

Reimagining Eugene Station

Winter 2020 LTD

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LA 539 Landscape Architecture Studio









Reimagining **Eugene Station**

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COLLEGE OF DESIGN









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Jennifer Zankowski, LTD Senior Development Planner

This report represents original student work and recommendations prepared by students in the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year Program for Lane Transit District. Text and images contained in this report may not be used without permission from the University of Oregon.

Contents

- 4 About SCI
- 4 About SCYP
- **5 About Lane Transit District**
- **Course Participants**
- **7 Executive Summary**
- 8 Introduction
- 9 **Design as Research Questions**
- 11 Analysis Relevant to All Projects
- 18 Designing Space for Pedestrians and Micro-Mobility
- 23 Providing Areas of Safety and Comfort
- **31 Creating Pedestrian Identity and Aesthetic Interest**
- **31 Creating Pedestrian Identity and Aesthetic Interest**
- 31 Conclusion
- 32 References

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 year-long 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.

About Lane Transit District

LTD provides more than 10 million trips per year on its buses and EmX Bus Rapid Transit line in Lane County, Oregon. Encompassing the Eugene-Springfield metro area, LTD is a special district of the state of Oregon and led by a sevenmember board of directors appointed by Oregon's Governor.

LTD also operates RideSource, a paratransit service for people with disabilities, and numerous transportation options programs to promote sustainable travel county wide, and Point2Point, an initiative that provides community members with the necessary information and resources to assist them in identifying opportunities to drive less by discovering transportation choices that meet their individual lifestyles.

Course Participants

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Executive Summary

The following report is a compilation of student work exploring designs for Eugene Station and how the station connects to its downtown location. Students worked with Lane Transit District (LTD) as part of the Sustainable City Year Program to explore designs that prepare Eugene Station for projected needs in 2040. Investigative designs centered around emerging trends in autonomous vehicles, ride sharing, densification, micromobility, pedestrian flow, and climate change.

Students approached these issues through in-depth text research and qualitative data collection. The data collected were shared among the class and used to generate concept designs, and maps, ultimately informing final proposals. Student designs focused on the current Eugene Station. LTD and the instructed set site parameters, with students taking some liberty to expand for contextual reasons. The scale of these design parameters are as follows:

1. Downtown Eugene Station: The study area was centered on redesigning the current downtown transit station, the Eugene Station, located at 1080 Willamette Street. Students focused on incorporating the speculative complexities Eugene will be facing in the year 2040. At this scale, designs provided detailed analyses of how the station space will interplay with the rise of automated vehicles, micromobility, urban densification, increased usership of public space, and climate change. Most students used this scale to design for station safety and inclusivity.

- 2. Nine-Block Radius Around Eugene Station: Students were encouraged to integrate their designs with the larger city fabric and design for connectivity. Increased attention to city space added complexity and influenced how Eugene Station's design will serve the larger downtown area. At this scale, students focused on how pedestrians and micromobility users will enter and exit the Eugene Station as well as barriers to connectivity.
- 3. Eugene City Boundary: Students explored how the transit system connects the City through Eugene Station. Each student rode and documented various routes through the City to gain a more nuanced understanding of usership and improvement potential. Students used their research to inform how designs can improve usership for casual and dedicated LTD users. At this scale, students designed transit efficiencies, ecological connectivity, and transfers for transit users through the Eugene Station.

Introduction

The Eugene Station was built in the 1990's on a central block in Downtown Eugene. Though the station has served the community effectively thus far, LTD anticipates a changing transit reality in the coming years. As climate change threatens to affect all aspects of human society, increased use of ride-share, bike-share, and scooter-share services underscores a community desire for a varied transit system. For these reasons, LTD is looking for innovative designs that would facilitate a multimodal transit system in Eugene.

In anticipation of these changes, LTD sought creative perspectives on the following questions:

- How do people inhabit the landscape interactively and dynamically?
- How could the Eugene Station facilitate connections to the larger network of movement?
- How could Eugene Station infrastructure become more inclusive and sustainable?

LTD connected with students in the University of Oregon Landscape Architecture program to investigate these questions and consider ways to achieve an improved transit center. Students collaborated with LTD staff to understand LTD's goals for the partnership. During initial site

observation and analysis, students identified a number of factors to consider in design. These factors fall under the following categories: Opening Space for Pedestrian Movement and Micro-Mobility, Safety and Shelter, and Creating Pedestrian Identity and Aesthetic Interest.

Design as Research Questions

New designs for Eugene Station centered on seeking answers to the following questions:

- To what extent does the increase in micro-vehicles play into the redesign of Eugene Station and how it connects to surrounding city streets?
- How might streets around Eugene Station be redesigned to accommodate fewer personal vehicles and more bus and ride-share transportation options?
- Are there design principles that can be adopted to address concerns of safety and inclusivity?
- To what extent does an increase in city population affect the design of Eugene Station to incorporate and accommodate greater civic engagement?

ASSUMPTIONS THAT INFORMED EUGENE STATION DESIGN

Students derived Eugene Station designs and assumptions from class research. These designs and assumptions are highly speculative, which allowed for parameters to structure ideas and visions. Students conducted research individually with much of it gathered from Urbanism Next and the Sustainable Cities Institute. This research heavily informed design principles and visions. Designs were made anticipating the needs of LTD and the City of Eugene in the year 2040. Firstly, designs were based on the projected assumption that Eugene will see an increase in population, though the rate of increase is speculative. This was followed with the assumption that the downtown and the City as a whole will continue to densify, which is attributed to the urban growth boundary limiting sprawl. Secondly, students assumed that alternatives to individual car transportation will increase significantly, including public transportation and micromobility modes. Students designed with this assumption by altering cars' impact on the built environment, including restricting vehicle flow and parking. Lastly, students assumed the McDonald Theatre would be retained and present

in all designs. The theatre is seen as a cultural institution and representative of other institutions maintained, or newly created, in proposed designs. The assumption is that the theatre will continue to thrive into the target year and will benefit from the station redesign.

KEY CONCLUSIONS FROM INITIAL RESEARCH AND DECLARED ASSUMPTIONS

1. Safe pedestrian connection to the station must be addressed.
Eugene's population will increase by 2040 corresponding with densification of the city center. More people in the City will correspond to higher use of LTD's transit system, particularly the Eugene Station. The increase in transit users will coincide with the rise of micromobility and decline of personal vehicles. To safely incorporate expected user increases at the Eugene Station, crosswalks and connection points to the station must be prioritized.

2. It is imperative to connect public transit users to micromobility.

Micromobility users will increase by the year 2040 in the forms of bikes, scooters, and skateboards, which may or may not be motorized. This creates efficiencies for the Eugene

transit system, as micromobility allows new pedestrian routes to form that alleviate unnecessary bus routes. An increase in micromobility necessitates infrastructure connecting the aforementioned modes to the greater city fabric, including redesigned streets, protected lanes, and expanded sidewalks.

3. Personal cars need to be restricted. Micromobility increases in and around the Eugene Station prompt concerns over how these modes interact with larger vehicles. Reducing existing nonessential traffic lanes and parking for personal vehicles could help create a safer and better connected station. The projected decrease in personal vehicles along with the simultaneous rise in automated vehicles allows decreased infrastructure for personal vehicles and more space for micromobility, pedestrian use, and automated vehicle drop-off zones.

4. There needs to be an expansion of space dedicated to public interaction.
As Eugene grows denser and micromobility becomes a significant form of public transportation, more public space is needed to facilitate this transportation need. Expanding public space for the various modes to be housed is vital for encouraging growth. Designing more mixed-use space with an emphasis on public safety is necessary for public inclusivity. Based

on interviews with transit users, the more people present and engaging in various activities, the safer users feel in a space. Densification will also likely result in the loss of open space downtown and create a greater need for gathering spaces.

5. Climate change necessitates the further development of urban greenspace.

The effects of climate change on Eugene are speculated to be dramatic. Students concluded that public space needs additional trees and vegetation to combat climate change related to heat influx through carbon sequestration.

6. Spatial redesign potential is diverse and will emphasize pedestrian experience.

Student designs vary in scope but display the potential of a redesigned Eugene Station that enhances the transit user experience, and by extension the downtown pedestrian experience. Increased population density and micromobility use make designing the transit hub challenging, but also result in intriguing proposals that add vibrant character, innovative spatial construction, and cultural attachment. All student designs place heavy emphasis on the pedestrian experience and find plenty of spatial design opportunities to address pressing transit issues.

Analysis Relevant to All Projects

Students collectively conducted research on the current Eugene Station, observing movements, human behavior, and interviewing a random sample of Station users. The following graphics illustrate their findings.

MOVEMENTS (MORNING)

Morning
Observed movements
on site.



Purple: Bike Blue: Mobility Assistance Red: Skateboard

Purple Filled Square: Off Bus

LEGEND

Purple Outlined Square: Onto Bus Blue Filled Square: Out of Car Blue Outlined Square: Into Car

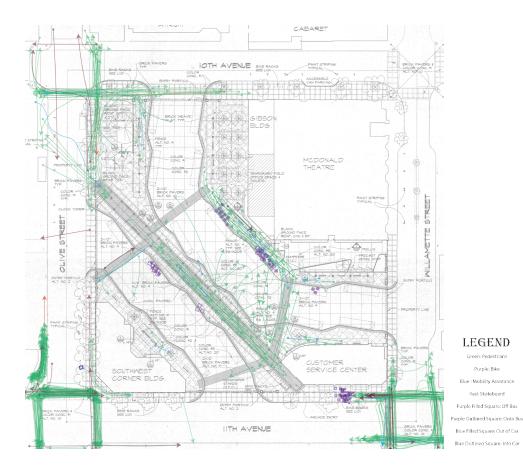


FIG. 2

Afternoon

Observed movements
on site.



Evening
Observed movements
on site.

LEGEND

Green: Pedestrians
Purple: Bike
Blue : Mobility Assistance
Red: Skateboard
Purple Filled Square: Off Bus
Purple Outlined Square: Out of Car
Blue Outlined Square: Into Car

Methods

Students observed movements using the following procedure: students selected four locations on the site and recorded all movements observed. recording direction and means of travel. The locations chosen were the corner of Willamette Street and 11th Avenue. the corner of 11th Avenue and Olive Street, the corner of Olive Street and 10th Avenue, and a central location within the Station block. Students observed each location for thirty minutes during morning, afternoon, and evening hours. Students recorded the movement of pedestrians, cyclists, skateboarders, individuals using mobility assistance (canes, wheelchairs, walkers), individuals getting in and out of vehicles, and individuals getting on and off Eugene Station transit. It should be noted that this information was collected during January and may not apply universally throughout the year. The following paragraphs indicate significant trends in the data for each category observed.

Pedestrians: The findings of this analysis point to heavy pedestrian use of adjacent crosswalks. Students found that in the morning, individuals encounter blockades (the building to the southwest and the Transit Infromation Center) when attempting to access their bus stops efficiently. Pedestrians used indicated crosswalks within the Station block in the morning but abandon them in the afternoon

and evening. Observations also found a lower volume of pedestrians on Willamette Street than other walkways and sidewalks in the study area.

<u>Bicyclists:</u> Bicyclists did not interact significantly with the Station itself but used Olive Street as a major thoroughfare in the mornings.

<u>Skateboarders</u>: Students observed a limited presence of skateboarders in proximity to the Station.

Individuals Using Mobility Assistance:
Students found this demographic to be most present in the afternoon. Morning data indicates very few individuals using mobility assistance. Evening data found these individuals to be present near the Eugene Library, using the east crosswalk across Olive Street, but recorded very little data within the station block itself.

Individuals Getting In or Out of a

Vehicle: There are only two recorded instances of this occurring, both in the evening and on the corner of Olive Street and 10th Avenue. If users are accessing the Station by car, the data suggests they are exiting or entering their vehicle outside of the study area.

Individuals Getting On or Off of Station Transit: Individuals showed consistent, high-volume use of the EMX station and Bay R.

BEHAVIORS

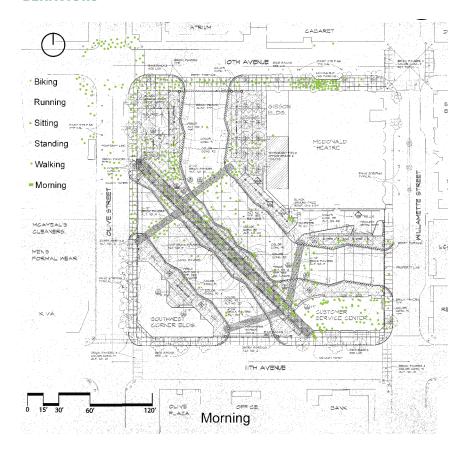


FIG. 4

Morning

Observed behaviors on Site.



FIG. 5

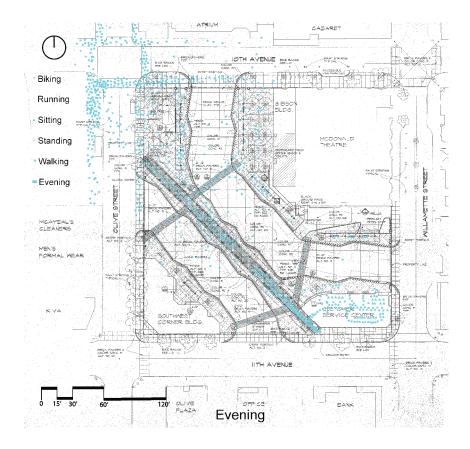
Afternoon

Observed behaviors on Site.

FIG. 6

Evening

Observed behaviors on Site.



Methods

Students observed behaviors using the following procedure: students selected four locations on the site and recorded all behaviors observed, recording individuals walking, running, sitting, biking, and standing. The locations chosen were the corner of 10th Avenue and Olive Street, inside of the Service Station, and two central locations within the Station block. Students observed each location for thirty minutes during morning, afternoon, and evening hours. It should be noted that this information was collected during January and may not apply universally throughout the year. The following paragraphs indicate significant trends in the data for each category observed.

<u>Walking:</u> Students observed that the majority of individuals actively walked. This was a uniform finding in all times of day.

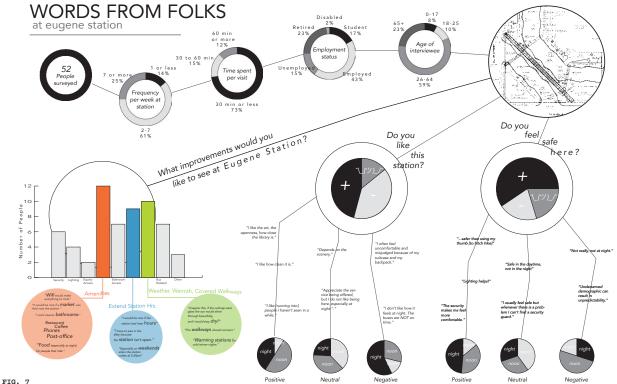
Running: People running in the study area did not constitute a significant number. This was a uniform finding in all times of day.

Sitting: The data indicates that the majority of sitting individuals reside within the Service Station. A limited number sat outside in proportion to individuals present. Of the number that did sit outside, the numbers indicate that this behavior is predominant in the morning and afternoon.

<u>Biking:</u> This behavior did not lend any significant data but support the movements recorded by the previously detailed analysis.

<u>Standing:</u> Students observed standing behavior predominantly in the afternoon near bus bays G, F, and E.

STATION USER INTERVIEWS



Data from Interviews Conducted on Site.

Methods

Students conducted interviews using the following procedure: students randomly approached station users and asked for their consent to be interviewed. 52 individuals agreed to be interviewed. Questions included station use frequency, amount of time spent per visit, and current employment status. Students estimated an age range for each individual interviewed. Students then asked each interviewee their opinions of the Station, whether they felt safe there, and what improvements they would like to see in the future. Students collected this information during January and may not apply universally throughout the year. Data collection occurred over hourlong periods in the morning, afternoon, and evening. The following paragraphs

indicate significant trends in the data for each category observed.

Overall Trends

The majority of those interviewed were 26-64, employed, and used the station an average of 2-7 times per week, spending about 30 minutes per visit.

"Do you like this station?"

Overall, the majority of those interviewed viewed the station positively. This opinion varied depending on the time of day interviews occurred. Afternoon interviewees held a generally positive view of the Station while the majority of evening interviewees responded negatively. Interviewees in the morning were fairly evenly split between positive and neutral.

"Do you feel safe here?"

Overall, the majority of those interviewed reported feeling safe in the Station. Converse to expectations, the majority of night interviewees felt safe at the station and the majority of afternoon interviewees felt unsafe. Morning interviewees responded neutrally on the subject of safety. Students suggested that these surprising numbers may be partially due to self-selection--those who would feel unsafe at the station in the evening may be choosing other means of transit during those periods. That said, evening interviewees did point to some specific elements that made them feel safe, specifically lighting and security guards.

"What improvements would you like to see and the station?"

Interviewees indicated that the most universally desired improvement was increased amenities, specifically Wi-Fi, stores, coffee shops, improved bathrooms, and post office boxes. Interviewees did not enjoy or did not know about on-site amenities such as the corner store. The second most desired improvement was warmer, sheltered spaces for waiting periods. As previously noted, students collected data in January, which may have impacted the reporting. Specific quotes ask for connected walkways and warming stations. The third most reported improvement was for an extension of the station hours. This desire connects to the need for more amenities and more warmth and shelter.

Designing Space for Pedestrians and Micro-Mobility

Several students centered their design on improving connectivity for pedestrians and micromobility. These students incorporated pedestrian gathering and relief spaces to develop more social connectivity and improve user safety. Students looked beyond Eugene Station's physical boundary and designed for safe mobility between the station and downtown. These designs also focus on developing more infrastructure and dedicating space for micromobility. In Figure Simon 1, sheltered, vegetated space connecting the station to downtown reflects the theme of relief. In Figure 12, a plaza is designed to facilitate more social connections that alter the user experience. Figure 9 draws attention to micromobility in the station space.

AUTHOR

Chris Gajeski, MLA Student

Concept

Improve multi-modal transportation and social infrastructure while incorporating wind shelter.

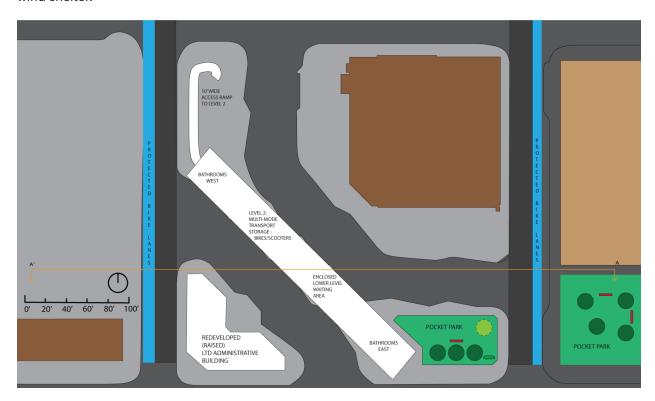
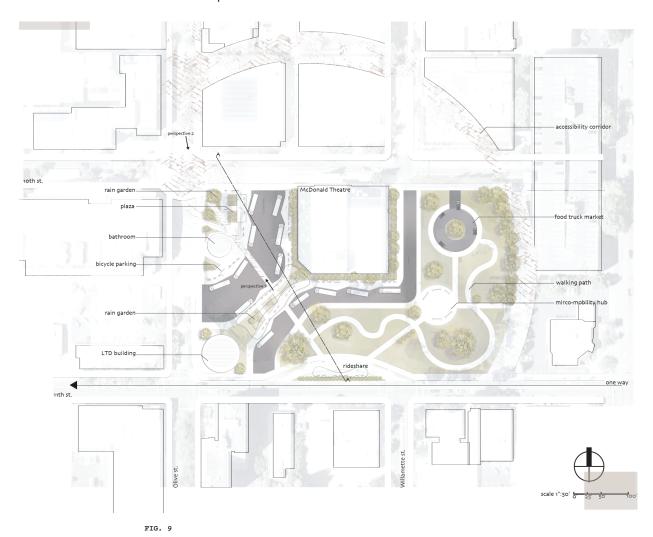


FIG. 8
Covered micro-mobility
hub.

Darby Pierce, MLA Student

Concept

Attention to micromobility, stormwater management, and user experience within the station space.



Proposed base plan

Masayo Simon, MLA Student

Concept

Following the theme of "relief" in urban environments: wavy streets to make room for more greenspace and swales, activated alleyways, adding shelter from elements.

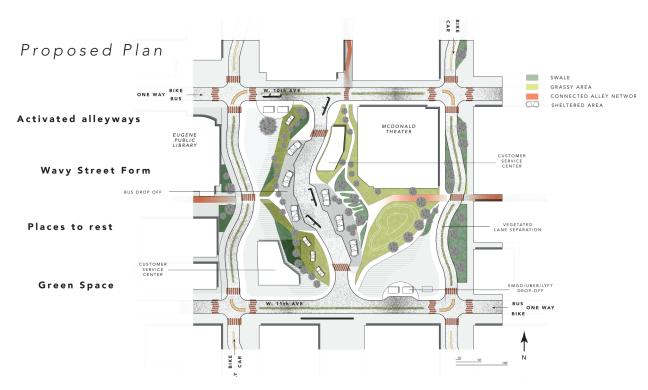


FIG. 10 Sheltered greenspace.

Stephen Lorber, MLA Student

Concept

Assessing landscape for pedestrian mobility and connectivity to, from, and within the bus station.

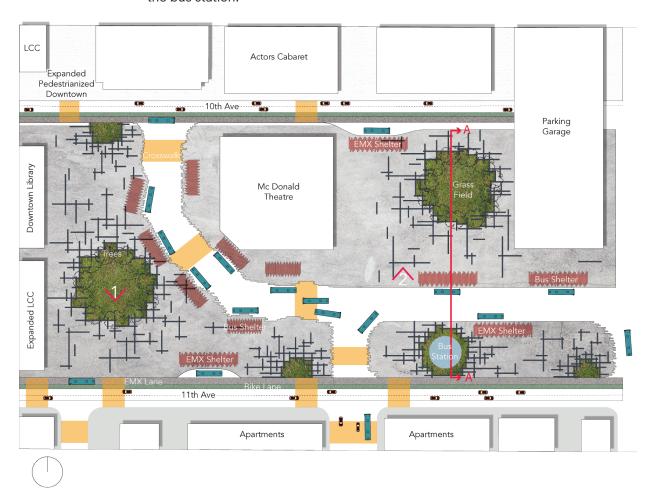


FIG. 11
Opening the viewshed.

Jessica Gonzalez, MLA Student

Concept

Colorful crosswalks, new mobility access, and a plaza for more social connections are central to altering the user experience while addressing concerns of the space.



FIG. 12 Community gathering around gardens.

Providing Areas Of Safety And Comfort

SHELTER AND LIGHT

Lindsey Kurtz, MLA Student

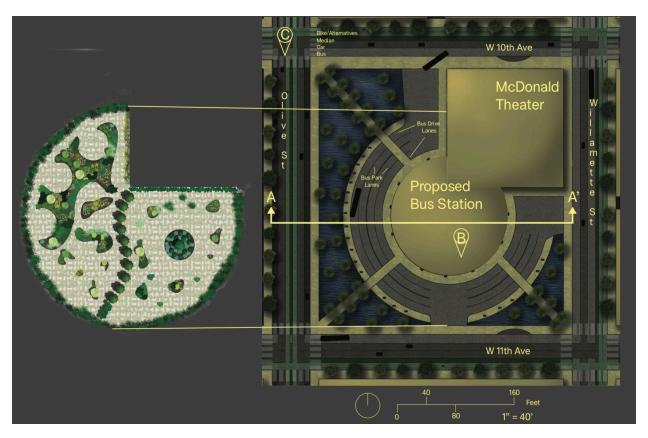


FIG. 13
Proposed Base Plan.

Initial Design Concept

The Eugene Station currently lacks sufficient evening lighting, sheltered spaces, and centrality to make evening users feel comfortable. This design remedies these issues by creating a circular structure surrounded by a rounded driveway featuring all bus bays. This structure would serve as a service station and covered waiting area featuring a green roof to enliven the space. Lighting would be incorporated throughout the site to ensure users perceived the station as safe throughout the evening. The design features direct pedestrian thoroughfares from street corners into the station, eliminating existing movement blockades and increasing crossing safety in station driveways.



FIG. 14
Perspectives show
Kurtz's design of a welllit, central station.

Context of Movement

The proposed design alters the flow of movement surrounding the block, creating a two-drive within the site and reimagining the adjacent streets optimized for future mobility. The design accounts for increased micromobility use and a decreased single-occupancy vehicle use.

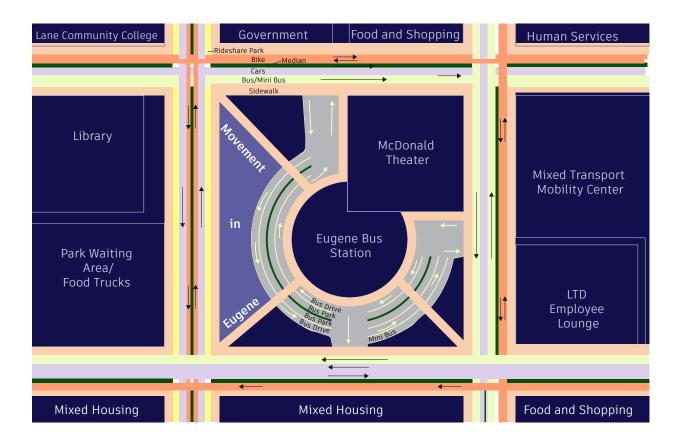


FIG. 15
Anticipated future movement patterns.

THE DOME

Cameron Dunstan, MLA Student

Eugene Station 2040 Under the Domes

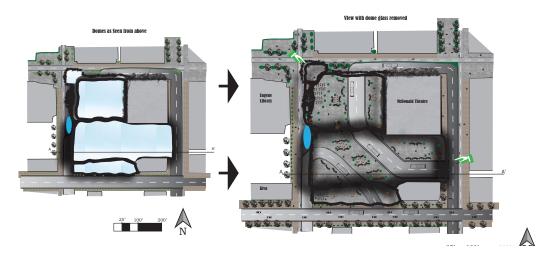


FIG. 16
Proposed base plan.

Initial Design Concept

This design focuses on the communicated desire for shelter and light in the Eugene Station. Dunstan proposes a large, clear dome structure to cover the station, protecting users from the elements and allowing light to penetrate throughout. The design facilitates facilitate free movement within the Station, rather than continuing bottlenecks in sheltered passageways.





 $_{\mbox{\scriptsize FIG.}}$ $_{\mbox{\scriptsize 17}}$ Perspectives illustrate Dunstan's concept of the dome.

This design includes four connecting, clear polygons. This dome would act as a variation on an umbrella, protecting the entirety of the station grounds from the elements. A series of attractive supports designed by Dunstan hold the dome.

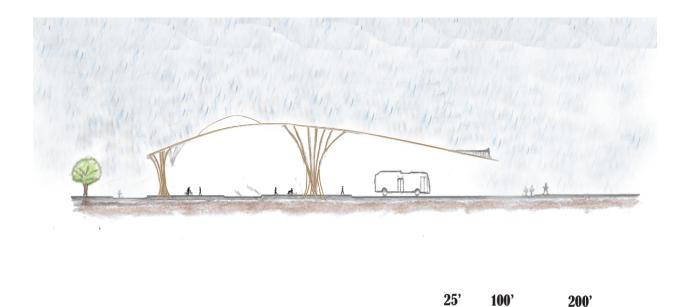
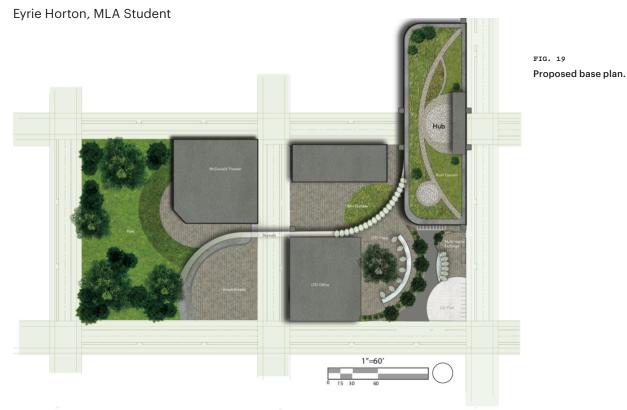


FIG. 18
Section of the largest section of the dome.

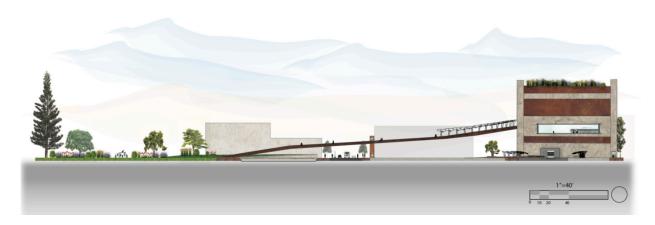
Shown @ 1.5x vertical exaggeration

EUGENE TRANSIT HUB



Initial Design Concept

Anticipating many of the changes outlined in the section on key assumptions, this design creates a safe and sheltered station by moving the entirety of operations into what is currently the Overpark Parking Garage on 10th Avenue and Oak. The current LTD Station block becomes a city park with a skywalk connecting to the new Transit Hub. The Overpark lot becomes a three-level structure: the first floor for the terminal, the second for the service station and a community market hall, and the third as a dedicated green roof. This design makes key community connections both on a physical and cultural level while creating a safe and sheltered environment for users.



 $_{\mbox{\scriptsize FIG.}}$ 20 Section of the connection from the new city park to the transit hub.



Perspective shows activity on the proposed green roof.

Context of Movement

This design reimagines street movement by utilizing one-way streets to ease traffic congestion and free up space for micromobility. Protected multi-use pathways and transit platforms maximize safety and comfort.

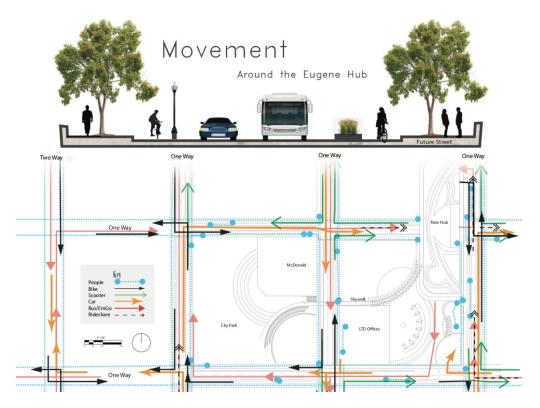


FIG. 22
Anticipated future movement patterns.

Micro-mobility and TNCs are given a specific space in the design, easing mode transfers.



FIG. 23
Perspective illustrates the multi-mobility transfer hub.

Creating Pedestrian Identity and Aesthetic Interest

GREEN WAYSTATION

Rae Matthews, MLA Student

The Eugene Station features minimal green space, reducing pollinators, creating a disconnect between the station and the rest of Eugene, and making the block appear aesthetically harsh. The area lacks any of the standard benefits that street trees or gardens provide such as air quality improvement, noise pollution reduction, wildlife and plant diversity, water absorption, reduction of reflected heat, and general enjoyment of natural scenery. This design aims to solve these issues by creating a healthier place for people, wildlife, and the climate.



FIG. 24

Proposed base plan.

EUGENE STATION AND COMMONS

Abby Pierce, MLA Student

This design encourages a gentler pace and more welcoming experience around the Eugene Station by employing traffic-calming measures including narrower streets and gentle curves. 10th and 11th Avenues become turned one-way, two-lane roads, with the innermost lanes designated for public transit to increase reliability. Olive Street is significantly narrowed and designated micromobility only. The additional green spaces that this new street configuration allow bring much needed soft surfaces and canopy cover to downtown. All of these features create a more desirable people-centered space where spontaneous social interactions and interesting outdoor spaces support a lively neighborhood atmosphere.

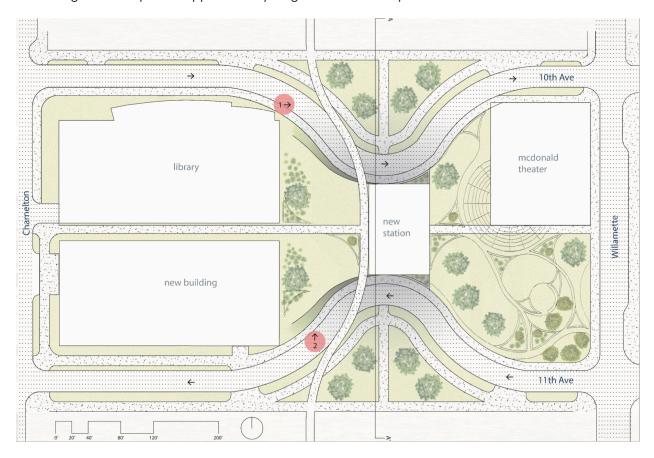


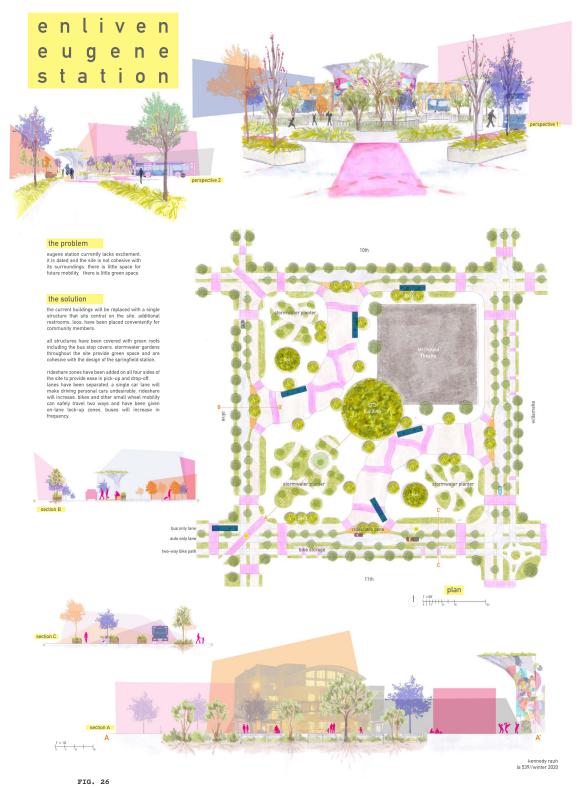
FIG. 25
Proposed base plan.

EUGENE STATION ENLIVENED

Kennedy Rauh, MLA Student

This design adds excitement, cohesion, mobility, and green space to the current station. A single building sitting centrally on the site replace the multiple existing buildings. Community members enjoy conveniently placed restrooms and green roofs cover all structures. Stormwater gardens throughout the site provide green space and act as a cohesive unit with the design of Springfield Station. Ride-share zones on all four sides of the site ease pick-up and drop-off. Separated lanes and

a single car lane disincentivizes personal vehicle use while prioritizing ridesharing and busing. Bikes and other small wheel mobility can safely travel two ways and enjoy on-lane lock-up zones.



Proposed base plan.

EUGENE STATION

Saya Akayama, MLA Student

This design encourages public transportation and ride-share services to combat serious concerns over climate change and sustainability. Eugene Station plays an important role in this process as it is an entrance into downtown. This design creates a pedestrian- and environmentally-friendly place. A rain garden covers the station, improving stormwater management and preventing people from crossing the street without using a crosswalk.

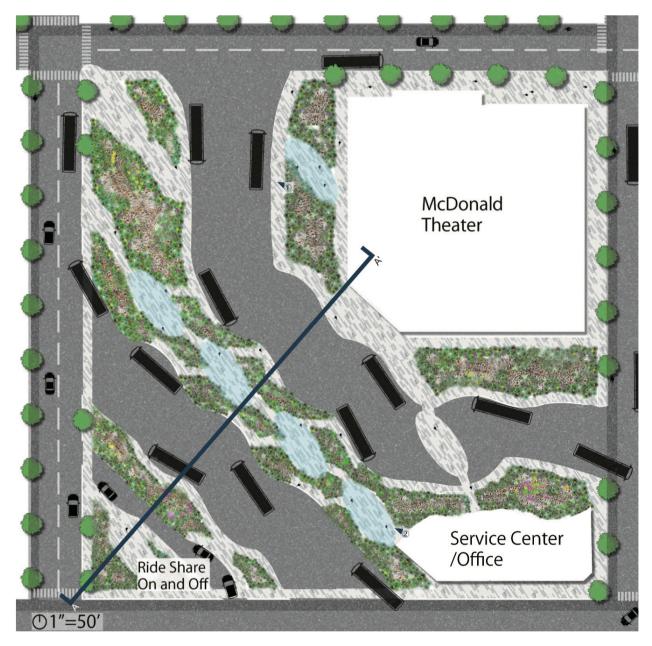


FIG. 27
Proposed base plan.

EUGENE STATION 2040

Will Bonner, MLA Student

Currently, Eugene Station lacks greenspace and connection to natural processes. It does not connect to other parts of downtown Eugene and visitors generally feel negative or neutral about the space. By 2040, through increased education and greater access to information, the people of Eugene could achieve higher levels of consciousness. People will become more understanding and connected to nature. Eugenians will have a deeper respect for the natural processes that keep us alive such as water and microorganisms. There will be a collective urgency to return to a state of equilibrium with the planet after decades of destruction. Water and greenspaces will be brought back into the urban landscape and be intertwined with the daily lives of commuters. People will also become better connected to machines. Though apps and other future technologies, autonomous rideshare could become one of the main methods of transport. More regular and frequent bus lines will run through the tunnel, connecting people with the rest of the city.

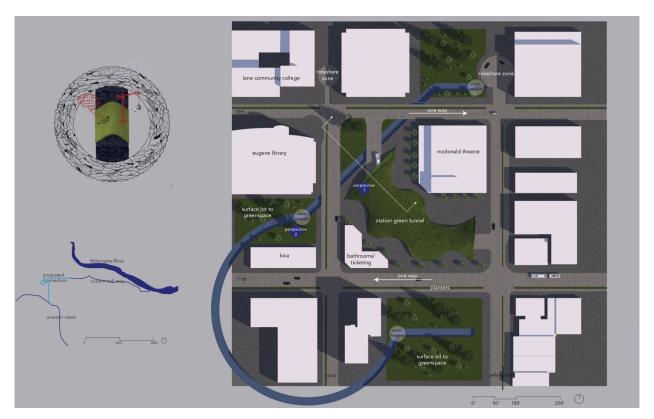


FIG. 28
Proposed base plan.

Conclusion

This compilation of student projects offers a multitude of design solutions for the complex problems facing modern transit spaces. Each project remains unique in its approach while targeting similar problems. Students determined these problems through a series of interviews and observations conducted at the Eugene Station. Students also used secondary sources to better understand the future of transportation. Student designs address pedestrian movement throughout the station's downtown area. Students responded to the current trends of increasing autonomous and ride-share vehicles. Students also recommended a heightened focus on greenspaces in order to combat climate change and offer refuge to people, animals, and natural systems.

References

Urbanism Next

City Reports

SCI Directors and Staff

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