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Emerald  **346-5511**

Oregon Emerald

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. A member of the Associated Press, the Emerald operates independently of the University with offices in Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union. The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

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LTD

Continued from Page 1

The cost of Bus Rapid Transit will be 4 percent to 10 percent of a comparable light rail system.

At LTD's Eugene Station customer service center Wednesday, the final stage of planning a Bus Rapid Transit corridor for a section of Franklin Boulevard was unveiled in a series of displays to passersby.

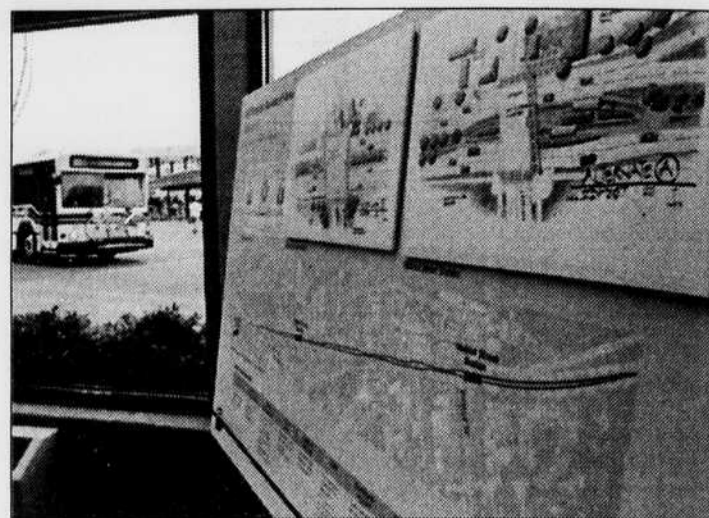
"We hope to go through the preliminary engineering in the year 2001," said Graham Carey, Bus Rapid Transit project engineer. He said construction won't begin until 2003, when this year's University freshmen will be grabbing their diplomas.

The initial Bus Rapid Transit section is proposed for Franklin Boulevard and stretches from a proposed "Dad's Gate Station" near Robinson Theater to a "Walnut Station" near the edge of Glenwood.

"We want a system that mimics light rail," Carey said.

To accomplish this, LTD will use low-floor buses traveling down a landscaped meridian in raised concrete pathways just a few inches wider than the bus. To keep the buses from meandering, Carey said, the buses will be fitted with small guide wheels that protrude from underneath the bus's sides and roll against the sides of the raised pathway. The wheels will hold the buses in a steady line.

Because of the buses' steadiness, the concrete used to make



A bus rolls into Eugene Station where an open house on the future of bus transit was held on Wednesday afternoon.

the track can be limited to the space under the wheels. Grass could then be planted down the middle of the track, Carey said.

According to LTD Planning and Development, the system will allow buses to travel faster because they won't have to pull out of traffic to let passengers on and off.

Three alternative ways of designing the system were presented Wednesday. The first plan calls for a single track that buses traveling from east to west would share. Signals would warn drivers if the track is occupied by an oncoming bus.

The two other plans called for dual pathways to separate east and west traffic, but they would

use space now taken by traffic lanes.

Of the three plans, the first is expected to win more community support because it does not require the removal of any of the six auto lanes on Franklin Boulevard, Carey said.

The proposed construction on Franklin Boulevard near the University is only the beginning of several long-term projects. Eventually the Bus Rapid Transit system will extend from Seneca Road in West Eugene to Springfield and Thurston.

LTD Planning and Development officials expect to be finished planning the last stretch of the system — East Springfield — in the winter of 1999.

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