

MINUTES OF BOARD SERVICE COMMITTEE  
LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

Monday, March 9, 2015

Pursuant to notice on the LTD website (LTD.org) and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, the Board Service Committee of the Lane Transit District held a Board service committee meeting on Monday, March 9, 2015, beginning at 3:30 p.m. in the LTD Board Room at 3500 East 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene.

Present: Gary Gillespie, LTD  
Ed Necker, LTD  
Gary Wildish, LTD  
Tom Schwetz, Planning and Development Manager,  
Andy Vobora, Director of Customer Service and Planning  
Heather Lindsay, Service Planner  
Tim Simon, Service Planner  
Renee Jones, Marketing Representative  
Nathan Banks, Service Planner

Board members were given a copy of the *LTD Rider's Digest 2014*, with an insert entitled, *LTD Winter Service Update*.

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Mr. Necker convened the meeting at 3:30 p.m. and called the roll of the Lane Transit District (LTD) Board Service Committee. Committee member Angelynn Pierce did not attend the meeting. Mr. Schwetz announced Angie Marzano, Marketing Representative, was also unable to attend the meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Gillespie moved, and Mr. Wildish seconded, the approval of the March 4, 2014 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

**REVIEW PROPOSED 2015-16 ANNUAL ROUTE SERVICE ADJUSTMENTS**

Mr. Simon gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled, *2015 Annual Route Review*. He described the annual process LTD staff used to evaluate potential route adjustments. Mr. Simon detailed the impact of the changes made last year. All the changes had resulted in increased ridership.

Mr. Simon highlighted that the additional service that had been added to Route 55 (North Park), experienced a forty percent increase in ridership. When Mr.

Necker asked if riders in the River Road area knew about the changes in the route, Mr. Simon responded he thought they did. He noted there were fewer clients in wheelchairs left behind due to bus overcrowding. Responding to Mr. Wildish's request for information on the impact on Route 51 (Santa Clara) and 52 (Irving) from the increases to Route 55, Mr. Simon said he did not have the data available at the meeting but would forward it to the Board committee members. When Mr. Gillespie asked if Route 55 served Emerald Park, Ms. Lindsay explained there were not stops on the route at the park. Mr. Vobora mentioned there were plans to build a bicycle/pedestrian path as part of improvements to Howard Elementary/Kelly Middle School that would connect to Emerald Park. At that time, LTD staff planned to review the stops on Route 55 to see if adjustments were warranted.

Mr. Simon reviewed the impact of the other 2014 changes. Route 28 (Hilyard) had experienced a four percent increase in ridership when mid-afternoon runs were added. Route 78 (UO/Seneca Station) saw a five percent ridership increase from adding a morning outbound segment. Route 96 (Coburg) was extended to the Coburg Industrial Park and rerouted off of Coburg Road. Ridership on the route had increased by thirty percent. LTD had also restored holiday service on Labor Day, Independence Day, New Year's Day, and Memorial Day. On all holidays to date, ridership exceeded 2007 levels.

Mr. Simon described how the Annual Ridership Review (ARR) process was being changed. The starting point was route changes previously identified but which LTD had not been able to implement (e.g., weekend service on rural routes, more holiday service, crosstown connector service) and service needs arising from new community development (e.g., Riverfront District, student housing projects, or Obie's downtown project) . He noted the focus for the 2015 cycle was West Eugene EmX connectivity. Mr. Vobora added another factor LTD staff considered was service changes expected within the community segments served. He cited the mandated program shifts at Pearl Buck Center as an example.

Returning to the 2014 ARR customer survey results, Mr. Simon noted the top five findings from the 2000 employees, riders, and community member respondents were:

- More frequent weekend service
- Increase late night service
- Increase how often service runs
- Add limited airport service
- Bring back the Student Transit Pass

Mr. Vobora noted the findings were consistent with previous years' survey results. The survey also asked clarifying questions, e.g., "Which is better for the

community, more frequent service on main routes or main routes running later or earlier”.

Using the input and staff analysis of impending community development projects, Mr. Simon listed the following 2015 proposed route changes. Because the Student Transit Pass issue was currently under discussion at the Oregon State Legislature, it was not included in the proposal.

- Modified routing to Route 95 (Junction City) to provide front door service to the newly-opened Junction City Hospital.
- Connector shuttle service from the Eugene Airport to Route 95 (Junction City) to serve primarily Lane Community College (LCC) aviation school students and employees working at the Eugene Airport. The shuttle service was not envisioned to provide service to travelers with late night or early morning flights.
- Extend Route 12 (Gateway) and connect it to Route 66 (VRC/Coburg Road) and 67 (Coburg Road/VRC) to serve the Veterans Administration Clinic under construction and a newly opened call center. The route revision also provided a cross-town connection.

Mr. Simon noted other factors also influenced change. To respond to system factors such as overcrowded buses, late buses, and the Frequent Transit Network outlined in Envision Eugene and Springfield 2030, the following adjustments were also recommended:

- Increase service to run later on weekdays on the core routes of: EmX, 11 (Thurston), 12 (Gateway), 13 (Centennial), 24 (Donald), 28 (Hilyard), 36 (West 18<sup>th</sup>), 40 (Echo Hollow), 41 (Barger/West 11<sup>th</sup>), 43 (West 11<sup>th</sup>/Barger), 51 (Santa Clara), 66 (VRC/Coburg Road), & 67 (Coburg Road/VRC).
- Add trips that will result in more frequent, safe, and reliable service for: 27 (Fairmount), 33 (Jefferson), 40 (Echo Hollow), 41 (Barger/West 11<sup>th</sup>), 43 (West 11<sup>th</sup>/Barger), 51 (Santa Clara), 52 (Irving), 66 (VRC/Coburg Road), & 67 (Coburg Road/VRC). Mr. Vobora clarified the buses listed were scheduled to return to the station hubs, not dead-head back to the garage from the end of the line. Ms. Lindsay added bus drivers would pick up riders on the way back to the Eugene and Springfield stations.

LTD Board Service Committee members supported the proposed route changes. Mr. Gillespie and Mr. Wildish said service to the airport was frequently mentioned as a community need. They recognized there would be some push-back that the service did not meet all airport travelers' needs, but thought the proposal was a good starting place. Mr. Gillespie described how well the Portland Red Line train provided service to the Portland International Airport (PDX). The connector shuttle service paled in comparison. He recognized the volume of riders, both employees and travelers, was much greater at PDX.

When Mr. Gillespie referenced the restoration of Route 27 (Fairmount), Ms. Lindsay clarified that the only addition was that the trip that served students was extended year round. Later he described how an LTD security officer had recommended to some riders they take Route 12 (Gateway) to the mall, not the EmX. Acknowledging the option, Mr. Vobora referenced the construction work and related fencing at Gateway Mall. LTD staff had asked the mall management to provide better signage for pedestrians.

Mr. Gillespie summarized the 2015 proposed route changes as “expanding service on the most popular routes”.

Mr. Wildish added it was very important LTD had addressed the accessibility issues that had arisen on Route 51 (Santa Clara) and Route 52 (Irving).

Speaking to the topics for the 2015 ARR, Mr. Necker asked for more information on weekend service on rural routes. Mr. Vobora explained the idea was to explore adding mid-day service so people weren't forced to stay in the metropolitan area all day.

Mr. Gillespie proposed extending Route 33 (Jefferson) up the hill to 34<sup>th</sup> and Chambers.

Mr. Gillespie thought increased frequency for evening departures would encourage more ridership. Downtown employees had to wait almost half an hour to catch the bus home. LTD staff described ways to provide better service to downtown employees and students now residing in the downtown core. Mr. Schwetz agreed increased bus frequency would help. Mr. Vobora wondered if the overall design of the system should shift from having major pulses at :00 and :30 each hour to :15 and :45. Ms. Lindsay said a move from the current “hub and spoke” system to a cross grid system was the long term solution.

When Mr. Wildish shared the cross grid system had been brought up to him many times, Mr. Simon explained current routes needed to be operating at higher frequencies before a cross grid system was feasible. Mr. Necker added it was important to explain any interim changes to the public if the system was becoming a cross grid approach.

Mr. Wildish asked if there were cost estimates for the proposed route changes and the ridership increase envisioned as a result. LTD staff assured him the information was available. Mr. Schwetz said the cost/benefit analysis was part of the upcoming presentation to the Board. Mr. Vobora added the long range financial outlook for LTD was improving and they were now looking at restoring approximately 5% of the system that had been eliminated in the recession.

Mr. Gillespie asked if ridership data was to be collected on the new routes. Mr. Simon said yes. He added it was LTD's policy to wait at least a year after making a change before considering further adjustments.

Mr. Necker emphasized the importance of an effective public communication plan to promote the enhanced bus service.

Mr. Wildish asked if the rider surveys were still being collected. He had found many of the ideas presented through the forum very worthwhile. Mr. Schwetz agreed. Ms. Jones responded that the surveys were still available until the public input phase was closed. The best way to complete a survey was to use the online form (available on [LTD.org](http://LTD.org)).

## **PROJECT UPDATES**

Mr. Vobora gave an update regarding ongoing conversations among the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Greyhound, and LTD staffs. They were collecting rider and freight data to see if there was a way to better situate Greyhound and LTD stops at the Eugene Amtrak station. He said seventy percent of Greyhound riders used transit to get to the station. ODOT supported routes such as the Diamond Express to provide intercity connectivity. Ms. Lindsay said in July 2015, the Diamond Express routes were being modified and would include a stop at the Amtrak station.

When Mr. Gillespie requested an update on the Willamette Street repaving project, Mr. Vobora explained the test vehicle and bike lane striping and a traffic signal at Woodfield Station were to be implemented this summer. LTD staff was collecting data on travel time and ridership. He was confident LTD drivers could safely navigate across bike lanes to get to transit stops. When Mr. Gillespie observed it was impossible for downtown employees to go to restaurants on South Willamette and return within a normal lunch break, Ms. Lindsay replied LTD might possibly restore Route 25 (Amazon) for training purposes only.

Mr. Necker asked about how much of the West Eugene EmX route are dedicated lanes. Mr. Schwetz explained there were no dedicated lanes similar to the EmX route near the University of Oregon. The West Eugene EmX route was mostly Business Access and Transit (BAT) lanes with queue jumps and mixed traffic. The design still met the federal requirement that 60% of the route had enhanced features. Mr. Vobora added there was lane exclusivity at the LTD stations and a small stretch near Chambers Street.

Mr. Vobora noted the Student Transit Pass proposed legislation was scheduled for a public hearing on March 11, 2015. LTD Government Relations Manager Edward McGlone planned to give an update to the Board at their next meeting.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Mr. Schwetz said at the LTD Board meeting on March 18, 2015, staff planned a similar presentation on the proposed route changes. A public hearing was also scheduled for that meeting. A second public hearing was planned for April 6, 2015, 5:30 p.m., at the Eugene Public Library. Board members were welcomed, but not required, to attend. Ms. Jones thought the hearing might not draw as many participants as those in recent years because service add-backs were not as controversial as service reductions. Mr. Gillespie and Mr. Wildish noted the LTD Board listened and responded to public input.

Mr. Wildish thanked LTD staff for the presentation and discussion. He said the background information was very helpful. He noted there were new Board members and wondered if they might also benefit from a similar briefing on the transit route system. In response, Mr. Schwetz suggested either the Board or the Service Committee consider holding a work session on LTD's service plan.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Necker adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

*(Recorded by Beth Bridges)*