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LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

PPPM 410: TRANSPORTATION POLICY
SCHOOL OF PLANNING, PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Future in Motion: Building Community Through Transportation

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Image credit: Lane Transit District

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
SCI Sustainable Cities Institute
SCYP Sustainable City Year Program

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About SCI

The Sustainable Cities Institute (SCI) is an applied think tank focusing on sustainability and cities through applied research, teaching, and community partnerships. We work across disciplines that match the complexity of cities to address sustainability challenges, from regional planning to building design and from enhancing engagement of diverse communities to understanding the impacts on municipal budgets from disruptive technologies and many issues in between.

SCI focuses on sustainability-based research and teaching opportunities through two primary efforts:

1. Our Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP), a massively scaled university-community partnership program that matches the resources of the University with one Oregon community each year to help advance that community's sustainability goals; and
2. Our Urbanism Next Center, which focuses on how autonomous vehicles, e-commerce, and the sharing economy will impact the form and function of cities.

In all cases, we share our expertise and experiences with scholars, policymakers, community leaders, and project partners. We further extend our impact via an annual Expert-in-Residence Program, SCI China visiting scholars program, study abroad course on redesigning cities for people on bicycle, and through our co-leadership of the Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Communities Network (EPIC-N), which is transferring SCYP to universities and communities across the globe. Our work connects student passion, faculty experience, and community needs to produce innovative, tangible solutions for the creation of a sustainable society.

About SCYP

The Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) is a yearlong partnership between SCI and a partner in Oregon, in which students and faculty in courses from across the university collaborate with a public entity on sustainability and livability projects. SCYP faculty and students work in collaboration with staff from the partner agency through a variety of studio projects and service- learning courses to provide students with real-world projects to investigate. Students bring energy, enthusiasm, and innovative approaches to difficult, persistent problems. SCYP's primary value derives from collaborations that result in on-the-ground impact and expanded conversations for a community ready to transition to a more sustainable and livable future.

Community partnerships are possible in part due to support from U.S. Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, as well as former Congressman Peter DeFazio, who secured federal funding for SCYP through Congressionally Directed Spending.

About Lane Transit District

Lane Transit District (LTD) is a special district of the State of Oregon led by a seven-member volunteer board of directors appointed by Oregon's governor. LTD's budget is funded through a combination of fares, taxes paid by local employers and employees, and from state and federal sources. LTD lives its mission to connect our community by delivering more than six million annual passenger boardings from 30-fixed bus routes and two EmX Bus Rapid Transit lines. LTD's paratransit service, RideSource, provides more than 360,000 trips annually for people with disabilities and Medicaid recipients.

Image credit: Lane Transit District

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Course Description

PPPM 410: TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Transportation policies shape urban spatial structure and impact outcomes ranging from environmental justice to travel behavior to public health. This course provides a foundation in transportation policy and covers topics related to local, state, and federal transportation policy. The course presents a brief history of U.S. transportation policy and introduces an array of transportation policy issues, including: the connections between transportation and land use; transportation, the environment, and public health; transportation finance; goods movement policy; and inter-metropolitan movements of goods and people. Course assignments use Lane County, Oregon, as a transportation laboratory and challenge students to synthesize knowledge and original data collection into policy recommendations.

Executive Summary

The Transportation Policy class worked with Lane Transit District (LTD) to develop a series of policy proposals developed over a 10-week term intended to provide the basis for developing LTD's Long-Range Mobility Plan (LTD Connect 2045). The students' policy proposals provide a vision for the future of an equitable, sustainable, and transformative transportation system in Eugene-Springfield and the broader Lane County area. Students worked in groups to research transportation policy through the lens' of education, social capital, economics, housing, and health. Students imagined policy solutions outside of the Overton window of the next long-range mobility plan and finalized their perspective in a series of policy proposals. Students furthered LTD's goals of sourcing imaginative solutions to issues of connectivity and accessibility. The LTD policies that students recommended work to improve mobility, opportunity, built environment, inclusion and accessibility, land use & housing, and evaluation. By impacting the physical, cultural and systemic environments, students believe LTD could further connect and improve their service. The most feasible, impactful, and creative policies are highlighted in this final policy report document.

Introduction

Through collaboration with Transportation Policy students, LTD sought creative and intuitive policy proposals for their upcoming Long-Range Mobility Plan (LTD Connect 2045). Students utilized information about LTD's current proceedings and past policies to develop relevant proposals to improve upon current policies and develop solutions to issues faced by the organization. As LTD looks to develop its next long-range plan, the policy proposals developed by students may allow for the introduction of new ideas into an already forward-thinking organization. The policies selected may offer unconventional solutions to transportation problems but represent a unique approach to transportation planning.

Policy Focus Areas

The primary goal of the following policy recommendations is to allow Eugene-Springfield and the greater Lane County area to become more interconnected, less car-dependent, and develop as a region renowned for its accessibility and multimodal transportation access.

Students identified six policy areas that could be integrated into the advanced long-range mobility plan:

- Transit Education
- Multimodal Infrastructure
- LTD Mobility Wallet
- Mobility Hubs
- Transit-Oriented Housing
- Annual Performance Evaluations

Each policy area includes a list of policy objectives that define the goals of that area.

TRANSIT EDUCATION

Policy Objectives

- Build transportation as a hard skill for Eugene-Springfield residents.
- Encourage the development of a culture that values transportation.
- Encourage greater use from choice riders.
- Link transit with education.

Needs Assessment and Policy Recommendations

LTD could help support and develop a transit culture within Lane County. A large part of developing a transit culture begins with the development of transit skills within a population. In developing these skills across the community, LTD could facilitate greater ridership by making transit knowledge more accessible for residents. Additionally, education of these skills may reduce automobile usage and encourage social cohesion. Additionally, in order to allow these skills to be used to their greatest extent, LTD could look to intertwine transit with the built environment. In providing basic transportation education, as well as linking transportation infrastructure with essential locations such as schools and community centers, LTD can improve critical transportation services. As summarized by the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, "Given the interdependence of built environment characteristics, policies that encourage a breadth of transit-supportive strategies may be more likely to be successful than policies that focus on one dimension" (2012). The development of transportation infrastructure can greatly expand community access to high-quality school facilities, affordable housing, and vibrant civic spaces. To substantiate infrastructural developments, a healthy transportation culture is necessary to support high transit usage.

To expand transit education, LTD could utilize the public school system and collaborate with the private market to develop education and family programs that tie transit use into everyday life. While density and interconnectivity are the primary drivers for effective transit implementation, a shift to more complete and widespread transit engagement must be culturally driven and founded in the education system.

FIG. 1

Students waiting for the bus in Lane County, Oregon.

Image credit: Lane Transit District

The current application of in-school transit education allows students within Lane County to develop a preliminary understanding of how to utilize transit from a young age. Supplemental courses on cycling and street safety conducted in elementary and middle schools further develop children's abilities to effectively exercise their mobility. Despite these policies' forthright design, they can lag in multiple areas when addressing overarching goals. Many programs offered by Safe Routes to School (SRTS) throughout the Eugene-Springfield area (Willamalane, 4J, Bethel, and Springfield school districts) may not be evenly applied. Individual schools must opt-in to programs which, often due to scheduling issues, may leave some schools and individuals without adequate transportation education. Additionally, private schools tend to receive reduced education in these areas because of connection gaps with volunteer groups.

Similarly, high schools often see reduced emphasis on transportation education when compared to elementary and middle schools, as SRTS bicycle safety education is only provided from fifth through eighth grade. In 4j School District, SRTS supports elementary PE teachers in providing pedestrian safety curriculum while in Bethel School District, the City of Eugene Recreation Program provides programs to second graders. Uneven provision of transportation education throughout Eugene-Springfield leads to a

lack of continuity between the programs. This may result in some individuals, schools, or neighborhoods failing to receive adequate, if any, transportation education. Failure to build transit appreciation through a child's schooling may cause habits to dissolve or weaken, limiting the effectiveness of current programs.

In order to mitigate such issues, LTD could look to strengthen ties with SRTS and ensure that every student in Eugene-Springfield has equal access to transit education. Building upon current initiatives, LTD could provide effective transportation services as well as provide education on effective utilization of transit services. This could include partnering to develop standardized transit, bicycle, and pedestrian classes that are taught at regular intervals throughout student's K-12 education. Education programs can range from classroom sessions to field-day experiences where children are physically able to experience transportation systems. Students recommend that this education mirrors that currently provided by SRTS, ensuring it is both educational and fun, while actively encouraging the use of active transportation and transit systems. To adjust for middle and high school students, these classes could progressively get more complicated and build upon previous lessons. An initial goal for the timed implementation of this policy could be at least one transportation lesson every school year from second grade onward. With subsequent improvements and cultural normality developing, this initiative could expand to multiple days each year in order to ensure that students who miss one class are not left without transportation education. LTD could utilize its partnerships to improve the physical connections between transit and schools through Transit-Oriented Development and support culturally favorable views towards transit through youth transit education. Impacting both the cultural and physical realms of transportation interconnectivity may develop future generations of predisposed choice riders.

With effective implementation, LTD could spend less time, funding, and effort in attempting to convince adults to ride transit when primary transportation education is done in K-12 schooling. Habits stick best when conditioned at a young age and imprinted as hard skills. Favoring active transportation and transit use may be a defining cultural value of upcoming generations if greater effort is put into transportation education. Additionally, this policy could help to bridge the gap between students in areas of varying transit accessibility and increase continuity in education within the community. The goal of this policy is that, by 2045, all students in Lane County will know how to use public transportation with confidence as learning about transit will be a normal part of the education system. Future generations will understand why public transit, walking, and biking are important for communities and the environment. With free or low-cost transit at their disposal, students will have an easier time getting to school, jobs, and other important places throughout their lifetimes. This will help create a more interconnected society that can benefit from LTD's services.

Case Study

Cross-referencing a similar policy implementation, the Tamien Child Care Center (San Jose, California) opened at the Tamien Caltrain and light rail stations in 1995. Owned and operated by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (SCVTA), the center enrolls nearly 150 children. Families receive

incentives to utilize both the childcare and transit, including rail and bus discounts, priority enrollment, and tuition discounts for children of transit users (Center for Transit Oriented Development, 2012). In applying similar linkage measures to encourage social cohesiveness around transit, LTD would be able to motivate cultural shifts favorable to transit and see an increase in ridership. Locations of interest for LTD to consider could be near schools, childcare centers, public spaces, parks, and large employers. Additionally, as LTD already offers free bus fares for K-12 students, more closely linking transit to educational services may benefit both parties (Burgoyne-Allen et al., 2019). The goal of this policy is to make transit not simply an option, but the best option. Intertwining transit into the physical and cultural psyche of a community allows for choice riding to become a much easier choice. As LTD Connect 2045 develops, it could look to impact the cultural view of transit by supporting dense, transit-oriented development, partnering with and planning around family and social locations, and supporting in-school transit education.

MULTIMODAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND MICROMOBILITY

Policy Objectives

- Improve effectiveness of existing primary transportation infrastructure.
- Integrate secondary infrastructural development into primary infrastructure expansion.

Needs Assessment and Policy Recommendations

Developing transportation infrastructure is crucial to shape a community's economy by expanding access to employment, workforce mobility, and connections within the community. A well-planned transit system can enhance workforce mobility by reducing commute times, expanding access to business districts, and broadening employment opportunities. In Lane County, efficient transportation policies are crucial to ensure that transit services meet the needs of businesses, workers, and residents.

LTD currently has a 10-year Community Investment Plan, which directs investments in public transportation infrastructure, operations, and sustainability. The plan's intent is to improve accessibility, enhance connectivity, and promote environmental responsibility while maintaining financial stability. While this plan provides a solid framework for improving transit services, it could be improved by linking transportation investments to broader economic development goals. Furthermore, it operates separately from the City of Eugene's transportation efforts, which could result in a lack of coordination between the two entities. The City of Eugene's 2035 Transportation System Plan focuses on sustainable development and equity, addressing carbon emissions, expanding affordable housing, and reducing car dependency. Without a coordinated infrastructure development approach between LTD and the City of Eugene, transportation may remain disconnected from economic development goals. For both LTD and the City of Eugene, investment in transportation infrastructure should be a priority for economic development. Specifically, a coordinated approach between expanding the EmX and developing secondary transportation services could better serve both LTD riders and Eugene's economy.

FIG. 2

PeaceHealth Rides bike share parking in Eugene, Oregon.

Image credit: Lane Transit District

LTD operates a hub-and-spoke transportation system, with one Mass Rapid Transit system (MRT) spanning the width of Eugene. The policy that may be best suited to expanding ridership in LTD's system is focusing on the development of multimodal transportation infrastructure (pedestrian, bicycle etc.) and investment in micro-mobility. The quality of infrastructure within one mile of the transportation grid determines in large part whether people use public transportation. Investing in first- and last-mile connectivity–bridging the gap between rider's starting location, end destination, and transit stops–should be a top priority for LTD, and if implemented effectively, ideally would yield an increase in ridership, fee collection, and economic activity.

Case Study

In Kolkata, India, researchers sought to ascertain the most important aspects of increasing the choice-ridership of residents living within one mile of a proposed metro line. India is one of the foremost adopters of mass rapid transit system (MRTS), however, the ridership of MRTS in India has experienced significant declines because of difficulties in first/last-mile connectivity (Chakraborty, 2025).

This study relied on a pre/post questionnaire given around the proposed area for a new MRTS. Accounting for socio-economic background, race, gender, and class, the study found that the quality of infrastructure within one mile of the proposed metro line was a

determining factor in riders' use of MRT. By identifying which of these aspects could be targeted in development, researchers concluded that: "Clean, and obstruction-free walkways and cycle tracks are the basic requirements of every commuter to perceive the utility of the active mode of transport" (Chakraborty, 2025). Regarding multimodal and micro-mobility use specifically, researchers found that the "availability of secured parking facility of bicycles and availability of rented bicycles at or near the metro stations are also found to be highly important for the potential bicycle users. In cases of motorized intermediate public transport service, safety and security at the designated stops and also within the vehicles are given due importance by the user" (Chakraborty, 2025).

In order to foster more ridership, targeted infrastructural developments will need to address the existing gaps in the transportation network. Implementing policies that improve first- and last-mile connectivity is critical to addressing these gaps. Specifically, the continued success and expansion of MRT systems like the EmX, an already high priority for LTD, will depend on the quality of surrounding multimodal infrastructure and micro-mobility services. This infrastructure includes but is not limited to:

- The quality of pedestrian infrastructure (clean, well-lit sidewalks).
- The quality of bicycle infrastructure (bike lanes and locked bike storage).
- The availability of micro-mobility services (e.g. Peace Health Rides).

Much of the infrastructure that is critical to improving first- and last-mile accessibility already exists. Targeted infrastructure expansion to areas surrounding transportation routes, including clear signage, would be the first step towards a comprehensive transportation network. Prioritizing infrastructure development for areas within the first- and last-mile of public transportation would help maximize the efficiency of the existing and future transportation network.

LTD MOBILITY WALLET

Policy Objectives

- Improve ease of access.
- Consolidate bikeshare and transit applications into a digestible format.
- Reduce confusion and overlap among current systems.
- Introduce application features that allow for improved trip planning.
- Improve fee collection.

Needs Assessment and Policy Recommendations

Students recommend that LTD could look to reduce barriers to entry for their services and associated public transportation because for first-time riders, it may be daunting to use transit services. Barriers to entry that may ward off new riders or reduce ease of access include having to download and understand multiple apps for a single trip, effectively utilizing trip planning resources, and understanding payment structures. Such barriers may make using public transportation less appealing and reduce prospective ridership.

A key goal of LTD Connect 2045 could be to allow for seamless and consistent interchange between bikeshare, transit, and other transportation services. For a first-time rider utilizing the current, disconnected system, it is likely they would need to take many steps to reach their destination. This would be considerably exacerbated if the given area lacked first- and last-mile connectivity. In the current system, a first-time rider would need to use bikeshare to ride to

FIG. 3
Rider scans card for payment of transit services.

the bus station, figure out which bus to take, take the bus, and then utilize bike share again for their final connection. This equates to renting two individual bikes, making three separate payments, planning three trips on two apps, and registering accounts on their phone in order to get to their final destination. To reduce friction between services, it is essential to consolidate bikeshare and transit services into one payment system. LTD should partner with Cascadia Mobility (and eventually other entities) to develop a mobility wallet and integrated application that creates greater ease of access between public transportation systems.

The LTD mobility wallet could initially seek to improve transportation access within Lane County and standardize fee collection. Subsequent iterations of the LTD mobility wallet may include other private and public services such as taxis, ride-hailing transportation network companies (i.e. Uber and Lyft), intercity services (i.e. Amtrak, Flixbus, etc.), Zip Car, and bike or equipment purchases from local, mobility-related businesses. It is recommended that LTD adopt and integrate this foundational concept into their current and future policies.

Additionally, students recommend that LTD look to improve their current mobile app. Mobile apps are a primary form of access for LTD riders, so it is important that the UMO app is efficient and easy to use. Although successful at displaying the time which buses arrive and the locations of stations, UMO does not have a live display of bus locations or integration with other transit services. Future iterations of this app should be combined with

Cascadia Mobility's "PeaceHealth Rides" application to reduce barriers between multi-modal use. This would allow for trip payments for both bikeshare and transit on a single application, with users being able to pay for a single trip on multiple transportation modes with a single click. Standardizing payment interfaces may reduce confusion and payment barriers. Additionally, improved trip planning would allow for more cautious riders to better understand how to navigate transit systems. For bus services, riders would be able to plan farther ahead and coordinate their trips more effectively. This may reduce the likelihood of some prospective riders choosing ride-hailing services that they may interpret as being more reliable and easier to plan. As for bikeshare, including maps that display the location of protected cycle tracks, bike lanes, sharrows, and other cycling infrastructure could increase service utilization and help prospective riders feel safer and more confident. This application could recommend routes to prospective riders, akin to features on Google Maps. It could also provide photos of the streets and roads where the cyclist may be riding to provide visual context for the infrastructure. All these recommendations aim to produce a better application for interconnected transportation and elevate the accessibility of LTD's systems. Convincing wary choice riders may be easier with an improved application that adequately supports users.

LTD and Cascadia Mobility both currently rely on external providers to service and maintain their respective phone applications. If current providers are unable to improve their applications to incorporate connected trip planning/scheduling, fee collection standardization, and improve ease of access, it may be in their best interest to seek alternate partners. An effective alternative could be the developers of the Transit App, a widely used phone application that currently includes both LTD and Cascadia Mobility's services.

Case Study

The LTD Mobility Wallet pilot program will reflect and improve upon systems utilized by LA Metro's mobility wallet. LA Metro's pilot program ran from May 2023 to April 2024 and gave 1,000 income-qualified (less than 80% average median income) applicants a prepaid transit debit card with $150 per month. The LTD mobility wallet could utilize a pilot program, beginning with a pool of 1,000 applicants living in Eugene's Opportunity Zones: downtown, riverfront and campus, and the Bethel neighborhood. Students recommend LTD utilize a credit card mechanism rather than LA Metro's debit card mobility wallet. Members would be reimbursed up to $100/month for mobility expenses, not including buying/operating a private car or purchasing gas. If over 50% ($50) is spent on rideshare services, members will be eligible for 25% transit cashback, which would roll over month-to-month and can be saved for other transportation options such as an Amtrak, Flixbus, bikeshare, personal bikes, or personal e-bikes. If members spend less than 50% ($50) of their total reimbursement on rideshare services, they would be eligible for $50 in transit cashback. This model is more cost-effective than providing each member $150 upfront, and it works to incentivize active transportation without penalizing rideshare usage. Following roughly a year of analysis and reflection on the pilot's successes, a subsequent 1,000 additional wallets could be introduced within Lane County, providing the basis for an eventual greater long-term expansion of the service.

MOBILITY HUBS

Policy Objectives

- Encourage multimodal travel.
- Integrate transit with underserved communities.
- Improve system continuity in rural areas.
- Develop a transportation culture.
- Improve community mobility.

Needs Assessment and Policy Recommendations

Mobility hubs are defined by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission as centers that "bring together public transit, bike share, car share, and other ways for people to get where they want to go without a private vehicle". They give users more flexibility in areas traditionally considered low density by incorporating long-term bike storage, bike share, electric vehicle (EV) chargers, and bus stops into one location. Mobility hubs can help create a sense of place by connecting people and by creating a gathering place.

The expansion of transit service to low-density areas could be a high priority for LTD. A major challenge to expanding efficient service is operating buses over a wide geographic area. By creating mobility hubs, LTD has the opportunity to solve this issue by implementing nearby transportation nodes for residents to more easily enter the transportation network. In the future, mobility hubs could gain EMX service and dense development, further closing the gap between transportation and dense development.

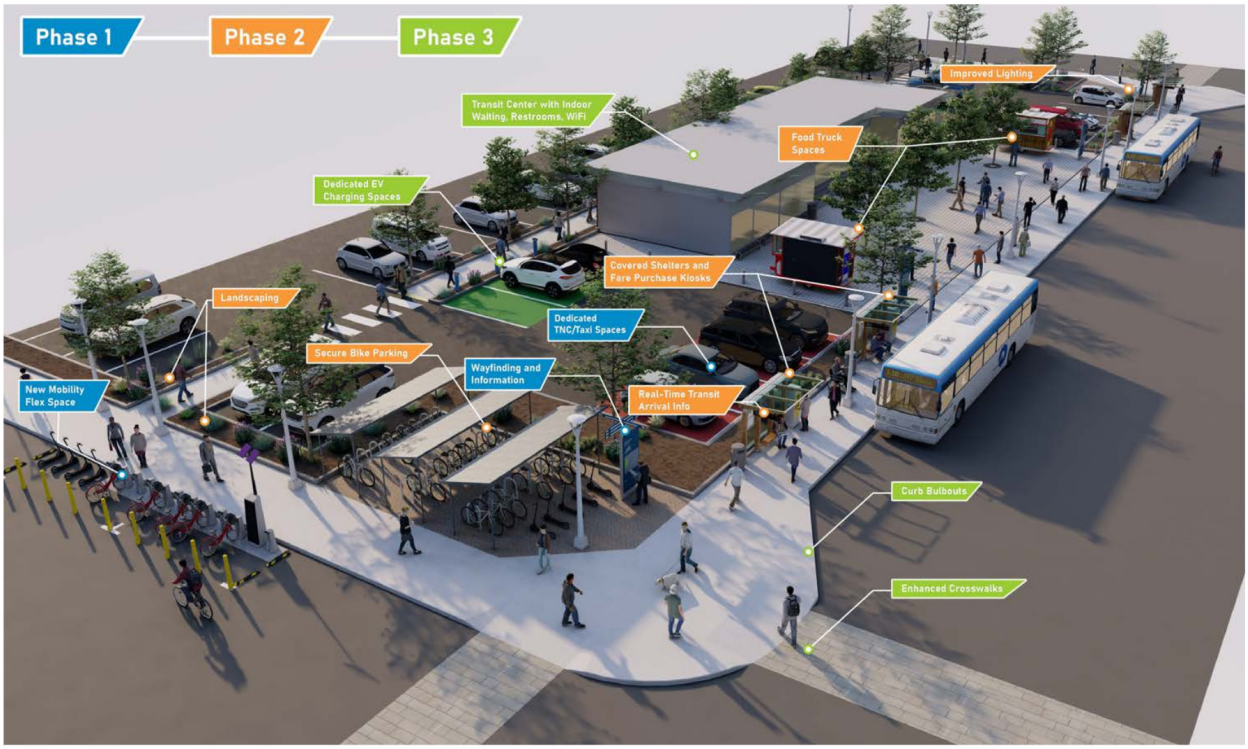

FIG. 4

Bend Mobility Hub Conceptual Illustration

Source: Cascades East Transit 2022

LTD's infrastructure already includes elements of mobility hubs, such as long-term bike storage and EV charging. However, only four stations offer long-term bike storage and charging stations are likewise limited. LTD could expand on existing infrastructure to make current stations more diverse in their transportation options.

To address these gaps, it is recommended that mobility hubs are implemented in three stages. Once a suitable location is identified and the land is purchased, (e.g. Santa Clara Station), LTD needs to establish the essential elements for a mobility hub. LTD should consider displaying basic route information, providing detailed maps, bus stops with benches to rest, and designated areas for flex mobility like bike share. The second step includes adding various secondary elements like art installations, landscaping, or food vendors to give riders added comfort, and make the hubs feel like third spaces. The third and final stage is a full build-out. The station would include rapid transit service and departure update boards, improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, crosswalks, curb bulb-outs, improved lighting, and other elements to improve safety. Lastly, the transportation hubs would be supplemented with EV charging stalls. Each stage of the mobility hub relies on the previous one, and functions independently of the subsequent stage. This allows gradual improvements to be made as funding becomes available.

Mobility hubs will allow people living in lower-density neighborhoods to have easier access to public transportation. Many residents don't live within walking distance of major bus stations, and taking connecting buses is not always an efficient option. If they can bike, scooter, or even drive to those stations and store their belongings safely, potential riders will be more inclined to utilize public transportation. Eventually, the mobility hubs could be supplemented with EMX line expansion.

Case Study

In Bend, Oregon, a similar project is set to begin construction later this year. This project will create eight mobility hubs, beginning in downtown Bend and moving progressively outwards into Bend's surrounding suburbs. The Bend metro area is slightly smaller than Eugene (~260,000 residents), but nonetheless can serve as a model for LTD.

After a 2022 feasibility study, Bend received a grant from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Transportation Growth and Management Program to fund the initial phase of its planned mobility hubs. For future funding, Bend is utilizing local bond measures as well as the Oregon Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) to bring the projects to completion. These types of resources are ones that LTD could also use to fund the development of mobility hubs.

The benefit of mobility hubs increases as each hub evolves. Earlier stages offer a variety of transportation options that allow commuters to easily switch between different modes of transportation like buses, bicycles, scooters, vehicles, and car shares. As hubs are expanded, they may develop past being mere transit points. By adding placemaking elements like comfortable seating and local food vendors and businesses, mobility hubs can become a point of interest central to the local area. Strategically placing mobility hubs in areas with relatively low population density creates the infrastructural requirements for transit-oriented development. Providing transit

access for an area is the essential step in encouraging greater density. Thus, by expanding mobility hubs, LTD can increase Eugene's connectivity through transit-oriented development.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED HOUSING

Policy Objectives

- Support complementary land-uses for transit.
- Develop a denser built environment around stations.
- Develop a transportation culture.
- Collaborate with city offices to adjoin goals.
- Connect housing to transportation systems.

Needs Assessment and Policy Recommendations

This policy recommendation focuses on prioritizing the development of diverse housing units near transit hubs. Proximity to transit is essential for addressing housing inequities and improving accessibility, particularly for low-income and underserved populations. Currently, only a small portion of the U.S. population has access to high-quality public transportation, forcing many to rely on personal vehicles. The proposed policy seeks to foster a more inclusive and accessible system by addressing the housing-transit gap. Public transportation and dense housing development go hand-in-hand. Without dense housing in close proximity to its stations, LTD's services may be unable to operate to their fullest potential. Transit-oriented housing seeks to improve LTD's service by influencing external factors that may limit its capacity and user base. It is important for this policy that LTD collaborate with city offices to encourage development of housing units in close proximity to stations, EmX expansions, and possible mobility hubs.

Students propose that LTD work, to the best of its ability, to support infill development and new housing in and along transit corridors and general downtown adjacent areas. This overarching policy goal aligns with Eugene Mayor Kaarin Knudson's proposed plan of developing 300 units of housing in Eugene's central core, supplemented by 1,000 additional units in the general downtown area. Further developing the area directly adjacent to existing transportation hubs–the most important of which is Eugene station–can facilitate the growth of a more effective system. Downtown housing initiatives are essential if LTD hopes to see continued growth. With more housing within the downtown core surrounding Eugene Station, LTD will ideally see greater ridership along routes branching out from the center. By implementing dense infill and transit-oriented development along low ridership corridors, LTD can support transit accessibility to make transit truly a better option.

Individuals living in dense areas will choose to ride not because they must, but because the offered service fulfills their needs. Such use may create a social shift in which transit is seen as more positive and accessible, with use increasing as the culture surrounding public transit shifts. In partnering with external city entities, LTD can work to expand the EmX in concert with dense development. If LTD hopes to see improvements in ridership, LTD Connect 2045 could address issues of land-use and zoning. Improving density, especially in and around the downtown core, will establish a larger base of individuals inclined to utilize transit. If land uses can shift to reflect greater density, LTD's services may become more advantageous, efficient, and may see greater farebox revenue. Thus, LTD should

FIG. 5

Lane Transit District's Santa Clara Station located at the intersection of River Road and Green Lane in Eugene, Oregon.

Image credit: Brian Davies; Source: Rowell Brokaw Architects, Inc.

look to play a larger role in land-use planning and zoning in order to influence the effectiveness and applicability of its service. New and expanded fixed-route lines could connect underserved neighborhoods to major transit hubs, addressing areas currently excluded from transit networks. Additionally, transit stations near high-density housing could be upgraded with improved pedestrian access, bike parking, and enhanced safety measures.

Case Study

LTD's previous work on the River Road Santa Clara (RRSC) neighborhood plan with the City of Eugene could provide a benchmark for continued integrated housing and transportation efforts. Resulting in the development of Santa Clara Station and Iris Place (53 affordable housing units), this plan showed that LTD has the capacity to influence land-use and transit-oriented development (Oregon Department of Transportation, 2022). Another example is the MovingAhead project; despite not resulting in EmX expansion, the project helped to facilitate improved transit additions in the RRSC neighborhood among others (MovingAhead, 2024). Coordinating housing and transportation efforts can improve the outcomes of each, and LTD should continue to facilitate such plans and look to develop more ambitious strategies. Without extensive changes to the housing and transportation fabric in car-oriented areas, it is possible that LTD initiatives are simply improving frequency and accessibility for captive riders instead of drawing in new riders. To increase both the functionality and efficiency of

their system, LTD Connect 2045 could help support dense housing efforts that are in close proximity to transit stops. Another solution is to make significant improvements to the transit system to align housing with transit accessibility. New and expanded fixed-route lines could connect underserved neighborhoods to major transit hubs, addressing areas currently excluded from transit networks.

Through this proposed policy, LTD can achieve its long-term goals of increasing ridership, improving service efficiency, and fostering financial sustainability. The policies aim to build a robust housing-transit network that supports equity, accessibility, and environmental sustainability. Including this policy in LTD Connect 2045 may give more Eugene-Springfield residents access to affordable housing within one-third of a mile of transit stops, significantly reducing car dependency and fostering a thriving transit culture. Collaboration among LTD, local governments, and developers could transform the region into a model for equitable and sustainable urban growth. Residents will experience seamless access to jobs, education, and essential services, and underserved areas will thrive as interconnected, high-opportunity communities.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Policy Objectives

- Allow for more effective use of ridership data.
- Improve LTD's current system for conducting performance evaluations.
- Improve public transparency.
- Encourage a commitment to consistency.
- Allow for more effective planning and community outreach.

Needs Assessment and Policy Recommendations

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires that all transit agencies conduct annual performance evaluations to assess system efficiency. The FTA provides guidelines for metrics that primarily focus on the operational performance of a transit agency. This includes metrics that measure an agency's rolling stock and the percentage of vehicles that exceed their useful lifespan, or metrics that rate the agency's infrastructure and identify the percentage of quality infrastructure. Guidelines that measure community value, however, are not clearly defined on FTA's performance website, leaving transit agencies to fill the gap.

LTD has successfully met the FTA's requirements for annual performance assessments since the program began in 2019. They have also expanded upon the operational guidelines to include measurements of maintenance cost per mile, accidents, on-time performance, and the use of renewable fuels. LTD measures community value as a separate category to identify ways that the bus system meets community needs, as well as areas where it falls short. A strength of LTD's current community performance metrics is their analysis of access to jobs and economic opportunity. This is being measured through job connectivity based on income disparities and regional connectivity, as well as employer access to transit. Use of these metrics is crucial in ensuring that community members have equitable access to jobs throughout Lane County.

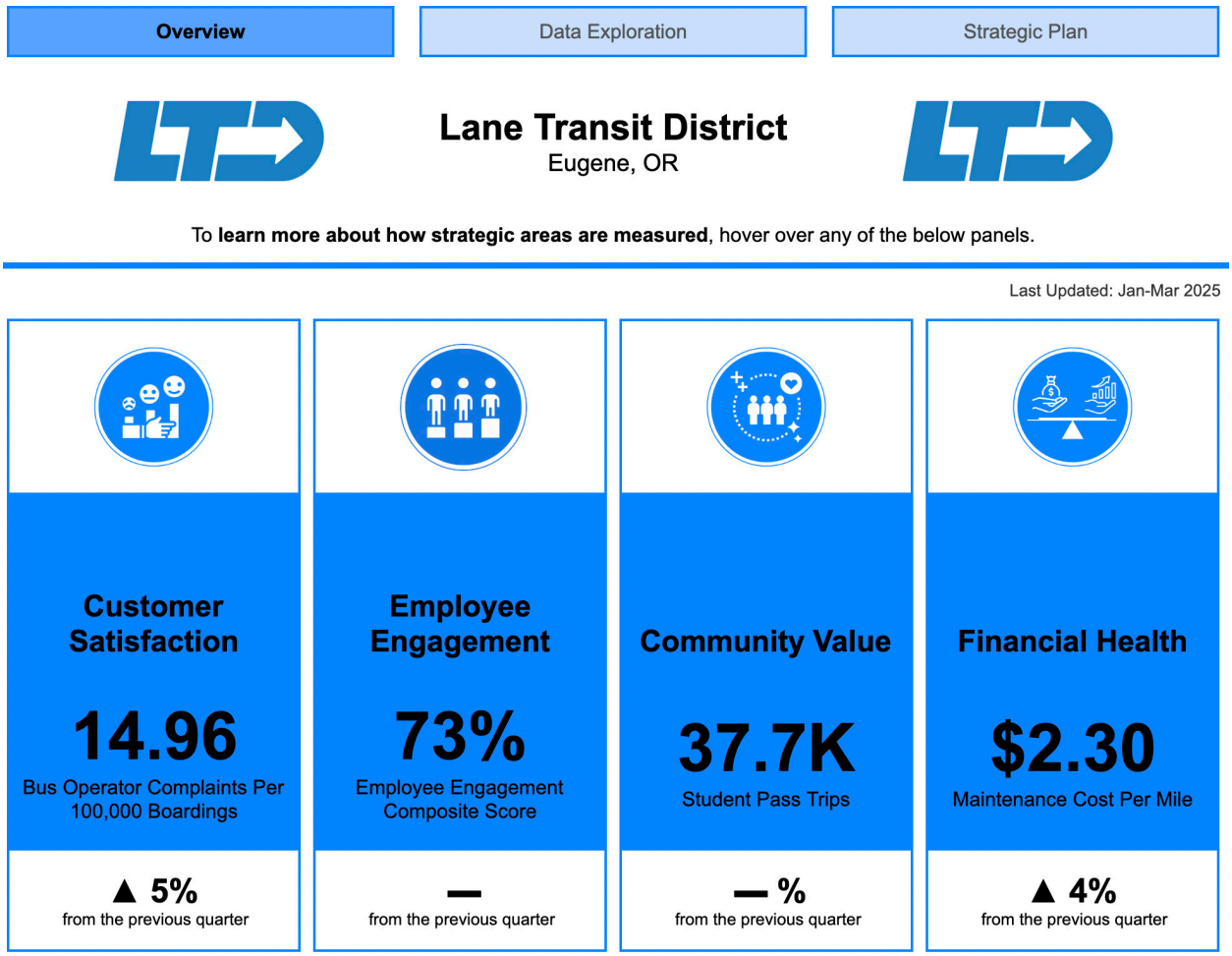

FIG. 6

LTD's Performance Dashboard

Source: https://www.ltd.org/Performance/

However, LTD has room to further develop its community value metrics. Students perceive that LTD's performance dashboard has an inconsistency between the metrics being measured each fiscal year. The data from 2023 presents two metrics measuring access to transit; one for the total population and one for minoritized populations, measuring at 22% and 23% of the population having access, respectively. In 2024, there is no record of a metric measuring access to transit for any population. In 2025, a population access metric is reported at 63%. Not only is the presence of population access metrics inconsistent between fiscal years, but they are being reported at vastly different values. It is also important to note that the 2014 Long-Range Mobility plan reported household access to transit at 73% across LTD's service area. This percentage was based on the number of households within one-third of a mile of EMX stations and within one-fourth of a mile of any other fixed transit stop. Based on the performance dashboard, it is unclear if current metrics are utilizing the same criteria, but it would explain the fluctuation in results. Inconsistencies like this can make trends unclear and make it difficult for LTD to identify underserved areas.

There also appears to be gaps in the metrics used to measure community value, falling short of assessing all the way that transit impacts a community. Specifically, there seems to be a lack of measurements that pertain to education and public health. The student pass trips metric in 2025 measures trips taken across all grade levels, grouping K-12 students with college students. Studying such a broad demographic category can fail to identify the needs of different subcategories within the overall data. Categorizing both of these demographics together will not enable LTD to identify the different needs of each group and adjust their service accordingly.

To improve their performance metric analysis, LTD could define specific measurement criteria that is consistent across fiscal years, expand analysis into a wider variety of policy areas, and make metric criteria and data more accessible to the public. The 2014 Long-Range Transit Plan defines criteria that are applicable to multiple metrics that LTD is currently using. LTD could revisit the criteria from the 2014 plan, including the definition for housing access to transit, and commit to using those criteria for future performance studies. LTD can also expand their performance analysis into more policy areas by breaking down broad metrics and creating new ones. The student pass trips could be divided between college and K-12 students, which would help identify needs specific to each demographic. Analyzing K-12 students separately would also help assess the success of the proposed transit education policy. Finally, LTD should publicly define the criteria being used to measure each metric directly on the performance dashboard. Doing so would help maintain public transparency and encourage a commitment to consistency.

Conclusion

LTD partnered with students to develop a long-range mobility policy document to help support new strategies to advance transit accessibility, ridership, and efficiency. The long-range mobility plan will orient a subsequent 25 years of development for the transit system. The purpose of the combined policy proposals is not simply to deliver a policy portfolio, but to impact LTD's philosophy of transportation. It is critically important that LTD's perspective on transportation corresponds to the needs of Eugene residents. Students emphasize that to fulfill LTD's mission to connect the community, LTD should consider prioritizing:

- Service expansion to low density areas
- Dense housing development
- First- and last-mile connectivity
- Transit education
- Financial accessibility

The proposed policies were selected because they form a comprehensive strategy. They are intended to both fill existing gaps in LTD's coverage and provide a comprehensive approach to service expansion. For the purpose of improving service for subsequent generations, LTD should not constrain itself to previously established norms. With the development of a transit culture, improved infrastructure, and more effective use of data, LTD will be able to provide a service that more adequately meets the needs of the population and captures new riders with the allure of a truly effective service.

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