

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING/PUBLIC HEARING

Monday, October 13, 2008

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on October 9, 2008, and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District held a special Board meeting on Monday, October 13, 2008, beginning at 5:30 p.m., in the Bascom-Tykeson Room of the Eugene Public Library, 100 West 10th Avenue, Eugene, Oregon.

Present: Greg Evans, Vice President
Michael Dubick
Gerry Gaydos
Dean Kortge
Ed Necker
Doris Towery
Stefano Viggiano, Assistant General Manager
Jeanne Schapper, Clerk of the Board
Lynn Taylor, Minutes Recorder

Absent: Mike Eyster, President

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL – Mr. Evans called the meeting to order and called the roll. He welcomed new Board member Doris Towery.

PRELIMINARY PUBLIC HEARING ON FY 2009 SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS – Director of Service Planning, Accessibility, and Marketing Andy Vobora stated that ridership was increasing, with records being set each month. He anticipated exceeding 12 million annual boardings. He reviewed productivity statistics for various routes and compared the 10 highest and the 10 lowest in productivity. He said that overall the system as a whole was very productive with an average of more than 53 boardings per revenue hour. He stated that the District was faced with budget challenges including fluctuating fuel prices and the increasing cost of paratransit services. Additionally, almost 80 percent of LTD's funding comes from payroll taxes, and with a weakening economy, LTD will see that income begin to decline.

Mr. Vobora identified potential solutions to budget problems, including fare increases, state and federal funding, and local funding options that could be considered in the future. He said the District's budget was closely scrutinized, and expenses pared wherever possible, leaving service cuts as the means necessary to address any remaining budget deficit. He said service reduction recommendations were made with the following goals in mind:

- Maintain service frequency on major travel corridors
- Maintain 60-minute frequency on urban routes
- Ensure no disproportionate impact on low income or minority populations
- Maintain the current span of service
- Avoid changes that increase costs
- Minimize creating transfers

Mr. Vobora said that there would be additional opportunities for public input prior to the Board's decision on recommendations at its November 19, 2008, meeting. He said that a majority of the changes would occur in September 2009. He explained proposed service changes throughout the system.

Mr. Evans opened the public hearing and explained the process for providing testimony.

Hilary Dearborn, 38513 Jasper-Lower Road, commented on elimination of the 8X route. She said cutting service to outlying riders was not the best way to cut costs. She felt that the 8X was not well known, but it made commuting by bus possible for many people who could not use transit to get to work if they were limited to regular service. She said ridership on that route had been increasing and would continue to grow as people discovered the service.

Mr. Vobora agreed that ridership on the 8X was increasing and current data was considered when making recommendations.

Terry Tanton, 38814 Camp Creek Road, also spoke to the elimination of route 8X and said many people were upset with the possibility of losing that service. She said that eliminating express service adversely impacted working people and she urged the Board to consider retaining the route. She reminded the Board that working people generate payroll taxes, which help to support the District.

Jeana Thompson, 3991 Alcona Street, Springfield, expressed concern about the overflow on several routes and noted that she had been bumped on several occasions when buses were full. She rode the 11 and felt that eliminating the 8X would create even more problems with full buses.

Mr. Vobora replied that the District tracked overloads on the system on a weekly basis and was looking at a policy change to require people to move from wheelchair bays to reduce the times that riders in wheelchairs were left behind. He said the proposed change would be presented to the Board for consideration.

Karen McClain, 6975 Bluebelle Way, Springfield, expressed her opposition to eliminating the 8X. She said that the buses seemed to be full and did not understand how the service could be recommended for cuts. She felt that cutting the 8X contradicted LTD's mission statement as most 8X riders did not feel that the 11 was a viable, reliable alternative. She submitted written comments.

Lynette Boon, 2115 Hawkins Lane, Eugene, advocated for the #76. She said that Hawkins Lane was steep and walking up the hill was difficult for the elderly and handicapped. She rode the bus as a University of Oregon employee on the group pass program, but was willing to pay the fare from her own pocket if that would keep the service going. She suggested continuing to provide service during the morning and evening hours so that people could continue to commute to work. She said the other buses going to the University were already very crowded.

Wendy Butler-Boyesen, 3805 Paget, Eugene, stated that she was a longtime bus rider and that her husband was disabled and used either RideSource or regular service if she accompanied him. She reinforced earlier comments concerning overloads on buses and endorsed a policy change that would require riders to give up a seat for a disabled rider. She advocated for service on Hawkins Lane and rush hour service on Oak Patch Road, which had a dense population of low income riders who depended on the bus to get to work. She also encouraged service to the

Tamarack Center for disabled riders who used that facility. She said that elimination of that service would increase the demand for RideSource.

Beth Prescott, 1554 Oak Patch Road, Eugene, commented that route 30 was a heavily used service with buses usually packed with riders. She said that the 78 was not a substitute as it did not provide service to downtown; it only provided service to the University. She said Oak Patch was a long street with numerous large apartment complexes and it would be difficult for people to have to walk to 18th Avenue or 11th Avenue to catch the bus. She felt that many people would stop riding the bus if it became inconvenient, and she feared that transit would become irrelevant. She urged preservation of service during rush hours.

Matt Koehler, 1554 Larkspur Loop, Eugene, said he was a rider on the 60 route and would not advocate preserving the full service, but encouraged the Board to consider options such as keeping one bus in the morning and one in the evening, or allowing some access to Cal Young on the 66 or the 67 for riders in the Ferry Street Bridge area.

Ed McDunn, 3690 West 1st Avenue, Eugene, speaking on behalf of the Pearl Buck Center, pointed out that the Center's services were now consolidated in a facility on West 1st Avenue. He said that all of the Center's clients rode public transportation and thanked the District for its service to the developmentally disabled population. He said that the 32 route was essential to the center's clients.

Mr. Vobora noted that route 32 was unaffected by the proposed reduction in service.

Peter DeFoi, 1133 Olive Street, Eugene, indicated that he had worked as a business manager for a nonprofit organization and understood the difficulties in dealing with budget cuts. He appreciated the service LTD provided. He had been bumped from full buses and expected that to continue in the future. He recognized the need to cut service on routes with lower ridership.

Jan Griffin, 6487 D Street, Springfield, said she rode the 8X route. It would add another hour to her commute each day if she had to use the #11, making it more feasible to drive to work. She said that for some riders it was not possible to stand for long periods of time, and they could not give up their seats for a wheelchair rider.

Ernie Unger, 1542 West 1st Avenue, Eugene, speaking on behalf of the Eugene Mission, noted that the #40 and #52 routes served the Mission's 2nd Avenue and Chambers Street location. He said the Mission had between 300 and 400 guests per night and many rode the bus. He asked for clarification of continued service to that area.

Mr. Vobora explained that the Mission's location would be served by the proposed new #51 route.

Ellen Johnson, Eugene, stated she was very angry when she heard that LTD was cutting service, but had learned a lot at the hearing, including how much effort had gone into the proposed changes for combining and streamlining routes. She purposely lives without a vehicle for transportation to protect the environment. She then asked Board members to indicate who lived car-free or regularly rode the bus. She expressed concern with the peak oil crisis and the community's survival, which would depend on having a reliable transportation system in place before people were no longer able to use their cars. She said more funding was needed to expand service.

Mel Barnes, 1473 C Street, Springfield, distributed written remarks. He advocated for retaining the #18 and #19 routes to the Willamalane Adult Activity Center. He said that many of the riders on those routes had limited mobility and would be forced to use RideSource if the service was eliminated as accessing other routes would be hazardous. He hoped that the Board would continue to consider his previous proposals for service as well.

Mr. Vobora commented that the Activity Center would continue to be served.

Tim Cookson, 6578 Aaron Lane, Springfield, spoke to the District's proposed budget and expressed concern with the built-in increases in fuel prices at a time when fuel prices had collapsed. He said it was unlikely that prices would rise until the recession was over and that should allow fewer cuts to be made. He encouraged incremental cuts tied to actual fuel price increases, or a fuel surcharge, in lieu of cutting service. He said that there should be cuts to administrative jobs commensurate with service cuts. He noted that debt service in the budget indicated the District could borrow funds, at least for capital projects, and suggested that additional funds could be borrowed to support service and then repaid in the future as the economy improved. He said that refinancing the outstanding debt at a lower interest rate was another option to consider.

There being no further testimony, Mr. Evans closed the public hearing and called for comments from staff and Board members.

Mr. Vobora thanked those who spoke and said that all public comments would be reviewed with the Board at its October 15 meeting. He said that any updates to the service recommendations would be posted on the District's website and discussed at the next public hearing on November 10.

Mr. Evans asked if the elimination of the #8X would be reconsidered based on the comments received. Mr. Vobora said that any of the recommendations could be revisited and the administrative budget was also being reviewed.

Mr. Kortge remarked that it was difficult to estimate fuel prices and that was why the changes were being proposed for September 2009. He added that the budget remained a moving target.

Mr. Necker stated his support of the concept of express service in the morning and evening and asked riders to submit specific proposals on the website for which times those buses would best serve the riders' needs.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.



Board Secretary

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