

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING/WORK SESSION
LTD Board Room

Monday, July 24, 1995

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on July 20, 1995, and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, a special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District was held on Monday, July 24, 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
Hannah Bradford, Minutes Recorder
Jo Sullivan, Recording Secretary

Absent: Thom Montgomery, Secretary

Eugene City Council Members Present:

Mayor Ruth Bascom
Nancy Nathanson
Tim Laue
Kevin Hornbuckle
Laurie Swanson Gribskov

Jim Torrey
Barbara Keller
Shawn Boles
Mike Gleason, City Manager
Linda Norris, Assistant City Manager

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

ROLL CALL: Ms. Loobey called the roll. Eugene City Council Members introduced themselves.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY BOARD PRESIDENT: Ms. Hocken expressed gratitude to the City Councilors for their presence at the meeting. She briefly reviewed the agenda, particularly noting item 5, Collaborative Process. Ms. Hocken said the LTD Board was interested in continuing to work collaboratively with City Councilors and staff on issues of shared interest. She noted some areas in which LTD and the City had worked together successfully, particularly calling attention to the District becoming involved in reviewing site plans for new developments. Ms. Hocken thanked the Council for authorizing that process.

Ms. Hocken mentioned other areas in which the City could help LTD, including ways to allow LTD to provide service to "gated" communities and other areas with limited access. She mentioned the helpfulness of receiving updates on the Ferry Street corridor process, and especially having a representative on the committee. Mr. Hocken referred to packet information

about LTD goals and pointed out some similarities to City goals; for example, the City goal of enhancing transportation strategies for pedestrian access, bike routes, car pooling, buses, and roadways. Ms. Hocken said the goal of the meeting was an informal discussion and suggestions for how LTD and the City could work together to meet their mutual goals.

WORK SESSION WITH EUGENE CITY COUNCIL ON EUGENE/LTD MUTUAL CONCERNS:

BUS RIGHTS-OF-WAY/STREET PATTERNS: Ms. Hocken commented that a recent report by a consultant highlighted the need for dedicated rights-of-ways providing priority treatment for transit. She then asked Mr. Bennett to comment on this issue.

Mr. Bennett remarked that it had become clear to him during his year and a half on the LTD Board that unless the transit system did something dramatically different to improve its ability to compete with the private automobile, it would not be able to increase ridership to provide more than the current 3 or 4 percent of trips. Mr. Bennett said the bus rapid transit approach had been discussed and researched and had many advantages for improving the District's competitive position. He said it could be implemented over a long period of time on a phased basis, and is more cost effective than other approaches. Mr. Bennett said that changes to the Ferry Street corridor currently under consideration offered an opportunity to begin implementing this approach. He stated that the Board believed it was not too soon to start work in this direction. He added that the Board was looking for advice from the Council about how to continue to move forward and strengthen support for this concept.

Mr. Kleger introduced the street pattern discussion by noting the need for an integrated grid system in order to operate transit more efficiently. He said the reality in a community that had grown in a topsy-turvy manner was that nearly four-fifths of the metropolitan area was supplied with a series of branching thoroughfares, with little bits of unconnected grids. Mr. Kleger expressed gratitude to the Council for the Transportation Rule Implementation Project (TRIP) that it had adopted some time back. He urged the Council to continue to support opening connections between neighborhoods whenever the opportunity arose. Mr. Kleger said another issue for buses was curved streets, which small buses might navigate, but small buses are more costly per seat per hour. Mr. Kleger told the group it would be several years before LTD could consider more frequent service. He said LTD needed streets that connected, as well as corridors that would allow buses to get ahead of traffic. Mr. Kleger emphasized that customer convenience is the key to ridership, as demonstrated by research.

Ms. Keller noted several areas in which the Council had taken action to help meet the Board's concerns, including a street study, support for the multiple bridge concept developed by the Ferry Street corridor committee, and participation in the TransPlan process. She asked what actions might not be addressed in the TransPlan and what other LTD needs were not being met. Mr. Kleger responded that the LTD Board also was participating in the TransPlan process, but wanted to be certain that policy issues were clear prior to the completion of the plan.

Mr. Boles suggested potential action items by the City Council as: (1) exploring the use of preemption signal control by LTD; and (2) jointly addressing issues around "gated communities." Mr. Boles asked about long-term plans for the north bank study, asking whether exclusive

bus lanes could be converted for fixed rail. Mr. Bennett responded that the right-of-way acquisition could be applied to either mode.

Ms. Hocken asked about the preemptive signal, stating that she understood State statute precluded use by transit vehicles. She suggested a joint effort to lobby for a change in the statute. Mr. Boles remarked that transportation issues likely would be the focus of the impending special session of the legislature.

In response to a question from Mr. Torrey, Mr. Viggiano confirmed that the location of the rapid transit service would be consistent with the planned Park and Ride station on either 11th or 18th Avenue.

Mr. Torrey asked about the LTD Board's philosophy for increasing ridership; specifically, whether it leaned more toward user-friendly methods or punitive methods. Ms. Hocken responded that the Board did not have the authority to enforce many negative actions (for example, controlling downtown parking), and therefore had focused on the approach of providing incentives.

Mr. Torrey asked for the Board's reaction to the recommendations of the Ferry Street Corridor Advisory Committee. Mr. Kleger answered that there was some frustration about the inability to reach agreement for a separate transit crossing over the river, acknowledging that it was an awkward design problem. However, Mr. Kleger added that the Board felt it had been well represented and was used to compromise. Mr. Bennett added some background on the committee recommendations, noting that the committee had worked on the assumption that the ratio of bus riders to drivers would remain the same over time. He said the committee was unable to find examples in which the punitive approach had been successful over the long term.

Ms. Swanson Gribskov asked how the right-of-way acquisitions would be funded. Mr. Bennett responded that the committee had hoped to utilize federal funding combined with LTD resources; and planned to ask for the City's participation as well. Mr. Bennett explained that LTD had been trying to acquire a stronger capital base and leverage its resources to obtain other government funding.

Ms. Nathanson suggested finding a common term to refer to areas of limited access, noting that not all these areas are gated communities. She asked what else the City might be able to do to assist in speeding the flow of buses, suggesting a possible ordinance that would force cars to wait for buses to re-enter traffic after a stop. Ms. Loobey responded that this was a legislative issue that had been recommended, but did not move through the legislature. Mr. Torrey suggested adding language to the proposed bill that would designate it by size of community, thereby removing it from the rural areas.

Mr. Boles expressed interest in working with the LTD Board on areas of common interest. He also noted that examples of increasing bus ridership did exist in Europe, if not in the United States.

Mayor Bascom remarked that her understanding of the Ferry Street corridor committee report was that a transit bridge through Alton Baker Park was one suggestion, along with improving the Washington Jefferson Bridge to make it more transit friendly. Ms. Hocken

responded that, although the couplet plan had lots of good ideas, it may not be feasible to give priority treatment to transit on such a short span.

Ms. Keller expressed interest in working with the Board, including lobbying efforts.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) DESIGNATIONS: Jan Childs, City of Eugene Planning Director, explained that the purpose of a TOD designation is to provide the competitive advantage necessary to increase the use of alternative modes of transportation, including bus ridership. She said currently the only TOD in the zoning code was set up specifically for the downtown area. She confirmed that the density and mix of uses might vary for the Willow Creek area, noting that one advantage of the Willow Creek area was its identification in the Metro Plan as a nodal development area; it was, therefore, already planned for mixed land uses. Ms. Childs remarked that the area was a prime candidate for a TOD designation; the only question that remained was the timing of the application.

Ms. Keller expressed support for the Council to ask staff for a proposal to move forward on the TOD application in the Willow Creek area. Mr. Boles also expressed support, but suggested all LTD items be forwarded together as a package. He expressed concern about staff's need to shift work priorities to accommodate this request. There was general consensus among Council members to review all LTD requests as a package.

DOWNTOWN GROUP PASS: Ms. Loobey remarked that this item was on the agenda due to direction from both the LTD Board and the City Council to examine the issues involved for a downtown group pass program. Ms. Loobey pointed to the success of several group pass programs, including Symantec, the City of Eugene, Sacred Heart Hospital, and the University of Oregon. She said she was looking for direction and ideas on this issue.

Mr. Torrey endorsed the idea and suggested identifying an organization that might coordinate the effort; for example, Downtown Eugene, Inc. He also urged the LTD Board to include small organizations in the program.

Ms. Nathanson supported the downtown group pass effort. She brought up a related idea regarding youth riders, suggesting that a volunteer parent monitor program might help reduce the "fear factor" and increase youth ridership. Ms. Hocken responded that parent training and information might also be helpful in reducing fear, as well as the new downtown station. Mr. Bennett expressed interest in this idea, adding that coordinating with programs such as Kidsports and Scouts were other possibilities.

Mr. Boles suggested expanding outreach efforts to other groups that have a relationship to transit. He mentioned working with tourists with routes that stress recreation opportunities, perhaps working with the Convention and Visitors Association of Lane County, Oregon (CVALCO) to provide parking for recreational vehicles. Mr. Boles also suggested working with School District 4J to eliminate the subsidy for young drivers to drive to school, in addition to first year students at the University, who could be prevented from having cars.

Ms. Swanson Gribskov suggested putting issues such as the TOD on the agenda for the last phase of the City's goal-setting session, noting that one of the first goals was transportation.

LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES: FUNDING AND HIGH-SPEED RAIL: Ms. Hocken acknowledged agreement that the high-speed rail project needed funding to move forward. Ms. Loobey said the latest news from Salem indicated that the special session in January may act on transportation funding issues, including a possible gas tax increase, and airport and transit issues. She noted that LTD was particularly interested in the motor vehicle registration fee. Ms. Loobey explained that in the past, transit districts had received general fund monies for half of the local share of capital improvements. However, efforts to revive this protocol had been unsuccessful during the last three legislative sessions. Ms. Loobey asked the Council for its support on this issue, noting that LTD was likely facing a \$1 million a year loss in federal operating assistance, and a change in the ratio of federal funding from 80 percent federal/20 percent local to 50 percent each federal and local.

Mr. Torrey stressed the need for a meeting of interested parties soon to discuss strategies for approaching the legislature, not just for the special session, but starting work with candidates for State offices.

Ms. Keller noted that the Council's Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) committee had been consistently supportive of transit-oriented issues. She expressed willingness to work with LTD Board members or staff to develop strategies together. Ms. Keller observed that the most successful lobbying efforts are a results of combined efforts. Mr. Boles agreed with the idea of a united front at the state level, similar to the united lobbying group for federal issues. He suggested including all partners and not limiting efforts to transit issues only.

Mr. Boles asked City staff to bring recommendations to the Council at the next day's goal-setting session on how to proceed on the identified list of issues: (1) short-term changes in planning and siting, including street patterns; (2) legislative packet with large and small issues to take to the special session; (3) plans for jointly creating rights-of-way, (4) a way to implement a TOD in the Willow Creek area, either separately or in conjunction with the TransPlan update; and (5) staff work on the group pass program, both in the downtown area and with special populations, such as youth and tourists.

Mr. Gleason congratulated the Board on the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC) comparative performance report, stating that it spoke very well of LTD.

Mr. Hornbuckle referred to strategic activity number 11 under Vision II of the LTD Strategic Vision document, which reads, "investigate advertising at shelters and stops." Mr. Hornbuckle strongly discouraged the Board from that activity, saying he opposed visual clutter and that it might discourage property owners in potential TOD areas. He said he hoped he would be invited to testify before the Board when this issue was being discussed.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.


Board Secretary