

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, May 16, 1990

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on May 10, 1990, and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District was held on Wednesday, May 16, 1990, at 7:30 p.m. in the LTD Board Room at 3500 E. 17th Avenue, Eugene.

Present:

Peter Brandt, Treasurer
Tammy Fitch
Thomas Montgomery
Keith Parks, Vice President, presiding
Phyllis Loobey, General Manager
Jo Sullivan, Recording Secretary

Absent:

H. Thomas Andersen, Secretary
Janet Calvert, President
Herbert Herzberg

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Mr. Parks.

OPENING REMARKS BY PRESIDING OFFICER: Mr. Parks thanked the staff for their extra efforts and hard work on the three grand opening events on May 3, 4, and 5, which assured a successful grand opening for the District.

BUS RIDER OF THE MONTH: The May Bus Rider of the Month was not one person, but a group of students from Condon, Edison, Eastside-Willard, and Magnet Arts/Jefferson schools who were described by their bus operators as great bus riders and lots of fun. Several of the students came to the meeting to receive their awards. Mr. Parks called those students by name and gave them each an envelope containing a certificate of appreciation, a day pass, a coupon from Burger King, and LTD paper clips and magnets. Mr. Parks commented that he was happy to see that they were willing to be bus riders at this time in their lives, because in the future it may become mandatory. He added that the District appreciated the behavior and helpfulness of the children who were being recognized.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH: Mr. Parks then introduced the May Employee of the Month, Inside Cleaner Venda Stubbs. Venda was hired as a part-time employee in April 1988. She was described as an excellent worker with a good sense of humor, who builds employee morale through dedication to her job and superior attendance. After receiving her award and check, Venda said she was very pleased to accept the honor on behalf of the Maintenance division, whose members she called the District's unsung heroes who work behind the scenes.

She said it made her proud when Maintenance received awards, and this award made her feel like one of the team.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: Eleanor Gasper, of 2119 W. 12th Avenue in Eugene, said she had been riding the bus a long time, and was impressed with LTD's service, polite people, and the caring drivers, who were concerned enough to listen to her about the Jessen route. She said she was very proud to live in Eugene, and that LTD makes her independent as a 68-year-old woman. She also expressed her appreciation for the wonderful service for handicapped people.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Brandt moved that the minutes of the May 2, 1990, adjourned Board meeting be approved as distributed. Ms. Fitch seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

SERVICE TO THE JESSEN AREA: Ms. Loobey stated that, as part of the Annual Route Review process, a number of changes to service had come before the Board for approval in March. Those recommendations included some service changes in the Jessen area, due to low ridership and problems with running time and missed transfers. A number of people approached the Board at that meeting with concerns about losing their service. After hearing their concerns, the Board had instructed staff to look again at this issue and prepare a report for the May or June meeting.

Stefano Viggiano, Planning Administrator, used a flip chart to show the route of the #44A Echo Hollow, via Jessen. He explained that the proposal was not to make a routing change, but to shorten the route because of the route's tight schedule, which was particularly a problem in the afternoon. A chart showing the range of activities on each trip according to trip time was also used. In general, there were about 10 riders on the route per day, or 20 activities (boardings and deboardings). In the morning, those buses are between one and two minutes late, and in the afternoons, they are from two to four minutes late. Mr. Viggiano also showed on this chart which trips were recommended to have continued service, including the morning through the 1:05 p.m. trip from the Eugene mall. Staff were recommending that the 2:05, 3:05, and 4:05 p.m. trips turn around at the Echo Hollow Plaza at Echo Hollow and Barger. Mr. Viggiano explained that those are the trips that tend to have the most problems, especially the 3:05 and the 4:05. The 5:05 has some problems, but staff were recommending that it continue to serve the area because when it gets back into town at 6:05 p.m., there are very few buses leaving the mall; so there are few missed transfers. People on that trip normally have to wait until 6:20 p.m. to transfer. The 6:05 p.m. trip from the mall would be the last one of the day. Mr. Viggiano explained that the 3:50 p.m. trip of the #53 Junction City would deviate, on demand, to drop off passengers in the Jessen area. The deviation for one trip would add an additional five minutes each weekday, at a cost of about \$600 a year. The 2:05 p.m. trip, which returns to downtown Eugene at about 3:00 p.m., has some trouble with running time, being late three to four minutes at Jessen, and then, at times, being unable to make up that time before reaching the Eugene mall. Some of the Jessen residents do tend to ride that trip, however. Mr. Viggiano said that if LTD continued to serve Jessen with that trip, the trade-off would be that riders would occasionally miss transfers.

Mr. Viggiano stated that staff wanted to maintain consistency of service. Any rerouting of the #44A would be confusing with the 44B routing. Staff also wanted to continue to provide some circulation within the Jessen neighborhood, and thought this recommendation would do that.

Ms. Fitch asked if Mr. Viggiano had a cost for each change if that change was not made. He replied that there is no monetary cost, but there are costs such as stress for the driver and missed transfers. Ms. Fitch then asked the number of riders on the bus coming into town who would miss transfers. Mr. Viggiano replied that riders were coming into town primarily in the morning. However, a number of people board at the Gilbert Shopping Center and along 8th Avenue, so there are probably about 10 people per trip on the bus when it gets into town on the afternoon trips.

Public Testimony: Greg Nelson, representing the Jessen Neighborhood Association, said he had also addressed the Board in March, and that the Association appreciated Mr. Viggiano's efforts regarding some of the neighbors' concerns. Mr. Nelson talked about the neighborhood, saying that a new house was being completed every week to ten days. The residents were concerned that without the mid-afternoon runs, service wouldn't be seen as predictable and reliable; ridership would be less than it currently was; and the downward spiral in service would begin. He said he did not believe it should be made a budgetary matter in the future. Rerouting the #53 Junction City bus would add \$600 per year, while retaining current service would cost nothing.

Mr. Nelson said he knew there were some problems, but believed they should be handled without affecting service to the Jessen/Cleary neighborhood. He stated that at least two people need to get into the area on the 2:05 p.m. bus, which is being recommended to be shortened and not run to the area. Two handicapped people who work at Goodwill ride the 4:05 p.m. and 5:05 p.m. runs. If the 4:05 run were shortened, they would be left at the Eugene mall without any way to get home until later.

Mr. Nelson also suggested an alternative that would have a minor effect upon people in the Marshall Street area. It would mean rerouting the #44 down Highway 99 to Jacobs. It could cause confusion in the Echo Hollow/ Marshall area, but there would still be an hourly route. He thought this might be the lesser of two evils--cutting some service to one group rather than eliminating service to another group.

Board Deliberation: Mr. Montgomery asked how this ridership breakdown compared to what was presented to the Board in March. Mr. Viggiano said it was close to the previous numbers. He explained that there was a fair amount of variation by trip and day, and that the numbers presented that evening were the result of about eight more days of counts. Some of the counts were done by staff and some by machine, and both showed about 10 riders per day into and out of the area.

Ms. Fitch asked how often the #53 Junction City ran. Mr. Viggiano said there were about five runs a day, but none other during that afternoon time when service is needed. Mr. Viggiano responded to some of Mr. Nelson's other concerns that this reduction would be the first step in completely cutting service to the Jessen area. He agreed that the Jessen

neighborhood is a growing area, and said that staff expect to provide bus service there into the future. Eventually, he said, service would be added back, ideally with access into that neighborhood from Barger. He explained that it takes about three or four minutes to get into the neighborhood, which is an isolated area with only one access point. Eventually, there will be a street access through what is now a field, and then the area can be served with more regular buses. However, he stressed that this is not a situation where the District plans to eliminate more trips per year.

Ms. Fitch said that, as a Board member, she was concerned more than anything else about the possibility of stranding two handicapped riders in downtown Eugene. She wondered if the 3:50 p.m. Junction City route would be an option for them.

Eleanor Gasper said she spends about 20 hours a week as a care giver in a situation where someone absolutely has to be there. In order to do this, she rides the 2:05 p.m. trip from the mall, and returns on the 5:30 p.m. run. A gentleman mentioned a boy with a learning disability who rides the bus in the afternoon; if he gets confused and takes the wrong bus, they lose track of him on the bus.

Mr. Viggiano said that LTD had a good working relationship with Goodwill. One option would be to try to be sure the workers' schedules met LTD's schedule. He offered to have District staff work with Goodwill to accomplish that if it were necessary, saying that in the past, Goodwill had been very helpful in accommodating LTD's schedules.

Ms. Loobey said she knew it was a difficult decision. She said her concerns went beyond the \$600 cost, because when schedules run late, it affects the rest of the schedules. Drivers are also late missing their reliefs, and there are additional costs associated with that. Other costs occur when the people living or working along Highway 99 and 8th Avenue miss their transfers, maybe then missing their work opportunities. She said she had the sense that this whole issue would be evolving over time. She stated that staff stood ready to work with the neighborhood association and Goodwill, and would approach the City of Eugene to help build the pressure to build a street into the Jessen area.

Mr. Nelson said he realized that the route is stretched, and that there shouldn't be missed transfers if a bus misses a stop light, but that it does happen, although it is variable among the routes. He thought the route should be changed to use more of Highway 99 before or after Jessen. Because Jessen is a big loop, it counts as four or five stops, rather than one stop at the end of the route.

Mr. Brandt said that his only comment is that this did not seem to be much of a solution, even though he knew staff had worked hard at finding one. Ms. Fitch said that when she read the recommendation in the packet, it seemed ideal, but now it did not.

Mr. Viggiano stated that a bus that is four minutes late is considered on time within the system, so routes were created with some time to make up. Mr. Brandt asked about providing fewer stops along the route. Mr. Viggiano said the District has some express routes, and found that it is difficult to communicate that information to people, who expect buses to stop at every bus stop. Since the #44A did not have high ridership, the running problems were

primarily due to traffic congestion rather than ridership. He further explained that staff were trying to accommodate the 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. work schedules. Trips during the day are sometimes more discretionary, so staff hoped those riders could plan their days differently to work around the reduced service; however, he understood this was not always true, as in the case of the care giver.

Mr. Brandt asked if this service could be tried for a month to see how it worked. Mr. Viggiano said staff would need to communicate that to the people who ride the bus. Mr. Montgomery said it sounded as if it would be better to settle the problem in a way the riders could count on. He said this recommendation really didn't solve the overall problem and the District would have to go back to attack that later, that things were not cast in stone. Ms. Loobey said the recommended change would be for September service; major changes were normally made in September and minor changes at other times.

Mr. Brandt moved that the Board try the recommended service this summer with no final decision until it had been tried, in time to print informational materials for fall service. The motion died for lack of a second.

Mr. Montgomery asked if Mr. Brandt's suggestion would be feasible. Marketing Representative Ronnel Curry said that it would be fairly simple to communicate changes to current riders, but much more difficult to let potential riders know. Mr. Montgomery asked when staff would have to obtain the information and act on it in order to know whether it would be changed in September or not. Ms. Curry said the final schedules need to be ready by the end of June in order to be printed in time for September service.

Ms. Fitch asked about return times of the Jessen service. Mr. Viggiano said the 1:05 p.m. bus would go to Jessen and return to the mall at 2:00 p.m., and the 2:05 p.m. route would not run. It was suggested that, instead of leaving such a big block of time in the afternoon without service to Jessen, the 1:05 and 3:05 p.m. runs be eliminated. Mr. Montgomery said, however, that those particular afternoon runs are the ones with schedule problems, and that trading one for another did not solve the particular problem. Staff would want to be sure that, if the 2:05 p.m. trip did continue to go to Jessen, the bus could make up that lost time on the run when it got back to the mall at 3:00 p.m. Ms. Fitch asked if this run also affected driver reliefs. Mr. Viggiano said that it might. Bus operators are shuttled back and forth to the mall, and the shuttle van does not wait. However, he said, the bus is not late at 3:00 p.m. every day.

MOTION Ms. Fitch moved that the Board agree to the proposal as presented by staff, with the exception that the 2:05 p.m. run would continue to the Jessen neighborhood, and that this service be re-evaluated at the June Board meeting, with this trial service beginning as soon as possible and running for one month. Mr. Montgomery seconded the motion. Mr. Brandt

VOTE called for the question, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Viggiano asked if, when this issue is brought back to the Board in June, it would be evaluated based on the impact on ridership, since it would be sure to address the time problem. Ms. Fitch said it should be evaluated on complaints from riders and a sense of whether or not it works for them.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AT THIS MEETING:

LCC Station Update: Ms. Loobey said that in past Capital Improvements Programs, the Board had approved transit station improvements at Lane Community College (LCC). She added that the station had come before the Board at least one time in the last five or six years, and that the District continues to have problems with the station. At one time, the Board had discussed moving the station from where it currently is to the front of the College. However, the problem with that design idea was that it was extremely difficult for those in wheelchairs to use, so that idea was dropped, and staff attempted to address capacity and safety issues at the current location.

Paul Zvonkovic, Transit Planner and project manager, said that according to input from the Planning Advisory Committee and other resources, the current location is the best alternative. He used slides to show access to campus and the station itself. He explained that the current station has two sections, one for Eugene and one for Springfield, and that students walk down a service driveway between the sections, causing passenger and vehicle conflicts. That issue is being addressed with the new station design. Sidewalks are being built along the road to give students the option to walk on the sidewalk and then cross to the Eugene side of the station. The Springfield section is currently narrow, making passenger flow difficult during wheelchair loading. The main seating area is concrete block, so is not comfortable for the District's customers as a waiting area. There is also not much shelter, information, or lighting available to riders. Changes being planned for the station include a larger, expandable shelter, sidewalks, and more sheltered seating. Ken Nagao, the project architect, showed the Board the new design for the LCC Station. It included three 20-foot bays with transparent windbreaks on both sides of the structure, to give the shelter a feeling of openness. Mr. Nagao explained that separate bids would be accepted for different pieces of the work, with an option to build either three or four bays.

Mr. Parks asked if there were any problems with LCC as far as taking the additional space for the expanded station. Mr. Nagao said that he and staff had been working with LCC, and LCC had been very cooperative, even to allowing LTD to connect the clock and utilities to LCC's existing system. Mark Pangborn, Director of Administrative Services, added that LTD would bear 20 percent of the cost of the station, and 80 percent would come from an existing federal grant.

Mr. Brandt asked why the station was not by the student union. Mr. Zvonkovic explained that the area was narrow and dark and would not work as well as the current location.

Mr. Parks thanked Mr. Nagao for his presentation to the Board.

Grand Opening Report: Ms. Loobey thanked Mr. Parks for his gracious comments to staff, and offered staff's thanks to the Board members for their time and participation in the grand opening events.

Buses on a Reopened Willamette Street: Ms. Loobey called the Board's attention to the memorandum on page 22 of the agenda packet. She said that while the Board was in the process of looking for a new location for the downtown Eugene transit station, it also needed

to be aware of what was happening with streets downtown. Ms. Curry, who participates on the downtown task force, said that the decisions made by the task force so far had implied that LTD's 40-foot buses would not be allowed on a reopened Willamette Street. Staff, however, believed that it was very important to have this option. She said that some task force members were transit supportive, but some did have a view of the street as a narrow, quiet street with sidewalk cafes.

Because the task force was transit supportive, the members wanted LTD to look at using a smaller vehicle than the 40-foot bus for a downtown shuttle. Ms. Curry said she would continue to work with the retail task force. The issue would next go to the Eugene Downtown Commission and the City Council. At that time, she said, the Board could take some action. This item was being presented as an informational item at this time, however. She introduced Bob Hibsichman, manager of the City of Eugene Planning and Development Department, who was present to answer questions.

Mr. Parks asked if segments of a plan were being approved, rather than an overall plan, and if different groups were working on different areas. Ms. Curry replied that the downtown task force was looking at the retail aspects of downtown, including circulation and access. Mr. Hibsichman said that several groups were working under the auspices of the Downtown Commission, and there was also coordination with the LTD Downtown Eugene Transit Station Site Selection Committee. There was a "wait and see" approach to whether or not only a block or so of Willamette will be opened, but Mr. Hibsichman thought the Board should keep all possibilities in mind.

Mr. Montgomery asked if there had been any indication from the City regarding what would happen if opening only a block failed, and whether more of the street would then be opened. Ms. Curry said there had been no discussion of this at the task force level.

Meeting with Lane County Commissioners: Ms. Loobey said that there had been some publicity in The Register-Guard lately regarding the downtown Eugene transit station and some of the sites being considered. She said the article in the newspaper was there because the Downtown Transit Station Site Selection Committee had set a public input series on those sites. The Lane County Commissioners asked to meet with LTD on May 22 because two of the sites belonged to the County. Ms. Loobey said she believed that one member of the Downtown Station Site Selection Committee should accompany staff to the meeting to hear the Commissioners' concerns. She said that staff would prepare a history of the downtown Eugene transit station for the Commissioners, as well as a discussion of the selection criteria and how those various parcels were rated.

Mr. Brandt, a member of the Site Selection Committee, was concerned that only LTD was meeting with the Commissioners, since the committee had spent a lot of time on this issue. He thought the full committee would like to hear the Commissioners' concerns, and that the committee members should be asked to attend. Ms. Loobey asked Mr. Brandt if he thought LTD could have an initial meeting with the Commissioners to explain the criteria, and then ask the Commissioners to come to a meeting of the whole Site Selection Committee to make comments. Mr. Brandt thought that Ms. Calvert, the Board President and Site Selection Committee chair, should be asking the committee members what they wanted to do; that she

should at least give them the courtesy of a call. He said that one or two people could attend and do the job, but maybe more committee members would like to know when the meeting was and that they could attend if they wanted to. He was afraid that one committee members' comments might not reflect the mass of the committee, and thought that any comments should be within the guidelines of the task force.

Mr. Brandt asked who attended the public input meeting. Ms. Loobey said the meeting was a joint effort by LTD and City staff. She stated that staff appreciated Mr. Brandt's comments and would follow the protocol he had suggested.

Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours: Mr. Brandt asked who was going to be paying for the alcoholic beverages being served at the Chamber-sponsored Business After Hours that would be hosted by LTD at the new facility on June 27. He also wondered about serving alcoholic beverages on the District's property. Ms. Loobey said that LTD would not be purchasing any alcoholic beverages. She added that other public agencies had hosted such events where alcoholic beverages had been served, and that the Chamber makes the arrangements for these events. Mr. Brandt wondered who purchased the liability insurance and who had the liquor license coverage. Ms. Loobey replied that staff were researching those questions and would make sure that the District was appropriately covered in those areas.

June Board Meeting: Mr. Parks said that the Board needed to ensure a quorum at the June Board meeting in order to adopt the FY 90-91 budget.

EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO ORS 192.660(1)(d): Ms. Fitch moved that the Board move into Executive Session pursuant to ORS 192.660(1)(d), in order to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to carry on labor negotiations. Mr. Montgomery seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to move into Executive Session. An Executive Session pursuant to ORS 192.660(1)(i), to evaluate the employment-related performance of the General Manager, had also been scheduled for this meeting, but Ms. Loobey said she would prefer to wait until more Board members were present at a later meeting.

Mr. Brandt left at this point in the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: After returning to regular session, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.



Board Secretary