

## MINUTES

### Eugene City Council and Lane Transit District Board of Directors Virtual Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

May 26, 2021  
12:00 p.m.

**Councilors Present:** Emily Semple, Matt Keating, Alan Zelenka, Jennifer Yeh, Mike Clark, Claire Syrett, Randy Groves

**Absent:** Greg Evans

**LTD Directors Present:** Caitlin Vargas, Joshua Skov, Emily Secord, Susan Cox, Don Nordin, Steven Yett, Michelle Webber

Mayor Vinis opened the May 26, 2021, work session of the Eugene City Council.

Board President Vargas opened the May 26, 2021, meeting of the Lane Transit District (LTD) Board of Directors.

#### 1. **JOINT WORK SESSION: MovingAhead Project Update**

Rob Inerfeld, City of Eugene Transportation Planning Manager, and Andrew Martin, Lane Transit District Development Planner, provided a MovingAhead project update.

##### Council Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – expressed agreement with staff to use the current momentum around the River Road Neighborhood Plan to implement River Road corridor improvements; asked staff for further details regarding the public comments given at the October 2019 public hearing; inquired of staff what metrics will be used to project impacts on congestion.
- Councilor Zelenka – expressed his support for EmX and stated it will never be cheaper than now to build this infrastructure; stated he prioritizes Highway 99 and River Road in Tier 1, Coburg Road in Tier 2, and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Tier 3.
- Councilor Yeh – expressed enthusiasm for the MovingAhead project and would like to see the project positioned to apply for funding as it comes available; stated it makes sense that Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. will not be considered for EmX; thanked LTD for the work it has been doing during the pandemic.
- Councilor Keating – expressed enthusiasm for the proposed enhanced corridors; asked staff how the EmX routes impact the possibility of improving and maintaining the essential neighborhood routes in West and South Eugene.
- Director Skov – stated he shares the enthusiasm for expanding the system; stated the corridors that have the best chance of fostering changes in land use and planning should be front-of-mind because that will make transit more viable.
- Councilor Syrett – stated she concurs with Councilor Zelenka’s comments and has a bias for EmX, particularly for River Road and Highway 99; stated having a robust and reliable transit system will help reduce parking impacts of multi-family housing in neighborhoods; stated the public will need to be re-engaged in a robust manner to gain specific feedback on the work.
- Councilor Semple – expressed her support for having EmX on the proposed corridors; agreed that River Road is a good corridor to start with, along with Highway 99; expressed concern for

the south end of River Road where it was recently turned into a four-lane road and stated she would not like to see those residents lose more of their front yards; shared she appreciates the outreach and public input.

- Councilor Groves – thanked staff for the presentation; shared concerns about congestion, safety, and lack of routes in South Eugene; agreed that Highway 99 would be a good second corridor to enhance as the project moves forward; shared he is supportive of EmX and working with mass transit, but is not supportive of making things inconvenient and pushing people that way, and so would like to find a balance.
- Director Vargas – on behalf of the LTD Board expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet with City Council to discuss this project; stated she is seeing priorities align with River Road as the first corridor to be enhanced and Highway 99 as the second.
- Director Nordin – stated it is encouraging to feel the coordinated acceptance of the MovingAhead project and appreciates the work done by staff.
- Councilor Semple – asked questions related to funding for smaller projects; stated this is an equity project as well as a climate project; stated she is excited about increasing ridership and improving travel time.
- Councilor Keating – stated he is in favor of EmX corridors but not if it causes a reduction of neighborhood routes; inquired of staff what has been the strategic outreach to businesses along proposed corridors to ensure support by those who will be impacted.
- Councilor Syrett – thanked staff for the presentation and the good work; thanked fellow councilors for their show of support for prioritizing the River Road corridor; asked staff clarifying questions regarding the safety feedback received from the public.
- Director Skov – shared LTD gained much experience working with stakeholders to navigate trade-offs for the West Eugene EmX project, and much of this work occurs at later stages of a project.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated he appreciates that most councilors expressed similar priorities for the proposed routes; stated he would like to learn more about LTD’s climate plan and new electric busses.
- Mayor Vinis – stated she appreciates the clarity by which councilors are identifying priority of routes and agrees with the priorities; shared she remembers from past conversations with staff that there is a difference between “implement” and “implement planning”, which can be challenging for the public and requested for all to be very clear in intent when discussing the project.
- Councilor Keating – shared a constituent’s idea for wrapping buses that travel along Franklin Blvd.
- Director Secord – expressed appreciation for support of the River Road corridor prioritization.
- Councilor Semple – shared she liked the bus wrapping idea brought forward by Councilor Keating’s constituent.
- Director Nordin – shared there has been discussion about bus wraps and branding.
- Director Skov – provided information regarding LTD’s climate action policy, which intends to change transportation and land use systems to decrease dependence on the automobile and increase transit use.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated LTD is a leader in the country for climate action and applauded LTD for its work.
- Councilor Semple – stated it is critical to increase transit use and this can be done by making routes quicker, easier, and free.
- Councilor Keating – agreed that free transit will increase ridership and suggested “Free for All Friday” to begin this effort.
- Mayor Vinis – shared she attended the Mobility Justice listening session and LTD does provide free passes for seniors and a 50 percent discount for students and people with disabilities.

- Councilor Yeh – acknowledged that LTD works hard with limited resources to provide the best service it can; stated LTD has had to shift operations due to the pandemic and asked staff when conversations around ongoing services might resume.
- Director Skov – stated he is always open to having conversations about how to make transit more financially accessible to people; shared the LTD Board of Directors understands that transit is climate equity.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the Eugene City Council meeting at 1:20 p.m.

Board President Vargas adjourned the Lane Transit District Board of Directors meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Beth Forrest  
City Recorder

*(Recorded by Jessica Gebb)*

Link to the webcast of this City Council meeting [here](#).