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# West Eugene EmX Extension **UPDATE**

Want more information?  
Come to an open house!

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ltd.org!

If you would like to sign up to receive e-newsletters about the West Eugene EmX and other projects, visit our website at ltd.org.

## Come to an OPEN HOUSE!

Mark your calendar! Plan to attend one of these drop-in open houses to learn about EmX in our community, what we're learning about the benefits of the proposed West Eugene EmX, and how you can be involved in the upcoming process.

**Monday, October 24**  
10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, October 25**  
4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Eugene Public Library  
Bascom-Tykeson Meeting Room

Not able to make the meeting?  
Give us a call at 541-682-6106 to schedule an appointment to talk with staff about the project.

### ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

Alternative formats of printed material and/or a sign language interpreter will be made available with 48 hours' notice. The facilities used for these meetings are wheelchair accessible. For more information, call 682-6100 (voice) or 7-1-1 (TTY).

Este boletín informativo está disponible en español en la página de LTD: weemx.ltd.org, o puede pedir una copia llamando al 682-6100, la cual se la podemos enviar por correo o por e-mail. Si está interesado en recibir información actualizada en español, planea asistir una de nuestras reuniones o juntas abiertas al público y si quisiera tener un traductor, o quisiera obtener información impresa en español en la junta en, por favor háganoslo saber con anticipación. Para mayor información, por favor llame a LTD al 682-6100 ó visite nuestra pagina web: weemx.ltd.org.

The Best Way to Connect

## What are we learning?

Extensive analysis has shown that implementation of a West Eugene EmX Extension would result in:

**A highly cost-effective project** that provides more efficient transit service. By reducing travel time while improving service and attracting new riders, LTD's cost per rider decreases. This investment to provide better service into the future avoids many of the long-term operational costs and service problems associated with congestion.

**Less congestion for buses and general traffic.** Use of the shared BAT lanes (see "What is a BAT Lane" on Page 3) generally adds capacity at busy intersections, and over time,

more people using better transit service means fewer cars on the road. The traffic and ridership benefits will be immediate, and will continue to grow over the next 20 years. Compared to the do nothing option (No-Build), implementation of EmX in West Eugene will improve several congested intersections for all vehicles, and no intersection will be negatively affected.

**Support of land use and economic development plans.** The project will link high quality transit to the residential and commercial areas of West Eugene, the region's two commercial business districts, and our two largest employers, Peace Health and U of O. This improved transit connection of current and future residents with jobs is a critical element of our communities' land use plans and economic development goals.



The analysis shows that West Eugene EmX will add efficiency and reduce congestion.

OCTOBER 2011



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You may recall that earlier this year, the LTD Board of Directors, Eugene City Council, and Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) all selected the proposed West 6th/7th/11th Avenue alignment to move forward. This selection led to completion of an application for federal funds submitted to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in August, and initiation of the project's Environmental Analysis (EA).

There are three processes occurring simultaneously: the continued local review of the project, the federal process reviewing LTD's funding request, and the federal environmental review process.



## The Local Process

Earlier this year the LTD Board, Eugene City Council, and MPC selected the West 6th/7th/11th Avenue alignment as the best alternative for extension of EmX for this corridor. They each have the option of reaffirming that decision once the EA is complete. This is a good idea, as the EA will provide the public and officials with the most complete and detailed project specific analysis to date. This information will focus on the differences between the benefits and impacts of implementing either the project or the do nothing (No-Build) option.

## The Federal Environmental Review and Funding Request Processes.

LTD is preparing an Environmental Analysis (EA) for the proposed West Eugene EmX Extension. This analysis, required by FTA, analyzes in detail the environmental impacts (positive and negative) on our natural, built, and cultural environment. The EA compares the results to a do nothing (No-Build) alternative.

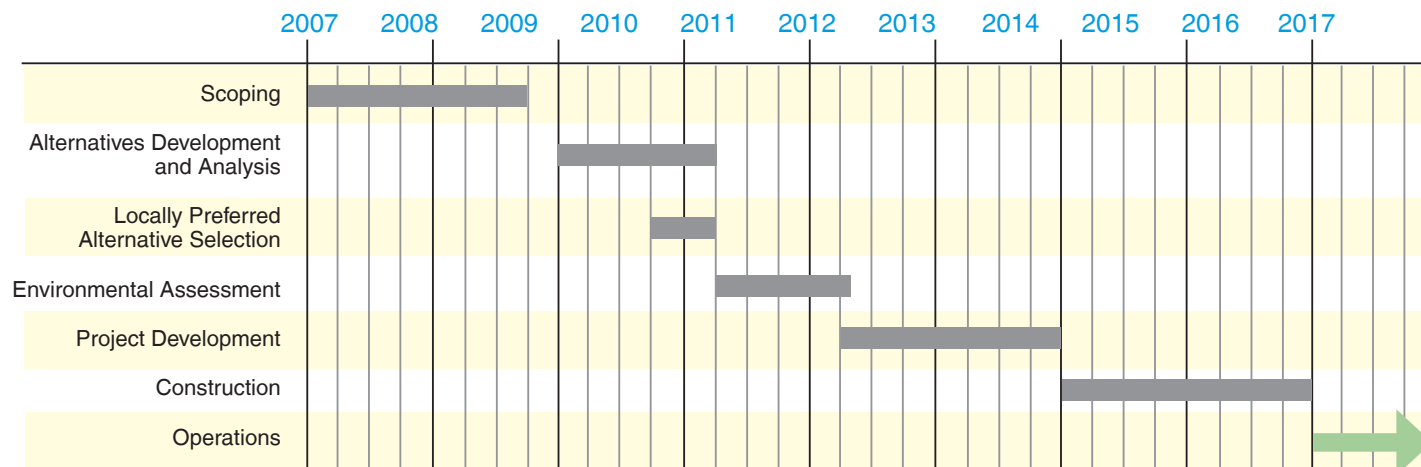
Although throughout the project's multi-year planning process the project has been refined to reduce or avoid impacts, this thorough analysis on the refined design of the locally preferred alternative is the right thing to do to ensure an appropriate project. FTA conducts extensive review of the methods and analysis, and the results of that analysis to ensure federal requirements for environmental issues are met, and that cost and ridership projections are accurate.

Once the EA is approved by FTA, it will be released to the public. The results of months of analysis will be available to the public for comment - expected at the end of this year. Before the EA is published, LTD will provide extensive public notice about upcoming public events and a 45 day comment period will be scheduled.

LTD welcomes and will respond to all comments on the analysis made during the public review period in a report for FTA to review. Based on the analysis and comments, FTA will determine if the analysis is sufficient and if it will issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

LTD recently submitted a request to FTA for federal funding for the project. This is a highly competitive process requiring extensive reporting and review of the project's costs and benefits as compared to transit projects across the country. We expect to hear by mid 2012 if we are successful.

When these local and federal processes have been accomplished, the project will move into the Project Development phase.



## Q: What is a "BAT" Lane?

A: BAT lane is short for a "Business Access and Transit" lane. This is a lane that is used by buses, and also available for traffic as a turn lane when accessing driveways or streets. An example of a BAT lane operates today along Pioneer Parkway north of Main Street.

## Q: Can the project operate in the future without the need to find extra money for operations from the legislature, local businesses, or without having to cut service?

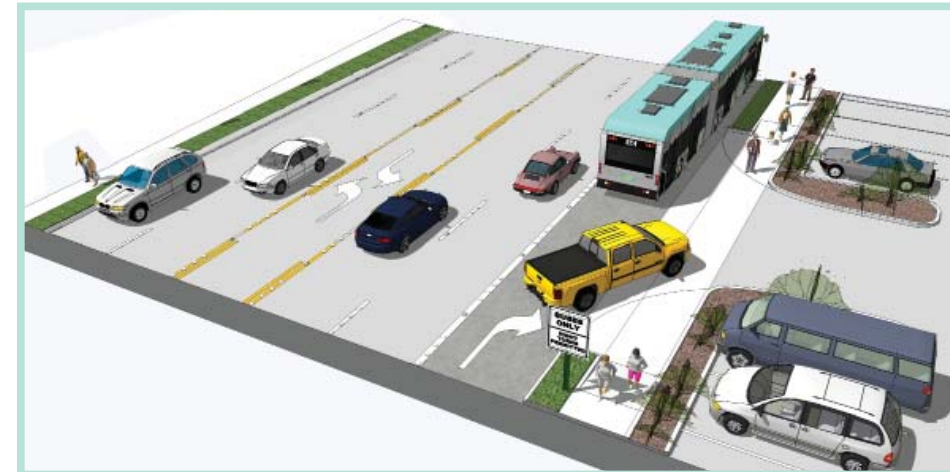
A: Yes. The additional operating costs are covered under LTD's current Long Range Financial Plan. The bigger question may be, "Can LTD afford not to invest in a system that operates more efficiently?" Investing in traditional transit options costs the community more in the long run. We believe our community is worth this very prudent investment in our future.

## Q: The impacts during construction and on properties along the corridor will be a disaster.

A: It is typical in a project such as this to begin with "fat lines" on a map that show generally where service might operate. As the number of alignments are reduced, staff are able to spend time and resources to fine-tune the concepts. Through conversations with the public, agencies, and other interested people, we have gone through many processes to avoid and minimize property and other impacts. The design concepts we have now reflect many conversations, and the conversations are continuing.

If our decision-makers do move the project forward, the work will really begin. Over the next two plus years, the project engineering work will occur. Although much mitigation of impacts has already been done, there are still more opportunities for this to occur.

LTD has learned a lot about EmX construction on the Franklin and Gateway corridors. Examples of strategies we've



BAT lanes allow buses and turning cars to be pulled out of the through-traffic lanes, enabling all traffic to move more smoothly and faster, as well as helping reduce transit travel times.

## Q: I hear the EmX is going to reduce the capacity of West 6th & 7th by 25%. A 1984 study concluded that this capacity was needed to address traffic projections.

A: EmX along West 6th and 7th Avenues will operate using a variety of strategies. This includes adding a BAT lane, reassigning a current lane to a BAT lane, and EmX operating in mixed traffic. The decision of which strategies to apply along the route was developed through an extensive public process by evaluating the potential operational benefits for both EmX and other traffic, and the impacts on adjacent properties. EmX's operational benefits did not trump other impacts; many design iterations were developed to avoid and minimize impacts to find a balanced alternative (the selected project).

ODOT has reviewed the project's traffic analysis projections, methods, and results, and has found them correct and acceptable. They agree that the conclusions of the 27-year old study are out of date and no longer valid. ODOT continues to support the project on West 6th and 7th Avenues because the project would preserve or improve the capacity of the roadway for both transit and all other vehicle traffic.

identified to reduce business disruption during construction include working at night, working in short segments to reduce the amount of time spent in front of a business, and use of quick-dry concrete where appropriate. Definitely, one of the best tools we've found is good communications with businesses before, during, and after construction so we can accommodate their business needs, such as deliveries, etc.

## Q: Why not just run more regular buses?

A: To put it simply: traffic congestion and cost. Congestion increases travel times for everyone, including the bus. As congestion increases, at some point we have to add another bus (and the costs to operate that bus) to maintain the current level of service. With congestion, the additional bus also will get stuck in traffic and further add to congestion. Longer travel times mean increased operating costs, and less attractive service and reliability. It makes more sense to pull the buses out of traffic allowing EmX to maintain travel times (and costs) regardless of increased traffic over time. This makes road conditions better for all, makes riding transit more attractive, and preserves LTD resources to better serve the community as a whole.