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COMMUNITY

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BRT to speed residents around town

The system, which will see hybrid-electric busses speed passengers down Franklin Boulevard, is set for construction starting spring of 2004

By A. Sho Ikeda
Senior News Reporter

Area residents will not see signs of the first phase of Eugene's newest transportation system, Bus Rapid Transit, until the end of the school year, because construction has been postponed until spring 2004.

The BRT system — based on the principles of

light rail transportation, such as Portland's Metropolitan Area Express (MAX) — uses busses in coordination with existing infrastructure like roads and traffic signals. BRT busses would also have an exclusive right-of-way, letting them bypass other vehicles in their own lane.

Mark Pangborn, assistant general manager at Lane Transit District, said much progress has been made in developing BRT, despite construction delays.

Pangborn said the BRT proposal is already in its final stages, and LTD is waiting for approval of building permits from the city of Eugene and the Oregon Department of Transportation.

"We're waiting for permits on our design of the

Phase 1 system," Pangborn said. "We will probably get those during the next couple of months."

Pangborn said LTD needed to resolve design issues before applying for permits from the city and ODOT, preventing the organization from starting construction this summer, as originally planned. He added that LTD is also waiting for the University to select a site for its new basketball arena. The University is considering building the arena at several sites along Franklin Boulevard, where the BRT will operate.

"Of course, we want to make sure that everything is settled before even starting construction,"

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Criminal activities down by 6 percent

Although the overall crime rate sank last year, area bike thefts increased by 22.5 percent

Ali Shaughnessy
Senior News Reporter

University junior Sara Green has lived in Eugene for two years. She said that while she has never felt threatened, she knows to keep her bike locked up and her personal belongings close at hand.

"My bike was stolen my second week here," she said. "I learned my lesson."

It's possible others have learned that lesson in the same way, or perhaps thievery is on the decline. Either way, the crime rate for person, property and behavioral crimes in Eugene dropped 5.6 percent from 2001 to 2002, according to Eugene Police Department reports.

The University area in particular also saw a decrease in crime, while both the South University and West University neighborhoods saw an increase in person, property and behavioral crimes.

EPD Spokeswoman Kerry Delf noted that percentage changes from one year to the next don't necessarily mean crime is changing for better or worse.

Bike thefts increased in the city of Eugene, from 732 in 2001 to 897 in 2002, a 22.5 percent increase. On campus, bike theft increased 73.7 percent, jumping from 118 cases in 2001 to 205 cases in 2002. There was no change in the South University neighborhood, but in the West University neighborhood, bike thefts increased from 86 in 2001 to 111 in 2002, a 29.1 percent increase.

EPD Crime Prevention Specialist Tod Schneider recommends that people buy a heavy duty, U-Bolt-style lock.

"Always lock your bike, or assume it will be stolen," he said. "Standard cable locks will not be adequate." He added that if people can get around without a fancy bike, they have a better chance of their bicycle not being stolen.

Rape incidents also increased in Eugene. There were 40 cases reported in 2001 and 55 in 2002 — a 37.5 percent increase.

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A rose is a rose

Eugene's award-winning Owen Rose Garden offers at least 47 of the 52 categories of roses among 4,500 shrubs on nine acres of land

By Ayisha Yahya
News Editor

Fiery pinks and mellow peaches. Luscious reds and virgin whites. With its vibrant flowers, Eugene's Owen Rose Garden greets the eyes with a splash of color. The garden is located on Jefferson Street, along the Willamette River, and offers a tranquil space away from the bustle of urban life.

George E. Owen, a local lumberman and philanthropist, donated the original two acres of the garden to Eugene in 1950, selling the acres for \$10 each. Owen said he wanted "a place where the people of Eugene could get away from daily stresses and smell the roses." The Eugene Rose Society then donated 750 rose bushes to start the garden.

The garden now covers about nine acres and has more than 4,500 shrubs of some 400 varieties of roses, according to the garden's Web site. Head gardener Dee Grissell said there are 52 different classes of roses, adding that the garden includes at least 47 of these classes. He said the garden has both old-style and modern varieties, as well as some rarer types.

"We have some roses that nobody has or are very rare," he said.

Taking care of the flowers is labor-intensive, Grissell said. The garden has three gardeners constantly tending to the plants as they bloom from buds into a flourish of color.

"Each plant has its own individual character so you learn by trial and error from year to year (what each one needs)," he said.

Even in the winter, when the flowers are dormant, the gardeners must continue pruning them. In the spring, Grissell said they start cleaning, fertilizing and spraying the plants for fungus.

"We try to minimize our pesticide usage," he said. "We use no

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Jessica Waters Photo Editor

Owen Rose Garden, on Jefferson Street, covers nearly nine acres and boasts more than 400 varieties of roses and is cared for by three gardeners.

Eight city councilors oversee Eugene's legislative work

City councilors have had a full legislative plate this session, dealing with many local hot topics

By Jan Tobias Montry
Managing Editor

They may seem like governmental faces in the crowd to many University students, but the members of the Eugene City Council make a bigger impact than students may think.

In fact, the eight council members could decide many big issues this year, from cell tower locations on campus to the location of a new sports arena.

The City Council, the legislative branch of Eugene's government, develops policies and legislation for the city.

Papé

The City Council has two leadership positions, president and vice president, who don't hold any significant additional power. Currently, Ward 5 City Councilor Gary Papé is president and Ward 8 City Councilor Nancy Nathanson is vice president.

Papé, who has lived in Eugene for 48 years, said the city doesn't

have the resources to do everything it wants, and as a result, it must make cuts.

"First and foremost, I want to find a way through this difficult financial time," he said.

Papé said he wants to focus his efforts on public safety services and saving police services, which he said are short of what a community of Eugene's size should have.

Also on Papé's plate are working on the new fire station and federal courthouse constructions, and enhancing branch libraries to accompany the downtown library.

"I hope we will do it with the long-term taste and construction we saw with the (downtown) library," he said.

Nathanson

Nathanson, whose western ward is more conservative than the other South Eugene wards, is heavily involved in telecommunications, but she also lists public safety, as well as parks and open space, as her top priorities.

Nathanson's involvement in telecommunications started when she chaired a committee that developed Eugene's comprehensive

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Mark McCambridge Senior photographer

City councilors meet on Jan. 13 to discuss the marijuana fine increase and to choose several new officers.