on a community. The Springfield City Club emphasizes that there has been a “pushback from the business community on transit. Transit needs to work with businesses, including them in events, raffles, special discounts.” They also added, “It is important to make and maintain relationships with the business community. West Eugene is not accessible to students, but it will be after the construction of the West Eugene EmX.” However, the life of a small business, particularly in evolving, mid-sized cities such as Springfield and Eugene, is volatile. Change is seen as innovation, but it is also seen as a huge risk to the existing equilibrium. Construction is particularly seen as a worrisome aspect of the transit process. Therefore, according to the Springfield Chamber of Commerce, “we must define specifically why businesses should support transit.” Transit traditionally does not turn a profit and it is believed that many business owners are not riders of transit. Demonstrating to businesses, which pay for 62% of LTD’s operating budget, the massive value that transit brings to our community is absolutely essential to the success of transit. In addition, it is also critical for LTD and public agencies to support local businesses, especially during times of construction and renovation.



Convenience of Transit

Options, Freedom, and Choice

The City of Eugene Active Transportation Committee (ATC) expressed that “South Hills needs better bus routes so that residents are more likely to bike or bus than drive.” Currently, there is a lack of service to the Friendly neighborhood area and existing bus stops are far from key areas, such as Woodfield Station at 29th and Willamette. Most importantly, “transit should be equally accessible for both bicyclists and pedestrians” and that according to ATC “bike and pedestrian groups should work closely with transit.” Connections between modes of travel are weak when one has to walk over half a mile to a transit stop or there are no available bike racks nearby for cyclists to use.

ATC goes on to suggest, “Bike routes should be part of transit planning and all planning processes. Road projects are required to include 1% of funding for bike projects. Maybe transit projects should be required to include 1% as well.”

Many we spoke to emphasized a “transit learning curve” (ATC), a confusing schedule (BEST Public Forum), or that “there are too many hurdles to regular transit use. If people wish to use it, it must be convenient” (Springfield City Club). In addition, the lack of Sunday service was cited to be a major obstacle to regular usage of the bus. The Friendly Area Neighbors, Oregon Supported Living Program, and BEST Public Forum all discussed the barriers to entry associated with a lack of Sunday transit, as well as the effect that limited Sunday hours have on workers. In fact, many community members take taxis, as a result of limited Sunday service and a lack of late night and early morning service. According to the Oregon Supported Living Program, “buses do not run before 7 AM. Those who do not drive or own a car have to fund other modes of transportation, including taxis.” The BEST Public Forum also expressed that “it takes too long to get from one destination to another. There are too many transfers.” This was also an concern shared by Oregon Supported Living Program who said that “missing a bus can result in waiting 30 minutes or longer for the next bus. Bus service to certain neighborhoods have been cut, when already buses can run late and don’t run at night.” Friendly Area Neighbors built upon this concern, saying “there is no bus from the Friendly neighborhood to South Willamette. Buses are cut when the economy is bad, including well-traveled routes.” This is the classic dilemma of the transit agency—when times are hard, more people wish to take public transit. But, when times are tight, agencies also have less of a tax base from which to draw in order to fund the needed level of service. As the Springfield Chamber of Commerce states, “we can’t have everything, so we must make tough financial decisions about what kind of system we want.”



Community Building

Transit plays a valuable role in community building, in particular social interaction. Not only does public transit enable all members of the community to access other parts, it also allows community members to meet other people. The Human Services Forum emphasizes, “many consumers at the Pearl Buck Center desire to be a part of the community, but are not able to do so.” Taking transit allows community members autonomy, as well as provides an opportunity to interact with a diverse group of individuals.

A Sustainable Future

Public Mindset and Transit Funding

Friendly Area Neighbors said, “Two-thirds of LTD funding is from business taxes.” Church Women United observes, “businesses feel stretched by transit taxes.” This is complicated by the fact that many do not know that EmX is part of a regional master plan and is intended to be a full-scale system. The taxes that businesses are paying are not just funding operations of the transit system—they are funding a full-scale re-envisioning and revitalization of our transit system. The Interfaith Clergy United (formerly Progressive Clergy) states, “some people question the success of the West Eugene EmX because it looks like a stand-alone project—like there is no master plan.”

Other Questions and Concerns

We also had many community members ask questions about our transit system, ones that were far more conceptual and had no definitive answer. We felt that these questions were valuable prompts for the community to consider. Eventually we should strive to find consensus about the evolution of our transit system

The Community Behavioral Health Consortium states, “the population served [we serve] is an ‘invisible population’ and their needs for services like transportation are not always obvious to the public.” How can providers help this invisible population gain the access and service they need? For example, many clients at White Bird cannot afford the bus. The Community Behavioral Health Consortium asks, “if seniors get free bus passes, surely this could be made available for very low-income populations as well?”

The Springfield Chamber of Commerce asked a practical question about how we wish to envision our transit system, asking “what does the most effective solution look like?” They emphasize that it is important to look at EmX as an integrated system. All spokes of the system are important, as they are major corridors in our community.

The Jefferson-Westside Neighbors asked, “do we need ‘local’ or ‘express’ buses? Both? We as a community need to think about quick and high density versus expansive and rural service.” In other words, do we wish for bus rapid transit that runs through high-density corridors every five to ten



minutes, or would we rather have a system that buses that come every thirty minutes to an hour, providing service beyond the UGB?

The Springfield Chamber of Commerce also asked, “how do we pay for transit in a community that is still pulling out of the recession?” The payroll tax is not a sustainable funding base, but transit is a necessary public good. How can we effectively fund transit and also have a sustainable model?



CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Public transit is essential to our community: It offers people, especially seniors, youth, students, people with disabilities, or people with limited economic means, a good—and sometimes the only—way to get around; it supports a strong economy; and it contributes to a healthy, natural environment.

But citizens have questions about how Lane Transit District is governed and structured, how it operates, who pays for public transit, and why public monies are invested the way they are.

Moreover, we heard from many, especially those who depend on transit in their daily lives and those who serve such populations, that the transit system we have does not adequately serve their needs.

In response, BEST recommends launching a community-wide look at our transit needs and how to better address these in the future.

For such an effort to succeed, we suggest these twelve guiding principles:

1. **Listen to the community:** Our transit system serves and belongs to the public. To determine our transit needs and how to better address these, listen to the community.
2. **Provide opportunities to learn:** While listening to the community, also provide opportunities to answer questions and improve understanding of the transit system we have today. Better informed citizens can make better decisions.
3. **Be inclusive:** It is essential to include those who depend on public transit, those who pay taxes to support transit, those located along and impacted by transit routes, and others less directly affected by transit. Welcome all ideas about what would make our transit system better.
4. **Form a coalition:** In order to effectively engage different segments of the community, a coalition of public and private entities should work together. Lane Transit District should collaborate with other local governments, businesses, schools, social service agencies, community groups, neighborhoods, etc. Many of the organizations BEST heard from for this report could help with this effort. But as a practical matter, LTD will likely provide most of the support.
5. **Depend on community leaders:** To gain the attention of the broader public, identify respected community leaders to highlight the importance of the effort.
6. **Start with shared values:** To have a better chance of reaching broad agreement, start with our shared values and understanding of why transit is important. The recent Oregon Values and Beliefs survey is a good starting point.
7. **Think big about what's possible:** When identifying transit needs, look at particulars but strive to move towards larger themes. The aim isn't to develop a detailed transit service plan, but rather to consider different scenarios and rethink how the transit system could serve the community's needs better.
8. **Evaluate benefits and costs:** There usually is no free lunch. Evaluate the benefits and costs of



different possibilities to enable the public to make an informed choice of the tradeoffs. The “triple bottom line” of sustainability—economy, social equity and the environment—is a good framework for looking at impacts.

9. **Talk about money—but not too soon:** Acknowledge up front that sustaining better transit service will likely cost more money. But suspend disbelief long enough to enable the community to envision and seriously consider different possibilities.
10. **Recognize other needs:** Public transit serves a basic need, allowing some lacking other options a way to get to jobs, schools, doctors appointments, shopping, etc. But the community has other important needs: housing, jobs, health, education, public safety, etc. Recognize that the community must prioritize needs when there are limited public resources.
11. **Take enough time, but not too much:** Take enough time to give the community an opportunity to participate, to consider different possibilities, and to develop agreement on a preferred approach. But be expeditious to maintain the public’s attention.
12. **Commit to action:** Someone once said, “vision without action is hallucination.” Commit to taking whatever actions—including potentially a decision to continue the status quo—the community deems preferable and feasible.

BEST does not have the resources—nor would it be appropriate—to undertake such an effort alone. As noted above, a successful effort will require a coalition of public and private interests working together.

But BEST commits to being part of such an effort. We call on other community leaders—Lane Transit District, the cities of Eugene and Springfield, Lane County, the Eugene Area and Springfield Chambers of Commerce, the University of Oregon, Lane Community College, and others to join us in a community-wide look at our transit needs and how to better address these in the future.

We invite anyone who is interested to join us in working for better transit.

We are better when we speak together.



APPENDIX A: RESOURCES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

We don't have to reinvent the wheel: We can follow others who have successfully engaged the public around transit and related issues.

8 80 Cities

8 80 Cities is a non-profit organization based in Toronto, Canada. They are dedicated to contributing to the transformation of cities into places where people can walk, bike, access public transit, and visit vibrant parks and public places. Their approach is to engage people and communities across multiple sectors to inspire the creation of cities that are easily accessible, safe, and enjoyable for all. They achieve their mission through grant projects, advocacy work, and their innovative services.

8 80 Cities has come up with a simple rule to evaluate public spaces (as well as public transportation options) called the “8 80 Rule”:



Figure 3. The 8 80 Rule.

Source: www.880cities.org/images/resource/engagement-tools/the-8-80-rule.pdf



American Public Transportation Association

According to American Public Transportation Association (APTA), coalitions are the ideal way to represent community interests, influence key policy makers, attract media attention, and have an impact on funding decisions. Coalitions are particularly appropriate for public transportation because transit systems work through an intergovernmental partnership of federal, state, local and private support, along with user fees.

Coalitions represent a group of individuals or organizations that share common goals. A coalition may be large, formal, and highly structured, or it may be a may be small, informal and operate on an ad hoc or as-needed basis. Just as each local public transportation authority mirrors its size, characteristics, and priorities, local coalitions should reflect their unique characteristics and goals. A coalition gives you the maximum flexibility to adapt to your local needs.

Source: www.publictransportation.org/community/build/Pages/default.aspx

Additional resources:

- Sample Presentation on Local Coalition Building
www.apta.com/gap/advocacy/Documents/coalition101.ppt
- Local Coalition Workbook
www.apta.com/gap/advocacy/Documents/coalitions.pdf
- Building Transit Coalitions: Who's on your team?
<http://www.apta.com/mc/statepublic/previous/2012State/presentations/Documents/Andrew-Austin-Building-Transit%20Coalitions.pdf>
- Americans for Transit
<http://www.americansfortransit.org/resources>
- National Alliance of Public Transportation Advocates (NAPTA)
<http://www.publictransportation.org/napta/Pages/default.aspx>

Envision Utah

The Coalition for Utah's Future was formed in 1988 as a multi-issue organization and worked to increase discussion, cooperation, and consensus-building on a variety of issues, including affordable housing, neighborhood and community issues, education, children, wildlands, healthcare, rural economic development, water, air pollution, demographics, transportation, and information technology issues.

In the mid-1990s, in response to unprecedented growth, the Coalition for Utah's Future helped launch Envision Utah as a public-private partnership, headed up by respected industrialist Robert Grow. To understand citizens' hopes for the future, Envision Utah conducted public values research, held over 200 workshops, and listened to more than 20,000 residents between 1997 and 1999. They heard a common dream: safe, close-knit communities; opportunities for our children; time to do what matters



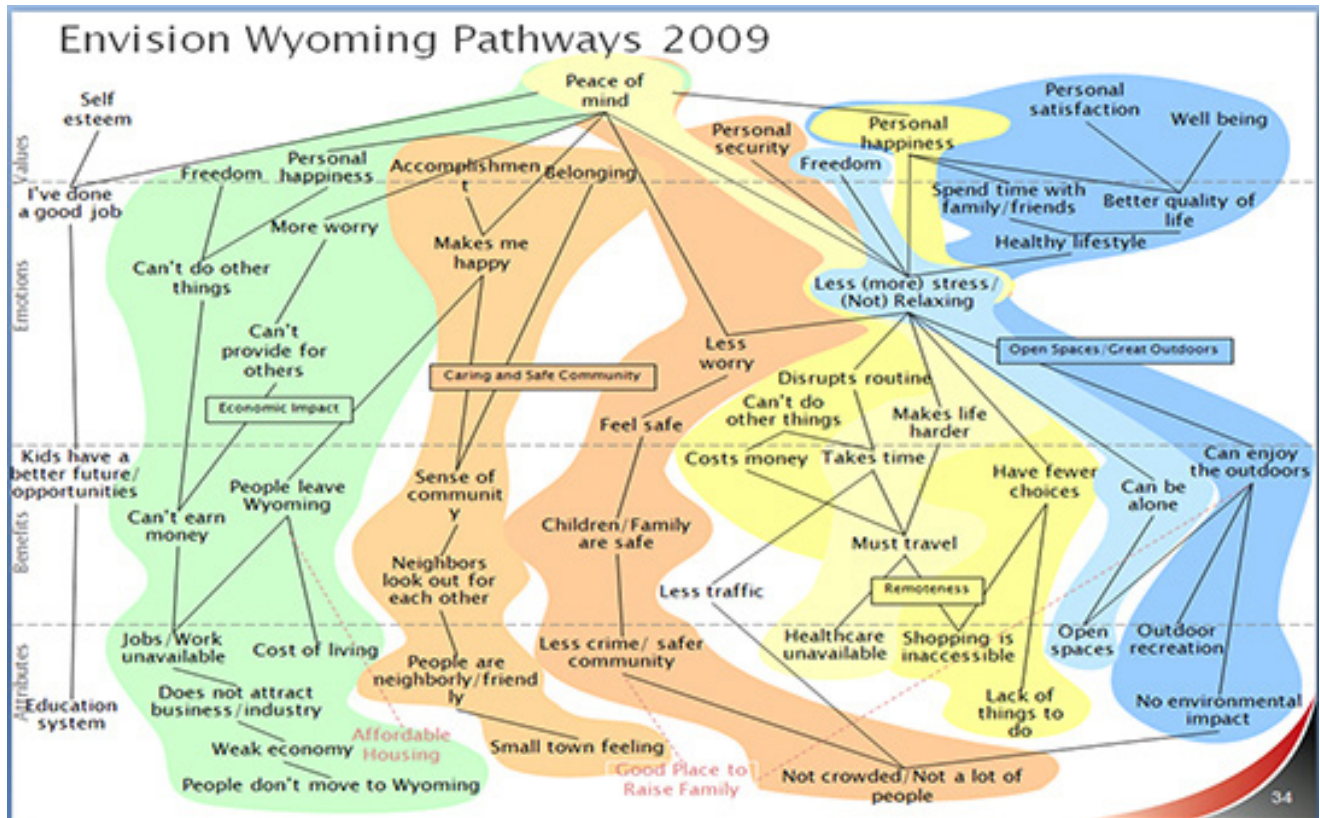


Figure 4. Values laddering. This example shows a value laddering that the market research firm assisting Envision Utah had previously conducted in Wyoming. Core values appear in the top “rung” of the ladder while initial responses provided by individual (attributes) appear in the bottom “rung.”

most; and the security of a good job. To achieve the public’s aspirations, Envision Utah we created the Quality Growth Strategy, which provides voluntary, locally-implemented, market-based solutions. It also called for significant public investment in public transportation, so that today the greater Salt Lake City area is one of the nation’s leaders in public transit.

To help other communities chart their future, Envision Utah created a Regional Visioning Guidebook: www.envisionutah.org/about/process/regional-visioning-guidebook

Source: envisionutah.org/about/mission-history

City of Boulder, CO

Boulder has a good transit system, but they want to make it great. They have designed an exercise that allows you to select potential improvements that would help you to ride transit more often, or hop on the bus for the first time.

Source: boulder-transit.herokuapp.com (broken link)



Start spending your \$ by checking the boxes below!

↓


			BENEFITS					COSTS
			Ridership ?	Speed & Reliability ?	Passenger Experience ?	Multimodal Connections ?	Energy/Emissions ?	
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Figure 5. Part of Boulder Transit Design interactive worksheet.

TriMet

TriMet, the public transit agency for the greater Portland area, is seeking public input to help plan improvements to transit service, stops, and crossings in community. Between 2013 and 2015, TriMet is asking riders, residents, neighborhood groups, governments, schools, and businesses for their feedback to create a long-term vision for transit service. Together, they will identify and prioritize opportunities to improve bus service as well as pedestrian and bike access to transit.



Figure 6. TriMet is dividing its service district into five areas.

Source: future.trimet.org

University of Oregon Community Planning Workshop

The Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD) is exploring options for High Capacity Transit (HCT) along the Highway 99 corridor between Central Point and Ashland. In Spring 2014, the University of Oregon Community Planning Workshop (CPW) assisted RVTD in evaluating the feasibility of this project by providing a preliminary assessment of community perceptions and evaluation of the policy opportunities and constraints associated with the development and enhancement of transit in the region.



CPW utilized three methods to elicit public perceptions: key person interviews, focus group meetings, and three surveys—a RVTD patron survey, a business survey, and an online survey. At the end of their assessment, CPW provided RVTD with three deliverables: community engagement strategy, community engagement report summarizing collected perceptions, and a review of existing plans, policies, land use regulations and studies,

Source: scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/18828/RVTD%20HCT%20Report.pdf

Jarrett Walker

Jarrett Walker is a consultant in public transit network design and policy, based in Portland, Oregon. He has been a full-time consultant since 1991 and has led numerous major planning projects in North America, Australia, and New Zealand. He provides expert advice to clients worldwide.

Walker offers “Transit Network Design: an Interactive Course,” which is designed to give anyone a grasp of how network design works, so that they can form more confident and resilient opinions about transit proposals. Any institution or organization can sponsor the course. So far, it has been offered through universities, professional organizations, and transit authorities.

Source: humantransit.org/courses



The Bridgespan Group

The Bridgespan Group offers a collection of resources sharing research that explores the keys to success of community collaboratives and recommending ways to drive more collective impact. It also includes a number of profiles of community collaboratives that have successfully addressed challenges in their communities, as well as three guides that can help collaboratives become more effective in their efforts.

Source: www.bridgespan.org/insights/library/children-youth-and-families/needle-moving-community-collaboratives-a-promising



Figure 8. A new kind of community collaborative—an approach that aspires to significant community-wide progress by enlisting multiple sectors to work together toward a common goal—offers real promise for bringing about broader, more lasting change across the nation.

Oregon Consensus

Oregon Consensus, part of the National Policy Consensus Center at Portland State University, can provide assistance to controversial policy issues in Oregon when some are looking to work constructively together. Oregon Consensus can:

- Conduct a formal assessment to understand the dynamics of the situation better.
- Identifying key project participants.
- Working with you and other stakeholders to design a process and select a mediator.
- Providing ongoing project facilitation or agreement-seeking, oversight and evaluation.



Source: oregonconsensus.org/resources/resources-overview

International Association for Public Participation

As an international leader in public participation, the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has developed the “IAP2 Core Values for Public Participation” for use in the development and implementation of public participation processes. These core values were developed over a two-year period with broad international input to identify those aspects of public participation that cross national, cultural, and religious boundaries. The purpose of these core values is to help make better decisions that reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities:

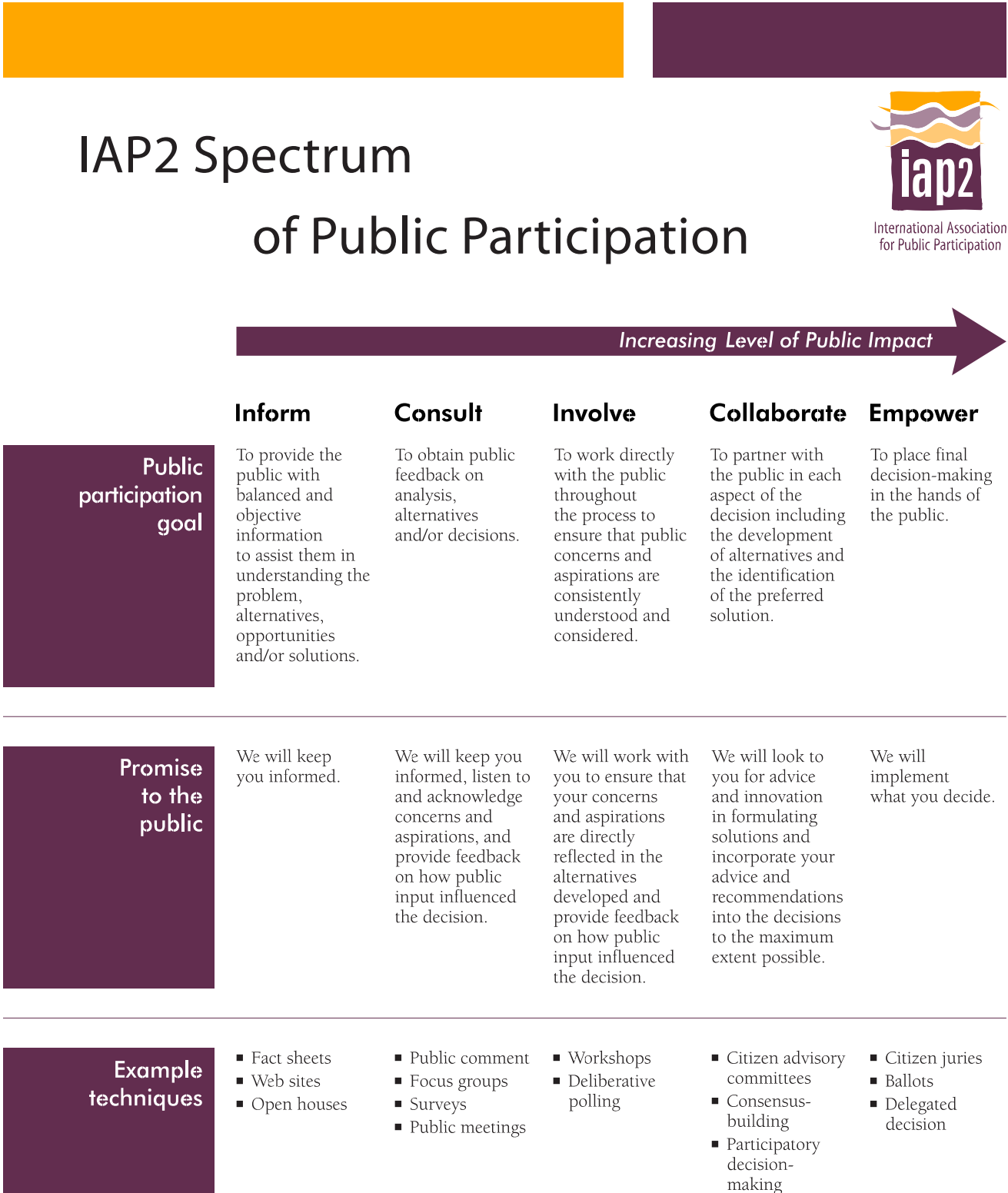
1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public’s contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Source: www.iap2.org/?page=A4

Additional resources:

- Student Workbook: Planning for effective public participation, Denver: International Association for Public Participation, 2006.
c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/06_PlanningStudentManual.pdf
- Student Manual: Communication for effective public participation, Denver: International Association for Public Participation, 2006.
<http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/Trainers%20Manual.Communications%20for%20Effective%20Public%20Participation.pdf>
- [Student Manual: Techniques for effective public participation, Denver: International Association for Public Participation, 2006.](http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/06_TechniquesStudentManual.pdf)
c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/06_TechniquesStudentManual.pdf
(broken link)





© 2007 International Association for Public Participation

Figure 8. IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



Lane Livability Consortium

The Lane Livability Consortium was founded in 2010 to bring together Lane County, Oregon, regional leaders in economic development, higher education, transportation, affordable housing, water and energy, and social equity to build upon the Eugene-Springfield region's successes and to further integrate livability into our plans and strategies.

As part of its Livability Toolkit, it identified a number of ways the region can improve public participation methods in general and specifically for marginalized communities. The Baseline Assessment specifically recommends the development of a peer-to-peer working group on public participation, development of resources to help with reaching marginalized communities, and exploration of more comprehensive needs assessments. A number of concerns have been identified related specifically to members of the Latino community, which primarily center on perceptions

of insecurity and community belonging as well as concerns about access to quality affordable housing, transportation, parks, health services, and community gardening spaces.

This Livability Toolkit also presents general methods and specific tools any jurisdiction can use for making more cost-effective and more transparent decisions that better advance community goals. Triple Bottom Line analysis, for example can facilitate better consideration of economic development, social equity and the environment (the “three E’s”). Although some of these terms are new, such approaches reflect what jurisdictions have always been called upon to do: advance and balance multiple objectives with limited resources.

Source: www.livabilitylane.org/toolkit/latino_outreach.htm



Figure 9. Students engaged in Transit Network Design: an Interactive Course.



Figure 10. Latino Participatory Research Project.



APPENDIX B:

ORGANIZATIONS WE INTERVIEWED AND WHAT THEY DO

The community conversations that are the basis of this report took place between January and September 2014. Below you'll find a listing of the organizations with whom we spoke and their mission statements and/or descriptions of their service to our community.

Active Bethel Citizens Steering Committee: “Active Bethel Citizens (ABC) was chartered by the City of Eugene in May 1974. We are one of 19 neighborhood associations recognized by the City. ABC has been formed to help resolve the concerns of the people of the neighborhood. These concerns include but are not limited to: land use and planning, social, recreational, educational, economic development and transportation needs; and to promote a sense of community cohesiveness and self-reliance. ABC will also serve in an educational capacity to inform the citizens in this community, and to continue the planning process by periodically reevaluating its goals, objectives, and recommendations.”

Source: activebethelcitizens.blogspot.com

American Institute of Architects, Southwestern Oregon (Past Presidents): “The Southwestern Oregon Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA-SWO) was founded as a chapter in 1952, a professional organization. Based in Eugene, our chapter’s geographic reach spans 9 counties, stretching from the coast to Bend, and from Corvallis to Roseburg. 75 percent of our members are in Eugene, 15 percent in Corvallis, and the remainder are in Bend or elsewhere. We are a volunteer-run organization with one part-time paid staff person.”

Source: www.aiaswo.org/about

Church Women United of Lane County: “Church Women United, an ecumenical movement of Christian women impassioned by the Holy Spirit, advocates on behalf of women and children throughout the world. We find unity in diversity, and we work for a world of peace and justice. Church Women United of Lane County supports the National programs, priorities and goals, and celebrations. Our monthly forums reflect the concerns of participants and explore issues of concern to local and state governments and to the citizens of Lane County, Oregon.”

Source: www.cwulanecounty.org

City Club of Eugene: “The mission of the City Club of Eugene is to build community vision through open inquiry. We explore a wide range of significant local, state, and national issues and help to formulate new approaches and solutions to problems. Club members have a direct influence on public policy by discussing issues of concern with elected officials and other policy makers. Membership is open to all.”

Source: www.cityclubofeugene.org/about/our-mission



Community Behavioral Health Consortium: “Ensuring improved health outcomes through the provision of a coordinated continuum of mental health and chemical dependency treatment services that meet the needs of children, youth, adults and elders throughout Lane County.”

Source: www.trilliumchp.com/documents/University/2013-University/Marshall-Peter/CBHC-Flyer-10022013-UPDATED1.pdf

Eugene Active Transportation Committee (formerly: Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee): “Eugene’s Active Transportation Committee (ATC) advises the City of Eugene Transportation Planning staff and community organizations and partners on the following: implementation of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategic Plan, community and constituent interests in transportation planning decisions, and provides feedback to staff on projects relating to walking and bicycling.”

Source: www.eugene-or.gov/490/Committees

Eugene Human Rights Commission: “The mission of the Human Rights Commission is to promote implementation of universal human rights values and principles in all City of Eugene programs and throughout the wider community. To carry out this mission the commission shall affirm, encourage and initiate programs and services within the City of Eugene and in the wider community designed to place priority upon protecting, respecting, and fulfilling the full range of universal human rights as enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

Source: www.eugene-or.gov/2376/Mission-History

Eugene 4J school district: “Eugene School District 4J is a K–12 public school district in and around Eugene, Oregon. The district spans 155 square miles in Oregon’s southern Willamette Valley. Most of the city of Eugene (about 85 percent) lies inside 4J’s boundaries, as do the town of Coburg and a small part of Linn County to the north.”

Source: www.4j.lane.edu/communications/about

Springfield school district: “Springfield Public Schools believes that student success is our most important outcome. We seek to improve each child’s quality of experience by meeting their needs—one child at a time. We believe that the schools belong to the community and the community belongs to the schools. We are committed to upholding the dream of opportunity for each of Springfield’s children and we stand behind our vision of ‘Every Student a Graduate Prepared for a Bright and Successful Future. We believe the best way to achieve this goal is by working to ensure our students, teachers, staff, parents and community members are all learning together. Through ongoing conversations with the community, we believe children are better prepared to take advantage of opportunities to allow for their success in the 21st century. We hope this web site serves as a place to have inspiring conversations, make connections and celebrate our successes as a community working and learning together.”

Source: www.springfield.k12.or.us/domain/3

Bethel School District: “Welcome to Bethel School District, the third largest school district in Lane County. Bethel is a growing school district in northwest Eugene that is home to approximately 5,700 students. The district encompasses 31.7 square miles, and features bike trails, wetlands, public parks, streams and a portion of Fern Ridge Reservoir.



“Bethel School District is proud of one of the most comprehensive high school facilities in the state. Willamette High School, with its labs, shops, three gymnasiums and performing arts auditorium, serves a student population of about 1,500 students in grades 9–12. Wil-Hi’s graduation rate is the highest among the large local public schools in Eugene and Springfield, and is 10 points higher than the state average.”

Source: www.bethel.k12.or.us/district/aboutus-2

Portland Public Schools: “Portland Public Schools, founded in 1851, is a PK-12 urban school district in Portland, Oregon. With more than 49,000 students in 78 schools, it is one of the largest school districts in the Pacific Northwest. With highly trained teachers and staff; an engaged parent community; strong partnerships, and a focus on closing the racial educational achievement gap, PPS is at its highest graduation rate in at least 15 years and is enjoying its seventh straight year of enrollment growth. Thanks to the state Legislature, school funding is improving and thanks to Portland voters, a PPS School Building Improvement Bond is now fueling the modernization of our aging school buildings for 21st century learning.”

Source: www.pps.net/domain/265

Friendly Area Neighbors: “Friendly Area Neighbors (FAN) is one of about 23 officially-recognized neighborhood associations in Eugene, Oregon. A board of up to 15 people meets monthly and general membership meetings are held quarterly. The purpose of Friendly Area Neighbors is to build community at the neighborhood level and improve the livability of the neighborhood.”

Source: www.friendlyareaneighbors.org

Human Service Providers Forum: Executive Directors of nonprofit Human and Public Service providers who receive funding from the Lane County Human Services Commission and United Way as well as other non profit and service provider leaders who received the invitation and receive funding from Lane County or the Cities of Eugene and Springfield.

Source: Susan Ban, Executive Director, ShelterCare

Jefferson Westside Neighbors: “The mission of the Neighborhood association is to build community at the neighborhood level and improve the livability of the neighborhood.”

Source: www.jwneugene.org/about/charter

Lane Community College: “The goal of Lane Community College is to help students achieve their dreams and transform lives through learning. The faculty and staff are dedicated to helping students succeed. Lane partners with businesses in the community to help shape the current and future workforce. ... Lane is a learning-centered community college that provides affordable, quality, lifelong educational opportunities ...”

Source: www.lanecc.edu/about

League of Women Voters of Lane County Action Committee: “The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.”

Source: www.lwvlc.org/about-the-league/mission-principles



Oregon Supported Living Program: “Our mission at Oregon Supported Living Program is to enhance the lives of adults with developmental disabilities by providing person-centered residential, vocational and supported living programs with emphasis on the arts and community integration.”

Source: www.oslp.org/about.html

Interfaith Clergy United: Interfaith Clergy United (formerly known as the Progressive Clergy Association) is a monthly gathering of Eugene and Springfield religious leaders. The group gathers to deepen our understanding of local concerns, for collegial support, and for networking to strengthen the religious voice in creating a more just, peaceful, and inclusive community for all.

Source: Rev. Melanie Oommen, Associate Minister, First Congregational United Church of Christ

River Road Community Organization: “The River Road Community Organization supports the River Road area within Eugene, Oregon in Lane County. The River Road area is roughly bound by the Beltline Highway (Route 569) on the North, Northwest Highway on the west and the Willamette River on the east.”

Source: riverroadco.org/wp/?page_id=1005

Springfield Chamber of Commerce Government Issues Committee: “Serving almost a thousand businesses in the Southern Willamette Valley, the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce’s mission “To champion our community’s future as a regional leader in economic vitality and quality of life” plays an important part in our everyday work.”

Source: www.springfield-chamber.org/pages/AboutUs

Springfield City Club: “To promote leadership and vision for Springfield by bringing together the community for open dialogue and civic engagement, the Springfield City Club provides its members with thought provoking programs and discussions of community issues.”

Source: www.springfieldcityclub.org

Springfield Rotary Club: “Rotary brings together people like you from all walks of life who want to use their expertise for good. People whose sense of responsibility inspires them to give back to their communities. At Rotary, we connect for good and form lifelong friendships in the process. Together, we empower youth, improve health, promote peace, and advance our communities in all corners of the globe. With 1.2 million members in 34,000 clubs worldwide, our global community’s impact has never been greater and it continues to grow.”

Source: www.springfieldore364rotary.org

University of Oregon: “The University of Oregon is a comprehensive public research university committed to exceptional teaching, discovery, and service. We work at a human scale to generate big ideas. As a community of scholars, we help individuals question critically, think logically, reason effectively, communicate clearly, act creatively, and live ethically.”

Source: pages.uoregon.edu/uosenate/UOmissionstatement.html



APPENDIX C:

2014 ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Introduction

Before you respond, we want to tell you about this survey and who we are.

About This Survey

Our community is at a juncture. The decision to proceed with EmX bus rapid transit in west Eugene is almost two years behind us. Ahead lie decisions on whether, where, and how to improve transit in our community, as envisioned in regional plans such as Envision Eugene, the Springfield 2030 Refinement Plan, and the Central Lane Regional Transportation Plan.

We have an opportunity to have a more enlightening and constructive discussion than before by building on our shared values, and starting by asking why: Why transit? Why have public transit at all? What purpose does it serve? What benefits do a strong transit system provide? How does transit support the things we value as a community and our vision for our future? By starting with why—ends before means—questions about if, where, when, who, and how much will become easier to answer.

To help us understand why transit, please take 5–10 minutes to complete this survey, which consists of the following pages of questions, most of which are optional:

1. Introduction
2. Your Transportation Choices (3 questions)
3. Importance of Transit (4 questions)
4. Doing Better (4 questions)
5. About You (5 questions)
6. Thank You

Please be candid. We welcome all points of view. At your request, we will keep your responses confidential.

This summer, we will report to the community what we have heard. If there are some common themes, areas of agreement, we hope to suggest possible next steps for moving forward together.

Who We Are

Better Eugene-Springfield Transit (BEST) is a privately funded and independent nonprofit organization that educates the public about and promotes a regional transit system that fosters prosperity, social



equity, and a healthy natural environment. More broadly, we believe good transportation options are good for everyone. We include community leaders representing businesses, social services, the environment, schools, neighborhoods, people of faith, and other community groups. We strive to work together to find win win win solutions that advance all our interests.

BEST doesn't pretend to have all the answers. We do know we can all learn by listening to each other. We are listening to lots of groups about the kind of community we want to have, and the role of transit. Learn more about our community conversations...

If you have any question about this effort, please contact BEST Executive Director Rob Zako at rob@best-oregon.org or 541-343-5201.

Disclaimer

BEST is solely responsible for this survey. BEST is unaffiliated with Lane Transit District.

2. Your Transportation Choices

Let's start with your personal experience making local trips to work, school, appointments, shopping, recreation, etc.

1. How frequently do you make local trips in each of the following ways? (check all that apply)

Choices: Most or all trips | A few times a week | A few times a month | A few times a year | Never

- Drive myself
- Carpool with someone else driving
- Take EmX bus rapid transit
- Take a regular (nonEmX) public bus
- Use the RideSource doortodoor service
- Bicycle
- Walk or use a wheelchair
- Telecommute (stay at home rather than making a trip)
- Other ways? Comments?



2. If you sometimes take a public bus, what are your reasons? (check all that apply)*Choices: Very Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important*

- Fast
- Convenient
- Lack or high cost of parking at my destination
- Save money
- Unable to drive
- Don't have access to a car
- Less stressful/easier than other transportation options
- Avoid bad weather
- Personal health
- Be with other people
- Improve local air quality or reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Other reasons? Comments?

3. What obstacles are there to your taking the bus more or at all? (check all that apply)*Choices: Major obstacle | Minor annoyance | Not an obstacle*

- Takes too much time to get door-to-door
- A bus doesn't stop close enough to my origin and/or destination
- A bus doesn't run as early in the morning as I need it
- A bus doesn't run as late in the evening as I need it
- A bus doesn't run on weekends, summers or holidays when I need it
- Buses run too infrequently to match my schedule
- It is too complicated to figure out routes and schedules
- Unable or can't safely access the bus stop
- I don't feel personally safe waiting for or being on a bus
- I don't like being with other people or the other passengers on the bus
- I can't afford the bus fare
- Not enough space for wheelchairs
- Not enough space for bicycles
- Other obstacles? Comments?



3. Importance of Transit

Now let's look at the importance of transit to our community, whether or not you personally ride the bus.

4. Imagine no public transit at all—maybe some billionaire convinces the Oregon Legislature to outlaw public transit. How would you personally or our community be impacted if public transit disappeared entirely? (fill in the blank)

5. Now flip it. Imagine we have a worldclass public transit system—maybe some billionaire decides to give our community a huge grant. How would you personally or our community be impacted with such a public transit system? (fill in the blank)

6. In your view, what are some BENEFITS of public transit to the community? (check all that apply)

Choices: Very Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important

- Provide decent transportation options for people with disabilities
- Provide decent transportation options for people who can't afford to drive
- Provide decent transportation options for those too young or too old to drive
- Support the economy by getting people to work and shopping
- Get K-12 and highered students to school
- Reduce the cost of transportation, hence the cost of living
- Keep more dollars circulating in the local economy by reducing expenses for cars and gasoline
- Reduce traffic congestion
- Reduce land needed for parking
- Support plans for how our community grows and develops
- Improve public health
- Improve the environment
- Other benefits? Comments?

7. In your view, what are some COSTS of public transit to the community? (check all that apply)

Choices: Very Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important

- Cost to taxpayers
- Increased traffic congestion
- Takes away parking spaces
- Increases crime or encourages homelessness
- Negatively impact neighborhoods
- Degrades public health
- Degrades the environment
- Other costs? Comments?



4. Doing Better

We are starting with why: Why is transit important to our community? But if you have ideas on how public transit could be better, we'd love to hear them! *(fill in the blank)*

8. What would be your ideal public transit system? Describe in as much detail as you like how your experience riding the bus would be different from that today. Feel free to dream, even if you don't see how your dreams might be realized. Or If you feel like you already live with the ideal transit system, please say so. *(fill in the blank)*

9. In the next few years, what single improvement or action could you see happening that would most improve transit for you? Or if you don't see the need for any improvements, please say so. *(fill in the blank)*

10. Do you have other suggestions for making transit better or for encouraging people to ride the bus? *(fill in the blank)*

11. Who are some key individuals or organizations who might want to help make transit better? *(fill in the blank)*

5. About You

12. What is Your Gender?

- Male
- Female

13. How old are you?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85 or older

14. Some of your comments might be quoted in the report to the community. If so, may we credit you by name?

- Yes. You may quote me by name.
- Maybe. Please check with me first before quoting me by name.
- No. Please keep my comments anonymous and do not quote me by name.
- Comments?



***15. If we have more questions or want to provide you with updates on this effort, how may we contact you? Please provide at least your name and email address. Your contact info will be kept in strict confidence, and you will not be spammed.**

Name (required):

Address:

City:

State:

ZIP:

Email Address (required):

Phone Number:

16. Do you want to help improve transit in our community?

- YES, YES, YES! It is my life passiona to make transit better.
- Yes. I am willing to devote significant time and/or money.
- Maybe. I am willing to help as I am able, but am pretty busy.
- Not really. I'm not interested in helping at this time.
- Definitely not.

Comments on how you might help? Additional thoughts, suggestions or concerns? *(Fill in the blank)*

