West Eugene EmX Launch

Executive Summary

**Project Synopsis**

After seven years in planning, development and construction, the West Eugene EmX line will launch on September 17, 2017. This project is the third corridor in LTD’s Bus Rapid Transit System and will add more BRT service to the system as well as improved connectivity and more efficient service.

West 11th Avenue in Eugene was designated by ODOT as one of Oregon’s major chokepoints. In order to alleviate congestion in the West Eugene area, the city of Eugene and LTD determined that this area had the greatest need for transit improvements. After a comprehensive alternatives analysis, which included evaluating traffic patterns, increases in population and traffic, cost/benefits analyses, community input and other data analysis, the Eugene City Council and LTD’s Board of Directors approved the expansion of EmX into West Eugene.

The purpose of this plan is to provide the LTD public affairs team as well as LTD’s executive team with a guide for the marketing and communication efforts promoting the new West Eugene EmX.

**Overarching LTD goals:**

* To make sure that LTD is positively represented as a vital part of the community;
* That LTD is consistently improving operations and service;
* That LTD provides equitable, safe and reliable transportation as part of a well-functioning transportation network;
* That LTD is a responsible partner in current and long-range planning efforts, which supports economic and community development as well as public and environmental advancement.
* LTD is a responsible public steward and values community engagement and public transparency;
* And the District serves as a valuable resource for and benefits all members of our diverse community.

**Goals for this specific communication project:**

* To inform the community about the new service in West Eugene as well as highlight the many benefits that the EmX will bring to the neighborhood.
* To encourage and grow ridership on EmX West and, by extension, the entire EmX line.
* To support the local business community and Westside residents and thank them for their cooperation and patience.
* To educate and inform the public and riders about the benefits of the EmX Network, which includes the newest segment, EmX West.
* To encourage participation in a community-wide celebration of EmX West.
* To build enthusiasm and support for LTD as the community’s public transit agency.

**Strategies**

The main objective of this plan is to build knowledge of the new service in West Eugene and encourage/increase ridership on the newest segment of the EmX and the EmX Network, and recognize key stakeholders that have been an integral part of this project.

Strategies include:

* Engage and involve key stakeholders in order to demonstrate support for this project and future transit projects. This will also allow for the opportunity to publicly thank these people for their support and assistance in this project.
* Conduct proactive media relations that tell the story of EmX West, which will include seeding of stories beginning in late spring/early summer and continue throughout September. Stories will include economic development and growth, features and benefits of the new EmX West line and first-person accounts.
* Use a combination of marketing, advertising and social media to reach target audiences. This includes utilizing our own resources such as buses, stops, shelters, signage, website, rider materials, etc., to share and reinforce messages about EmX West. Additionally, we will tap into Point2Point group for help in educating the public about the new options for travel into and out of West Eugene. Finally, we will engage our contracted marketing support agency, Bell & Funk, to assist with advertising placement buys, creative development, and materials production as part of a campaign that will introduce and encourage use on the new line.
* LTD will help to facilitate a series of events that engage the public and stakeholders in the launch of the new EmX West line. These will be rolled out beginning in the summer months and culminate in a public event on Sunday, September 17. These events will include an invitation-only event for VIPs and a separate, “Thank You,” event for West Eugene businesses and project stakeholders, Staff will take advantage of other events occurring in the community that will help LTD engage and inform the public about EmX West.

**Key Audiences**

**External Audiences:**

* The Community/Media
* Customers/Riders
* Elected Officials/VIPs
* Business Community
* Cities of Eugene/Springfield/LCOG/other municipalities
* Bike/Ped Community
* Social Service Organizations
* University of Oregon/LCC/NWCU
* Funders (FTA, ODOT)
* Sustainability Advocates
* Adjacent neighborhoods

**Internal Audiences:**

* Board of Directors
* Staff (Operators/Admin)
* Vendors/Contractors

**Key Themes/Messages**

LTD provides:

* Improved connectivity and public transportation for West Eugene.
* Greatly enhanced cross-town travel with more connection points and transportation options.
* Safe, reliable quality transportation for all members of the community.

LTD is:

* A good community partner – engaging with and listening to the needs and concerns of the public as well as responsibly using public funds
* A good neighbor grateful for the opportunity to serve the community and provide enhanced commuting options for those living in or traveling to West Eugene.
* A safe, reliable way for those that rely on public transportation to live independent lives.
* A nationally-recognized and award winning public transportation agency dedicated to meeting the needs of the communities it serves.

EmX Specific Messages:

* Better connectivity and more efficient service in the West Eugene area
* 10 minute service
* One seat ride
* Greater connectivity
* Less downtown transfers
* Better service efficiencies that end redundancies
* Improvements along route will encourage economic development and business growth.
* Upgraded infrastructure including better ADA access, wider sidewalks, signalized crosswalks, new planters and landscaping.
* Enhanced transportation network along EmX
* Less congestion and better road capacity.
* Local jobs and investment have added $$ into the economy
* Sustainability messages such as habitat protection (butterfly), over 200 trees planted (partnership with Friends of Trees).
* Bicycle/pedestrian improvements (Bike bridge and signalized pedestrian crossings).
* Public art by local artists.

**Tactics**

**Marketing (by audience):**

VIP – these are to include elected officials, businesses, partners (cities of Eugene/Springfield), LTD Board of Directors, funders and vendors.

* “Thank you” commemorative item
* Invite to ribbon cutting/big event

Community/Riders – includes riders, residents and businesses (particularly from West Eugene), social service agencies, area colleges (U/O, LCC, NWCU), bike/ped community, motorists and sustainability advocates.

* Advertising (as budget and priories dictate)
* Bus
* Radio
* Print
* Web
* Social Media
* TV?
* Tagline development
* Social Media
  + Twitter
  + Facebook
* Educational/Promotional
* Brochure(s) and Fact Sheet(s)
* Info-graphic collateral (varies topics)
* Station displays and Signage
* Web Site
* Media kit materials
* Corridor mailing(s)
* Bus wraps
* Headway signs
* Coupons West Eugene business promotion
* Business engagement
* Free/Trial Rides
  + Extend GPP free-pass program to west Eugene businesses through end of year
  + Promote a ‘get onboard’ trial ride period introducing the service
* Speakers bureau/presentations
  + Before and following launch
* SWAG
* Pens, cheap merchandise
* Commemorative item

Internal (see above)

* Educational/informational materials for operators/CSC

**Events (by audience):**

VIP – these are to include elected officials, businesses, partners (cities of Eugene/Springfield), LTD Board of Directors, funders and vendors.

* Preview ride (DeFazio drives)
* Ribbon Cutting/Dedication
* Thank You event for VIPs
* West Eugene businesses event

Public/Community – includes riders, citizens (particularly from West Eugene), social service agencies, the two colleges (U/O, LCC, NWCU), biking community, sustainability advocates and the media.

* Tabling at Eugene Station and other spots
* Opening of bike bridges/dedication
* Public art installations/events
* Launch day event (9/17/17)
* Tours such as Audubon Society
* Partnership events with West Eugene businesses
* Fun community events leading up to/after launch day (examples):
* Pancake tailgate (prior to U/O-Nebraska game)
* BBQ picnic
* Bike ride, ala Sunday Streets
* Scavenger hunt or Pokemon-type event?
* Special beer (Claim 52, Falling Sky)/ice cream flavor
* Emeralds Night
* Pop up events with giveaways
* Music at stations

Internal audiences (see above)

* LTD employee day preview ride
* LTD ambassadors for events

**Media Relations:**

* Editorial board meeting
* Letters to the editor (from citizens) about benefits to them of new EmX/West Eugene service
* Letter to the community (in RG) from AJ thanking community
* Newsletters (neighborhood associations, Chamber of Commerce, partner organizations, etc.)
* Media ride along/preview tour
* Radio remotes
* Local, regional, national (Passenger Transport) story placement
* Story pitches:
* Opening day
* Public art (Oregon Art Beat)
* Bike/pedestrian improvements
* Infrastructure improvements
* Neighborhood businesses feature (Blue Chip, Oregon Business Mag)
* Sustainability angle (Oregon Field Guide)
* Feature “Things to do/see in West Eugene”
* Testimonials from customers (ease of use, time, connectivity)
* Economic impact
* How does LTD prepare operators/ride along with ops testing
* Student perspective (for Torch or Daily Emerald)
* Follow up stories (First month ridership, business improvements, etc.)
* Coverage of select events (see event list)

**Budget: $50,000**

* Advertising and ridership marketing – 50%
* Media and communications – 5%
* Events and business outreach – 25%
* Launch event and related activity – 20%

**Schedule/Timeline:**

Key:

Green = Marketing

Red = Events

Blue = Media Relations

**April:**

Significant dates:

7 – Executive summary to executive team

19 – Board adoption of service changes

21 – Introduction of plan to PA team

28 – Final draft communication plan to executive team

Contract and task list for Vox (Therese/Edward)

Contract and task list for Bell/Funk (Meg/Lisa)

Outreach to participants in public comments/survey – 4/21 – 28

Begin calendaring outreach to electeds/Feds re: VIP thank you event (Julie) 4/21 –

Begin outreach to partners (Wildish/New Flyer, etc.) for Thank You event (AJ) – 4/24

**May:**

Begin development of fact sheets, pitches, other written press materials (Therese) May 1 – June 1

Calendaring outreach to 2nd tier (local officials, biz partners) (Julie)

Follow up on Thank You event ask (AJ)

Finalize marketing plan + team

Development of creative materials

**June:**

Bike Bridge event?

Thank You event budget developed

Media buys

Collateral material developed

Exterior EmX wraps

Design production

Begin seeding feature stories to media?

Brief board of directors and Strategic Planning Committee

**July:**

Bike Pedestrian Bridge event?

Sunday Streets event?

Eugene Emeralds tabling

Commemorative product

Installation of wraps

Order merchandise/SWAG

Pitch and seed feature stories to media

Construction concludes; testing begins

**August:**

Eugene Emeralds tabling

Thank You event and Service Launch event invite – Received by Sept. 18 – 21

Ridership marketing bus advertising Aug 6 – Sept/Sept - Nov

Emails & street teams

Installation wraps

Set up Eugene Weekly editorial board – Aug. 24 – 31

**September:**

Significant dates:

2 – U/O Football home game (Southern Utah)

9 – U/O Football home game (Nebraska)

17 – West Eugene service launch

VIP Thank You event – TBD

Ridership marketing – Sept. 10 – October

Street teams – Sept. 5 – 22

VIP Ribbon Cutting/Peter DeFazio/Other elected – Sept. 17

VIP Thank You event – TBD

Register Guard editorial board pitching – Sept. 6 – 11

Media tour of EmX West – Sept. 11 – 16

**October:**

Continue ridership marketing efforts

Continue media relations efforts