

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING
LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING/WORK SESSION

Monday, March 18, 2019

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on March, 13, 2019, 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/Work Session on Monday, March 18, 2019, beginning at 3:30 p.m., at the LTD Board Room, 3500 E. 17th Avenue, Eugene, Oregon.

Present: Carl Yeh, President
Kate Reid, Vice President
Josh Skov, Secretary
Don Nordin, Treasurer
Emily Secord
Caitlin Vargas
Steven Yett
A.J. Jackson, General Manager
Camille Gandolfi, Clerk of the Board

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL — Mr. Yeh convened the meeting and called the roll.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS BY BOARD PRESIDENT — There were no comments.

COMMENTS FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER — There were no comments.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA — There were no announcements or additions.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AT THIS MEETING

American Bus Benchmarking Group (ABBG) Presentation — Assistant General Manager Service Delivery Mark Johnson introduced Lindsey Morse, Imperial College London, manager of the ABBG.

Ms. Morse distributed a fact sheet indicating the 22 urban and suburban transit agencies across the United States that were members of ABBG. She said the purpose of ABBG was collection of data and continuously measuring performance and sharing of best practices. She said there were key performance indicators for both fixed-route and paratransit service and each year ABBG produced database reports and conducted a complimentary customer satisfaction survey of fixed-route service. She said clearinghouse studies were led by members on topics of interest. A protected website stores all information and reports, and facilitated the exchange of information and peer-to-peer technical support among member agencies. Members received an onsite visit every three-years from an ABBG representative. She said ABBG was lead by members and facilitated by the Imperial College London Center for Transport Strategy. She described the activities and experience of center staff.

Ms. Morse said common principles of ABBG were collaboration, confidentiality, and independence. The size of the group allowed for swift responses among members and with center staff. The 22

members of ABBG were geographically diverse and consisted of small and medium size agencies. She showed a series of graphs from Fiscal Year 2017 comparing operations data of members, such as annual boardings, fleet size, mix of vehicles, and propulsion methods. She highlighted LTD's position within those categories.

Ms. Morse said fixed-route performance indicators were in the following categories:

- growth and learning
- customer
- internal processes
- financial
- safety
- environment

Ms. Morse showed graphs to illustrate the performance of ABBG members on indicators in each category, with only LTD's identity shown. She noted that LTD was either leading or highly-ranked in most categories. She said LTD had the highest operations costs and cost recovery was below average. Those indicators were influenced by service expansion and cuts, capital investments, wages and benefits, fare prices, and pass programs; all of which varied significantly among group members.

Ms. Secord arrived at 3:55 p.m.

Ms. Morse said in the environmental category, LTD had the lowest CO² emissions. She showed a dashboard of LTD's performance relative to its peers, with the caveat that it should be used holistically to identify areas of strength and weakness.

Mr. Nordin asked if the cost-per-boarding would go down over time as LTD had recently made large capital investments. Ms. Morse said she had seen that happen with other agencies that had major capital expenditures. The indicator was a rolling five-year snapshot and the cost-per-boarding did decrease as in subsequent years.

In response to a question from Mr. Skov, Ms. Morse said the five-year window was a default for trends generally and intended to smooth out the spikes in data created by things such as capital investments.

Ms. Reid asked what factors other than wages and benefits impacted LTD's cost efficiency. Ms. Morse said another factor was the age of LTD's fleet, which correlated with higher costs.

Mr. Skov asked about the extent to which an agency operated bus rapid transit (BRT), which was more cost effective by covering longer distances faster, influenced key indicators such as speed. Ms. Morse said that depended on what percentage BRT was of the network and the use of express commuters, although those tended to drive down density and boarding's. She said for LTD, speed was not a significant indicator in performance.

Mr. Yett asked if ABBG assessed the performance of an agency's BRT separately. Ms. Morse said currently that was not done. LTD was one of the early adopters of BRT and now almost half of the ABBG membership had BRT service so that was something that could be measured in the future. Currently members benchmarked their BRT performance through an informal exchange of information and international standards were available as a resource.

Mr. Nordin observed that LTD's seat utilization was good and asked if it was possible to distinguish between BRT and fixed-route seat utilization. Mr. Johnson said that ABBG looked at the overall system, but LTD did conduct its own analysis of BRT compared to fixed-route service. He said BRT between Eugene and Springfield was the most productive route with 100 boardings per hour.

Mr. Yeh asked if there was a comparison of indicators based on the type of network model, such as hub-and-spoke or grid-pattern, and the experiences of agencies that had switched models. Ms. Morse said that data on transfer rates was collected, but there was not sufficient comparable data for all members to do that type of comparison. She said she had seen a drop in boardings when an agency transitioned from a hub-and-spoke model to a grid. There were also changes in trip lengths and on-time performance. She said there were many network reviews being conducted currently and she expected to see more changes over the next two years.

In response to a question from Ms. Vargas, Mr. Johnson said he was not surprised by the data as LTD monitored its performance closely and annually examined what factors were driving performance and what steps could be taken to improve outcomes.

Ms. Secord asked how operating costs could be reduced. Ms. Morse replied that wages, fuel costs, subsidies, and network size were all factors in operating costs. She noted that LTD had an efficient network with low density, while other members had many more miles and hours because of their network size. She said some of the cost indicators showing lower costs were not necessarily desirable factors to achieve. She said it was a community decision to offer a lot of service with lower boardings.

Mr. Yeh said while it was good to make efforts to reduce operating costs, there were benefits to offering decent wages and retain a qualified workforce.

With regard to Transit Tomorrow and the tradeoffs to be considered by the Board, Ms. Reid asked if opting for higher ridership would result in lower operating costs. Mr. Johnson pointed out that according to ABBG data, LTD was very high in productivity compared to peers. He said additional BRT service would increase that productivity, but the cost-per-hour would not necessarily decline, although the cost-per-passenger would. He said there were many ways to view the data and cost-per-hour was different than cost-per-passenger or passenger-per-hour.

Mr. Skov said that he was not convinced that cost-per-hour was a useful metric on which to focus; it would be more useful to look at cost effectiveness measures as LTD's job was to get people places, not to run buses for hours. He said following through on the elements of BRT should result in more productivity-per-hour and in other ways as well. He asked if there were any concerns with the quality of data reported by ABBG members and how new data, such as the information that would be available through LTD's new fare collection system, was handled.

Ms. Morse said that data quality was a continuous process, but across the group data was reliable. She said new members typically took a couple of years to develop their reporting capabilities. She said that she had confidence in the data provided by LTD. Mr. Johnson added that a large part of ABBG meetings were spent discussing definitions and data reporting to assure that members were reporting accurately within the defined parameters. He said adding BRT service required capital investments and that would drive up costs.

Ms. Morse said in the future, ABBG would provide more customer-centric data, such as on-time journey performance to reflect use of the system.

Mr. Johnson pointed out that LTD's customer satisfaction scores were very high, and paratransit cost was about \$30 per hour; some other agencies had costs of \$50-\$60 per hour.

Mr. Yett asked how many ABBG members had unionized employees. Mr. Johnson said about 75 percent were unionized. He said wages were higher for agencies on the east than west coasts so geographic location was a factor in labor costs.

Transit Tomorrow Update — Director of Planning and Development Tom Schwetz said the Board would be providing direction to staff on a recommended scenario at its March 20 meeting. That direction would inform LTD staff and partner agencies as they participated in a core design workshop with Jarrett Walker & Associates on March 21 and 22. The workshop would produce a preferred scenario network design for the Board to consider in May or June 2019. He said staff would also develop an implementation plan for the scenario.

Daniel Costantino of Jarrett Walker & Associates, project manager for Transit Tomorrow, briefly reviewed the Transit Tomorrow process to date which was intended to help LTD decide how it should be organizing its services. An evaluation of the current system produced the Choices Report and the ensuing public engagement period obtained interests and priorities with respect to service and coverage from community members. Based on responses, four scenarios were developed and presented to the public over the past two months. He said the scenarios provided network alternatives oriented towards high ridership, high productivity scenarios, or high coverage, and how best to use the new State Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) revenues LTD would receive.

Mr. Costantino reviewed a high coverage network, which was an optimized version of LTD's current system and reflected the same balance of resources between ridership and coverage that was being spent now. He said the high ridership network was a departure from the current system with frequent service along main corridors. He said the high coverage network would lead to travel time and job access outcomes that were not much different from current service. The high ridership network would result in lost service in some areas, but areas within a half mile of service would see significant improvements in terms of passenger travel times and access to jobs and other amenities. He said people also were asked whether STIF dollars should be used for more service, such as more weekend and evening service, or to make fares more affordable.

Mr. Costantino said during the public engagement process, the tradeoffs were presented to a stakeholder forum comprised of about 30 representatives from a number of organizations that LTD worked closely with, and who were concerned with transportation issues. Meetings were also held with elected officials and advisory bodies, and a broader public effort included an online survey and open house, along with a number of direct outreach events. He said more than 16,000 people became aware of the Transit Tomorrow effort, about 2,000 participated directly, and a little more than 1,000 provided input.

Mr. Costantino said responses from the stakeholder forum tended to favor a high ridership network model and using STIF resources for service rather than reduced or discounted fares. Online responses tended towards high ridership and more services, but there was also support for a high coverage network. He said there were limited differences between demographic groups; frequent riders tended more strongly toward additional service, Eugene residents tended slightly toward a high ridership network, and low-income residents tended to slightly prefer coverage. He said there was a very positive response to using STIF money not dedicated to youth and low-income pass programs for additional service on evenings and weekends.

Mr. Costantino described two options for the Board to consider and the advantages and disadvantages of each:

Option 1 - 65 percent Ridership: optimize the current system, maintain and slightly expand geographic coverage, limited change in travel times and job access, limited controversy, does not respond to the majority

Option 2 - 80-85 percent Ridership: focus service on frequent corridors, some areas lose service, significant improvements in travel times and job access, more controversial, strikes a balance between different types of input

Ms. Reid reported on the last Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) meeting, which was conducted as a workshop on Transit Tomorrow scenarios. She said the results of that were very similar to input from the stakeholder forum and tradeoffs were based on community and LTD values. She said all participants said that they felt that STIF funds not already dedicated to youth and low-income pass programs should be invested in evening and weekend service. During discussions of ridership versus coverage, it was determined that LTD, at 65 percent ridership, was not actually compliant with the current policy of 75 percent ridership. She said over the years people had asked the Board during the Annual Route Review to make concessions to meet individual or neighborhood needs. She said that there was agreement among SPC workshop participants on 85 percent ridership, but everyone was interested in finding equitable solutions for the loss of coverage.

Ms. Vargas asked if the online survey distinguished between responses from riders and non-riders of the LTD system. Mr. Costantino said the survey did identify riders and non-riders and there were some differences in their responses. He said frequent riders tended toward coverage and added service, whereas infrequent or non-riders tended toward ridership. He said it was important to consider the needs of current riders and also realize they reflect the existing system. For those who did not ride or rode infrequently, the existing system might not be convenient for them. He said there was also a significant association of responses with income. He pointed out that on the high ridership network map there was much less service in deep South Eugene and no service north of Santa Clara station; however, the 97405 zip code was the most strongly pro-ridership of all zip codes in the metro area.

Mr. Skov said LTD's divergence from its current ridership policy illustrated the type of pressure to bear if a higher ridership option was chosen. He said the Board was listening to people and considering their input, but knew that input was based on a variety of settings and a wide range of information. He said one of LTD's goals was to attract more frequent riders in the future. Options that could result in more frequent riders included more frequency and evening and weekend service. He asked if there were other ways to encourage frequent ridership.

Mr. Costantino said frequent service for long hours, seven days a week was the obvious answer. He said those who were frequent riders were well positioned in the current system, but the system served about 30,000 boardings daily, or about 10-15,000 people, in a region with a population of 240,000. The potential market was much larger than current riders. He said more survey responses were from current riders because they used the system, were more involved with it, and had more to lose. That perspective did not necessarily represent the majority of people who might take transit in Eugene and Springfield. He noted that it was very difficult to obtain input from University students despite specific outreach efforts on campus and those students comprised about a third of ridership.

Mr. Yeh asked if LTD could ease into a higher ridership if the Board chose that scenario. Mr. Costantino said it would be difficult because high ridership would be a significant network shift and different parts of the network were interdependent.

Ms. Vargas asked if the public engagement process incentivized participation. Transportation Options Outreach and Events Coordinator Cammie Harris said participants could choose from gift cards or a free bus pass.

Ms. Vargas asked if respondents who indicated they were not riders were asked why they did not use transit. Mr. Costantino said that question was not asked, but people were asked why they chose either high ridership or high coverage. Respondents tended to choose high ridership because of more frequency and those who chose high coverage were interested in service to more places.

Ms. Reid asked if other agencies that chose a high ridership network had provided options for coverage loss. Mr. Costantino said typically between the time the network changes were proposed to the community and the time those changes were implemented there were usually some compromises between ridership and coverage. The form of compromises varied from agency to agency and could include a flex zone with subsidized shared ride pool or taxi service. He said the problem with any option for coverage loss was that it still had to be paid for. He illustrated on the high coverage map how other compromises might occur, but said it was unlikely that all coverage loss could be mitigated within LTD's budget.

Mr. Skov suggested 75 percent ridership, 20 percent coverage and 5 percent for creative options for coverage loss. He said his preference was to make walking, biking, and transit viable, enjoyable, safe, and accessible transportation modes for everyone. He said that he was reticent about leaving people behind, but was willing to take a risk if some type of safety net was provided. He said that he hoped LTD was prepared to foster the cultural change necessary to generate high ridership if the Board decided to invest in a high ridership network. That would require a major effort to educate the community about the changes being proposed and the reasons LTD chose a new network model and service approach.

Mr. Costantino commented that the 75-20-5 percent split was not workable because reducing the investment in service below 80-85 percent and reducing frequency on more than a couple of lines would significantly impact the effectiveness of the network in driving high ridership.

Ms. Reid asked if possible solutions for coverage loss would be considered in the design workshop. Mr. Costantino said solutions would be considered, but working within LTD's budget, solutions might be possible for some, but not for all.

Ms. Reid asked for clarification on how funding decisions the Board would make at its March 20 meeting would impact Transit Tomorrow decision-making. Mr. Schwetz said the issue was how fixed-route resources would be used for coverage or service. He said LTD valued making transit more useful, but also valued the equity issues associated with coverage. He said a decision to invest 80 percent of resources in service could also direct LTD to play a leadership role in mobility management in the region, such as pooling resources among agencies to support the development of mobility options for those losing some fixed-route mobility.

Ms. Jackson said the purpose of the work session was to provide the Board with information obtained to date and ask if there was any additional information members wanted before they were asked to make a decision.

Mr. Nordin said decisions about the next three years were being made based on the current system and resources, but it was a very dynamic system that would be changing rapidly in the near future. He said emerging transportation technologies could occur rapidly with the proper interest and investment. He said at a recent workshop on climate change, one-third of the 200 participants looked at LTD and transit systems, and the District had to be forward-thinking and consider the next five years, not just three years.

In response to a question from Mr. Yeh, Mr. Costantino said the ridership/coverage balance varied from one agency to another based on each community's values and strategies and he did not recommend using what another community had done as a guide. He said decisions about the type of network relied on the District's financial realities and community values.

Mr. Skov encouraged Board members not to think of coverage as the only equity issue. A high frequency/high ridership network that allowed people to get to work regularly had an economic equity component to it as well.

Mr. Skov said the motion contained in the agenda packet for the Board meeting was non-specific and asked if the Board should recommend more specific language based on the work session discussion.

Ms. Reid said staff would develop more specific language for the motion based on the work session discussion and the Board could accept that language or amend it at the meeting.

Mr. Skov said he hoped to have the option of voting for a high ridership network and providing some additional guidance to identify funds to address other concerns as they arose, but without retreating from the high ridership network.

Mr. Yeh asked Board members to indicate what they were looking for in a motion.

Ms. Secord said she wanted options for 65 percent and 85 percent ridership.

Mr. Nordin said that he wanted high ridership, but also something new and dynamic and different. He said that he wanted more frequency and greater flexibility on how the first and last miles were traveled. He said mobility on demand was exciting, but also an expensive option.

Ms. Vargas said that she concurred with Ms. Secord.

Mr. Yeh said that he wanted to consider high coverage options as well. He said that he liked the idea of 90 percent ridership, but tended toward 80-85 percent ridership because of the loss of coverage concern in areas such as Harlow Road, Cal Young, and Hayden Bridge.

Mr. Yett said that he agreed with Mr. Skov on ridership, but a reserve of funds for innovation to fill in the gaps. He said LTD should remain flexible and open to new concepts. He asked what Transit Tomorrow's goal was and who recommended it to LTD.

Ms. Jackson said a comprehensive operations analysis (COA) was typically done by transit agencies to assist in creating service models that allow the governing body to make decisions about service. She said that she had spoken to the Board about a COA during the first year of her employment. Previously, LTD had engaged in an annual route review and each year the Board was asked to make decisions about service based on very limited input and without the context of a larger plan or direction. She discussed developing a strategic business plan to guide the District in serving the community. She said LTD's product was transportation service and that had to be

done in relation to land use, housing, employment, economics, and other community policies and plans. She said the Board had a strong interest in a COA and had directed her to move forward with one. That decision was also supported by key community partners.

Mr. Yett asked who scoped the community outreach and what budget did it have. Ms. Jackson said community outreach was scoped internally by public affairs staff and Jean Lawson and Associates - a firm that had worked extensively throughout the state - was hired to work with LTD staff and Jarrett Walker & Associates on the community outreach component of Transit Tomorrow. She said that she had approved final scoping for the project.

Ms. Reid expressed interest in mobility as a service for lost coverage and the high ridership scenario. She said she was pleased with LTD's pivot to an organization that focused on transportation options for the community, with moving people as its primary purpose.

Ms. Secord and Ms. Vargas both stated that they supported a high ridership network and increased frequency.

Mr. Skov encouraged members to read an article circulated by Ms. Jackson about partnerships between ride-hailing companies and transit agencies as that was another mobility option to consider.

Mr. Yeh said that he supported the concept of mobility on demand, but not as a solution to fill all gaps in the network.

Mr. Schwetz said mobility on demand was one option and there were many emerging ways that transit districts approached mobility as a service.

Mr. Costantino said the Board's direction appeared to be toward a high ridership network with consideration for mobility as a service. He cautioned against investing the majority of coverage resources on mobility on demand because it was not yet clear what form that would take.

ADJOURNMENT


Mr. Yeh adjourned the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT:

ATTEST:



Josh Skov
Board Secretary



Camille Gandolfi
Clerk of the Board

Date Approved: 4/17/19