

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, November 20, 1996

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on November 14, 1996, 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, November 20, 1996, at 7:00 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
Thomas Montgomery, Secretary
Mary Murphy
Roger Saydack
Phyllis Loobey, General Manager
Jo Sullivan, Recording Secretary

Absent:

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Board President Pat Hocken.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY BOARD PRESIDENT: Ms. Hocken announced that the District had received an award from a program called Transitions to Success, a program to help displaced homemakers and single parents achieve self-sufficiency. LTD provided assistance to the participants by providing bus passes for the program.

Ms. Hocken also asked Ms. Loobey to share with the Board what LTD had done to rescue people in a flooded area in Pleasant Hill. Ms. Loobey explained that the Sheriff's office had called LTD at 4:45 a.m. to see if the District could help evacuate people from a rest home in Pleasant Hill because water was coming up around the home. LTD responded immediately with one bus and driver, who made two trips with people and equipment. Together, other emergency vehicles and the District's bus were able to evacuate the rest home. The bus operator said that he would not have taken the bus across the road a third time because the water was getting too high. Ms. Murphy said she had been proud to hear of LTD's role in this evacuation on the news that day.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: There was no audience participation of a general nature at this meeting.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH: Ms. Hocken introduced Bus Operator JoAn Montgomery as the December 1996 Employee of the Month. Ms. Montgomery was hired on April 17, 1973, and had 18 years of Safe Driving and more than 12 years of Correct Schedule Operation (CSO). During her employment with LTD, Ms. Montgomery had served on many committees, including the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee, the first Driver's Planning Committee, and employee selection committees. She also had served as a bus operator instructor. Ms. Montgomery was nominated for this award by a customer, who praised Ms. Montgomery's sense of humor and her kindness to all passengers.

When asked what made Ms. Montgomery a good employee, Transit Operations Manager Patricia Hansen said that Ms. Montgomery had contributed a lot to the District during her 23-year career with LTD--as a bus operator, as an instructor, and through her involvement in many District committees and programs. Ms. Montgomery was among the first women to drive for LTD, reflected by the fact that she currently was LTD's top-seniority female operator. She always had set high performance standards for herself, and was committed to providing excellent service to her customers. She truly cared about her customers and her co-workers, and went the extra mile to help them whenever she could. Ms. Hansen stated that Ms. Montgomery was very pleasant to work with, and her professionalism set an example for all LTD employees.

Ms. Hocken presented Ms. Montgomery with her certificate, letter, and monetary award. Ms. Montgomery thanked the Board.

MOTION
VOTE

CONSENT CALENDAR: Mr. Bailey moved approval of the Consent Calendar for November 20, 1996. The motion was seconded and carried by unanimous vote (Bailey, Bennett, Hocken, Kleger, Montgomery, Murphy, Saydack in favor; none opposed). Items on the Consent Calendar were the minutes of the October 16, 1996, special meeting/work session and the October 16, 1996, regular Board meeting.

PROPOSAL TO INCREASE RIDESOURCE FARE: Ms. Kaplan stated that staff had given a presentation on this proposal at the October Board meeting. A memorandum and fare analysis from Terry Parker of LCOG were included in both the October and November agenda packets. Staff and the Special Transportation Fund (STF) Advisory Committee were proposing that the RideSource fare be raised from \$.80 to \$1.00. The last fare increase was in September 1994, and ridership and costs had increased significantly, while STF revenues from the statewide cigarette tax had remained flat or declined. The actual cost per trip for RideSource was \$12.50, with less than a 6 percent farebox recovery ratio. Staff believed that RideSource already was a heavily subsidized program, and that it was fair for riders to help pay more of the costs of the program. Increasing the fare also would maintain some level of incentive for people who were able to ride the fixed route to do so.

The STF Advisory Committee recommended the increase, but was a little concerned about eventually charging the maximum allowed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which would be \$1.60, or twice the adult cash fare on the fixed route. The Committee would continue its discussions about future increases.

Public Hearing on Proposed RideSource Fare Increase: Ms. Hocken opened the public hearing on the proposed RideSource fare increase. She called the Board's attention to the comments received by telephone that were written and handed out to the Board members. First, Lucille Johnston of Eugene said that she was a RideSource rider who supported the service and would not mind having the fare increase to \$1.00. However, she said, she was concerned about those riders who were on limited and fixed incomes who may not be able to afford the increases. Second, Paul McGuire of Eugene said that the increase kind of hurt. He did not think that it should be raised that much because some people could not afford it. Also, he said, he went to his parents' house sometimes and they could not afford it, either.

Several people in the audience asked to speak to the Board, as well.

(1) Brian Knowles of Eugene said that he served on the STF Advisory Committee as a community representative for three consecutive terms. He said that the decision to recommend the fare increase was a difficult decision for him to make, because he knew the impact it would have on those with low incomes. However, he deemed it necessary, having seen the decline in revenues during the last few years.

(2) Linda Reynolds of Eugene stated that she had been a RideSource user for several years, and had been able to go to the Cuthbert Amphitheater in the summer, the Hult Center, and art shows, and to do many things that she could not do otherwise, since her electric chair was too large for the fixed-route buses. She also was a member of the STF Advisory Committee. She had reviewed the facts and understood that the program was heavily subsidized. She described herself as low-budget, but she believed that 20 cents was minimal and it would be important to budget for the change in fare. She thought the fare increase was important and necessary in order to continue the RideSource service in this wonderful, accessible community. She said that Eugene was a great place and she believed that the service should be accessible to everyone, but should not lean on other services.

(3) Ed Necker of Eugene said that he supported the fare increase, although he would have reservations about an increase to \$1.60 because he also had a limited income. However, he thought that an increase of 20 cents was not too much to ask, and agreed that it might be an incentive for some people to use fixed-route service instead of RideSource.

(4) Grace Retford stated that she worked for Goodwill Industries and was speaking on behalf of her clients. She said that they did not understand finances and how heavily subsidized RideSource was, and it might be a hardship for them to pay an additional 20 cents per ride. However, she said, it would be a bigger hardship if RideSource did not exist, so her clients would manage somehow.

(5) Russ Matthews of Eugene said that he was a RideSource rider and also was on one of the STF subcommittees. He supported the fare increase as an incremental increase. He said he personally would gladly pay another 20 cents per ride because the service was a bargain at \$1.00. He thought it was more than reasonable as one way to pursue funding

sources outside of what currently was available, and could offset several thousands of dollars in operating costs each year.

Closure of Public Hearing: There was no further testimony, and the public hearing was closed.

MOTION

Board Discussion and Decision: Mr. Kleger moved that Fifth Amended Ordinance No. 35 be read by title only. Mr. Bailey seconded.

Mr. Bennett said that because so many RideSource riders were present, he would be interested to know if any had suggestions for improving the quality of the service and whether they thought it was a good value.

Mr. Necker said he lived in a facility for head-injured people, and he had asked the leader of the facility about the service. He said that she did not object to the increase, and thought it was good service. She thought it was important to keep the service. However, sometimes when she called to RideSource and talked to the people in the office, they acted as if they were doing a favor and had forgotten about customer service. Mr. Necker said he was quite satisfied with the service, himself.

Ms. Reynolds said that she liked the service a lot, and used it quite a bit, especially at night. She said that RideSource had a small van, which she could use, but it took a little bit of doing. Her wish would be that RideSource could get a little bit bigger van. She liked the ability to go places the same as if she were on a bus, and said it really provided service for her. She thought it was a necessary service, and said she appreciated it.

Mr. Matthews agreed. He said that he had taken a taxi ride on a holiday when RideSource wasn't offered, and the fare had cost him \$.80, when it normally would have cost \$30, which he would have had to pay if it were not for RideSource. He said he had a higher appreciation of the service after sitting on the committee and realizing what went into an average day at RideSource. He added that he was very thankful for the service.

Ms. Retford said she had been in the RideSource office many times because of clients who were not always appropriate on the bus. She appreciated the cooperation and brainstorming of the RideSource staff.

Ms. Kaplan said that RideSource riders had been surveyed through a mail-out survey not too long before, to measure customer satisfaction. She said that the ratings came out very high. She had asked colleagues at a recent conference about surveying customers, and they said they would trust a telephone survey and focus groups more than a mail-out survey, so those probably would be done in the future.

VOTE

There was no further discussion. The motion to read the ordinance by title only passed by unanimous vote (Bailey, Bennett, Hocken, Kleger, Montgomery, Murphy, Saydack in favor; none opposed). Ms. Hocken read the title: "Amended Ordinance No. 35, An Ordinance Setting Fares for Use of District Services." Copies of the ordinance were available to the audience.

EUGENE STATION CONSTRUCTION BID AWARD: Mr. Viggiano explained that Phase 2 of the construction project had recently gone out to bid, and the bids were opened two weeks before. There were six bidders, four of them from local firms. All the bids were over budget. The apparent low bid was withdrawn due to a bid error, and the next low bid was by Wildish Building Company, at about \$800,000 over budget. Four of the bids were very close together, within about 1 percent of each other, which suggested that this was a competitive bid. Staff met with the Board's Eugene Station Committee the previous week to discuss several options for how to address this situation. Three options were being presented to the Board: award the bid and build as designed; award the bid and reduce costs through deductive change orders and other cost-saving changes; or redesign and rebid. Staff and the Committee did not believe that it would be appropriate to bid again, as it was unlikely that the costs would change substantially. Further, it was not appropriate to rebid without redesigning the project unless there was something wrong with the original bid.

Mr. Viggiano discussed the advantages and disadvantages of rebidding the project. He also discussed the bid options and what they meant. He stated that the Eugene Station Committee had recommended the middle option. He then discussed possible design changes that could reduce the cost of the station. He handed out a list of other design changes that were considered and which the Committee deemed less attractive. Some of them were very significant. Mr. Viggiano stated that in order to get to no budget increase, the District would have to make many of the changes included on that list.

Mr. Montgomery asked what advantage color concrete had and what the disadvantage of losing one inch of concrete would be. Mr. Viggiano explained that specifying 10-inch concrete was a guess before the soil conditions were known, but the engineers now were comfortable with nine-inch concrete. The color concrete was a bid alternate that would save \$74,000. The concrete on the bus driveway would be colored charcoal or dark gray. In the long run, it would look better because it would not show the oil and tire marks like regular concrete. Additionally, it would address some safety issues for people with disabilities, because it would look more like an asphalt street. Mr. Viggiano said that staff had considered whether certain deductions could be added back in without too much of a penalty at a later date. With the color concrete, there would be no second chance. The recommendation was to not exercise this as a bid alternate at the beginning of the contract, and wait to see how other changes worked out before possibly deducting this item later.

Mr. Bennett asked if staff believed they could get the shortfall to \$450,000 by managing the bid carefully. Mr. Viggiano replied that it would require making some of the design changes on the list, some of which would have to be committed to before signing the contract. Mr. Bennett asked if the District could discuss deductions with Wildish after awarding the contract but before deciding on the numbers. Mr. Viggiano said it was his understanding that LTD could not negotiate any changes before having a signed contract with an initial dollar figure.

Mr. Bennett was concerned that changes would be made that would cut out things that people would see and appreciate every day, what he called "skinnying the finish." He

would prefer that the District look at materials that did not show or diminish the appearance without affecting the quality of materials used. He thought the project had been pretty well thought out and the Eugene Station Committee had done a good job. He said his choice would be to try to raise the money to complete the project.

Mr. Kleger stated that the Committee did consider what could be cut without changing the appearance or which could be added back later at a minimal increase in cost. For instance, with the sound system, the District would pay the front-end cost of the conduit and locating the signs, but the signs would be installed at a later date. He also discussed some of the things the Committee considered doing to save on labor and materials without doing away with the distinct features of the station. Mr. Viggiano added that the preference was to save costs with items that did not affect appearance and function; unfortunately, however, there were not many of these kinds of items that could be identified. The project already had been through a value engineering process, so some of those items had been caught before the project went out to bid.

Mr. Viggiano said that the architect, Eric Gunderson, had worked hard on the list to end up with a project that the District still could be proud of. He added that the bid had to be awarded first, but the contractor may have ideas that staff and the Committee had not considered. He said that Wildish had a good reputation as a contractor, and staff believed Wildish would look for those areas. In checking references, staff found that Tri-Met in Portland experienced the same situation, and reported that Wildish was very accommodating and provided good value for the changes.

Mr. Saydack said that he was comfortable with the process the Station Committee had gone through and thought they were right on track. He then asked about reasons for the high bids. Mr. Viggiano said that staff did not have the answers yet. The estimating firm in Portland was reviewing the bidder information to see where the estimates were off. An allowance for the tight construction market had been included, but it apparently was not high enough. It also appeared that there were some errors in the estimates.

Mr. Gunderson stated that the market factor had a bigger impact than he had experienced in the past. Masonry work came in \$200,000 to \$300,000 higher than estimated. Electrical, including all the special systems, was about \$250,000 over the estimate. The rest of the estimates were still being reviewed.

Mr. Viggiano suggested that if the Board agreed with the Committee's recommendation, the District would work on the list and reserve the right to change its mind on any issues if it found it was saving more money than expected in other areas. It would then be the Board's prerogative to decide if it did not want to make the changes and add additional money to the budget.

Mr. Montgomery asked about the clock tower. Ms. Hocken stated that the citizen design review committee had thought the clock tower was an important feature, and the Eugene Station Committee was reluctant to remove it for that reason. Mr. Bailey added that the Committee members had picked apart these kinds of design issues, but were very aware that most of them had gone through the design review committee and therefore felt

very strongly about preserving the design. Ms. Hocken gave the example of the shelter skylights. The Committee rejected the idea of eliminating those, because the community and design review committee thought those were an essential element of the design and loved the way they looked.

Mr. Montgomery asked what effect eliminating half of the video cameras would have on security. Mr. Viggiano replied that he was not sure, but that there still would be fairly good coverage with nine. After operating there for a while, staff would know whether nine were operating sufficiently or some additional cameras needed to be added. Mr. Kleger added that the Committee discussed wiring the station for all 18 locations but buying and installing nine cameras at the beginning. Those nine could then be relocated if it became apparent that other locations were better.

Mr. Montgomery then asked about extruded unit pavers. Mr. Viggiano replied that those bordered walkways and helped people who could not see and used canes to tell where the edge of the walking space was. Staff had worked closely with members of the visually-impaired community on these kinds of issues, and this was the agreed-upon solution. Staff had walked blindfolded through various materials, and the extruded pavers were more detectable than others. If a change were made, the District would have the responsibility of working out another way to accomplish this.

Ms. Hocken stated that staff and the Eugene Station Committee had talked about every item on the list and could provide a reason for each. Otherwise, the Board could approve the direction and the District could continue to work with the contractor.

MOTION Mr. Kleger moved that the Board adopt the following resolution: "Resolved, that the LTD Board of Directors hereby (1) awards the Eugene Station Phase 2 contract to the Wildish Building Company; (2) increases the Eugene Station project budget by \$450,000; and (3) authorizes the general manager to sign the construction contract." Mr. Bailey seconded the motion.

VOTE There was no further discussion, and the resolution passed by unanimous vote (Bailey, Bennett, Hocken, Kleger, Montgomery, Murphy, Saydack in favor; none opposed).

MOTION **WEST 11TH PARK & RIDE:** Mr. Bailey moved that the Board meet in Executive Session pursuant to ORS 192.660(1)(e), to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions, and ORS 192.660(1)(f), to consider records that are exempt by law from public inspection pursuant to ORS 192.551(6), regarding information relating to the appraisal of real estate prior to its acquisition. Mr. Saydack seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously moved into Executive Session at 8:08 p.m.

VOTE

Return to Regular Session: The Board unanimously returned to regular session at 8:40 p.m.

In response to questions asked by Mr. Saydack, Ms. Kaplan discussed the benefits of providing Park & Ride facilities. Mr. Saydack then asked how large a Park & Ride lot the

District would want at that location if cost were not considered, how many cars LTD wanted to take out of traffic each day, and how many spaces would be needed to do so. Ms. Kaplan replied that staff believed that a facility with 100 parking stalls would be at capacity in eight to ten years, not assuming bus rapid transit (BRT). Mr. Viggiano added that this was based on LTD's experience with River Road Transit Station, which currently was at half-capacity. When the 100 or 115 spaces on West 11th filled up, LTD could purchase the adjoining property or build another Park & Ride lot farther along the route. Because the bus would not pull through the lot, there would be no added operating expense to serve two lots. The BRT concept had Park & Ride lots located strategically along the corridors.

In response to a question by Mr. Saydack, Ms. Kaplan indicated that the Park & Ride facility would provide several benefits. Though it would have only a minimal impact on congestion, it would reduce vehicle miles traveled and vehicle emissions. Furthermore, the Park & Ride would reduce the need to build additional parking in downtown Eugene and the University of Oregon area.

Ms. Kaplan then discussed the time line for this project. In December, the Board would receive additional information from the Level 1 environmental assessment. A full environmental assessment would need to be completed by June.

Assistant General Manager Mark Pangborn stated that typically the property owner would pay the cost of an environmental cleanup. Mr. Viggiano added that federal funds could not be used for environmental cleanup. The federal government assumed that the agency was buying a clean property. He explained that a Level 1 assessment essentially was a paper review that researched the history of the site. It would provide an idea of how likely it would be that contamination would be found on the site. During a Level 2 assessment, holes are drilled on the property, but staff recommended waiting to perform a Level 2 assessment until the District formally committed to the property.

Ms. Hocken asked if a Level 1 would look at surrounding sites. Mr. Viggiano was not sure, but said that typically, if contamination migrated onto a site, the owner of the site in question was not responsible. The owner of the source property would be responsible for that cleanup.

Mr. Bailey asked if the Level 1 would include a legal description of the size and the boundaries. Mr. Viggiano said it would not, but staff could provide that information for the Board.

MOTION

Mr. Bailey moved that the Board adopt the following resolution: "It is hereby resolved that the LTD Board of Directors approve hiring a consultant to conduct a Level 1 environmental assessment for a proposed Park & Ride facility located at the south side of West 11th Avenue at Conger, also known as Site M, Option B (tax lots 100 and 200) on the attached maps." Mr. Kleger seconded, and the resolution passed by unanimous vote (Bailey, Bennett, Hocken, Kleger, Montgomery, Murphy, Saydack in favor; none opposed).

VOTE

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AT THIS MEETING:

Board Member Reports: **Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC)** - Ms. Hocken reported that at the most recent meeting, held the previous week, MPC discussed the TransPlan process and a recommended draft update. Copies of that draft were handed out to the Board. LCOG staff would attend an LTD Board work session on TransPlan at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 18. The Planning Commissions would make recommendations to the City Councils and the County Board of Commissioners, and they would give direction to LCOG staff, who would then draft the plan. LTD's opportunity to provide input would be at the December work session. **TransPlan** - Mr. Kleger reported that nothing else was happening with the TransPlan committees. **Oregon Transportation Initiative** - Ms. Hocken reported that both the Base System Working Group and the Revenue Committee had completed their work. The transit recommendation said the state should have the responsibility for about \$53 million statewide in elderly and handicapped service. LTD would receive about \$1.6 million, which would be a significant increase. There were still several hurdles, including a constitutional amendment to allow vehicle registration fees to be used for transit. **Eugene Station Art Selection Committee** - Mr. Saydack reported that the art committee would consider final art proposals for the station during the first week of December. **Eugene Station Groundbreaking** - Mr. Bailey stated that the groundbreaking went extremely well. The weather was beautiful, and Senator Hatfield gave a good speech in support of transportation. Attendance was good, and the story was covered by all the local television newscasts.

First-Quarter Performance Report: Finance Manager Diane Hellekson explained that the information in this report was used for various purposes, and that during the last six months the job of reporting the numbers in a usable format had transferred to the Finance Department. She said that the report was a work in process; staff would be reporting to the Board on a quarterly basis and would like feedback from the Board about what additional measures they might find helpful.

Assistant Finance Manager Roy Burling discussed the report that began on page 42 of the agenda packet. He explained that it compared the current quarter with the last quarter, showing the percent of change; it compared the current quarter with the previous year's quarter; and it compared the previous year, October 1995 through September 1996, in a rolling average of the last twelve months. It measured weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Person trips, which included transfers, were measured rather than individual boardings. The chart on page 45 showed trips per schedule number, which provided productivity numbers. Mr. Burling explained that productivity was measured by person trips divided by service hours. The report showed that LTD was putting more riders on the bus on weekdays than during the previous year. Revenues were up 10 percent over the rolling average year. All sales items were up, except Reduced Fare tokens. Even though pass prices increased in September, sales remained strong for the first quarter. Page 46 showed that revenues were increasing but were very seasonal.

Mr. Burling said that RideSource rides were up about 9 percent in the current quarter, largely due to volunteer program rides. Lift rides on the fixed-route system had increased significantly.

Mr. Bailey asked why cost per mile decreased. Fleet Services Manager Ron Berkshire said that trends went through the fleet and projects such as lift overhauls and engine overhauls created the differences. The previous year was a heavy overhaul year, so the current year showed a dramatic reduction in repair costs.

Ms. Hocken thought this was a good report, and said that the graphics were helpful. She suggested that the Board discuss the usefulness of the report after seeing it for a couple of quarters. She also suggested that Board members tell staff if additional reports would be helpful for them.

Bus Purchase Alternatives: Mr. Pangborn discussed the fact that the District had submitted a federal grant application for \$6,640,000 to purchase 35 new buses to replace 18 buses that were over 17 years old and 15 buses that were over 12 years old, and to expand the fleet by three additional buses, but had been awarded only \$2,530,000. This meant that the Board would need to make decisions about using local resources to purchase more buses than the grant would allow, and staff also wanted input on what kinds of amenities and what type and style of buses the District should purchase.

Mr. Pangborn explained that LTD kept buses up to about 18 years, but the older buses were in lesser use after about 12 years, which was their typical life span. The Board had seen one of the 700-series buses that evening. Those were the District's oldest buses, at 16 years old, and 18 of them were in daily use. The Fleet Services Department was having trouble obtaining parts for those buses.

Mr. Pangborn stated that LTD typically had expansion needs for three to five buses a year. In the 1993 plan, staff predicted 80 peak buses for 1996, but the District currently was using 85 buses during peak hours. With changes that had occurred in service, such as with School District 4J and Sacred Heart Hospital, the District was oriented more toward peak-hour service. Mr. Pangborn stated that peak-hour service was directly related to the issue of productivity, because those were the hours when people wanted to travel and LTD wanted to affect vehicle miles traveled (VMTs).

Mr. Pangborn discussed the long-range fleet plan for the year 2007. Staff currently were discussing the purchase of fourteen 40-foot diesel buses and what that meant for the future. It was anticipated that 32 buses would be needed in 1999 and 18 more in 2001. Last spring, Mr. Bailey and Ms. Loobey had gone to Washington, D.C., to ask for money to purchase 35 new buses for replacement and expansion, at an anticipated cost of approximately \$280,000 per bus. An 80 percent federal share would amount to \$6.7 million, but the District had been awarded only about \$2.5 million, which would purchase about 13 buses. LTD also had funds from an old grant for electric shuttle buses for downtown Eugene. When the District applied for that grant, the technology was for battery-powered buses, but those became outdated technology within one year. Staff were proposing to combine that grant with the current grant, for almost \$2.8 million in federal funds, with a local share of \$348,200, which would buy 14 buses and spare parts. The question was what those buses would look like and how they would be used.

Mr. Pangborn stated that staff had met that day with the federal lobbyist to discuss the next reauthorization of federal funding. Staff would come back to the Board at a future meeting to discuss going to Washington, D.C., to ask for funding for 32 more buses. The schedule for bus replacement and expansion was for six 30-foot buses and three 40-foot buses to be ordered in November 1996 and delivered in August 1997; fourteen 40-foot buses to be ordered in March 1997 and delivered in June 1998; and 32 buses to be ordered in January 1998 and delivered in June 1999.

Mr. Berkshire explained that in the past the growth in fleet size had been based on a percentage of service increases. Now it was being based on peak assignments, which created a dramatic change in needs.

Mr. Bennett asked how many of the new buses were projected to replace older buses. Mr. Berkshire said that the District currently had 18 1980 GMC buses. The chart assumed that they would cease to be used in 1999, but they would be kept as contingency buses. There would be an increase of 11 peak-hour buses at that time. The 800-series fleet would be reduced by six buses, but those would have to be used again in the year 2000. He stated that staff believed that the 14 buses being proposed were essential to replace aging buses and meet higher peak demands.

Mr. Bennett asked about the 18 buses projected for 2001. Mr. Berkshire replied that some of the older buses would be dropped to the contingency fleet at that time. He added that staff were trying to equal out the purchases over every three years if possible, and maintain a 20 percent spares ratio. The assumption was that at the end of 12 years the District would put buses into lesser service if it had the opportunity to do so, but would continue to use them until they were 18 years old, at which time staff would prefer to take them out of service. Buses might be held until they were 20 years old in case they were needed, and it probably was less expensive to maintain known buses rather than selling them and having to purchase someone else's used buses.

Mr. Berkshire then discussed alternative fuels, explaining that this was an area that needed to be constantly monitored. The use of ethanol and methanol had become almost insignificant in the transit industry because of toxicity and corrosion. Liquid natural gas (LNG) and compressed natural gas (CNG) were popular, but the infrastructure to build plants was very expensive, and there were other problems inherent in using liquid gas. CNG seemed to be preferred over LNG. Mr. Berkshire recommended that LTD not become too interested in CNG, because it was very expensive to provide large gas lines and pumping stations. The fueling process was expensive and slow.

Mr. Berkshire said that electric and battery-powered buses were viable. The local community did not have overhead lines for electric-powered vehicles. Battery-powered bus development was still underway, and the hybrid electric bus was beginning to be popular. Mr. Berkshire thought that would be a significant power source for transit buses. One bus manufacturer, Gillig, might be offering a low-floor hybrid electric in 1999. That bus would use a battery pack with a small engine, possibly propane or CNG, to drive the generator.

Mr. Berkshire also discussed clean-diesel buses, which were the standard diesel bus with the latest technology and upgrades. He recommended that the District consider hybrid and clean-diesel buses and continue to monitor the others. Mr. Kleger recommended discussing Special Mobility Services' experiences with propane buses.

Mr. Berkshire then described the various kinds of buses, including low-floor; articulated; specialty; and standard, new-look buses. He showed overhead projections of the different types and described the advantages and disadvantages of each. He told the Board that a New Flyer low-floor bus would be on the property on December 4, and invited the Board members to view it. He said that these were well-built, dependable buses, although they appeared a little less aerodynamic than the Gillig design.

Mr. Berkshire talked about using electric hybrid buses for a downtown shuttle. He said that he needed more research to determine how far these buses could travel before being recharged. Usually, they traveled in a loop of three miles or less, which would make them ideal for a downtown shuttle route.

Mr. Berkshire suggested that the District begin considering the purchase of a 60-foot articulated bus, since several routes currently required trippers because the scheduled bus was full. Trippers had become necessary more than one time a day on some routes, during a two- to four-hour period. Using one operator for two busloads of people would reduce operating costs. Mr. Bailey asked if the District had the right kind of routes for these buses, which typically were longer commutes with high ridership. Mr. Viggiano said that this was a good question, and that there was a process to go through to determine whether or not articulated buses would work for a particular transit system. Mr. Berkshire added that articulated buses made up 40 percent to 50 percent of Seattle Metro's fleet, and that articulated buses worked very well for them. The bus operators had found the articulated buses to be easier to operate.

Mr. Bennett said he was interested in knowing the seating options of the 40-foot low-floor buses, and what the options did to the number of seats. He mentioned again the idea of providing storage for riders' possessions. Mr. Berkshire said that it was easy to create any seating configuration. Mr. Viggiano explained some options, which were perimeter seating facing the inside of the bus, perimeter seating facing forward, double seats on one side of the bus and single seats on the other, etc. Normally, those kinds of arrangements were done to add standing room for higher capacity for short trips.

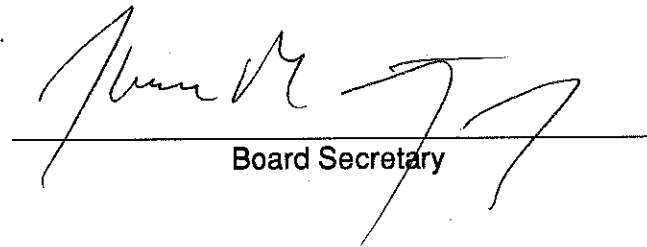
Mr. Berkshire stated that the low-floor design seemed to be appealing to the Board and that staff would look at seating configurations in some of the buses. Ms. Hocken commented that she did not like the back door on the low-floor bus that the Board had seen that day. Her experience was that the bi-fold that passengers operated seemed to work more quickly than if the driver controlled the doors. Mr. Berkshire said that this was a good point, and that the community was used to the bi-fold doors. It may be possible to order a wider door of the same kind.

Follow-up from Board Strategic Planning Work Session: Ms. Loobey said that there were two lists of unresolved issues from the Board's strategic planning work session.

She asked the Board members if they wanted to schedule a one-day session before the end of the calendar year to discuss some of the major issues, and look at the rest after the first of the year, or wait until the holidays to begin. The Board members understood that there was a lot to discuss, but were concerned that December would be too busy. Ms. Loobey said that staff would contact the consultant for available dates in December and January and let the Board decide which worked best.

Meetings with Local Area State Delegation: Ms. Loobey said that State Representative Lee Beyer had suggested that the Board invite all of the local delegation to one meeting instead of separate meetings as they had done last year. She said that staff would attempt to find two dates during early December when such a lunch meeting, or two meetings, might be held.

ADJOURNMENT: There was no further discussion. The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 10:07 p.m.



Board Secretary