

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

SPECIAL MEETING/WORK SESSION

Wednesday, February 21, 1996

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on February 16, 1996, 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, February 21, 1996, at 5:30 p.m. in the LTD Board Room at 3500 East 17th Avenue, Eugene.

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

Absent: Thomas Montgomery, Secretary
(one vacancy, subdistrict #2)

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 5:45 p.m. by Board President Pat Hocken.

WORK SESSION ON BUS RAPID TRANSIT: Planning and Development Manager Stefano Viggiano said that this was a work session to give the Board some information about work in progress. Staff were not asking for any decisions that evening, but did want some feedback about the direction of the project; it was early in the project, things were changing daily, and it was easy to make adjustments. Staff had five items that they wanted to discuss with the Board: an update on the pilot corridor selection; the projected BRT system for the year 2015 and its implications for service; cost estimates for the pilot corridor and for the year 2015 system, including short-term and long-term capital costs; preliminary work on the funding plan; and the marketing plan and public involvement and communications plan. He introduced Transit Planner Lisa Gardner and project consultant Graham Carey, and discussed a revised time line for the Bus Rapid Transit project. Selection of the corridor had been extended to April. In the interim, staff would begin contacting people who lived and worked along the proposed corridor. The marketing plan was being developed. Marketing of the system and route would begin less than a year before implementation, but the marketing plan was being developed because it was important to use it in the communication with the community. A community involvement segment was being developed; it would begin soon and continue throughout the project.

Mr. Viggiano explained that LTD staff had formed a BRT Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which included staff from the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG), the

Cities of Eugene and Springfield, consultants, and a person from Oregon State University who was helping with research. The TAC had met twice so far and discussed the concept and selection of a pilot corridor. The TAC identified seven potential corridors. The corridors under discussion were: (1) two options on Coburg Road (to Crescent, or to Harlow to Gateway); (2) a Centennial corridor from downtown Eugene to the Mohawk area; (3) two variations of a Franklin/Main corridor, traveling out Franklin/Main (ending in downtown Springfield, or continuing to 58th and Main); (4) Willamette Street to 29th and Willamette or to 40th and Donald; (5) West 11th corridor out to about Bertelsen; (6) Highway 99 to Barger; and (7) a River Road corridor out as far as Beltline. They were fairly obvious main arterial streets in the community, and seemed to make the most sense for BRT. A BRT corridor would not end in downtown, so in order to travel through downtown, two of these corridors would be selected. In order to give the most flexibility in terms of evaluation, they were being evaluated as separate pieces.

Mr. Viggiano discussed the data that had been collected on the seven corridors, including current ridership per day and the length of each potential corridor, from which riders per mile could be calculated. They also had determined the current bus travel time and the current automobile travel time. Current service levels along the corridors were noted: buses per hour outbound and inbound during peaks, and the average auto speed along each corridor. He said that the biggest factor was riders per mile, since the District would want to select a corridor with some proven demand. The amount of increase in ridership over time would be important. Current ridership varied quite a bit among corridors.

Gateway and Crescent both had about 340 boardings per mile. Centennial was considerably lower; about half of Gateway and Crescent. The route out Franklin between downtown Eugene and downtown Springfield had 552 boardings per mile, and then dropped off quite a bit beyond Springfield. That also included riders between downtown Eugene and the University of Oregon. To 29th and Willamette there were 517 boardings per mile, dropping down quite a bit in the lower residential areas. West 11th showed 416 boardings per mile, a very strong corridor for LTD. Highway 99 showed about 210 boardings per mile, and River Road was a medium-level corridor for boardings.

The TAC also had discussed what other factors were important. It was mentioned that it would be nice if the corridor could travel across both jurisdictions (Eugene and Springfield). The TAC recommended selecting corridors where it was easier to implement a transit-priority system. Mr. Viggiano used the example of 11th Avenue versus 18th Avenue.

It was thought that 18th Avenue would be a difficult corridor for transit priority, because there was a limited amount of right of way, with two lanes and a center travel lane. To buy exclusive right of way would mean having to purchase the right of way and buying out a lot of businesses, whereas another corridor with five travel lanes might mean having an opportunity to use part of a travel lane or perhaps share it.

The TAC narrowed the list of potential corridors to four: (1) Coburg Road (both options); (2) Franklin to downtown Springfield (the corridor length was important, especially for a pilot corridor; staff believed that they could do a better job demonstrating BRT in a shorter corridor, so that a full range of improvements could be made in the shorter corridor); (3) Willamette corridor to either 29th and Willamette or farther (ideally, the feeder routes should not be longer than the BRT route); and (4) West 11th to Bertelsen.

Ms. Hocken asked about obvious pairings that would or would not be selected. Mr. Viggiano said that the Coburg Road corridor could be combined with either the West 11th or the Willamette corridor. When looking at combinations, probably an east-west, a north-south, and a west-to-northeast corridor would be the three options.

Ms. Hocken asked if staff had information regarding people's travel patterns. Mr. Viggiano replied that the Origin and Destination Study showed where people transferred and where they began and ended their trips.

Mr. Kleger suggested extending the West 11th corridor a little farther to get to the center of the industrial area before breaking into feeder routes. Mr. Viggiano said that a real advantage of using buses instead of rail was that BRT did not necessarily have to stop at a certain location. One option would be to continue the bus closer to certain employers if the majority of the ridership was to meet work shifts at those employers, in order to reduce transfers for those employers. Because that would be for certain trips, it might not be considered part of the BRT line, and would not require a lot of extensive improvements.

Mr. Saydack asked why River Road had not been selected and about the use of current ridership. Mr. Viggiano explained that River Road was in the medium range in terms of ridership. Current ridership did play a big role in the selection; however, a lot more information would be collected on the finalist corridors. Mr. Saydack asked about projected growth in the corridors. Mr. Viggiano replied that this had been considered, and that was one of the reasons the Gateway area appealed to the TAC. They also had considered the major employment development in southwest Eugene. The River Road area had some development occurring, but it did not seem to be as extensive as the Coburg Road corridor, for instance. Willamette Street had the least development potential.

Mr. Bennett said it was interesting that of the total trips taken in the community, only 17 percent were work trips. Over time, the District would need to broaden its market to appeal to more than work trips, by being in a corridor where there were a lot of other kinds of commercial activities, including such things as attending a seminar at the University of Oregon (UO) or visiting someone at the hospital, although the work trip approach was still very important. He added that he was not interested in pursuing BRT aggressively unless the District could get exclusive rights of way, because merging into traffic would not work. He asked about the estimated four stops per mile, and said that LTD would need a significant number of Park and Ride facilities--more than he saw in the original budget. He said that feeder loops also could be used, with smaller vehicles, but the idea of being able to draw from outlying areas to the Park and Ride facilities to get on the system in a number of different places was an important concept. He said the BRT corridors should not use bus stops; rather, they should have stations that would be the focal point of the community. Businesses could take advantage of the fact that people were stopping there. He thought that the East Springfield Park and Ride would be the test of that. Also, there would be the opportunity for housing density that went along with nodal development.

Mr. Carey added that right of way was important, but a lot could occur through signal priority. He said that people do get out of the way of BRT vehicles. He said there was merit

in looking at right of way, but he would like to see that right of way within the existing road reserve. Trying to find a separate right of way would be extremely difficult and extremely expensive.

Mr. Bennett said that maybe the signalization priority would work, but the District was making a long-term commitment and ought not to give up on a system that the Board envisioned as the future. He thought it was worth the capital costs to have exclusive rights of way, which could be implemented over time. He compared the costs with waiting until the local area got to the size of Portland. He said he was not adverse to buying private right of way, if that were necessary. He asked Mr. Carey if the District would need to remove traffic lanes in order to keep the separate right of way within the current road reserve. Mr. Carey said that it would, and would become a traffic management issue; LTD would need to show that BRT could use the lanes more efficiently and move more people. His vision for the stops was that they would be nodal developments, as Mr. Bennett had said; more of a station than a stop, with commercial development around the stop. He mentioned the Brisbane model, where the stops were named, and they had considered having private enterprise buying the stop, such as a Safeway stop, for instance. Those kinds of stops would be more like a mile apart.

Mr. Viggiano then discussed the criteria to be used to select the pilot corridor. They were not in priority order, but included: determining major activity centers in addition to work centers; plan designations in the Metro Plan for each urban corridor; transit priority opportunities (for extra right of way, etc.); the number of existing lanes; and the land use measures/development notes developed for TransPlan. Mr. Viggiano said that staff would be using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data to determine the demographics--population, number of employees, type of people who lived along the corridors--to try to judge where the best market might be. Other issues to be studied were the five-year development potential, travel time by auto and bus, and current ridership.

Mr. Bennett asked if Portland's light-rail system (MAX) traveled on two streets downtown. Mr. Viggiano said that it traveled on one-way streets. Mr. Bennett said that it might be easier to get 20 feet of right of way on two streets instead of 40 feet on one street. Mr. Viggiano said that this made sense downtown, but it would be harder to do farther out, as on Coburg Road, especially if there were no parallel route. Once out of downtown Portland, MAX used an exclusive corridor or one street.

Mr. Viggiano discussed the cost estimates for 18 miles for the pilot corridor (nine miles in one direction and nine in the return direction), with ten-minute frequency along the corridor. There was some discussion about bus frequency. Mr. Carey explained what happened when there were no designated times, when passengers arrived randomly. If one bus came late, there would be more passengers than normal and the bus would take longer to load. The bus coming behind would have fewer passengers to load, so within about a mile the buses would end up "bunching." He thought that anywhere between six and ten minutes would be reasonable.

Mr. Bennett stated that it was important for the first shot out of the block to be successful. There was some importance in considering the political implications of the route

that would be picked, and what kind of support it would receive. Another important consideration was what could be done at the present time that it might be difficult to do later. One of the things that worried him was getting across the river. It was possible that having a Coburg Road/Ferry Street Bridge BRT route might increase the chances of a transit-only bridge. The Coburg Road area was "exploding," so in terms of right of way and Park and Ride locations, it might be better to do that now. He reemphasized the important of Park and Ride facilities, and said that those needed to be identified.

Mr. Viggiano explained that staff suggested budgeting \$350,000 per bus for the BRT system, which was approximately \$100,000 more than the cost for a typical bus. He stated that the number of stops per mile was a key issue in terms of travel time and cost. Mr. Bennett asked if there would be a Park and Ride at every stop. Mr. Viggiano said that there would be a Park and Ride at many of the stops. Some of the stops would be in high-density nodes, where Park and Ride facilities would not be appropriate. The District would have to run other service to pick up people between the BRT stops, and some buses might have to stop more often. Mr. Kleger commented that some people would not walk farther to get to faster service. Mr. Bennett wondered if a large percentage of the ridership got on at a few locations. Mr. Kleger said that with the present service, that was not the case. There were a few places where there was a concentration of development and housing where there was a pretty steady turnout. But for the rest of the system, the real ridership loads on the buses came with the every-other-block stopping, picking up one, two, or three people at individual stops, well spread out along the routes.

Mr. Bennett asked Mr. Kleger about the appeal of using small feeder buses circulating through a neighborhood and picking up riders at some of the other stops. Mr. Kleger said he thought that would restore the convenience for people to the point that not having to hassle with cars became attractive enough to make a transfer to the more rapid service, as long as they did not have to walk more than two or three blocks. Mr. Bailey cautioned that transfers may not be more convenient than using a personal car. Mr. Kleger added that if parking costs continued to increase, that also might make it more attractive to make the transfer.

Mr. Viggiano stated that nodal development, with centers of denser residential housing and employment, was important to the concept of BRT, because it grouped ridership at particular stops. Mr. Bennett said that no one yet knew if nodal development was going to work, and it would take a long time, possibly ten years, to develop. He added that he did not think staff had estimated enough money for the BRT stops. Mr. Viggiano said that staff had used an average of \$30,000. Many of the stops would be shelters, and some would be more like stations, with platforms, fare equipment, etc. Mr. Bennett said he was envisioning shelter for a number of people, possibly rest rooms, a place to get coffee, etc., in an attractive station. Mr. Viggiano said that staff could lay out what something like that would look like and try to cost it out.

Ms. Hocken asked about the cost of current stops with shelters. Mr. Viggiano replied that a pad and shelter cost approximately \$6,000. However, a bigger shelter was being designed; he thought it would cost around \$10,000. The downtown Eugene station shelters cost about \$15,000 each at the time they were installed. The South UO Station cost

\$150,000, including pavement. Mr. Bennett said he was thinking more about that kind of station--a quality place for people and a contribution to the community; someplace appealing to go to.

Mr. Saydack asked if buses would pull over to pick up people. Mr. Viggiano replied that if BRT used an exclusive lane, there would be no need to pull over. The advantage was to not pull out of traffic. The stops or stations would be built along the side of the road. Mr. Carey said that a station in the middle would not be ideal, because people would have to cross traffic. Also, more retail could happen around a stop on the sidewalk, so the station would be more integrated into the community. Mr. Viggiano added that there may be some situations where it might make sense to put the stop in the middle, so it should not necessarily be ruled out.

Mr. Viggiano gave rough estimates for a signal priority system at about \$200,000 for the system and approximately \$5,000 per bus for some sort of transmitter. Staff would be meeting with the City of Eugene staff to discuss the software that the City would be ordering for signals, to make sure that software would be compatible with a transit priority system.

Mr. Viggiano then discussed the percent of the corridor that staff and the TAC were assuming would be exclusive bus right of way. For the initial corridor budget, staff had assumed 10 percent exclusive right of way for an 18-mile corridor. A rough estimate of \$1.3 million per mile was used, for purchasing right of way, putting in asphalt, etc. At 10 percent for one corridor, that would equal approximately \$2.4 million; 20 percent would be about \$4.8 million. As Mr. Carey had said, there may be some opportunities for exclusive right of way without having to pave or buy, such as sufficient capacity or traffic management to free up one lane in each direction for BRT. Mr. Bennett asked if that was politically possible. He stated that he thought the estimates for the amount of right of way to purchase were too small. He said he would double the total cost of this item.

Ms. Hocken asked if there might be a way to trade with the City to build a separate bike paths out of the right of way for LTD's use of the current bike lanes. Mr. Bennett asked about eliminating some sidewalks. Mr. Viggiano replied that sidewalks were important to transit riders, to provide a convenient way for them to get to the stop.

Mr. Bennett said that exclusive right of way was key to the long-term success of this effort, and the District needed to face up to it. He suggested looking at the first choice mile-by-mile to see what the District might be faced with in this regard. He added that he did not know what all the potential sources of funding might be, and asked if \$20 million would really be any different than \$9 million if the District had the appropriate back-up to make the case for BRT.

Ms. Loobey said she thought the way to obtain funding was to talk about a 20-year build-out of a conceptual project and ask for funding commitments. The District needed to figure out how much would need to be spent each year for this project. The District should be talking about BRT as an incremental project with a build-out to the year 2015, done in a rational, manageable way. Mr. Bennett said he wanted to be right in estimating the first costs, however. Mr. Viggiano said that it was fairly ambitious to be talking about trying to

buy that much right of way in the next three years, for 1.8 miles, because they could be dealing with a different owner every few hundred feet. If the District were to consider a higher percentage of exclusive right of way, the time line might have to be extended, which might give the flexibility for additional funding. Once the pilot corridor was selected, he thought a much better assessment could be made.

Mr. Saydack said he was having a little trouble understanding the value of BRT without a large amount of exclusive right of way. He wondered about the difference between the proposal and the current system, except maybe the type of bus. Mr. Viggiano said that the idea was to use the 10 percent judiciously, based on a careful examination of the corridor to find the points at which the most congestion occurred. Along the rest of the corridor, the system would use traffic signal priorities so that the bus did not stop at signals. When traffic moved well along certain parts of the corridor, the buses would move rapidly without exclusive rights of way. He thought that a good portion of the travel savings could be accomplished through the first ten percent, and then the next 10 percent achieved somewhat less benefit.

Mr. Saydack asked if purchasing the right of way meant trying to negotiate a separate right of way with every owner or condemning the property. Mr. Viggiano said that the property would have to at least be under threat of condemnation. Mr. Bennett said that the District wanted to compete with the car for a certain percentage of ridership. In his mind, he said, every minute counted, which meant that convenience and speed were very important. He asked why not try for a system that during peak periods got riders where they were going faster than the cars did. Mr. Viggiano agreed that this was a good goal. Mr. Saydack said he would be interested in seeing what staff projected would be the trip time on BRT as compared with the trip time in an automobile. Mr. Viggiano replied that staff had some guesses about that. Mr. Saydack asked if it was reasonable to expect that BRT would be faster than cars. Mr. Carey said that during certain periods of the day, traffic was difficult. The rest of the time, it moved fairly smoothly. Over time, the BRT bus travel time would stay the same as congestion grew, and cars would move more slowly. Congestion and travel time were not that bad currently, but it was important to try to get the system in place so that BRT travel did stay the same over time.

Mr. Saydack said that projecting the additional stress on the road system if 10,000 more people moved into the Coburg Road area with 12,000 cars in the next five to ten years would be a powerful way to sell the BRT concept--to project the future with and without BRT. Mr. Viggiano explained that a model was being established as part of the TransPlan for the year 2015. It would project traffic flow, congestion, etc., and for the first time would model transit systems as well as road systems. The Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) had asked LTD to develop three different scenarios for transit systems for the year 2015. The three scenarios selected by staff were the current system with some adjustments; a bus system with ten-minute corridors and 20-minute service serving the other land use measures nodes, as recommended by a land use measures task force; and the 2015 BRT system. Staff would have an idea of what the travel time improvements that BRT would offer would do in terms of ridership and car travel. Mr. Viggiano thought that having this quantitative information for discussion purposes would be very useful.

Mr. Kleger said that implementing this project in an incremental manner would not be observed as making progress, so the District would need to be sure that was noted as gains were made, every step along the way.

Mr. Bennett offered another thought about a north-south corridor. He said that during his participation as LTD's representative on the Ferry Street Bridge committee, a strong case was being made for a transit way across the river. It ended with a situation where the buses would fit in with regular traffic flow, possibly with a separate lane at some point. A new automobile bridge span at some point would change all the calculations with respect to traffic flow. On his bicycle one day, he had looked at the idea of being able to get across the river and end up on Mill Street, get to 4th, and take a right. He said it seemed to him that there was no reason to stop between starting to cross the bridge and arriving downtown, in terms of the services available along that span. He thought that maybe BRT could have a separate corridor and end up at the train station.

Ms. Hocken asked if the planned Ferry Street Bridge improvements included a bike bridge. Mr. Viggiano said that they did. Mr. Bennett suggested that maybe there was a way to make that bike bridge wide enough to include LTD. Ms. Hocken said she did not think LTD should totally abandon a river crossing, especially if it selected the Coburg Road corridor. If the City were to build a bike bridge, the additional cost for transit might not be that much.

Mr. Viggiano stated that the BRT plan assumed buses traveling at 18 to 20 miles per hour. That was close to speeds for autos on some corridors, and, as Mr. Carey had mentioned, travel time for autos would increase over time.

The BRT budget assumed that one Park and Ride would be planned for the end of the service corridor. Later, several would be constructed along the corridor. Ms. Hocken asked about other funding to be used for a Park and Ride at either Coburg and Beltline or West 11th Avenue. Mr. Viggiano said that the District had funding for the Park and Ride being planned at 58th and Main in Springfield, and had some funding for a Park and Ride at either Coburg or West 11th. Land costs probably would be more than the \$400,000 currently available. For BRT, the projected budget assumed \$1 million for each Park and Ride at the end of the corridors.

There was some discussion about fare payment, including Portland's use of an honor system with spot checks and fines for fare evasion. This would allow multi-door boarding. Ms. Hocken asked if it made sense to take care of exclusive rights of way first and a fare system second. Mr. Viggiano said that there was a per-stop cost of fare collection. Manual collection slowed down the bus a lot.

Transit Planner Lisa Gardner talked about the year 2015 BRT system. It would include five routes, based on TransPlan's planned nodal developments. Those routes would be: (1) 58th and Main through downtown Eugene, out Highway 99 to Beltline and Barger; (2) River Road Park and Ride, across a future Valley River bridge to downtown Eugene, Hilyard Street, and Lane Community College (LCC); (3) Coburg/Crescent, with the

variation to Gateway, to a Willamette Street Park and Ride at 40th and Donald; (4) Mohawk Marketplace to Centennial, downtown Eugene, and a Park and Ride on West 11th Avenue; and, (5) the last to be implemented, a Beltline connector, which would be a perimeter route with two-way traffic. Regular bus service would fill in where BRT was not warranted in terms of ridership, including Valley River Center, UO service, and the West Eugene Parkway. The feeder system would include routes shorter than the BRT routes; greater neighborhood service with smaller buses; opportunities to travel between major BRT routes; and cross-town service, linking connectors through several BRT lines without going downtown. Park and Ride facilities would be located at the end of the line routes rather than at the end of feeder routes.

Ms. Gardner discussed service hours compared with current LTD service hours and service frequencies in the system. An annual increase of 3.4 percent for 20 years would result in 2,000 service hours per day, roughly twice the current system, as proposed for the year 2015 system. Ten-minute frequencies were assumed during peak and mid-day hours on the BRT lines, with 20-minute frequencies during the evenings. Connectors would have ten-minute frequencies during peak hours, 20-minute during mid-day, and 30-minute during evenings. A downtown circulator would have 10-minute frequencies during peak and midday times and 30-minute frequencies during evening hours, and regular bus service would have 30-minute frequencies, with 60-minute frequencies in the evenings.

Mr. Bennett asked if the reason for doing this was to coordinate with the land use plan. Ms. Gardner replied that in selecting the pilot corridor, land use was considered as a qualitative criterion, in terms of development, but the year 2015 plan specifically included the requirements of the land use measures nodal development, which was ten-minute frequencies on identified transit corridors, and twenty-minute frequencies on all others. Modeling the 2015 BRT system provided a basis for comparison with the base case, which was the current system in the year 2015, and for evaluation of the marginal service benefit of the BRT over the other service.

Ms. Hocken asked if interlining could be done with the connectors. Mr. Viggiano said there would be ten-minute frequency, which might be run as an individual loop, or might involve a switch at a node. That is, neighborhood service could function both as feeder service to the BRT and as a neighborhood connection to shopping and other services. There also would be cross-town routes. Mr. Carey thought it would be important to market feeders as community buses that support the community and lessen the emphasis on transfers as people transferred to the main system.

Public Affairs Manager Ed Bergeron discussed the draft information plan that staff had shared with the Board in December. Feedback from the Board had been that more time was needed to gather information before selection of a pilot corridor. He said that marketing of BRT in the community would start when the District introduced the concept. Staff had looked for an identity that would work for the community and establish a separate identity for BRT, to make it special. The current thinking was to use "The EM," which could be short for Emerald Valley Express or Emerald Metro. Emerald and Em had a connection to the community, had a good appearance in terms of a logo, and would be easy to remember.

Mr. Bergeron said that staff and the District's advertising agency were developing a brochure to help the community begin to understand the concept of BRT. Staff also were working on a question and answer document regarding BRT. He asked for the Board's questions and feedback.

The walkabout process would allow the Board and staff to be able to talk one-on-one with some of the key opinion leaders in the community and use their feedback to help shape the planning effort. The second phase of the walkabout was a corridor-specific, door-to-door information campaign along the chosen corridor, to explain the concept and help allay any fears that merchants or landowners might have. Mr. Bergeron stated that the walkabout could begin any time the Board felt it had enough information. There were approximately 70 names on the list for the walkabout. The written materials would be ready around the first or second week in March. He said that staff would like to give the merchants and property owners along the selected corridor a little bit of advance notice about the direction the District was leaning in terms of selecting a corridor. There was a lot of work to be done in that regard in a short time. He said that staff had held off on broad community awareness efforts that had been identified in the original plan so that more information could be gathered and staff could receive feedback from the Board.

Finance Manager Tamara Weaver told the Board that her job had been to try to bring the numbers together in a 20-year business plan, which coincided with the TransPlan project. Those numbers were just starting to jell and were "grand" numbers, and better numbers would be available within the next few months. She said the Board may not end up liking the basic business plan completely; on the other hand, she found it exciting because it was pushing a lot farther than the District might have thought possible under certain sets of reasonable assumptions. Ms. Weaver discussed the first sets of numbers that the TransPlan staff were seeing, and said that they were feeling excited about transit as a viable financial entity. The District looked healthy, with reasonable growth and opportunities. The business plan would assume that the District would receive grant funding. She was looking at ways to fund the local match, new buses, etc. She had stretched the five-year plan out 20 years, and it was very preliminary at that time. The capital contribution possible was much bigger than anything the District had done in the past. Next, she would begin defining the problems, what LTD could do within the current economic environment, what challenges the District would face, and what the District would need to focus on for funding. She added that this discussion was being held at the staff level for the TransPlan process.

Mr. Bennett asked how BRT would be presented to the federal government on Ms. Loobey's trip to Washington, D.C. Ms. Loobey replied that she would present it as an incremental project until the year 2015, and would talk about a full-funding contract. She said that this was the District's best year for these discussions, since Senator Hatfield was still in the Senate and Grace Crunican was the deputy director of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Ms. Loobey had talked with Ms. Crunican about BRT. Ms. Crunican had liked the concept because LTD was not talking about a light-rail system. Also, one of Senator Hatfield's staff members, Matthew Garrett, recently had visited LTD and had liked the concept of BRT.

Mr. Bennett asked if the State would become involved in BRT. Ms. Loobey replied that this was problematic at the current time. She added that the federal government would ask if this was a project that could be justified, operated, and maintained. It would be months before the District would have to assign specific numbers to any budget requests, but she would give some sense of the magnitude and how it compared with other projects across the country.

Mr. Bennett said that he thought the assumptions were very important. The first corridor had to work well or the whole project would be lost. He said it was not unusual when exact costs are not yet known to go in on the conservative (high) side. Ms. Loobey said it was important to get the federal contacts thinking about the concept and whether it is possible or not, with the current political climate in Washington, D.C. She said she was not bothered by using the \$9 million estimate at that point, even though it might double later, because better numbers would be available once the specific corridor was chosen.

Ms. Hocken said she was not sure the District was ready to begin the walkabout in March.

Mr. Bennett said that he thought the marketing side was extremely important. Mr. Bergeron asked the Board how the suggested name and logo felt to them. Ms. Hocken said that it "hadn't grabbed her yet." She wondered if it would be tested with a focus group, or whether other logos would be generated for feedback. Mr. Bergeron replied that it made sense to do that before the introduction of service in 1988. Ms. Hocken suggested spending the extra time now, before picking the name.

ADJOURNMENT: There was no further discussion, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.


Board Secretary

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