

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

SPECIAL MEETING/WORK SESSION

Wednesday, June 21, 1995

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on June 19, 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, June 21, 1995, at 5:30 p.m. in the LTD Board Room at 3500 E. 17th Avenue, Eugene.

Present: Pat Hocken, President
Dave Kleger, Treasurer
Kirk Bailey, Vice President
Rob Bennett
Roger Saydack
Thom Montgomery, Secretary
Jennifer Self, Minutes Recorder
Phyllis Loobey, General Manager
Jo Sullivan, Recording Secretary

Absent: (one vacancy)

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

ROLL CALL: Ms. Loobey called roll.

BOARD POSITION ON FERRY STREET BRIDGE: Mr. Viggiano reminded the Board that at the last meeting staff had promised to report back to the Board in a month with refined plans for the Ferry Street Bridge. He stated that the bridge and corridor designs had been refined and a new six-lane option had been added by the committee. He said that the committee needed to make a decision, and Mr. Bennett, as a member of the committee, was interested in getting direction from the Board.

Mr. Bennett stated that the committee members generally agreed that the approach to handling the automobile traffic in the corridor was to make an effort to distribute the traffic to other routes. He said that there was unanimity among members that a Valley River Bridge would be a necessary part of any of the options. He said the bridge would take a significant number of trips off the Ferry Street Bridge corridor and off the Washington-Jefferson Bridge. He added that members had considered the idea of adding another river crossing on the east side of the Ferry Street Bridge. He said that the majority of the committee members believed that option 3B (the six-lane bridge option) addressed the issues in the most acceptable manner. He said that this option included maintaining the existing bridge and adding another bridge with three lanes going in the opposite direction.

Dave Reinhard, City of Eugene staff, added that Club Road and Centennial Boulevard would be changed to one-way in opposite directions. Mr. Bennett added that land use issues

were important because Club Road would be moved off the river bank, and the area could be designed to bring people back into the area through private development or park use.

Mr. Bennett said that in representing LTD he had not supported that option because it did not include a transit-only bridge or lane. He said that he had supported option 2 (a four-lane bridge and a transit-only bridge). He said this option was a better deal for LTD, and added that he was struggling with letting go of the transit-only lane because he did not ~~foresee that option being available in the future.~~

Mr. Bailey arrived at the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Reinhard stated that if LTD wanted to optimize its future in establishing a corridor for transit, then option 2 did a better job than option 3B. He added that the committee had discussed how to optimize transit travel within option 3B, and had developed the idea of transit-priority lanes. He said that buses would have "queue-jumper" lights that would enable them to get ahead of the traffic. He noted that a transit-only lane did not work with option 3B because it would impede the entrance and exit areas for automobiles, and the traffic forecast predicted that all three lanes would be needed to accommodate traffic.

Mr. Bennett asked what effect a Valley River Bridge would have if the ramp from I-105 to Coburg Road were removed. Mr. Reinhard stated that staff predicted that if the ramp were removed people would still go through the corridor rather than going to the Washington-Jefferson Bridge. He said that staff could do some more analysis on that idea.

Jan Childs, Eugene Planning Director, stated that the committee was committed to looking at transit in the corridor in three forms: (1) commuter transit (rapid transit or rail); (2) local transit that would provide service to the North Bank area; and (3) circulator/shuttle system. She added that the committee was committed to reviewing and supporting additional river crossings and maintaining the original Ferry Street Bridge structure. She said it would not surprise her if the Valley River Bridge were built before any construction began in the Ferry Street Bridge area. She concluded by saying that option 3B would offer more long-term choices, but she understood the concern that it did not offer LTD as visible a transit facility as did option 2.

Neil Hyatt, a member of the Ferry Street Bridge Corridor Committee who was present in the audience, stated that none of the options would go into effect without the construction of a Valley River Bridge. He said that the "red flag" that was raised for him was that there would be a stiff campaign against any option containing six lanes. He added that option 3B would cost, at minimum, \$90.25 million, plus the expense of the outside bridges, and that would be a hard package to sell the City Council and the general public. He said that he could not support that option for those reasons, but he could "sell" option 2 with the inclusion of a street car option. He added that option 2 would cost about \$50 million, most of which could be paid for with County and State money.

Mr. Kleger stated that ten buses an hour crossed the Ferry Street Bridge during the middle of the day. He said that he did not think the bus priority lanes in option 3B would work effectively. He said that his preference was for option 2.

Mr. Montgomery said that option 2 was the best way to deal with the transit issue now and in the future, but it seemed completely insupportable because it did not work because of land use issues and automobile traffic issues. He said that if there was the political pressure that would "pound option 3 to the mat," then it seemed ridiculous that the same pressure would not exist against a Valley River Bridge being built. He said that the best option was to pick the option that dealt best with the present and some of the future and work to get support for the idea.

Ms. Hocken asked if option 2 included any improvements to Centennial Boulevard and Club Road. Mr. Reinhard stated that it was possible that some improvements would be added into that option, but it would not be possible to move Club Road very far off the river in that option. He said that couplets could not work with only one bridge.

Mr. Bennett stated that federal money could be used for seismic improvement and other safety improvements without a major vote, so a vote might not occur in November. He said that most people on the committee wanted to sign onto a specific plan and attempt to sell it to the people. He reiterated that he was struggling with which option to support, and was having a tough time letting go of the transit-only bridge.

Mr. Saydack stated that his conclusion was that option 2 did not do enough with automobile traffic unless it was coupled with other crossings. He said that this package was not big enough.

Mr. Montgomery said that he did not see why in the future a transit-only bridge could not stand alone as a bond issue.

Ms. Hocken stated that she did not think that option 3B was not sellable, but added that option 2 was not good enough.

Mr. Bennett said that he did not think there would be enough support on the committee to have option 2 be the prevailing model, and that he was not sure that people thought LTD was the answer to traffic problems. He said that if he could be sure that in the future transit could get a lane, then he would say that option 3B was the best.

Mr. Montgomery asked if the Ferry Street Bridge could be created with the capacity for additional levels. Ms. Childs said that it was not feasible because the on-ramp area was not long enough and it was not high enough off the water to accommodate levels.

Mr. Bennett asked if there would be an option for four lanes on the bridge in option 3B. Mr. Reinhard stated that it was possible that four lanes could fit and that one could be designated transit-only. He said the lanes would be substandard.

Mr. Bailey stated that he did not want to pursue an option that would not work. He said that he was less concerned about political liability than he was about supporting an option that would work. He said that he wanted an option that included all the best it could for transit. He stated that he was not in favor of putting buses on one side of the road and cars on the other side of the road, but a paradigm shift needed to occur.

Mr. Bennett asked for a vote so that he could represent LTD at the next committee meeting. He said that he sensed most people supported option 3B.

Mr. Montgomery, Ms. Hocken, Mr. Saydack, Mr. Bailey, and Mr. Kleger (with reservation) stated their support for option 3B.

Mr. Kleger expressed his concern about giving up the exclusive transit right-of-way.

Mr. Montgomery asked if option 3B could work for bus rapid transit in the future. Graham Corey, consultant to LTD, stated that it could work in the immediate future, but he was worried about it working in the long term.

Mr. Reinhard stated that Mr. Bennett could ask the committee to defer a decision and work on another option. Ms. Loobey supported that option, and added that there were so many questions about the options that it might be best to hold off making the decision. She said it was important to develop a good plan that would work in the short term and the long term. She said that the federal money could be obligated by taking care of the seismic and the safety issues, and the decision on an option could be deferred until a later date.

Mr. Montgomery said if waiting was an option, then it was the best option. Mr. Saydack agreed, as did the other Board members.

Ms. Childs thought that if Mr. Bennett suggested that the committee recommend taking care of the seismic and safety issues and examining more options, then the committee would support that idea. She also thought the City Council would like that idea.

The Board members agreed to support the idea of deferring a decision.

THE BOARD'S POSITION REGARDING TRANSPLAN: Ms. Hocken stated that the other agenda item, "The Board's Position Regarding TransPlan," would be placed on the regular Board meeting agenda, due to time constraints at the special meeting.

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


Board Secretary