

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING/WORK SESSION
WITH SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Monday, February 25, 2008

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on February 21, 2008, and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District held a special meeting/joint work session with the Springfield City Council on Monday, February 25, 2008, beginning at 6 p.m., in the Library Meeting Room at Springfield City Hall, 225 Fifth Street, Springfield.

Present: Gerry Gaydos, President, presiding
Dean Kortge, Vice President
Debbie Davis, Treasurer
Mike Dubick
Mike Eyster, Vice President
Greg Evans
Ed Necker
Mark Pangborn, General Manager
Jo Sullivan, Clerk of the Board
Amy Sowa, Springfield City Recorder/Minutes Recorder

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION MEETING OF
THE SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL HELD
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2008

ATTENDANCE

Present were Mayor Leiken and Councilors Lundberg, Wylie, Ballew, and Pishioneri. Also present were City Manager Gino Grimaldi, Assistant City Manager Jeff Towery, City Attorney Joe Leahy, City Attorney Matt Cox, City Attorney Bill Van Vactor, City Recorder Amy Sowa and members of the staff.

Councilors Ralston and Woodrow were absent (excused).

1. Lane Transit District (LTD) Discussion.

Mayor Leiken welcomed the LTD Board. He asked that both the Board and City Council members introduce themselves. Those in attendance from the LTD Board were LTD Board President Gerry Gaydos and members Mike Eyster, Greg Evans, Ed Necker, Dean Kortge, Debbie Davis, and Mike Dubick.

Mr. Gaydos called the LTD portion of the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. All members were present.

Mr. Grimaldi reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

Mark Pangborn, General Manager of LTD, said the City Council and LTD Board had met jointly about once a year for a number of years because there were so many services to the community that intersected.

Mr. Pangborn presented a power point presentation. He talked about where LTD was now. He provided a service overview: the bus, RideSource, event shuttles, EmX, Commuter Solutions, and the Breeze. He referred to a graph in the power point regarding ridership, service and service area population. The population in our community was using the bus more and more for their transportation needs. He further discussed the graph and explained some of the trends and reasons for increased ridership.

Councilor Pishioneri asked when the high school free ridership program started.

Mr. Pangborn said it had been in place for about three years. It was started with a sample of just a few high schools and was expanded to offering to all middle and high schools. That did have a significant impact in ridership numbers. He also noted that Lane Community College (LCC) started a group pass this last year.

Mr. Pangborn continued his presentation by discussing the comparisons LTD had made with their service and other cities. He noted the cities used for this comparison and discussed the areas of comparison, which included: boardings per service hour; boardings per capita; cost per boarding; cost per service hour; cash fare comparison; and fare recovery.

Councilor Ballew asked about the boarding per service hour figure.

Mr. Pangborn said the figure was the number of riders per hour per bus.

Councilor Ralston asked about a figure on the chart and asked if the difference was a subsidy.

Mr. Pangborn said that was correct, it was a payroll tax subsidy. They did have some advertising revenues, but seventy-five percent of their operating revenue came from payroll taxes. Tri-Met and LTD were the only two transit districts in the State that operate from payroll taxes.

Mr. Pangborn said LTD conducted a survey of riders in 2007 to find out why people were riding the bus. He explained the results of that survey. It included information on why people rode the bus (no vehicle, shared vehicle, economic reasons) and also how they paid for the bus fare (cash, group pass from employer, student pass). He discussed the EmX and noted that only nine percent of those riding the EmX were riding for free.

Councilor Ralston asked if they thought people didn't know EmX was free.

Mr. Pangborn explained why many people choose not to ride even if it was free. There were a number of people, however, that were trying the EmX and finding it very convenient.

Councilor Ballew asked what percentage of total ridership was using EmX.

Stefano Viggiano, Assistant General Manager of LTD, said about fifteen percent.

Tom Schwetz, Director of Development Services at LTD, discussed the Fare-Free Service at LTD (attachment B, page 13 in the agenda packet). He said the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) had encouraged LTD to consider implementation of fare-free service. He gave an overview of the financial and operational impacts. With the group pass program, student transit pass program, and those under 5 and over 70 years old riding for free, about 49 percent of the people in the community had access to the system without paying a fare. On the cost side, the biggest concern would be a loss of about \$5 million in revenue. That would need to be made up in some other way, such as cutting 20 – 25 percent of the service. Another issue was the RideSource service. RideSource was a mandated American with Disabilities Act (ADA) service that was required to be complementary to the existing service. If not charging on the regular service, they could not charge on the RideSource service, which was the most costly service. There were constraints to moving toward a free-fare system, and LTD felt they were currently in a good position with the number of riders that already rode for free. He asked if Council had any questions.

Councilor Ballew asked if they would get an additional \$5M in revenue if they did away with all of the free ridership. That could allow them to decrease rates across the board.

Mr. Schwetz said that most of the riders in the 'free' category were actually those that had a group pass. The group pass was paid by the employer, so was not actually free.

It was noted that 49 percent of the population were in that category, not 49 percent of the riders.

Councilor Ballew asked about the elderly riders.

Mr. Pangborn said many elderly people rode the bus, but not very frequently. He noted that people over 70 years old could receive a free pass by showing photo ID, but many didn't use the pass. LTD was considering lowering the age for that pass to 65 years old. The whole community was paying for transit service so they were trying to market it for the community.

Councilor Ralston asked about 49 percent figure.

Mr. Schwetz said 49 percent of the population in the district held a group pass, a student transit pass or ride for free pass because of their age. He said they had the pass, but may not use it.

Mr. Dubick said one of the reasons they were considering lowering the age to 65 was to get people comfortable using the regular bus service because it was less expensive to operate than RideSource. They were currently taking money from the General Fund to help fund RideSource. RideSource was mandated by the Federal Government through the ADA, but was not federally funded. Some cigarette tax funds were provided for this program.

Mr. Schwetz spoke regarding Applicability of Rail in the Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan Area (attachment B, page 21 in the agenda packet). He said the information in the agenda packet described the cost per mile for construction of various modes of rail. There was some interest in looking at rail in the future. The attached table gave a good comparison of various street car and light rail systems across the country and included the EmX system. The EmX did quite well in the performance measures related to annual cost per boarding and annual boardings per route mile.

Mr. Pangborn said people often asked why LTD didn't put in light rail rather than EmX. He said light rail was ten times more expensive and was not needed in this area at this time.

Mr. Viggiano discussed Springfield service. He referred to a chart showing boardings by route. He noted the number of ridership on the Springfield routes. Springfield services were some of LTD's most productive offered. He referred to a map in the power point presentation that showed boardings by location. He noted the number of boardings at the Springfield station on South A Street. The downtown Eugene station was the hub of the bus service and served a very large volume. Secondary hubs had been formed, such as the one in downtown Springfield, which was growing all the time. He discussed the upcoming change to the Gateway route for 2008 that would include International Way and the anticipated ridership growth that would occur in that area. The frequency would increase from 30 minutes to 20 minutes during the afternoon. Because the RiverBend Hospital was scheduled to be open this summer, there was an interim route strategy for the next two years until the EmX was finished. He explained the route.

Mr. Pangborn said there were several buses that made that route.

Mr. Viggiano said Symantec was not currently on the route, but would be on the new route. Many businesses along this route currently provided group passes and would now be served with the new route. He noted that the next big change would be in 2010 when they implemented the Pioneer Parkway EmX. He described the process they would use to determine those changes, and whether or not to use connector routes. He discussed the current routes in Springfield and noted some areas that could receive additional service in the future.

Councilor Woodrow asked if consideration had been given to an EmX line out to the Thurston Station, up Highway 126 and back to Pioneer Parkway.

Mr. Viggiano said they hoped eventually to have an EmX route that went out to Thurston and back to west Eugene. In 2001, it was decided that Gateway service was a higher priority due to the large amount of growth in that area.

Mayor Leiken discussed parking in the downtown. He asked if LTD would be interested in working with the City to look at putting in a parking structure or garage. It would be beneficial to both the City and LTD, especially once the EmX line was in place and going out to Gateway. He hoped the LTD Board would consider this partnership for the future. Urban Renewal could play a part in this as well.

Mr. Necker asked if a parking garage adjacent to Springfield Station would be a good location.

Mayor Leiken said he didn't know, but that could be a starting point. Other areas could be considered as well with input from citizens.

Mr. Evans said the Board had held conversations about a long-range vision for their Park and Ride system and increasing the parking capacity around that. As EmX and the system grew, that could happen at some point. Currently, they were maxed out, but they would consider that partnership in the future. LTD was looking at public and private partnership to increase capacity around Park and Ride locations and structures.

Councilor Wylie said during her time on the LTD Board she learned that a good transit district was not trying to get people to get rid of their car, but was a partnership and part of the whole transportation picture. The Park and Ride was part of that partnership.

Mayor Leiken asked if LTD had an expectation from the City to have a role at looking at service providing areas.

Mr. Pangborn referred to a chart showing the Springfield Outreach schedule which listed Springfield neighborhood meeting, community groups, City staff, and Council from fall of 2008 through fall of 2009. LTD would like strong participation with the entire structure of the City. Because it involved service to Springfield citizens, they expected it to be a partnership in planning.

Mr. Mel Barnes, a Springfield resident, spoke from the audience. He said he took groups from the Senior Center to the Springfield Station to teach them how to ride the bus and the EmX. There were a lot of people that didn't have bus service to their neighborhoods or near their homes, especially off of Jasper Road. He also had people ask him where they could catch a bus and he had to tell them there was not a bus route there.

Mr. Gaydos said local match was very important. Creative ideas were needed to find revenue.

Mr. Pangborn said Mr. Barnes had worked hard to help find appropriate routes.

Mr. Schwetz spoke regarding the Franklin Boulevard Project (attachment C, page 1 in the agenda packet). Mr. Schwetz said the documents included in this packet were the same as those that were going to Washington DC for the United Front trip. It described a project that went from the Courthouse in downtown Eugene to the Springfield bridges. The City had been conducting a stakeholder outreach in the Glenwood area. The concept for that corridor had not yet been presented to Council, so he just wanted to highlight this project was in progress.

Councilor Ballew asked where Federal financing came from that went to LTD.

Mr. Schwetz said the general FTA funding was part of the Transportation Trust Fund. Gas tax and other funding sources were also provided.

Mr. Pangborn said about 80-85 percent of the Federal funding was from a Federal gas tax, and the remaining 15 percent was General Fund money. President Bush's proposed budget to Congress included a cut in some funding for both highways and transit.

Mayor Leiken said Council had a lot of interest in the Franklin corridor. That project was one the City and LTD would need to continue to work on together, especially regarding the alignment of Franklin Boulevard.

Mr. Necker said the Board knew Glenwood was soon to be in process, and they wanted to be sure to include transit as an important part of that redevelopment.

Mr. Dubick said he attended the open house held at Roaring Rapids and felt that the preliminary concept he saw there was very impressive.

Mr. Viggiano said the Pioneer Parkway EmX item was put on the agenda a couple of weeks ago, but LTD and the City Council were still in the middle of those discussions, so it would not be productive to go into details of the design at this time. He suggested instead that the agenda proceed to the update on the Gateway Station.

Charlie Simmons, Facilities Services Manager with LTD, spoke on the Gateway Station. He said LTD approached Gateway management a few years ago about moving the location of the Gateway station. The mall did not understand why the station needed to be moved at first. Mr. Simmons explained that it was important to move the station out where there could be faster service for the EmX and still serve the Gateway Mall. Also, getting through the parking lot to and from the existing Gateway Station was a real challenge. He showed the proposed location for the station. This station would serve both regular service as well as EmX service. There would be two bays for each route for both directions.

Mr. Simmons said it was also important to LTD how the platform would work. They would reduce the lanes on the road around the mall and put in a covered crosswalk from the station to the mall. The fewer lanes provided a calming of traffic in that area. He referred to the diagram showing the walk connections from the neighborhoods. The covered walkway was proposed to be transparent to allow a view of the mall and General Growth (the management of the mall) had begun to embrace that design. LTD would go out to bid in March and hoped for construction to begin in late spring or early summer, with the facility ready for the holidays. It was currently at 70 percent design with a budget of about \$1.6M for construction.

Councilor Lundberg asked what they considered the holiday season.

Mr. Simmons said early to mid-November. If the project was not complete by then, they would stop the construction and wait until the end of January to finish the project. The current site would go back to parking once the new station was complete. He felt it was a win-win for the mall and LTD. This project was part of the Connect Oregon grant.

Councilor Pishioneri asked how much funding was devoted to lighting.

Mr. Simmons said he believed it was about \$86,000.

Councilor Pishioneri asked how effective that covered walkway would be in protecting pedestrians with wind blowing through.

Mr. Simmons said General Growth didn't want a covered walkway that would block the visibility of their front entrance. The cover protected against rain and sun. The number of

days there was heavy wind and rain was fairly minimal, and this cover should provide a pretty high level of shelter area.

Mr. Pangborn said one complaint before EmX was put into service was that people thought the station shelters would be too high to offer protection from the weather. Now that they have been built, there were no complaints about people not being protected.

Mr. Simmons said when there were vertical surfaces that blocked visibility, there were vandalism and security issues. The walkway being open was a good compromise.

ADJOURNMENT

The LTD Board adjourned at 7:08 p.m.



Board Secretary

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