

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

SPECIAL MEETING/WORK SESSION

Wednesday, May 17, 1995

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on May 16, 1995, and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, a special meeting/work session of the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District was held on Wednesday, May 17, 1995, at 5:30 p.m. in the LTD Board Room at 3500 E. 17th Avenue, Eugene.

Present: Pat Hocken, President, presiding  
Dave Kleger, Treasurer  
Kirk Bailey, Vice President  
Rob Bennett  
Roger Saydack  
Phyllis Loobey, General Manager  
Siobhan Briley, Minutes Recorder  
Jo Sullivan, Recording Secretary

Absent: Thom Montgomery  
(one vacancy)

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Hocken called the meeting to order.

**ROLL CALL:** Ms. Loobey called roll.

**WORK SESSION ON BUS RAPID TRANSIT OPTIONS IN FERRY STREET BRIDGE**

**CORRIDOR:** Mr. Viggiano reminded the Board that Mr. Bennett was the Board representative to the Ferry Street Corridor (FSC) Committee. He introduced Jan Childs and Dave Reinhard of the City of Eugene, who provided the staff report. Ms. Childs reviewed the history of the study. She said the committee was looking beyond the immediate FSC itself into a regional transportation system and hoping, in the long run, to determine what the role of the FSC was in the entire regional transportation system.

She said it was important to consider the possibility of additional river crossings; for example, a bridge slightly west of the Valley River Center (VRC) area or a transit and/or alternative modes bridge parallel to the Washington-Jefferson bridge. She also mentioned the possibility of a bridge near Alton Baker Park, but explained that this bridge would not be used as a commuter corridor, since the park area was currently, and should remain, less traveled. She mentioned and briefly explained the possibility of developing an inner and outer loop transit system in the Eugene-Springfield area, where the inner loop would serve the downtown area and the outer loop would serve the more outlying and residential areas. She then introduced Dave Reinhard, who provided more information regarding specific changes to the actual corridor.

Using an overhead projector, Mr. Reinhard reviewed two transit plans. Both included a Valley River Bridge, an Alton Baker Park bridge, and I-5 ramps to Franklin Boulevard. The first plan included a four-lane Ferry Street Bridge plus a two-lane transit-only bridge. The second included a six-lane Ferry Street Bridge, with two priority or exclusive transit lanes, rather than a separate bridge.

Mr. Reinhard reviewed what staff had presented to the committee the previous week, detailing both plans. He distributed a handout, which listed the pros and cons of each plan, to each Board member.

He noted that staff were in the process of making detailed maps illustrating how each option would look, which would provide some visual comparison, as well. He also said staff would be doing some comparative travel option studies.

Mr. Reinhard reviewed some previous ideas for changes to the south bank of the Ferry Street Corridor. He expressed his opinion that retaining the current bridge would not justify such changes. The plans to revitalize the south bank included the assumption that there would be a new bridge. He said, however, even if the current bridge were retained, the committee should consider viaduct improvements.

Mr. Reinhard said that one thing to consider regarding the six-lane bridge was the flow of transit traffic, as it would occupy the same bridge as auto traffic. With the four-lane option, there would be a second bridge.

Mr. Viggiano asked what the process and schedule for decision-making were, and how the Board might have input into that. Mr. Reinhard said the next Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting would take place on May 26 and would be a good place to respond to the evaluation of the two concepts. At that meeting, the CAC hoped to finalize one of the plans. He said the last City Council meeting most likely would be scheduled for the first week in August, and this issue needed to be resolved by then. Ms. Childs said it was unclear whether the City Council would hold a public hearing on the matter.

Ms. Hocken asked about the funding situation. Mr. Reinhard explained that the money allotted to the Ferry Street Bridge would not be used for any other project. He said the current problem was that the modeling tools used last time revealed little impact by a new Valley River Bridge, although there now was reason to believe there would be some impact.

Ms. Childs said the committee was looking at the issue from a long-term standpoint. The longer-term recommendations for the Valley River Bridge would be included in the TransPlan update, and in this way information would be gathered regarding whether the region as whole agreed that the bridge should be included in a regional transit update.

Addressing his question to both staff and committee members, Mr. Kleger asked what questions might be useful to ask to make connections to a transit-only bridge. Mr. Reinhard explained the possible connections, pointing out a north-end entrance without a loop ramp onto I-105, but with a traffic signal instead, using the space under the overpass for a transit corridor



to the Coburg-Oakway intersection. The south end, he said, posed another kind of challenge, due to the railroad tracks. He said he looked at the possibility of entering from Mill or High Street and on 4th Avenue over the tracks. Another possibility would be to create a completely separate transit lane. Mr. Kleger commented that every idea seemed to work well on its own, but not in tandem with the rest of the system. He also suggested that the committee consider the Campbell Senior Center in reviewing the situation. Mr. Reinhard said the committee was not planning to have the buses travel to the end of High Street.

Mr. Kleger asked Mr. Reinhard to comment on proposals for pedestrian access to the western end of Centennial Boulevard. Mr. Reinhard said last year's ballot proposal provided a pedestrian and bicycle overpass. Another option would be a fully-signalized intersection, although this option was not as popular. A third possibility would be to extend the viaduct and Centennial Boulevard or to take Club Road and extend the bridge in that direction.

Mr. Bennett explained his approach to the Ferry Street Corridor. He said he had recommended that it did not make a lot of sense to force cars off the road by crowding them, since such a strategy never wins in long run and does not benefit the community. He said it must be acknowledged that private passenger vehicles are an important part of the transportation mix, and will be, indefinitely. His favored approach was to put the transit system in a position that would be competitive with private passenger vehicles. He said a separate transit lane would provide the most attractive option for making transit competitive.

Mr. Bennett pointed out that LTD currently was not a major player in the transportation system; it provided only 3 percent of the transportation in the area. The only way to affect this situation would be to put LTD in a significantly more competitive position and to do it in such a way as to avoid incurring large costs immediately. Mr. Bennett also commented that the kind of bus LTD was using was perhaps not the most popular. He suggested LTD think about upgrading its vehicles. He expressed his disagreement with the concept of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, but said a private van system may have merit at some point. He said he believed in the Park and Ride approach, and noted that LTD could become a much stronger player by competing harder.

Responding to a question from Mr. Reinhard, Mr. Bennett said he had no preference for either the four- or six-lane option, but whatever option was chosen should give buses the right of way.

Mr. Kleger commended Mr. Bennett on his framing of the issue.

Mr. Bennett asked Mr. Reinhard to comment on other perspectives. Mr. Reinhard said the next step in the process would be to obtain a quantitative analysis of the issue. He also commended Mr. Bennett on his framing of the issue.

Mr. Kleger said travel time parity, not even advantage, would increase ridership, especially in light of the parking situation. He said a priority route through the "Coburg snarl" was essential.

Ms. Hocken asked if the City Council would be taking action on the issue at its meeting



with LTD, scheduled for late July. Ms. Childs said the City Council most likely would take no action before August. Ms. Hocken clarified that it was still undetermined if one of the options would give more priority to transit.

Graham Carey, of JRH Engineering, said the FSC committee needed direction from the LTD Board regarding the two options presented. He cautioned the Board, however, that the present information was perhaps premature, as the difference in travel time of connections for separate bridges had not yet been established. Mr. Bennett asked if engineering for a separate bridge would be so difficult as to be practically impossible. Mr. Reinhard said that the kind of connection LTD needed would have a serious impact on land use. The south side would require an elevated viaduct, which could incur opposition in the neighborhood.

Mr. Bennett asked for staff comment. Director of Administrative Services Mark Pangborn said that staff were excited by the idea on a number of levels, including the possibility of making transit more competitive.

Ms. Loobey reminded the Board that a six-lane bridge provided a different opportunity than the four-lane bridge. She said it was fortuitous that the Ferry Street Corridor committee broadened its focus from the corridor to the larger metropolitan area. It was correct to say the issue was at a pivotal point. She said either LTD was going to be one of the best transit systems in the country carrying 3 to 4 percent of trips, or it would step up a level and provide more service. She reminded the Board that it could make improvements incrementally on a bus rapid transit system.

Ms. Hocken suggested that the Board not wait until September or November to consider the issue.

Mr. Viggiano said studies had repeatedly shown that people don't take transit because it takes too long. He said he would like to explore the different options to see what makes the bigger difference in travel time.

Ms. Hocken announced that she and Mr. Bennett had met with City Council representatives to plan a Council-LTD Board meeting. The meeting will be held at LTD and LTD will set the agenda. She recommended that the areas of focus include the downtown plan and Ferry Street Bridge corridor. She asked the Board to provide feedback over the next two months regarding the meeting and the topics involved.

Mr. Bennett asked Mr. Reinhard and Ms. Childs to discuss their perception of the Urban Rail Feasibility Study (URFS). Mr. Reinhard said the committee should have settled on three corridors by now, one of which is a shuttle loop. The most controversial part of the study was the cost estimate for urban rail. He said the initial cost estimates were much higher than those received from Emerald Empire Railroad. The direction of the committee had been to find the least expensive option. Mr. Kleger pointed out that the initial assessments seemed low to him.

Ms. Loobey said that, clearly, there was a difference between urban and non-urban rail, due to electrical propulsion of urban rail and shielding issues. Mr. Kleger explained that the



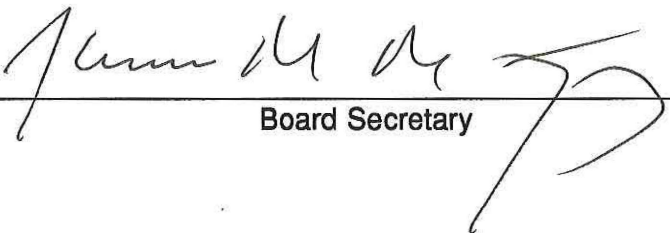
electrical phenomenon was induction, and any electrical facility near the line was capable of picking up the current or a portion of the current. This could occur even with self-propelled cars with diesel electric generators.

Mr. Reinhard added that with a trolley system there is a novelty factor, which could increase ridership. The question to consider there was whether ridership would increase enough to warrant the extra capital and operating costs. The study, he said, should provide an estimate of this.

Ms Hocken asked if LTD could be invited to the formal presentation of the recommendation to the City Council. Ms. Childs said it could. Ms. Loobey said it would be prudent for the Board to address the issue sooner this time than it had the last time around.

Ms. Childs expressed her appreciation for Mr. Bennett's presence on the Citizen Advisory Committee. Ms. Hocken asked if Mr. Bennett would need direction from the Board at some point. He said he would, particularly regarding technical support. Mr. Reinhard and Ms. Childs said they expected enough direction from the committee to be able to present a final draft of the proposal for approval by the end of June. Ms. Hocken said her concern was that the June Board meeting would occur too late for LTD to give any helpful feedback to the committee. She suggested that staff decide when they needed the Board's feedback and let the Board know.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The special work session adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

  
Board Secretary