

# New transit system to speed commutes

Spurred by local growth, LTD will add a new bus system to the docket of transit options

**Danielle Gillespie**  
Safety/Crime/Transportation Reporter

Students use many different modes of transportation to travel to campus — bicycle, car, moped, motorcycle or the bus. But in a few years, students will have another option.

In spring 2003, the Lane Transit District will start construction on the first phase of its Bus Rapid Transit, a system that will have a separate bus lane along the current median that runs down Franklin Boulevard to Main Street in Springfield. The project will cost about \$20 million.

The first phase will be four miles long and will start at the downtown Eugene Station — located at West 11th Avenue and Willamette Street — and run to a new Springfield station being constructed on South A Street. Eight stations will sit along the route, and six buses will drive the loop.

LTD Public Relations Representative Sue Aufort said LTD hopes to have the new transit system operating by late 2004.

University senior Andrea Rodriguez said she is frustrated with

the current bus system because she often must switch buses, and she thinks this new system will be much more convenient.

"It will be nice to (take) one bus (when I'm traveling) one way," she said.

LTD foresaw a need for the system to prevent future problems, Aufort said.

"All information indicates that we will need it," she said. "Population is set to rise in Eugene, and if we wait 10 to 15 years, the congestion is already going to be there."

LTD decided to install the Bus Rapid Transit instead of a light-rail system because it will save about 4 to 10 percent in operating costs. LTD expects the new transit system to be within its budget.

Because LTD is partially funded by student incidental fees, ASUO has plans to meet and discuss the new transit system in the next couple weeks before coming to a formal stance on the issue, ASUO Community Outreach Coordinator Jesse Harding said.

Aufort said she thinks the new bus system will benefit students because the bus will have its own lane and will be protected from delays in traffic. The lane will be built with raised, concrete curbs to guide the bus.



An artist's rendering of LTD's Bus Rapid Transit System. Courtesy

"Hopefully people driving and sitting in traffic jams will watch the bus zoom by and think, 'Hey, maybe I should take that,'" Aufort said. "That's what we want."

The system will be quicker because it will have its own traffic signal that turns green a few seconds ahead of the other signals, allowing the bus to get a jump start on other traffic, she said.

LTD is discussing expanding the line to run along the median next to Pioneer Parkway in Springfield

and along Coburg Road, as well. Aufort said LTD hasn't decided if the transit system will connect and make a full loop around town. She said the entire build-out plan should be finished in the next 20 years.

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