

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING
LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING / WORK SESSION

Wednesday, January 15, 1997

PRESENT: Kirk Bailey, Vice President
Rob Bennett
Pat Hocken, President, presiding
Dave Kleger, Treasurer
Mary Murphy
Roger Saydack
Phyllis Loobey, General Manager
Jo Sullivan, Recording Secretary
Susan Hekimoglu, Transcribing Secretary

ABSENT: (one vacancy, subdistrict 1)

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Hocken called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

PLAQUE PRESENTATION: Thom Montgomery was present at the meeting, but not participating as a Board member. Ms. Hocken presented Mr. Montgomery with a wooden bus as a token of appreciation for his service on the Board of Directors. Mr. Montgomery wished the Board well and stated that he had enjoyed his time as an LTD Board member.

SERVICE POLICY: Mr. Vobora was present to discuss the proposed revisions to the Service Policy. He asked the Board to consider the policy for three reasons. One was that some of the language and information needed updating. Second, the Board had been very interested in evaluating productivity standards, which were a major portion of the service policy. The third reason was to answer the question of why there were standards.

There was no mandate under ORS.267 that LTD had to meet any certain productivity standard. ORS.267 only stated that LTD must provide transit services within its service area. At the time the Cities of Eugene and Springfield requested transit services, they wanted service for the transit-dependent. There were no productivity standards that the Cities expected LTD to meet. However, it very quickly became obvious that the payroll taxpayers expected LTD to meet certain standards. The taxpayers wanted assurance that the resources that LTD was receiving to operate the District were being used effectively and efficiently. Therefore, service standards were developed to measure the effective use of those resources.

Mr. Vobora then reviewed the section of the Service Policy that covered the definition of terms. He highlighted the terms that were changed as defined in the agenda materials.

Ms. Hocken asked about the definition of directional routes. She stated that there was language about productivity that she did not quite understand in the context of some other definitions, in terms of adding the deadhead time into the routes. Mr. Vobora explained that LTD previously had not factored in the time that a bus was out of service when it was running a one-directional route, but rather when calculating productivity, staff only factored in the actual time that a bus was in service. For one-directional routes, such as the 3x Express route that traveled from the River Road Transit Station to Sacred Heart, only the actual time the bus was in service was reported in productivity standards. However, there was a cost involved in getting that bus out to that point each time it provided that one-directional service. Staff were adding that definition in and when figuring productivity would add in the extra time to those routes to give a truer representation of how productive they were.

Ms. Hocken noted that the definition of ridership productivity referred to the number of boardings per revenue hour of service. She wondered if this new definition meant that all hours would be counted from the time the bus left the garage to the time it finished its route. Mr. Vobora responded that all of that time would not be included, because there was a deadhead portion on every route. However, with the one-directional routes, there needed to be some accounting for the cost of having to queue the bus each time that route was in service. He further explained that most buses operated in scheduled service throughout the day, but each time those one-directional routes were run, there was a deadhead across town.

Mr. Vobora then discussed the evaluation procedures section on page G9 of the Service Policy. These addressed the decisions regarding timing of service changes. There was not much change to this section of the policy. Some of the language was eliminated because staff believed that the decision process was covered in Section F of the policy. Staff also recommended changing the frequency of conducting the Origination and Destination (O&D) survey from once every four years to once every three years. The ridership count frequency of four times each year was changed to reflect that with the addition of the Automated Passenger Counting system, those counts now could be made on a continuous basis.

Mr. Vobora then noted that there were no recommended changes to the New Service Implementation, Section E.

The Service Decision Process, Section F of the Service Policy, had minimal language changes to reflect the staff reorganization that had taken place in November of 1995. The process remained the same.

The next two sections considered two different types of service. Section G covered the Tripper Service. In that section, the wording was simplified. Statement No. 2, on page G11 was eliminated. Mr. Vobora explained that tripper buses were put into service usually when overloads occurred on a route. Those tripper buses would now be included in the productivity standards of the routes they were assigned to rather than being counted as separate productivity.

The last portion of Section G covered the fare charged on tripper service. It was determined that tripper service duplicated the service that LTD offered in the regular system, so the regular fares should apply.

Mr. Vobora then discussed the Community Events, Section H. Service to special events had expanded in terms of the number of special events and charters that LTD provided. The Board had adopted a separate document called The Special Events and Charter Policy, which dictated that LTD would charge a fully-allocated cost less service discounts to the organizer for routine events that occurred annually or events that had a significant impact on the community. The only community event service that fit under the Service Policy was UO special events service, such as sports shuttles. Staff were working with the University to convert that service to the type where the UO would be paying the costs to LTD to provide the service, much like the Oregon Country Fair and Lane County Fair service. Mr. Vobora stated that this section would be revised to include the Special Events and Charter Service Policy and would be presented to the Board at a future date.

Mr. Saydack asked if the pricing for special service would be made part of the Service Policy or if it was negotiated separately with each group. Mr. Vobora replied that pricing was addressed in the Special Events and Charter Policy. Mr. Saydack asked if the fully-allocated costs were defined in the Service Policy, and if not, he asked Mr. Vobora to define what those costs consisted of. Mr. Vobora replied that the cost for special service was the entire cost of operating the District, divided into the number of service hours that would be provided. Currently, that cost was \$60.00 per hour, and it included all the operator time, benefits, maintenance costs, etc.

Mr. Bennett asked if buses for the UO football games remained at the game, or if they returned to the shop during the game. Mr. Vobora replied that they remained at the game in order to be queued up for post-game service. The football service had expanded so rapidly that to meet the demand, LTD had increased the number of post-game buses from 28 to 32 in previous years and to 40 this year. In order to have the number of bus operators needed to provide that service, LTD had to cancel scheduled days off. According to the labor contract, when this was done, LTD had to guarantee eight hours' pay, so LTD's costs increased dramatically. The University was not asked to pay that full eight hours, but just for the service that was provided, which was generally five to six hours per bus.

Mr. Bennett wondered if that service could be arranged as part of LTD's regular service so that days off would not need to be canceled. Mr. Vobora replied that demand would go up as Autzen lost more parking and LTD added another Park & Ride to its shuttle service. The dilemma that LTD faced was a shortage of equipment, because the regular service operated in conjunction with the football service. Transit Planner Will Mueller discussed the problems involved with trying to write the football service into the schedule, such as the changing game times and the number of games played each year. However, most of the annual special service events, such as the Lane County Fair, were written into regular service. Mr. Bennett discussed the possibility of raising the fare for the football service. Mr. Vobora replied that the fare would become a moot point if the UO service were moved to the Special Events and Charter Policy where the UO would be responsible to pay LTD the cost of providing the service.

Mr. Vobora then discussed the productivity standards. He defined productivity standards and how and why they were measured at LTD. He further explained what LTD's standards were for measuring productivity, and he presented other options for measuring productivity standards. Some Districts used an absolute basis where the productivity standard was a set number, and others used a relative standard for measuring productivity, where productivity was based upon a relationship with other routes in the system. LTD used the relative standard method.

Mr. Bennett asked what were the maximum rides per hour that LTD could carry. Mr. Vobora replied that it would be hard to make that determination unless 45 people boarded the bus and rode it from start to finish. Planning and Development Manager Stefano Viggiano stated that the real determining factor for capacity was not so much the rides per hour, but rather the peak load on any given trip. Mr. Saydack added that the Board had just heard the the fully-allocated cost for special event service was \$60.00 per hour, and he was curious to know what kind of revenue 31 rides per hour would produce and what would be the maximum limit that a bus could produce. Mr. Viggiano thought that an average route could produce \$12 to \$13.00 in revenue at 31 rides per hour, which worked out to about 20 percent of total revenue. At capacity, it was thought that the revenue per bus would be about \$35.00.

Ms. Murphy asked if transfers were counted by the automated passenger counting (APC) system as two trips or one trip. Mr. Vobora replied that the APC counted boardings. Rides per hour were counted as each time someone stepped on a bus, and transfer rates were factored in.

Mr. Vobora described another method of measuring productivity that was used by some transit districts in which passengers per mile were counted. Passengers per trip also could be measured, which was the method LTD used for measuring the rural service. He pointed out that staff were recommending raising those standards for measuring rural service productivity.

The Board had questioned whether there truly was a need for standards to be placed around rural services, if the rural communities were paying more in to LTD's service area than what they were getting in service. Mr. Vobora discussed the Coburg service as an example of service that currently was not producing at LTD's productivity standards. Staff were proposing to raise those standards, which raised the question of whether service, such as the Coburg route, would be in jeopardy of being eliminated if it did not meet those new standards, or would a certain level of lifeline service be considered as mandatory regardless of its productivity. Mr. Bennett asked about raising the fare on those unproductive routes. Mr. Vobora replied that in the instance of the Coburg route, more revenue was being produced from that area in the payroll and self-employment tax than it cost the District to provide the service.

Mr. Vobora pointed out that when LTD looked at providing service to Cottage Grove, it was thought that if the City of Cottage Grove were willing to pay for the service, LTD would provide it, and it would not have anything to do, necessarily, with how productive it was. Ms. Hocken noted that in other areas of LTD's service area, the revenue generated was not relative to that service, such as how much was generated in Springfield versus how much was generated in Eugene. Mr. Saydack added that it was prudent to look at the question of whether or not any revenue was generated in an area, such as in Cottage Grove, or if the payroll tax was not paid, if LTD could provide the service at the \$60.00 per hour rate.

Mr. Vobora thought that the Board should consider the question of whether or not LTD should consider its responsibility to serve the rural communities in the area that were paying the payroll tax with a certain number of trips regardless of the productivity of those trips and consider that service to be lifeline. Mr. Kleger noted that he was more concerned about the productivity if the urban area was subsidizing the service to the suburban area, than if the suburban area was subsidizing its own service. However, if LTD were not going to provide at least a basic service to those suburban areas, they should not be subject to the tax.

Transit Planner Lisa Gardner mentioned that she had spoken with an LCOG planner who was working on the Junction City transportation system plan. They wanted to know how much Junction City paid for LTD service versus the level of service that LTD offered. Assistant General Manager Mark Pangborn stated that there was one other piece that the Board should consider, and that was that State law stated that LTD's boundary should be located within 2.5 miles of a service route. So, if LTD were to discontinue service to Coburg, then the argument would have to be made that LTD would have to bring its boundaries in. He reminded the Board that when service to the Mohawk area had been cut, the boundaries were moved in, and the Mohawk area was no longer subject to the payroll tax.

Mr. Bennett asked how many people who lived in Junction City actually worked in Eugene. Ms. Murphy noted that 60 percent of the residents who lived in Cottage

Grove worked in the Eugene and Springfield metropolitan area. She asked that if that data were to be collected, that it not be restricted only to the Eugene area, but that it also include the number of people who worked in the Springfield area as well.

Ms. Murphy asked about the productivity level of the McKenzie Bridge route. Mr. Vobora replied that the McKenzie Bridge trip was one of LTD's highest producers in terms of the number of boardings per trip. Ms. Hocken asked if the standard were raised as was proposed in the Service Policy, would it cause more routes to become substandard. Mr. Vobora replied that the Coburg route already was substandard, and the Lowell route would be pulled to substandard. One thing that could be done was to trim back the service so that it only served the more populated areas or major roadways. However, with the Coburg route, there was not much that could be done to trim that service.

Mr. Saydack noted that when productivity was measured, it was done to make a determination about the recovery rate that route had versus the cost of operating that route. Mr. Vobora said that was another way to look at productivity, but productivity measures were mainly used to determine how effective the route was in terms of how many riders were getting on and off that bus.

Mr. Saydack asked if there were any other way to measure the other objectives that LTD tried to accomplish with bus service, such as the impact on traffic. Mr. Vobora replied that a study would be conducted in the next few months with the group pass participants to try to determine the value of the group pass program and its impact on reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMTs). In looking at routes like the Coburg route, Mr. Saydack wondered if productivity was the correct standard to use to measure the true impact of all that LTD was trying to accomplish. Mr. Vobora stated that if LTD were successful in increasing ridership from an area such as Veneta or Junction City, there would be an impact on VMTs. Mr. Saydack thought that if VMT reduction were a standard for the rural routes, those routes might rate better than when factoring only the number of trips.

Mr. Bailey asked if there were any studies anywhere that staff were aware of that indicated the level of service versus the reduction in vehicle miles traveled. Mr. Vobora thought that Oregon was one of the first states to even use VMTs, but that it had not determined how to measure it. Ms. Loobey clarified that Oregon's Goal 12 addressed the reduction of VMTs. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) stated that the role of transit was to be at the table in compliance with the efforts under the Clean Air Act. It referenced congestion management, but it did not specifically address VMTs.

LTD staff had met with economics professors at the UO to discuss how to measure the value of transit service to a community based on non-traditional kinds of factors; for instance, the value in time saved to the community when LTD could move people in and out of Autzen for football games in 15 minutes. Since football service had the

highest modal split, must not only mean something to those people who used the service, but also to the greater community at large, because at least those riders were not driving their automobiles, not taking up more space, not increasing congestion, and to some degree not creating more air pollution. There were a lot of things that occurred because the transit system was operating effectively that were not typically measured or even discussed. These would be some of the benefits that could be mentioned when discussing the value of transit to the payroll taxpayers. Mr. Vobora stated that a study of economic analysis of transit service was being considered for the next fiscal year.

Ms. Loobey further stated that if the payroll tax and transit were eliminated, the expenditure for transportation would not necessarily be less, because other things would need to be done, such as building more parking structures, providing more street capacity, and providing more land for surface parking.

Mr. Vobora continued by discussing how the standards and measures were applied within the LTD system. He demonstrated these factors using several routes as examples. He further discussed the basis for recommendations that staff made to the Board regarding adding, changing, and deleting service.

Mr. Saydack asked if service were cut for falling below the standards without regard to the population that it served, how much money would be saved and how many buses would be freed up for other service. Mr. Vobora replied that an analysis of that proportion had not been conducted. However, if a route were deleted from service, LTD would not only lose the ridership from that route, but it would have a multiplier effect in that people from that route most likely used other routes as well, so ridership would be lost to some degree off other routes. The other factor would be the loss of specific coverage and frequency along certain corridors.

Mr. Saydack further clarified his question by assuming that LTD had to find a way to save some money or to free up some money, and the Board needed to know what kind of money was to be saved by eliminating the unproductive routes, and just looking at that without regard to any other repercussions, what would be the economic consequences. Ms. Hocken noted that when staff recommended eliminating a route, they did attach numbers to it in terms of the annual service hours and the ridership impact that staff estimated. It also would indicate how many buses were needed to operate that route.

Mr. Mueller offered the example that if the #14 and #16 routes were eliminated in Springfield, the cost savings would be about \$20,000 per year.

Mr. Vobora then discussed changing the standard from two-thirds to three-quarters of the urban average. If that were done, it would bring three additional routes to substandard service. If that standard were raised, it would not necessarily mean that LTD would eliminate service completely to the areas served by those three routes,

although the possibility of major modifications to those routes was greater. If all unproductive service were cut, five peak buses would be available for service elsewhere.

Mr. Saydack stated his concern regarding evaluating the substandard service for reasons to keep it operating. Under some standards, those lower-productivity routes were justified, but some of the higher-productivity routes may not be justified. Mr. Mueller stated that in last year's route review, there were 23 routes that fell below the urban average.

Mr. Bennett questioned the routes that were important for other reasons than how many rides per hour. He suggested the possibility of setting standards on those routes according to how much higher the fares would need to be on those routes in order to get the same amount of revenue that was gained from the above-average routes. If it were a matter of ten cents higher per ride, then it would be worth keeping; but if the fare would need to be doubled or tripled to make it revenue equal, then maybe it would not be worth keeping.

Mr. Mueller stated that for a route such as the #14 Fairview, the fare would need to be 1.5 times the amount currently charged, or \$1.20 per ride, and he sensed that thinking in these terms would penalize the very people who could least afford to pay the fare, because that was where LTD tended to keep the service that was lower productivity and consider that to be lifeline service. Ms. Hocken also said that this would be a very cumbersome fare collection problem for LTD.

Ms. Murphy wondered if it was fair to charge an increased fare for that person who fell under protection from the Americans with Disabilities Act when it was LTD's goal to get that person using the fixed-route system. Ms. Hocken thought it was an interesting issue, and LTD should look at premium service in general, but she cautioned that care would need to be taken to gauge what the effect would be.

Mr. Bennett noted that people who lived in areas where there was not bus service managed to get along without it. He thought that in order to get to a high-quality, highly efficient, increased market share type system, there would be trade-offs. Ms. Loobey added that it was an interesting dilemma that was facing transit systems. The reverse of that was settled in the Los Angeles area when groups that were traditional bus riders charged that the transit system was subsidizing the suburban rider to a greater extent than it was subsidizing the urban rider. Those groups based their argument on the fact that the transit system had just opened a light-rail system from Long Beach to the central Los Angeles area. The subsidy to the light rail was something like \$17.00 per rider as opposed to the subsidy to the urban bus system. The transit District did not regulate the fares, so they captured more of the farebox revenue from the urban rail rider. Not only did those folks in Long Beach get more premium service, but they were not charged a differential fare to pay more of the operating cost. The case was settled out of court. One of the things the transit

system had done was to draw down on the regular core bus system to accommodate the light-rail system, and as part of the settlement, the transit agency agreed to restore that core bus service. They were dealing with it the opposite way--if premium service were offered, it should be paid for.

Mr. Vobora stated that in terms of fares, the cash fares were raised more rapidly and a premium was paid by the cash fare riders. The regular core riders who were dependent on the system were given a fare break by purchasing passes, tokens, etc.

Ms. Hocken asked about the proposal to remove the statement that the District would maintain coverage to at least 85 percent of the households within the service area. Mr. Vobora replied that the idea was to have staff monitor that situation as the city grew. However, keeping the statement in the Service Policy that LTD would provide coverage to 85 percent of the households may no longer make sense with the addition of more Park & Ride locations. Staff intended to track that specific statistic.

Because several members of the Board had stepped out of the room, Ms. Hocken asked the Board to postpone its action on the revisions until later in the meeting when a quorum would be present.

ANNUAL ROUTE REVIEW: Mr. Vobora reviewed the key dates in the annual route review (ARR) process. As background, Mr. Vobora stated that the key components that went into the service package that would be presented to the Board in February included new service, service changes to existing routes and schedules, and service fixes and deletions.

In the area of new service, staff were looking at an I-105 express route. It would utilize the new 58th & Main Park & Ride location. It would be LTD's first true express route, and would travel from the Park & Ride to the University Station in 15 to 18 minutes. Staff thought it would compete well with the automobile.

Staff were discussing a group pass program with Lane Community College. Of the nine new buses ordered for next Fall, four were slated for LCC service. It was contingent upon the negotiations that were taking place with LCC and a student vote passing this Spring, with implementation in the fall of 1997. The service that would be included in this LCC package was not necessarily new routes and schedules, but additional service to accommodate overload problems.

The other service that staff were concerned about was to Cottage Grove. The service was once again on the ballot for a vote this spring. If it were to pass, negotiations would take place with the City of Cottage Grove for implementation of a one-year test project. There would be some flexibility in the actual start date of that service.

In service changes, staff were considering the major growth that has occurred in the westside industrial area. There was a tripper that went along 1st Street, and this year, it was combined with some regular fixed-route service by way of route deviations. Staff were recommending that those deviations be pulled out and industrial service be reinstated.

Staff were also considering changes in the West 18th Avenue corridor. There was a lot of growth in that area, including residential developments and the Hyundai plant. Overloads were being experienced in the West 18th area.

Mr. Saydack asked what staff meant by overloads. Mr. Vobora explained that an overload occurred when the bus was full with standing loads and people were being left behind. It also occurred when the standards were exceeded and people were standing for more than 15 minutes.

Mr. Vobora discussed the feeder-loop concept. Currently, there were two routes, the #34 and #35, that looped into the south hills. Staff were considering using those routes for the smaller buses that were being ordered, and testing the feeder-loop system there. Those two routes were very low in terms of their productivity along those loop sections. Staff were considering running those loops to the Fred Meyer Shopping Center on West 11th where several routes converged. It would provide service to a major shopping area as well as to connections to other buses. It would begin to test the BRT concept in many ways. Also being evaluated for feeder-loop service were the #22 and #26 routes that were operating in the upper Willamette Street area.

Ms. Murphy asked if any other transit systems in Oregon had tried the feeder-loop system. Mr. Vobora responded that Portland's Tri-Met used this system to connect riders to the MAX light-rail system. In order to provide the feeder-loop service, Tri-Met had dropped some of its core bus service, but later discovered that it had to restore that core service in order to maintain ridership levels.

In terms of service fixes, staff were focusing on adjustments to the outbound timepoints as well as the peak-hour timepoints. A higher level of tripper contingency service also would be presented to the Board in February.

Finally, staff would present recommended service deletions to the Board. They were concentrating on and studying the unproductive trips of any given route as well as the unproductive segments of existing routes. Staff most likely would recommend eliminating the #71 route. Last year, staff had eliminated some of the trips on that route, and ridership had not increased. Additionally, staff had conducted some direct marketing to people who lived along the route, and the #71 route still did not get a boost in ridership.

The detailed service changes would be presented to the Board at its February meeting, and the first public hearing would take place at that time. A second public hearing and Board adoption were scheduled for the March Board meeting.

MOTION

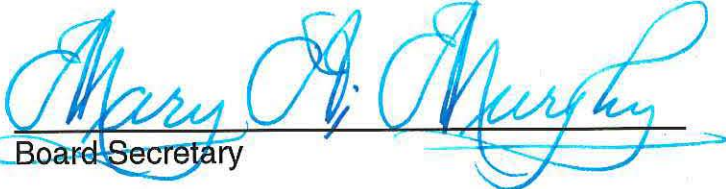
Ms. Hocken stated that the Board still needed to take action on the revisions to the Service Policy that were presented earlier in the evening. Mr. Bennett moved the following resolution: "It is hereby resolved that the Board of Directors approves the recommended changes to the LTD Service Policy."

Mr. Bailey asked if the Board were to approve the changes to the policy, and staff decided to add some of Mr. Saydack's points or some other points later on, would the Board be under some restrictions in terms of approving the ARR service package in February. Mr. Vobora replied that changes to the Service Policy could be made at any time and those changes would affect future service adjustments. He anticipated that staff would recommend changes to the Special Events and Charter Policy at a future Board meeting.

VOTE

Mr. Kleger seconded the motion, and following a polling of the Board, the motion carried by unanimous vote (Bailey, Bennett, Hocken, Kleger, Murphy, and Saydack voting in favor; non opposed).

Ms. Hocken then thanked Mr. Vobora for his presentation to the Board and adjourned the special meeting at 6:45 p.m.


Board Secretary