

## MINUTES

### Lane Transit District Board Service Committee Wednesday, September 2, 2008

**Present:** Mike Eyster, Lane Transit District Board Member, Chair  
Andy Vobora, Director of Service Planning, Accessibility, and Marketing  
Will Mueller, Service Planning Manager  
Ken Augustson, Service Planner  
Ruth Linoz, Service Planner  
Heather Lindsay, Service Planning Associate  
Angie Sifuentez, Marketing Representative  
Cosette Rees, Marketing Representative  
Tom Schwetz, Director of Planning and Development  
Stefano Viggiano, Assistant General Manager  
Mark Pangborn, General Manager  
Ed Necker, Lane Transit District Board Member  
Greg Evans, Lane Transit District Board Member  
Terry Parker, Accessible Services Program Manager

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL** – Mr. Eyster called the meeting to order and roll was taken.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Mr. Eyster determined there were no corrections to the minutes and they were approved as submitted.

**2009 SERVICE REDUCTION ANALYSIS** – Mr. Vobora reported that staff had been working hard to achieve the budget goal of a 15 percent reduction. He stated that the draft proposal would be presented at this meeting, as well as modified proposals reflecting various levels of service cuts. He told that group that meetings with the public would begin the following week, with individual neighborhood meetings, a booth at the Eugene Celebration and Fiesta Latina, and a general open house at Customer Service in early October. The meetings would precede the official public hearing on October 13, where the final proposal would be presented. Final adjustments would then be made before the second public hearing in November.

In response to a question regarding the effect of fluctuating fuel prices on the proposal, Mr. Vobora responded that when long-range financial plans had been discussed, fuel prices and the state of the economy were considered. At that time, a pessimistic-to-optimistic range was outlined in terms of how deep the cuts would need to be made. He stated that by October there would be a better understanding of tax receipts for the next quarter, giving a clearer financial picture. He explained that staff had built some flexibility into the analysis for that reason.

Mr. Mueller introduced a document titled, “2009 Annual Route Review: Proposed Service Reduction/Redesign, September 2, 2008.” He explained details of the first option of the Tier 1 proposal, which offered a 15.1 percent reduction of service by deleting bus routes from several categories: express routes where alternative methods of transportation were available, school routes prohibited by new Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations, low productivity routes, and routes that would be covered by new corridor routes. He emphasized that this proposal would delete the routes designated as the *Breeze*.

Responding to a question from Mr. Evans regarding the new FTA regulations, Mr. Mueller explained the ruling regarding public buses competing against private school bus operations. He stated that LTD had testified that they did not compete with school bus service. And he noted that it was likely that any type of school service, such as that provided by LTD, would be prohibited under new regulations.

Mr. Mueller described the second option of the Tier 1 proposal, which would keep the *Breeze* route running while reducing the proposed cuts to 11.9 percent.

Mr. Mueller then highlighted the Tier 2 proposal, which offered additional cuts extending above the 15 percent mark. He remarked that the cuts on the Tier 2 level would be more "painful" cuts, which included eliminating service on certain days.

Mr. Pangborn stated that he understood Saturday service volume and expense to be approximately twice that of Sunday service. He noted that the Tier 2 chart indicated only about 1.5 percent in additional savings for eliminating Saturday service over Sunday service. Mr. Mueller agreed to check these figures to make sure they were correct.

Mr. Mueller presented a chart called *Weekday Ridership Statistics*, showing the boardings per revenue hour of different bus routes. He then introduced several system redesign maps, detailing frequency of weekday mid-afternoon service, the service segments proposed for deletion, and specific cuts proposed for various geographical areas.

Mr. Evans asked if specific analysis had been done regarding adverse impact on compliance with Title 6. Mr. Mueller responded that staff had met with the group who did the system analysis for the previous Title 6 report in 2006. He explained that when the new system was proposed, this group would research how minorities and low income people would be impacted.

Mr. Mueller stated that if the *Breeze* route was deleted, the current 30-foot *Breeze* buses could be used on connector routes. When detailing the Springfield routes, he described the difficulty of planning service for Springfield because buses there are allowed only on streets designed for heavier vehicles. He noted that on some streets, buses were allowed to operate, but bus stops could not be placed there.

Mr. Eyster asked if the planners had looked at simply eliminating certain bus stops based on the number of boardings. Mr. Vobora responded that the bus stops themselves usually would be rearranged when one stop was eliminated so the distance would be split between the remaining bus stops.

Mr. Eyster remarked that it would be a hard choice in some cases between considering riders who were totally transit-dependent, though their particular route was unproductive, versus a route that had a lot of daily activity. Mr. Mueller agreed, explaining that a lot of routes were under pressure at this point. He expressed concern about the design of new routes being accomplished on time.

Mr. Pangborn pointed out that because a route was productive did not mean that it did not serve transit-dependent people. He added that there would just be more transit-dependent people on a productive route than on an unproductive route.

Mr. Mueller agreed. He added that someone had asked how it was fair that Route 11 Thurston had 10-minute service frequency, while service would be cut to their neighborhood. He stated that the reason it was fair was because of the high ridership on Route 11 Thurston.

Mr. Vobora remarked that one of the challenges was incorporating specific service standards into LTD's service policy. He stated that most of the standards were currently already met, such as how buses were assigned, so that there was no discrimination in terms of where certain amenities and best buses were used. However, he continued, it also was suggested that there should be a specific coverage standard for the community, which had been moved away from by LTD as productivity had increased and resources grew tighter. He added that once the redesign was completed, if it were seen that 80 percent of households were covered within ¼ mile, this could be called the coverage standard.

Ms. Parker stated that another aspect of ridership that had been monitored was the number of ambulatory and wheelchair customers who had been turned away. When frequency of stops slowed and there were only two bays on the bus for wheelchairs, then wheelchair customers or those with other mobility devices often had to wait 30 minutes or longer for service pickup. She added that if a bus was full except for a wheelchair bay still being open, bus drivers would sometimes tell the wheelchair customer that the bus was full because of the time it would take to empty the bus of standing riders to load the customer in a wheelchair. When time was an issue, wheelchair boardings presented problems.

Mr. Evans asked if riders standing in a wheelchair bay would be asked to get off the bus if a customer in a wheelchair wished to board. Ms. Parker responded that the FTA Office of Civil Rights would say that a customer with a mobility device always had priority for the wheelchair bay.

Ms. Linoz expressed concern about reduced service levels also reducing peak bus numbers. She questioned what would happen with a low peak number and an occasional need to pull out 52 buses to run Duck shuttles. Her concern was that the University of Oregon needed to make accommodation for their parking requirements, including alternative coverage that LTD had provided in the past; what would happen if LTD could not meet the needs of UO.

Mr. Mueller stated that he felt football service was a problem and basketball service was an even bigger problem. He added that the LTD proposal called for moving from a 95 bus peak down to a 76 bus peak.

Mr. Vobora noted that rural routes had not been changed much except for Route 92, where trips taking the UO crew team to the lake to work out would be eliminated. Staff felt that this service could be chartered. Mr. Vobora then asked for any suggestions from the group for planning for the public meetings.

Mr. Eyster asked that the schedule be sent to all committee members. He also asked that the current schedule and the proposed changes be shown graphically in different colors, perhaps side by side.

Mr. Pangborn suggested using PowerPoint, with perhaps three slides showing current service levels, proposed cuts, and the new schedule.

Mr. Viggiano stated that just highlighting in red the runs being eliminated would be satisfactory.

Mr. Necker requested further orientation regarding changes in his subdistrict before the public meeting.

Mr. Vobora reiterated the timeline for the various upcoming meetings. Public hearing are scheduled to be held on October 13<sup>th</sup> and November 10<sup>th</sup>, and the Board would take action at the November 19<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. Implementation of the service changes would be in September 2009.

Mr. Pangborn clarified that the Board wait until their December 17<sup>th</sup> meeting to make a decision, if necessary.

Mr. Eyster asked if the committee wished to meet again. Mr. Vobora responded that the committee could meet once again before the October 13<sup>th</sup> public meeting, bringing together information gathered at earlier public meetings.

Mr. Evans asked if activist groups would be contacted so that they received full notice regarding the open meetings. Mr. Vobora stated that they would be duly notified. Mr. Evans also suggested briefing the Lane County legislative delegation, county commissioners, and city councils.

Mr. Necker noted that the Disability Services Advisory Council would have a legislative meeting on October 18, 2008. Mr. Viggiano stated that the County's legislative delegation would be at the meeting on September 25. He was not sure whether these issues would be raised at that meeting, but they would be updated about the LTD meetings scheduled.

Mr. Evans also suggested that the County's legislative delegation should be given a briefing on the final proposal before their session began in January.

Mr. Mueller asked that the information presented at the meeting be considered by the group over the next few days. He asked that any ideas or concerns be e-mailed within the group, since there would be such a short time to finalize details of the proposals before the public meetings occurred. He also requested feedback on whether to keep the *Breeze* route.

Mr. Eyster felt there would be no need to continue the *Breeze* route with EmX running as it had been.

Mr. Evans suggested that it would be important to get some other coverage out in the neighborhoods to lead into neighborhood connector services.

Mr. Evans questioned if street improvements might be possible in Springfield to make more bus service possible. He wondered if perhaps the City of Springfield could apply for federal grants through the FTA and the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) for road improvements.

Mr. Viggiano added that integrated transportation also was being researched at the State level. He stated that there currently was little money available for roads.

Mr. Pangborn asked if there was any likelihood of relief from the legislature that could be factored into the proposal. Mr. Viggiano replied that it would be next spring before that would be known. Mr. Pangborn stated that if funds were granted by the Oregon legislature for the elderly and handicapped, some of the General Fund money being used for paratransit could be recaptured.

Mr. Necker noted that if the proposed cuts worked well enough, reserves could be rebuilt. Mr. Pangborn agreed that building reserves would be very important, as they currently were very low.

Mr. Evans questioned how this reduction would affect the work force. Mr. Vobora responded that the rough numbers of 15 percent would translate to approximately 30 drivers. Drivers would be laid off rather than having reduced work hours. Mr. Evans expressed hope of having an idea soon

regarding reduction of drivers. Mr. Vobora responded that research currently was being done on how layoffs would be handled. He stated that information would be presented at the Board retreat regarding options for layoff versus early retirement for some people.

When asked for the date of the Board retreat, Mr. Pangborn stated that it would be held in November or early December.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Eyster adjourned the meeting at 1:40 p.m.

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