



LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETING

Wednesday, July 22, 2020 4:30 – 5:00 p.m.

VIRTUAL MEETING

Zoom details will be provided on the web calendar at www.LTD.org.

No public testimony will be heard at this meeting.

AGENDA

Table with 3 columns: Time, ITEM, Page. Rows include: 4:30 p.m. I. CALL TO ORDER; II. ROLL CALL (listing board members); III. COMMENTS FROM BOARD PRESIDENT; IV. COMMENTS FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER; V. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADDITIONS TO AGENDA; 4:35 p.m. A. RIDERSHIP AND OPERATIONS UPDATE; 5:00 p.m. VI. ADJOURNMENT.



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

DATE OF MEETING: July 29, 2020

ITEM TITLE: RIDERSHIP AND OPERATIONS UPDATE

PREPARED BY: Tom Schwetz, Director of Planning and Development

DIRECTOR: Aurora Jackson, General Manager

ACTION REQUESTED: None. Information Only

PURPOSE: To provide the Board with an update on current ridership trends and operations.

ROLE OF THE BOARD: The Board's role in this instance is to obtain information.

HISTORY: Beginning with the closure of the UO during the week of March 16, LTD's ridership experienced a decline until the week of April 27 when data indicates that ridership started to increase. The attached set of figures provide an overall view of LTD's ridership trends between May 4 and June 4, 2020, for both LTD's fixed route service and RideSource services. These figures include:

- Figure 1 - Summary of Boarding Activity
- Figure 2 - Number of Trips with Passenger Loads over 20 (40' Buses)
- Figure 3 - Number of Trips with Passenger Loads over 30 (60' Buses)
- Figure 4 - Average Weekday Boardings by Time of Day
- Figure 5 - Comparison of Average Weekday Boarding Activity - 2019 & 2020 Top 10 Regular Service Stops
- Figure 6 - Comparison of Average Weekday Boarding Activity - 2019 & 2020 Top 10 EmX Stop
- Figure 7 - RideSource Total Call Volume
- Figure 8 - RideSource Trips by Type

Trends in Fixed-Route Service

Overall, every route has the experienced ridership reductions. In particular, EmX and LTD's core routes have seen heavy reductions, though EmX continues to carry the majority of overall ridership. LTD's ridership has gone from an average of about 35,000 boardings per day on an average weekday in 'normal' times to about 10,000 boardings on an average weekday. This represents about a 70% reduction in our ridership – similar to what is being seen across the country. During this period of time, evening service (after 8:30 PM) - has been fairly stable currently at about 1,000 average weeknight boardings.

On May 8, 2020, Lane County formally submitted its "Blueprint for Re-opening" to the Governor. Phase 1 of this blueprint will include opening of some businesses that can be expected to increase the level of travel and social interaction within the Eugene-Springfield area. In that context, LTD's ridership trends are expected to change. As of the date this memo was written, weekday boardings during Phase 1 Reopening are averaging between 10-12,000. Staff will be continuing to assess the level of change in boardings, how transit is being used in this phase of re-opening, and where overloads may be occurring.

LTD has made several changes in its level of service in an effort to provide service in a safe manner for essential trip making under Covid-related conditions. These changes include:

1. For the period between 3-1 and 3-21, LTD was operating a "normal" level of service, and was providing service 7 days a week.
2. For the week of 3-23 (the first full week of the Governor's Stay Home order), LTD operated a Saturday level of service during the weekdays, a Sunday level of service on Saturdays and ceased operating on Sundays.
3. The following period (3-30 through 4-24), LTD operated a modified Sunday level of service during the weekdays, adding morning and evening trips on key routes.
4. On 4-27, LTD began operating the modified Sunday service Monday through Saturday, increasing EmX service frequencies to 10 minutes between 9 AM and 4:30 PM. This level of service will continue until 6-7.

The last period shown in the graph (5-17 through 5-29) reflects a small increase in boardings during the first full 2 weeks of Phase 1 Reopening.

5. On Sunday 6-7, LTD began 7-day service, reinstating Sunday service.

Average boardings by time of day for each week between the weeks of March 2 and July 6 are illustrated in Figure 4. This period spans the two weeks prior to the beginning of the stay-at-home orders to the first full week of July. This figure illustrates both the drop in the level of ridership over the course of a day and the change in the peaking characteristics of ridership. What is notable is the dramatic shifts in the morning and afternoon peaks. Largely driven by the presence of the UO students, pre-Covid ridership illustrates very sharp peaks in service which require the deployment of more buses. Without the students riding as well as the drop in the level of commuting, the peaking characteristics of ridership are much softer.

In terms of who might be using LTD's services during this period of time, it is useful to consider which community residents are most transit dependent. Though there are likely many factors that would cause someone to be dependent on transit, income, access to a vehicle, and possession of a driver's license are some of the most important factors. In LTD's 2019 Origin-Destination Survey, 61% of riders indicated that they do not have a driver's license. Many riders (46%) live in households that do not own a car. While many students do not have access to a vehicle, nearly as many non-students lack driver's licenses or vehicles.

Transit dependence is much more highly tied to income. A high percentage of LTD's ridership is comprised of lower-income individuals who tend to ride transit more days per week than those who have higher incomes. In 2019, 45% of our non-student ridership made less than \$15k per year, and 56% make \$25k or less. Overall, our 2019 survey indicates that 47% of our ridership in 2019 reported incomes of less than \$15k. In the 2015 survey, this number was 46%. It is with that reality in mind, that it was decided to move to a modified Sunday service, which is operating from 7:30 AM to 10:30 PM, rather than the 8:30 AM to 8:30 PM span that would normally be operated on Sundays.

Stop-Level Boarding Analysis

Staff has been researching the change in boarding activity between last year and this year between the end of March and late April with respect to high-volume stop locations. This provides some insight into who might be using those stops and possibly the purpose of their trip making. As can be seen in Figure 5, the majority of highest stop locations in 2019 for regular service were associated with University and LCC students. In contrast, the highest used March-April 2020 stop locations are primarily in the northwest and western side of Eugene, River Road, and parts of Springfield. Several of these stops are associated with shopping-related trip making (for example, Wagner East of Cubit is the stop associated with Winco).

Note that several of the stops associated with shopping are on both lists and represent stops on the West Eugene EmX line. There is also a correlation between the 2020 stop locations and lower income concentrations of population. LCC and UO have made up 50% of overall ridership in the past, but large parts of LTD's approximately 10% ridership decline are related to UO and LCC ridership as well as the rest of the community. A specific example of this - the 79X used to be a large contributor to student ridership. There has been a significant reduction in the demand for that service due to with the students moving closer to the University in response to the increase in housing adjacent to campus.

For March 30 through April 24, 2020, the top EmX station in terms of average weekday boardings during that period was the Commerce Station Outbound, having approximately 246 boardings on an average weekday. Using Figure 6, you can see that, for the same period in 2019, that stop was experiencing 678 average weekday boardings. In addition, you can look at the table showing the 2019 top 10 EmX stops and see that the Commerce Station Outbound was ranked number 3 in 2019.

Trends in RideSource Operations

On March 16, consistent with LTD's fixed-route service, RideSource switched to urgent and essential trips only. When Sunday service on fixed-route was stopped, RideSource stopped providing non-life sustaining ADA trips on Sundays. Medicaid trips or life sustaining trips are available through LTD's external providers at all times. Data has been gathered on LTD's RideSource operations during this time period. Governor Brown lifted the order which had delayed non-urgent procedures at medical facilities beginning on May 1, 2020. LTD continues to urge fixed-route and

paratransit riders to avoid travel on public transit unless there is an urgent and essential need. Paratransit riders are allowed to self-select whether a trip is considered urgent and essential.

Figures 7 and 8 provide an overview of the RideSource Call Center Activity and RideSource Trips by Date and Program. This data continues to show a lower ridership for the service, though an increasing trend since the May 1 action by the Governor, and as Lane County's Blueprint for Reopening has progressed.

Safe Operations for Essential Trips

Ridership productivity is not the goal at this time. This is true for two reasons; first, we need to make sure that we are providing a 'useful' level of service - one that meets the demands we are observing during this period; and second, we need to run enough frequency to avoid too many people on a bus at one time. LTD began managing loads on April 4. Currently, LTD is limiting 40 foot buses to 20 passengers and 60 foot buses to 30 passengers. In addition, on April 9, LTD began requiring that all passengers wear masks (i.e., masks, bandanas, scarves) while on LTD property or vehicles. This can be characterized as a "Public Health First" approach to service deployment - safely operate the minimum level of service that can be provided for essential trip making in the region.

Ridership levels will continue to be monitored closely as conditions change. A report on both ridership activity and operational activities will be provided at each of the board's meetings during this period.

CONSIDERATIONS: N/A

ALTERNATIVES: N/A

NEXT STEPS: N/A

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:

- Up-to-date ridership information will be provided as a handout at the meeting.

PROPOSED MOTION: N/A

Figure 4 - Average Weekday Boardings by Hour and Average Daily Boardings

