

EmX Website Evaluation

Final Report:

Prepared for: Lane Transit District

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September 2009



Special Thanks & Acknowledgements

Community Planning Workshop wishes to thank all the partners involved in making this project happen – the Oregon Transportation Research and Education Consortium, Lane Transit District, city planning staff from Eugene and Springfield, and transportation professionals from across the country.

We would especially like to thank Tom Schwetz and Mary Archer at Lane Transit District for their enthusiasm for the project and their faith in the learning experience. Also thanks to Terry Moore for transportation and, more importantly, report framework wisdom. Lastly, thanks to our Project Director, Bob Parker, who valiantly led us through the project from beginning to end.

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INTRODUCTION

Through a grant from the Oregon Transportation Research and Education Consortium (OTREC), Lane Transit District (LTD) partnered with University of Oregon's Community Planning Workshop (CPW) to assist LTD in evaluating the planning and implementation processes of their bus rapid transit line, the Emerald Express (EmX). As a part of this project, the CPW team communicated with various stakeholders to determine what they want to know about the EmX and what types of evaluation they would like to see conducted about the EmX.

This project will also help LTD develop a framework for evaluating the EmX system. This framework is based on Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidelines and stakeholder suggestions. Because bus rapid transit is a relatively new transit option in the United States, the work conducted for this project will also be valuable to transit agencies across the country that are looking to evaluate their systems.

Throughout the project, we conducted interviews, surveys, and focus groups with planners, policy makers, community members, the business community, and LTD staff. In the discussions we had with these stakeholders, we found out that they do not feel that they have all the information they would like to have about LTD or the EmX. LTD's website is a key information portal to provide information to the public.

In a survey of residents of the Fairmount neighborhood, 26% of respondents reported that they use the LTD website for information about LTD and its services. The internet is a useful means of reaching out to the public, and we determined that it would be useful to evaluate LTD's website to find out if the information stakeholders want is available, and how difficult or easy it is to find. This report provides CPW's evaluation of the BRT website and recommendations to LTD about how they can improve their website to make it more useful to their stakeholders in terms of both form and content.

ORGANIZATION OF REPORT

The remainder of this report summarizes the survey results and is organized as follows.

- **Methodology** describes the process CPW used to evaluate the LTD EmX website.
- **Summary of Findings** provides an overview of our findings regarding the LTD website with specific suggestions for improvements.
- **Suggestions for Improvement** summarizes CPW's recommendations and suggests specific examples for improving the LTD website
- **Stakeholder Appendices** discuss the website evaluation per stakeholder group and present opportunities to improve the website in response to findings.

METHODOLOGY

To evaluate the LTD website, the CPW team participated in a focus group led by staff member of the University of Oregon’s Community Service Center (CSC). In preparation for the focus group, the team developed lists of the information that each stakeholder group might want to find on LTD’s website. The purpose of this focus group was to:

- Determine whether key stakeholders are able to identify necessary information from LTD’s BRT website, and
- Determine how LTD’s BRT website can be improved for better access of this information.

During the focus group, we first determined what we thought to be the purpose of LTD’s BRT website. We spent most of our time looking at the website for the information stakeholders would expect to find. The following table shows a few of the key pieces of information we were looking for based on stakeholder interest:

	Future Plans (big picture)	Cost	Ridership Data	Impact on Other Modes	Public Involvement	Economic Effects	Benefits over other Transit Options
Businesses	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Planners	X		X		X	X	X
Policy Makers	X	X	X	X	X		
Community Groups	X	X			X		X

While much of our assessment was specifically focused on how EmX-related information was displayed, we also analyzed the graphic design and layout of the home page to see how it helped or hindered the user’s ability to find key information. While looking at the impacts of graphic design, we also assessed the quality and accessibility of information on the site. For example, when we discussed the routes and schedule information, we looked at how the layout of the site impacted our ability to find routes and schedules, the quality of route maps, the readability of timetables, and whether or not route and schedule information was complete.

The CPW team spent a majority of the focus group navigating the LTD website looking for various information relevant to stakeholders and discussing possible recommendations for how the website could be improved and made more easily navigable.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This section provides an overview of our findings regarding the LTD website. The appendices to this document contain more detailed descriptions of our findings for each stakeholder group, while this summary focuses more on those findings that were common for multiple stakeholder groups.

For each stakeholder group, we were looking for a different set of information, and, for the most part, we were able to find what we were looking for. The organization of the site, particularly the EmX FAQ, however, made finding information difficult. One has to navigate through too much other information before they arrive at what they are looking for. For example, if a user is trying to find information about where EmX funding comes from, they have to scroll through eleven other non-related FAQ questions. While the current structure of the EmX FAQ may be appropriate for the casual reader, the lack of organization makes locating specific information quite challenging.

For the purpose of this exercise, we were prepared to invest extra effort to find what we were looking for. While the CPW team members have some knowledge of the LTD website already, some stakeholders may not have the time to be as diligent in their search efforts as we were. If they cannot find the information they want easily, they may not continue to look. If LTD wants to reach out and inform the public about the EmX – which, based on our research on stakeholder perceptions of the EmX is a good way to develop community support – information should be as clear and easy to find as possible.

Aside from organizational issues, there was certain information that we were looking for across different stakeholder groups. Information about the cost of the EmX and where funding comes from was available in the “EmX FAQ” section, as was much of the other information that stakeholders were looking for, but it was not very well organized. There was also quite a bit of information about public involvement, but much of it was outdated and was not specific to different stakeholders.

The most important thing that we found to be missing on the LTD website was information about LTD’s long-term vision for transit in Eugene-Springfield. There was nothing that mentioned the full 61-mile build-out, which is something that many of the stakeholders we spoke to were interested in learning about. There was also a lack of information about rider demographics and origins and destinations.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The following section summarizes CPW's recommendations for improving the LTD website. A more comprehensive, stakeholder-specific list can be found in the appendices to this document. The recommendations are organized into recommendations for the EmX-specific pages on the website and recommendations for the LTD website on the whole.

EMX-SPECIFIC PAGES

Organize the EmX pages more logically

The "About EmX" link should be first on the list on the EmX page, because it contains most of the information people are looking for. CPW recommends that the EmX pages be divided into the following sections:

- *About the EmX* – This section would include the history of the EmX; costs and funding information for the EmX; and a "Fast Facts" page. This section could also include a description of the different lines of the EmX.
- *What is BRT?* – This section would include the characteristics of BRT and information about other BRT systems.
- *News and Updates* – This section would include news about the EmX, a schedule of upcoming public meetings, and construction updates. Public meetings could also be a separate section.
- *The Future of the EmX* – This section would address LTD's future plans for the EmX and include a timeline and map of the planned build out. It could also provide information about the role that LTD sees the EmX playing in the future.
- *EmX FAQ* – This section would address any questions or information that are not covered in the other sections.

Organize the FAQ more logically

The questions in the FAQ should be organized by topic, so that it is possible for viewers to find what they are looking for more easily. It would also help to include a hyperlinked table of contents per these topics at the beginning of the FAQ. The following is a sample outline for the FAQ:

- **About Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)**
 - [What is BRT?](#)
 - [Why is LTD moving forward with a BRT system?](#)
 - [Why don't we build a light rail line like Portland?](#)

- **About the EmX**
 - [What is the EmX?](#)
 - [What are the operating benefits of EmX?](#)
 - [Where is the first EmX corridor?](#)
 - [Where are future EmX corridors going to be?](#)
 - [Where is the money going to come from?](#)
 - [Why don't we just add more bus service, as we have done in years past?](#)

- **EmX Planning & Design**
 - [How has the community been involved in BRT decisions?](#)
 - [How was the vehicle selected?](#)
 - [How is LTD proceeding with future corridors?](#)

- **EmX Station**
 - [How do EmX stations protect customers from the weather?](#)
 - [Was artwork included in the Franklin EmX project?](#)
 - [Where did name Dads' Gates Station come from?](#)

- **Riding the EmX**
 - [How much does the EmX cost?](#)
 - [How do I pay a fare for the EmX?](#)
 - [Can I bring my bike on the EmX?](#)
 - [How does EmX work for people with disabilities?](#)

- **EmX Fast Facts**
 - [List of EmX Facts](#)

Provide clear and up-to-date information

Stakeholders who visit the LTD website should not have to search through a lot of information to find what they are looking for – it should be presented clearly and should be as up-to-date as possible. For example, most of the information about the EmX in the FAQ discusses the pilot corridor and there is little mention of the Gateway Extension or the West Eugene Extension. Additionally, information on bike storage and fare collection may need to be revised. The verb tenses of the FAQ questions will also need to be changed. Instead of having a section titles “How will the EmX work for people with disabilities?” it should be titled “How *does* the EmX work for people with disabilities?” Tables and images should be used where appropriate and any text should be concise and straightforward.

Provide links to reports, surveys, and evaluations relevant to the EmX

Policy makers and businesses would like to have easy access to reports about the EmX. Offering access to these documents will allow policy makers and interested business owners to review detailed demographic information about EmX riders. This information could assist marketing strategies to businesses located near EmX routes. For example, if a business along the EmX route knew that many senior citizens ride the EmX at 11:00 am on Thursdays, they could advertise a senior special during that time to attract more business.

LTD WEBSITE

Make the EmX more prominent

If BRT is LTD's vision for the future, it should have an integral role on the website. Our recommendation is that the EmX should be included in the navigation bar at the top of the page, with "Riding LTD," "Fares & Passes," "About LTD," and "Commuter Solutions." This would highlight the importance of the EmX and make it easier for visitors to the website to access information about the EmX.

Create a discussion board or public forum

Policy makers were interested in being able to find out how the public feels about LTD and the EmX, and a discussion board would be an interesting way for LTD to allow the public to express their opinions. It would also provide a venue for interested parties to determine how the public feels about LTD. There has already been an attempt at this using Facebook, but doing it through LTD's website might be more effective and might reach a more comprehensive audience.

Make the website more searchable

The search function was not a very useful way of finding information on the LTD website. In most cases, the results from searches were not relevant to the search. For example, when one searches for "EmX FAQ," which is a page on the website, the link to the "EmX FAQ" page is 27th on the list and the link to the main EmX page, from which the FAQ is accessible, is 17th on the list. The EmX FAQ is the first link on a Google search of the same term. It would be very helpful to make the search function more effective so that stakeholders can find the information they are looking for regarding LTD services.

Make the LTD logo a link to the homepage

This is a very basic action that LTD could use to make their website more navigable. On many websites, the logo in the top left corner brings the viewer to the homepage. On the LTD site, the logo is already there, but the link to the homepage is on the opposite side of the page and is very small.

Appendix A

Planners

INTRODUCTION

This appendix summarizes the LTD website evaluation conducted from the perspective of city planners from Eugene and Springfield. The planner's stakeholder group includes staff from both Springfield and Eugene, including long range, short range, and transportation planners. Planners work primarily with the public and policy makers to create acceptable plans and provide transit information. In addition, they work with planners from other jurisdictions to coordinate efforts and inform decision-making.

In order to evaluate LTD's website from this stakeholder group's perspective, we assessed their information needs. We performed the evaluation based on the information that we determined would be useful to planners, drawing from the information we gathered through interviews and focus groups.

DATA GATHERING

As a part of an analysis of stakeholder perceptions, the CPW team conducted five interviews with planners from both Eugene and Springfield. In addition, we held two focus groups with some of these planners and LTD staff to discuss their involvement in the EmX planning process. From the information gathered in these communications with the business community, we determined what information they would like to receive from LTD and what information should be available on the LTD website.

INFORMATION NEEDS

The following criteria describe what planners want to know more about regarding the EmX, either from LTD's website or from other sources. These criteria were discovered through the interviews and focus groups mentioned above.

- An explanation of the broader benefits of the EmX
- A description of the community's vision for the EmX
- A discussion of the broader benefits of transit
- More information about future route planning (timeline?)
- Any information LTD has about the economic effects of the EmX
- Ridership levels

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

While some of the information that planners are looking for was found on the website, it could be presented in a more accessible and useful format. Some other information was not on the website at all. In general, information about the EmX was limited and

isolated on the website, and the broad vision for bus rapid transit (BRT) was not conveyed. Information about the EmX was accessed via the EmX link, which leads to links to each line, photos and videos, and an “about EmX” section. The “about EmX” section includes a history of the EmX, EmX frequently asked questions, and links to other BRT projects.

EASY TO ACCESS INFORMATION

The frequently asked questions (FAQ) about the EmX , accessed via the “about the EmX” link, contains a discussion of the broader benefits of BRT and the EmX This information was conveyed in the answers to two questions: “why is LTD moving forward with a BRT system?” and “what are the operating benefits of the EmX?”

DIFFICULT TO ACCESS INFORMATION

A discussion of the community’s vision for the EmX is not discussed very well. Some of this information is included in the question “how has the community been involved in BRT planning?” but the answer to this question focuses on the process not the vision.

MISSING INFORMATION

The broader benefits of transit are not discussed in the EmX section or elsewhere on the website. A timeline for future EmX routes is also not included, nor is a description of the full build out of the system. The economic impacts of the EmX are not on the website, but LTD may not have this information. Annual boardings for the EmX and for other LTD services are included, but there is no description of ridership history or projections.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The FAQ section contains a lot of useful information, but should be reorganized and hyperlinked. The answers to each question should be edited to be as concise, approachable, and objective as possible, with links to more thorough reports.

Some of the information in the FAQ section is important enough that it should be addressed separately, rather than buried within other questions. The discussion of community involvement could be expanded to include the community’s vision for the EmX, past public involvement, and future opportunities for public involvement. A discussion of the broader benefits of transit would also be useful to include, as would a timeline for future route building and a description of the full build out of the system. A history of ridership changes for the EmX and other routes should be included.

In addition, the EmX section of the website should be easier to find. If BRT is LTD’s vision for the future, it should have an integral role on the website.

Appendix B

Businesses

INTRODUCTION

This appendix summarizes the LTD website evaluation conducted from the perspective of the business community, which is comprised of a diverse range of local and national businesses located in the Eugene-Springfield area. For the purpose of our study, only managers and owners of businesses that were chamber of commerce members were directly invited to provide input. In addition to individual businesses, this stakeholder group also included representatives of the Eugene and Springfield chambers of commerce, as well a representative from the Lane Metro Partnership. These organizations provide support and resources to existing and prospective businesses with the goal of strengthening the economic vitality of the region.

In order to evaluate LTD's website from this stakeholder group's perspective, we assessed their information needs. We performed the evaluation based on the information that we determined would be useful to the business community, drawing from the information we gathered through interviews and a survey.

DATA GATHERING

As a part of an analysis of stakeholder perceptions, the CPW team interviewed representatives from both cities' Chambers of Commerce, as well as a representative from the Lane Metro Partnership. We selected these three individuals because of their ability to speak on behalf of the larger business community. These interviews focused on perceptions of the EmX and the development process. Our team also distributed an online survey to businesses in Eugene and Springfield via the Chamber of Commerce listservs that covered a similar set of questions. Our team chose businesses that were members of their city's chamber of commerce. We received completed surveys from fifty-four businesses located within Eugene and Springfield. From the information gathered in these communications with the business community, we determined what information they would like to receive from LTD and what information should be available on the LTD website.

INFORMATION NEEDS

Based on data collected during the Stakeholder perception evaluation, CPW identified the following information needs of area businesses.

- Cost of EmX system
 - Operating costs
 - Capital expenditures
- Route placement
- Impact of route on motor vehicle access
- Ridership numbers

- Demographics of ridership
- Destination of riders
- Change in land use around transit stations/routes
- Long term plan for system
- Purpose of EmX
- Advantages over conventional bus routes
- How businesses are being involved in planning/design

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following section provides an overview of the accessibility of the information on the LTD website that is important to the local business community. The CPW team separated this information into categories based on how easy or challenging it was to locate on the LTD website. There is also a section devoted to information the business community is interested in that could not be found on the website.

EASY TO ACCESS INFORMATION

Information related to the cost of the EmX system was complete and easy to locate within the EmX Fast Facts section. This section also includes ridership counts for the EmX, although it is unclear when this data was recorded.

The FAQ section also contained information related to the purpose of the EmX and the advantage of this system over conventional transit. Locating this information required sorting through a long list of text, however, which may discourage some users.

Details of the EmX route placement are also easy to access using the EmX directory. Selecting each route name directs the user to a map and other related information.

DIFFICULT TO ACCESS INFORMATION

Information related to local businesses involvement in the planning, design, and development of the EmX was too general. While details of the public involvement process can be found in the EmX FAQ section, this information is outdated and organizes all of the stakeholder groups together. Our feedback from the business community indicates a demand for a section tailored specifically to the business community, which could include past involvement efforts and future plans for incorporating feedback from area businesses.

MISSING INFORMATION

Information about the long-term plans of the EmX could not be found on the website. The FAQ contains a small section about how LTD will proceed with future routes, but

this section is outdated and lacks specific details. Additionally, plans about the full build out of the EmX system could not be found.

Data about the demographics of EmX riders and their origins and destinations could also not be found on the website. We found that the business community is interested in this type of information and believe access to it would influence support for the expansion of the EmX.

Data about the impacts of the existing EmX line on land use and motor vehicle access could also not be found. This is likely due to insufficient or non-existent data on these issues since these topics may require the system to continue operating for a number of years before useful data can be collected.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The following section provides a list of recommendations that could be made to the LTD website to improve communication with the business community.

Provide links to FTA reports and rider surveys

Offering access to these documents will allow interested business owners to review detailed demographic information about EmX riders. This information could assist marketing strategies to businesses located near EmX routes. For example, if a business along an EmX route learns that a high number of EmX riders fall into a certain age group, the business may decide to offer special offers or promotions that are aimed at attracting this particular age group.

Restructure FAQ section

This section should be updated and include a hyperlinked table of contents that would make accessing information much easier. Additionally, the FAQ section that addresses future routes should provide greater detail and should include a map of the proposed 61-mile system.

Provide testimonials from local businesses

Creating a section that showcases testimonials from area businesses could provide a number of benefits for the expansion of the EmX system. For example, businesses along future routes may support the expansion of their system more if they see that their trusted colleagues in the business community support the EmX. To accomplish this, LTD could contact businesses along the pilot route and ask about the perceived impacts the EmX has had on their business. These testimonials could assist businesses along future EmX routes by providing an experienced view that could offer information related to motor vehicle access and the overall impacts of the system. This would allow LTD to provide anecdotal evidence of EmX impacts until more concrete data can be collected about the impacts.

Create a separate section devoted to business involvement

A potential “business involvement” section could be located on the Business Center page of the site and could include information about LTD’s outreach efforts to businesses. This section could also include an option for businesses to sign up for LTD updates and email notifications.

Appendix C

Community Groups

INTRODUCTION

This appendix summarizes the LTD website evaluation conducted from the perspective of community members. For the purposes of this report, this stakeholder group includes six community members who had various levels of involvement in the planning process for the Emerald Express (EmX), as well as residents of the Fairmount neighborhood. The groups represented included: the West Eugene EmX Expansion (WEEE) Corridor Committee, the West Eugene Collaborative (WEC), Residents for Responsible Rapid Transit (3RT), Fairmount Neighborhood Association, Active Bethel Citizens, the Jefferson-Westside Neighborhood Association, Eugene Sustainability Commission, Eugene City Council, Friends of Eugene, Lane Independent Living Alliance (LILA), Environment Center of Sustainability.

We chose these individuals based on recommendations from Lane Transit District (LTD) as well as recommendations from other interviewees. We recognize that these six community members represent a small percentage of the community that has been involved in some sort of communication or collaboration with LTD regarding the EmX. It is important to recognize that the individuals we interviewed are meant to stand apart from riders and the general public. Therefore, their opinions do not represent the community as a whole.

In order to evaluate LTD's website from this stakeholder group's perspective, we assessed their information needs. We performed the evaluation based on the information that we determined would be useful to community members, drawing from the information we gathered through interviews and a survey.

DATA GATHERING

As part of our community perceptions analysis, we conducted six interviews with community members and an online survey, which was sent out to residents of the Fairmount neighborhood. The survey was sent to 112 residents, and 34 responded. From the information gathered in these communications with the public, we determined what information community members would like to receive from LTD and what information should be available on the LTD website.

INFORMATION NEEDS

From the information gathered in these communications with the business community, we determined what information they would like to receive from LTD and what information should be available on the LTD website.

- Route maps and schedules
- The big picture

- What is bus rapid transit (BRT)?
- Why was BRT chosen for Eugene-Springfield?
- What does the future of the EmX look like?
- What are the benefits of transit in general?
- Environmental impacts of the EmX – what can be done and what is being done to reduce these impacts
- Cost of the EmX to LTD
 - Capital and operating costs
- Opportunities and challenges that LTD faces when implementing the EmX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following section provides an overview of the accessibility of the information important to community members. CPW separated this information into categories based on how easy or challenging it was to locate on the LTD website. There is also a section devoted to information community members are interested in that could not be found on the website. Overall, there were more issues with the organization of the information on the website than with content.

EASY TO ACCESS INFORMATION

The system map is easy to get to, but could be more user-friendly. The PDF system map is jumbled and it can be difficult to read, as is the clickable area map. It is useful, however, that there is a link to Google Transit so that patrons can plan trips, rather than just finding the schedule for a single route. Because we are focusing on the EmX for this evaluation, it is important to note that the EmX route map and schedule are somewhat difficult to find.

DIFFICULT TO ACCESS INFORMATION

Funding for the EmX is mentioned in “EmX History” and “EmX FAQ.” However, the only information provided is the construction costs for the Franklin Corridor and the cost of the EmX vehicles. There is not a clear breakdown of capital and operating costs, nor is there information about the funding structure, other than the fact that \$19.2 million of the construction costs for the Franklin Corridor came from the Federal Transit Administration.

MISSING INFORMATION

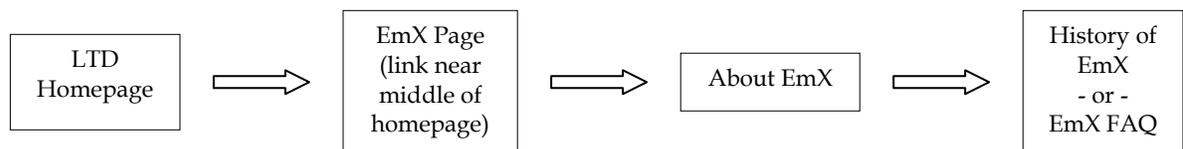
We were unable to find any clear information about the environmental impacts or benefits of the EmX. There are statements within the “EmX FAQ” such as “EmX vehicles should get better fuel mileage,” but there is no information available to back this up.

ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

When looking on LTD’s website for information about BRT and why it is appropriate for Eugene-Springfield, we found that, while most of the information was there, it was somewhat scattered in different sections and was not comprehensive. The section, “EmX History,” mentions briefly how BRT was chosen, but says little about what it is. The “EmX FAQ” section more clearly spells out what BRT is and why it was chosen, but this information is still spread out over several questions in the “EmX FAQ” and some of the explanations are very brief.

Information about the future of the EmX system only discusses the three lines that are currently operating or in progress – Franklin, Gateway, and West Eugene – and does not mention the future build-out of the system. Overall, the information about BRT on the website does not represent the bigger picture about BRT that many community members are unaware of.

From our experience navigating the LTD website looking for information about the EmX, we came to the overall conclusion that the section about the EmX is not very well organized, nor does it provide sufficient, comprehensive information about the subjects community members are looking for. When the information is available, you often have to navigate through multiple levels of pages to get to it. For instance, to find out about public participation in the EmX planning process, you have to go through the following process:



If a community member did not know where to look for this information, they might not arrive at the information they were looking for. Using the search function is an ineffective way of finding this information, either, as none of the ten first responses to searching for “EmX public participation” link to pages that address public comment opportunities, public meetings, or information about public participation in the EmX planning process. Instead, they link to information about a youth pass, a construction map for the Franklin Corridor, a map of the Franklin Corridor, and images of the EmX. In short, if one knows what they are looking for, a Google search is a much more

effective approach to finding information on the LTD website than the internal search function.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Based on our findings from the website evaluation exercise, the following section presents our recommendations for ways that LTD could improve its website to make it more useful to community members.

Make route maps and schedules more user-friendly

The existing route maps are sufficient, but there were comments on the survey of Fairmount neighbors that these maps could be more useful. We would recommend making them clearer by distinguishing routes better and possibly including street names. Another possible action that could be taken is that, when one clicks on an area on the clickable map, it links to a more detailed map of the routes in that area, rather than just a list of available routes. LTD could also make more use of Google Transit and emphasize that patrons can use that service to determine the best possible route.

Provide more information about the EmX

Community members want to know more about the EmX and why and how it has been implemented in Eugene-Springfield. LTD could fairly easily provide a clear overview of what BRT is, why it is appropriate for Eugene-Springfield, how LTD is implementing it, what the benefits of the EmX are, and what the vision for the future of the EmX is. A page of this kind would address many of the questions that community members had.

Organization

The biggest issue we had trying to navigate the website was with LTD's organization of information – particularly within the EmX pages. If LTD wants to highlight the EmX and its importance in the future of transit in Eugene-Springfield, then the link to the EmX pages should be more prominent – it currently falls near the bottom of the homepage and is cut off at the bottom. Also, we recommend including the EmX in the dropdown menus at the top of the homepage – along with “Riding LTD,” “Fares and Passes,” “About LTD,” and “Commuter Solutions.” This way, interested community members could more easily access information about the EmX.

Within the EmX pages, it would be useful to have better organization of the information provided. It is important to think about hierarchy of information and what is important to the audience. Based on our information we have gathered in our interviews and from the Fairmount neighbors survey, community members are concerned about route information and the big picture story – which could be found in the “About EmX” page. Therefore, it would be useful to present those two options first on the EmX page.

One of the suggestions that came up in interviews with community members is that LTD should be more forthright with information about the EmX and their website is a good place to start with this. Most of the information about the EmX provided on

LTD's website is found in the "EmX FAQ" section. We determined that there are two things LTD could do relatively easily to make this information more accessible. First, the FAQ could be better organized with a hyperlinked table of contents at the beginning. This way, people would not have to sift through all of the questions to find what they were looking for.

Our second suggestion is that much of the information found in the FAQ could be presented in its own page within the "About EmX" page. For example, LTD could provide a page explaining what BRT is and the advantages of BRT in cities the size of Eugene and Springfield. There could also be a page dedicated to funding or there could be a detailed funding section in "About EmX."

Appendix D

Policy Makers

INTRODUCTION

This appendix summarizes the LTD website evaluation conducted from the perspective of policy makers from the Eugene-Springfield area. Specifically, this memorandum focuses on the perceptions and interests derived from interviews of eight policy makers representing the city councils, the county commission, the mayoral offices, and EmX related committees.

In order to evaluate LTD's website from this stakeholder group's perspective, we assessed their information needs. We performed the evaluation based on the information that we determined would be useful to policy makers, drawing from the information we gathered through interviews and a survey.

DATA GATHERING

As part of our analysis of stakeholder perceptions, we interviewed a total of eight local area policy makers. The roles of the interviewed policy makers included city councilors, LTD Board members, and other government officials. The interview questions honed in on what the policy makers thought about LTD's planning, development, and implementation processes for the EmX, whether the policy makers viewed the EmX as a success, and how the policy makers would measure the success of the EmX. We also asked policy makers what they would like to see evaluated about the EmX. The responses to this question included simple curiosities, information that the policy makers wanted for the people they represent, and information that would help LTD gain community buy-in of the EmX.

INFORMATION NEEDS

Based on data collected during the stakeholder perception evaluation, CPW identified the following information needs of policy makers.

- Safety reports
- Future flexibility
- Importance of collaboration to LTD's processes
- Impacts of the EmX on other modes of transportation
- How routes are selected
- Ridership reports
- Does the EmX add to realistic transportation choices?
- Rider survey results

- Schedule adherence reports
- Does the EmX meet TransPlan's goals?
- Environmental report
- Report on the impacts on congestion and vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
- How do residents in neighborhoods affected by the EmX feel about it?
- Is there a place where policy makers can pull reports for decision-making?
- Does LTD provide an explanation on funding on the website?

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following section provides an overview of the accessibility of the information on the LTD website that is important to local policy makers. CPW organized this information into categories based on how easy or challenging it was to locate on the LTD website. A section is devoted to information that policy makers are interested in that could not be found on the website.

EASY TO ACCESS INFORMATION

Although we do recommend that the main link to the EmX information be relocated to the top banner of the LTD homepage along with route information, etc., it was relatively easy to find the location of general EmX information on the LTD homepage. However, the more detailed information and high level reports that local policy makers would be looking for about the EmX is not easy to access on the LTD website.

DIFFICULT TO ACCESS INFORMATION

Within the main EmX section of the website, we looked for some of the criteria that policy makers said would be important for them to have access to. It took a while to find this type of information, and the process of scrolling through long pages of poorly organized information was frustrating. The information was good and did address the policy makers' criteria, but it was hard to find.

MISSING INFORMATION

Most of the information that policy makers would be interested in finding on the LTD website about the EmX is available on the website. We were unable to find official reports that policy makers would be interested in reading, but some of the information that would be in such documents was randomly placed throughout the EmX link discussed above.

ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

Initially, the LTD website was overwhelming because it contained a lot of information. There is no immediate way to access pages about the EmX; you have to scroll down to the middle of the page before you find the link. It was surprising that the EmX would be tucked away with what looked like secondary information.

A lot of information was available on the website, but sometimes it was too much. We also found that some of the information that was available was not substantive enough. Overall, there is an impressive amount of information available on LTD's website regarding the EmX. However, it was frustrating how difficult and time consuming it was to find this information.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The following section provides a list of recommendations for changes that could be made to the LTD website to improve communication with policy makers

Make EmX information searchable

LTD provides a lot of information about the EmX on its website, but it is not easy to search the website for specific information. It is buried among several paragraphs of information that are not assembled in a logical or hierarchical manner. Policy makers do not have time to skim through all of the information about the EmX to locate the information that they need.

Provide factual reports of the EmX

The information that is presented on the website is sometimes persuasive or one-sided in nature. LTD should rewrite some of this information so that it is just factual. Policy makers want reports that allow them to make decisions or recommendations. Therefore, information about the EmX should be clear and factual. Policy makers would benefit from short paragraphs that answer their question but that also include an option to read a full report regarding the specific issue. A link to reports could be easily included and would be very helpful for policy makers.

Make the EmX link more visible and include a drop down menu

The easier that it is to find the information that a policy maker is looking for the better. Given the EmX's high profile, it should be included on the homepage's main bar along with route information, etc. Putting a link to EmX information at the top of the homepage will save policy makers time. If the EmX link included a drop down menu, then a policy maker could preview what the broad topics available are and thereby find the information that they need.