

MINUTES OF AD HOC SPC TOPICS COMMITTEE

Thursday, May 28, 2020

Pursuant to notice provided in accordance with Oregon Revised Statute 192.640, the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District held a virtual Special Board Meeting on Wednesday, May 28, 2020, beginning at 1:00 p.m., via ZOOM online.

Present: Emily Secord, Chair
Josh Skov
Kate Reid
A.J. Jackson, General Manager
Camille Gandolfi, Clerk of the Board

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL — Ms. Secord convened the meeting and called the roll. She said at the LTD Board's May 20, 2020, regular meeting the Ad Hoc SPC Topics Committee was established to discuss reconvening the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) and determine what topics it should address. Josh Skov, Kate Reid and herself were appointed to the committee.

Ms. Secord said the SPC was a good resource for the LTD Board and provided valuable input on a variety of important topics. She was interested in exploring ways to move some of the Board's workload to the SPC level to obtain additional information and feedback before the Board made decisions. She said potential topics could included the District's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as mobility as a service, and the status and future of pilot projects.

Mr. Skov said when the EmX Steering Committee evolved into the SPC a few years ago there was unanimous agreement that one purpose of the committee was to improve communications with the community. He was perplexed by recent public testimony before the Board criticizing LTD's transparency on ridership data as significant data was continuously being made public. He did think messaging would be critical as service levels changed during the summer and fall and schools and the economy began to reopen. The SPC could help convey those messages to the community and make recommendations on effective communication strategies. He did not want to rely on the University of Oregon or other institutions to get the message about transit service out to their constituencies. Another topic he wanted to see the SPC address was micro-mobility.

Ms. Reid joined the meeting at 1:10 p.m.

Ms. Reid asked if the committee was differentiating between micro-mobility and mobility as a service.

Mr. Skov said mobility as a service or mobility on demand could include many shared use modes that were not micro, where as micro-mobility typically referred to bikes and scooters or other modes that were fast to deploy, less expensive and have more physical requirements of users.

Ms. Reid said it was clear to her from discussion at the last Board meeting that micro-mobility was not what LTD was in the business of providing, although there were opportunities for partnerships. She said the Board should be very clear when sending topics to the SPC for consideration that LTD would not be implementing micro-mobility components. She did not want to refer topics to the SPC that were vague or did not relate to LTD's transit operations.

Mr. Skov said he did not presume LTD would own micro-mobility vehicles; his interest was in having the District think more openly about partnerships.

Ms. Secord agreed that it would be important to provide the SPC with clear direction on what outcomes the Board desired and perhaps provide a list of issues related to a topic that it wanted the SPC to discuss and make recommendations on.

Ms. Secord said her interest in micro-mobility was prompted by issues of economic sustainability and the fact that LTD was unable to load as many passengers on its buses during the pandemic. Micro-mobility could assist people with other transportation modes. She said transit systems in larger cities provided access to a wide range of transportation options through a mobile application. She hoped to see LTD help serve as that connection point in the region.

Ms. Jackson appreciated Ms. Secord's picture of how LTD could function in the metro area for residents and visitors. She said transit agencies did not have jurisdictional authority over micro-mobility options; cities in which those partnerships existed had made the decision to allow for various mobility options and integration with the local transit agency. She said at this point LTD's involvement with micro-mobility would be dependent on the degrees of interest expressed by Eugene and Springfield. If the cities wanted to move forward with micro-mobility she agreed LTD should be involved in that effort and would keep the lines of communication open. She asked how the SPC could help inform the Board on micro-mobility issues when jurisdictions were not moving forward at this time.

Mr. Skov said Eugene was postponing efforts related to scooters while it worked to save its bike share program.

Ms. Secord asked what the committee wanted from the SPC with respect to micro-mobility or should that topic be rolled into the broader topic of mobility as a service.

Mr. Schwetz said there was not much clarity at this time about the cities' directions on micro-mobility and LTD's role. The SPC was established to give the LTD Board advice on decisions it needed to make and framing requests for recommendation in that context would be helpful. He said staff was looking at what roles LTD might play within the broader spectrum of mobility options in the region and wanted guidance and decision-making from the Board on the extent and scope of that research. He said the future of Point2point was an example of a decision facing the Board.

Mr. Skov suggested a top request to the SPC could be surveying the different operating/business models available, such as the types of partnerships created between local jurisdictions and transit agencies. He felt it was important to articulate the benefits for the community from the standpoint of broader transportation needs, from both the resident and business perspectives, and for the foreseeable future how that all related to COVID-19.

Ms. Secord asked staff what information would be most helpful as they faced the challenges of operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Jackson said transit played a key role in getting people where they needed to go before, during and after COVID-19. The biggest challenge was trying to determine how people would travel during and after the pandemic and how fixed route, EmX and paratransit services could be most effectively deployed to respond to the needs of the community within budgetary constraints and in a public health first model. She said LTD had been testing mobility on demand pilot

projects in rural and urban environments to better understand how to partner and integrate with jurisdictions to meet communities' transportation needs effectively.

Mr. Schwetz agreed it was important to think about the various questions that had been raised about how to move through this period. Those conversations were being had internally on topics such as Point2point and the mobility management plan. He said some issues facing the Board about the strategic business plan included "why we do what we do" and "who we are now and what do we aspire to be." He said LTD was a regional service provider of transportation and in that context, with the values LTD had, the Board and staff were led to think in terms of the complete trip. That was an organizing element to consider in developing the strategic business plan and something the Board might want the SPC to discuss. He said LTD could be a regional innovator and integrator. All of that would require tradeoffs

Mr. Johnson said the SPC was a strategic planning body and while during the COVID-19 crisis LTD had to make some short-term decisions based on operations, many of the decisions would be long-term, such as barriers for operators. Likewise, maintaining capital projects would have long-term benefits. The SPC would continue to have a role in long-term initiatives such as the strategic business plan, the Transit Tomorrow service redesign and mobility planning. The SPC could continue to weigh in on those topics.

Ms. Gandolfi said the SPC's bylaws were approved by the Board of Directors and it was important to keep in mind the stated purpose of the committee when deciding what issues should be referred to it for recommendations and advice.

Mr. Skov acknowledged the jurisdictional limitations cited by Ms. Jackson, but said often one jurisdiction or another needed to be proactive in generating partnerships. Micro-mobility systems were at their best when coordinated with a transit system and LTD should actively find those connections. He said there would be first/last mile challenges in a redesign of the transit network and micro-mobility should be among the solutions considered. Thinking strategically about being a service provider meant looking at diversification of mode options.

Ms. Secord suggested posing specific questions to the SPC, such as identify five ways the first/last mile challenge could be met, how could the conversation about Transit Tomorrow be resumed or what would a strategic plan look like and how involved did the SPC want to be in making recommendations to the Board.

Mr. Skov liked the idea of questions such as first/last mile solutions. He said micro-mobility options like bikes and scooters were proven strategies elsewhere and felt it was appropriate to point directly to them as an SPC topic. He thought there was value in having that discussion among staff and the community members on the SPC.

Ms. Reid said the chair and co-chair of the SPC had been clear that when issues were referred to the committee they should include information about why the Board wanted the SPC's feedback and the type of recommendation or advice it was seeking. She did not want SPC members to feel their time was being wasted by talking about matters the District could not actually implement. Requests for advice from the SPC should include context so members understood the parameters of their discussion and what the Board intended to do with the SPC's responses.

Ms. Gandolfi reminded the committee it was not limited to one meeting.

Committee members indicated they would email staff with suggestions for discussion topics at the next meeting.

Ms. Reid cautioned that communications outside of a public meeting should be with staff, not among committee members, to remain transparent and avoid violating the public meetings law.

Mr. Skov said information sharing among Board members that did not include deliberation or decision-making was not prohibited, although it might be helpful to have clarification from LTD's legal counsel.

Ms. Gandolfi said in accordance with discussion at the last regular Board meeting, the SPC would be polled about meeting once this committee had formulated a list of issues or questions for the SPC to consider and the full Board had reached agreement on whether to ask the SPC to resume meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Secord adjourned the meeting at 5:57 p.m.