

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING/JOINT WORK SESSION**

**LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
AND  
EUGENE CITY COUNCIL**

**Monday, April 12, 1999**

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on April 9, 1999, and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, a special joint meeting of the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District and the Eugene City Council was held on Monday, April 12, 1999, at 5:30 p.m. in the LTD Board Room at 3500 East 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene.

Present: LTD Board of Directors

Kirk Bailey, President, presiding  
Rob Bennett, Vice President  
Pat Hocken  
Dave Kleger, Treasurer  
Dean Kortge  
Virginia Lauritsen  
Hillary Wylie, Secretary

Eugene City Council

David Kelly  
Bobby Lee  
Scott Meisner, President  
Nancy Nathanson, Vice President  
Gary Pape'  
Gary Rayor  
Betty Taylor  
Jim Torrey, Mayor

Mark Pangborn, Assistant General Manager  
Susan Hekimoglu, Recording Secretary

Jim Johnson, City Manager

Absent:

Pat Farr, Eugene City Councilor

**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY BOARD PRESIDENT:** LTD Board President Kirk Bailey called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. He asked that the attendance be noted in the minutes of the meeting. Mayor Torrey asked the Councilors to introduce themselves and to note which Ward they represented. Mayor Torrey then thanked LTD for inviting the Council to discuss bus rapid transit (BRT). He stated that he felt that he already knew a lot about the BRT project, because he had been to Washington, D.C., on at least three occasions to lobby the Oregon Congressional delegation, and had witnessed LTD's presentations to the delegation.

Mr. Bailey then asked the LTD Board members to introduce themselves and note the subdistricts that they represented. Mr. Bailey stated that LTD had an excellent partnership with the City of Eugene, and that they had worked together on numerous issues, including parking replacement for the downtown station, the downtown station itself, locating a public safety station at the downtown station, and locating a new downtown library. LTD and the City of Eugene had a long history of working together on transportation projects in the community. This meeting was an effort for both jurisdictions to come together to continue that partnership, take it to a new level, identify new issues that had to be addressed in the future, and build trust among

the two organizations in order to address those challenges in a very positive fashion. He stated that the LTD Board was committed to doing that, and he believed that the City Council was as well.

Mr. Bailey then reviewed the agenda. He stated that LTD's intent was to hold a discussion exclusively about bus rapid transit. There were other items on the agenda that would be addressed if time allowed, but the Board wanted to allow time for all the discussion and questions that might be present around bus rapid transit.

Mr. Bailey noted that each of the Councilors had received a packet of background information about LTD and its services. The information contained in the packet would not be covered at the meeting, and Mr. Bailey asked the Councilors to be sure to ask questions about any of the information contained in the packet.

### **BUS RAPID TRANSIT**

Councilor Meisner stated that the City and LTD had a long history of an effective partnership, and that partnership continued with bus rapid transit. The City was involved both at the technical level and the policy level. Mr. Meisner served as a member of the BRT Steering Committee for the pilot corridor. He noted that this was a strong, active committee, with members representing all local jurisdictions and the public at large. It was not a "rubber-stamp" committee.

Councilor Meisner said that BRT had been talked about for a number of years and was incorporated into the draft TransPlan, which would be forwarded to local policy makers later in 1999. The pilot corridor, which would operate from east Springfield to west Eugene, was within three separate governmental jurisdictions. Each of those jurisdictions -- the Cities of Eugene and Springfield and Lane County -- would be approving the TransPlan.

Phase One of the BRT would be presented to the City Council during the summer of 1999 for preliminary approval. Final approval would be considered next winter following the environmental work.

Councilor Meisner said that the public involvement process for BRT had been extensive and intense. The pilot corridor was divided into eight segments. Currently, design work was occurring on the fourth segment, which included the downtown-east area of Eugene. Public involvement for each segment included one-on-one contacts with businesses along the proposed route; direct mail to every resident in the vicinity; presentations to neighborhood, business, and civic associations; open houses; and interactive design workshops. There were many opportunities for citizen and stakeholder input. This was a project of long-standing interest and long-standing cooperation among the Cities and County.

To date, Councilor Meisner reported, the Steering Committee had considered designs for segments along Franklin Boulevard from East 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue through the Glenwood area, downtown Springfield west, and downtown Eugene east. This area was considered Phase One.

Mr. Bennett said that he appreciated the opportunity to speak to the Council about the BRT issue. He noted that he also was a member of the BRT Steering Committee, and he appreciated the participation of the elected officials. He believed that the jurisdictional representation on the Steering Committee was indispensable and extremely valuable, because of the feedback received regarding decision-making and the proposed implementation.

Mr. Bennett said that BRT was an important initiative, which LTD had been developing for a number of years. BRT was not a new concept, but was one that had received a particularly large amount of attention during the past few years in terms of moving the transit system forward in the community. Nobody said it would be easy, and those who had reviewed the routing and listened to their constituents knew that trying to create the fundamentals in which the system could actually be competitive was difficult. It was important for people to firmly believe in BRT, because it would not work without exclusive right-of-way. There were a number of other issues, such as station location, vehicle design, and neighborhood feeder service, which also needed to be decided.

The idea behind BRT was to create a system that could better compete with the automobile. And, in order for LTD to have a reasonable chance to compete with the ever-increasing traffic levels, it needed the support of the Eugene City Council and other jurisdictions. Mr. Bennett asked the Council members to take a close look and make a conscious decision. BRT was an important part of the draft TransPlan and played a large role in land-use decision-making. LTD did not believe it could ever replace the automobile, but it did want to offer a competitive alternative. BRT would add capacity to a given right-of-way.

On behalf of the LTD Board of Directors, Mr. Bennett stated it was hoped that as the Councilors reviewed the proposal and prepared to make decisions about whether or not to support BRT, that they would keep in mind the seriousness of the LTD Board.

LTD Planning & Development Manager Stefano Viggiano presented an overview of the proposed BRT project. He also explained several drawings and charts that had been posted on the walls. He explained that BRT had several elements, but it resulted in high-speed, high-frequency service along major corridors. In the neighborhoods, small buses would operate and connect with the corridor service. Along with the exclusive right-of-way, BRT would utilize a transit signal priority system to keep buses moving quickly through signalized intersections. BRT also would utilize new vehicles that more closely resembled a light-rail vehicle, a prepaid fare system to speed boarding at new stops and stations, and a whole new image for the bus system.

When LTD talked with people about BRT, the main question had been about implementation and what it would look like on the street. Exclusive lanes would be the key feature of the system and generated the most questions. Detailed planning of the pilot corridor was in process to answer that and other questions. Preferred designs were being created on a segment-by-segment basis. This initial design work essentially was a feasibility study that would result in a scenario of what BRT would look like on the streets. Following the initial design process, the proposed project would be presented to all affected jurisdictions for a decision. Those jurisdictions included the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), the Cities of Eugene and Springfield, and Lane County.

Mr. Viggiano then reviewed the design work that had been completed to date for each of the four segments within Phase One of the BRT project. Those segments included Franklin Blvd. from West 11<sup>th</sup> to I-5, Glenwood, downtown Springfield, and downtown Eugene east. The four segments east and west of the downtown areas would be considered during Phase Two of the project. It was LTD's intent to complete the preliminary preferred design work on Phase One by early summer and forward a recommendation for endorsement to the various jurisdictions. Following the endorsement process, an environmental review would take place, followed by a request for approval from the jurisdictions. Construction would commence following approval by all jurisdictions, resulting in BRT service of the Phase One corridor in the fall of 2001.

Councilor Kelly stated that he was delighted to see BRT moving forward. Some people were talking about BRT as if it would be the answer for transit in the Eugene/Springfield areas, but he believed it was a piece of the answer that would help meet the demands of a growing population and traffic congestion. He stated that he was a great believer in mass transit.

Councilor Kelly commented that it was important to him that BRT be done to succeed and not to fail. The point about required right-of-way was very well taken. He also thought that the neighborhood connector service was as key as the high-speed corridor service.

Councilor Kelly referred to the Franklin/UO Alternatives Evaluation spreadsheet that had been distributed in the agenda packet. Under Alternatives B and C, it was noted that ODOT approval was unlikely to occur, but capacity was projected to be significantly higher. He asked how much that had been discussed with ODOT and what the prospects were to forward Alternatives B or C. He also asked what the Council could do to assist with gaining ODOT approval.

Mr. Bailey, referring to the issue of neighborhood feeder service, said that LTD currently was beginning a Comprehensive Service Redesign (CSR) of the entire LTD bus service that would take BRT into account and would address neighborhood service. A lot of energy would be placed on ensuring that the neighborhood service worked with the BRT service.

Councilor Meisner stated that ODOT did have veto power over the BRT project because the pilot corridor mostly was on state highway. ODOT would be looking for right-of-way that did not result in a significant reduction in the level of service on the existing roadway. He noted that an ODOT representative was a member and active participant on the BRT Steering Committee. One of the benefits of that was the immediate feedback from ODOT. ODOT liked what BRT hoped to accomplish and appreciated the high goals and expectations that had been set.

Mr. Viggiano distributed a copy of the Goals and Objectives for the BRT project. Councilor Meisner stated that the Goals and Objectives were the result of two meetings worth of discussion. Actual performance measures also had been included in the Goals and Objective statements.

Councilor Pape' echoed Councilor Meisner's statement. He had worked with ODOT during the planning and design of the Coburg/I-5 interchange. During that time, ODOT had been very interested collaborators on the project and showed a willingness to work things out.

Councilor Taylor asked at what point and to what extent the public was involved in the BRT project. Mr. Bailey stated that there were one-on-one contacts along each segment with business owners and/or residents along the proposed route; public open houses and design workshops; and presentations to neighborhood, community, and civic organizations. Additionally, letters, notices, and newsletters were mailed to all residents and businesses within each segment area, and advertising was placed in local media. Public hearings would be held in conjunction with the completion of the Phase One design process.

Councilor Taylor then asked how many stops there would be and if there were many stops, how travel time would be improved. BRT Project Engineer Graham Carey responded that the space between stops would be increased with the BRT project in order to increase the speed of the service. Currently, stops were planned in approximately one-half mile intervals, which was based on the theory that people would walk one-quarter mile to a bus stop. There were three stops along the Franklin/UO segment: One at Dad's Gate (East 11<sup>th</sup> & Franklin), one at Agate Street, and one at Walnut Street. Regular service stops generally were placed at two-block intervals.

Councilor Nathanson asked how BRT impacted the ongoing reviews and changes in regular bus service, and if it would take resources from regular service. She noted that it had not been too long since LTD had introduced direct, express routing that was quite successful. She also asked about the medians and how they would be maintained. In addition, she asked how LTD planned to achieve Goals 2 and 3.

Mr. Kleger stated that the factor for express route service was the high demand for a bus from one location to another, rather than a route that picked up two or three people at various stops along the way. Typically, an express route had only two or three stops. There were no indications that express service or service enhancements would be affected by BRT. Each year during the Annual Route Review (ARR) process, staff had good ideas for service enhancements where there was a demand. He could not see anything in bus rapid transit that would stop that dynamic from working.

Service Planning and Marketing Manager Andy Vobora added that BRT would not compete with regular service. BRT was an evolution of what LTD currently offered. Staff would work to coordinate regular service with the BRT service.

Mr. Kleger added that LTD would not operate the typical 40-foot bus on the BRT line. The BRT vehicles would accommodate more people per bus operator, resulting in a lower cost per service hour of operation. Exactly how the vehicle would be configured had yet not been decided. Over the long term, the operator time, which was the biggest operating expense, would be more efficient. Operating expense was not much different than a light-rail system, except that LTD would not be able to hook two or three units together. If the community ever reached that level of traffic, LTD would want to convert to rail, and it already would have the right-of-way to do so.

Mayor Torrey said that he also was interested in maintenance plans for the median area and whose responsibility it would be. The Mayor stated that the community was very fortunate to have LTD. He thought that the community and the federal government believed that

Eugene/Springfield had an excellent transit system. He stated that he was supportive of the BRT project.

Mayor Torrey said that one of the things he had learned during his involvement in city government was to identify in advance where problems might be, and to take a proactive approach to resolving them. He did not believe that the public knew why BRT would be so much better. He also suggested that LTD take a proactive approach to tree removal. He asked if the Steering Committee also consisted of staff people from each jurisdiction, such as from public works or the planning department.

He cautioned that BRT could be a great program or a contentious program, and if different groups who had small problems with the project decided to tag on to one another, it could create insurmountable hurdles. Mayor Torrey's recommendation to LTD was to identify in advance where those hurdles were, reach out to those groups, and bring them into the decision-making process.

The Mayor questioned where the critical mass or major pick-up points were for LTD.

Mr. Bailey stated that the entire intent of the BRT public involvement process was to provide as many opportunities as possible for people to see the route and be involved in its design in order to identify hurdles. LTD was not simply holding open houses for people to come to. Staff and the Board were proactively identifying those stakeholders who would be impacted by the design in a particular area and on the entire route. It had been made very clear to the Board by all parties involved that this project had to be one that the community as a whole supported. The LTD Board was committed to the public involvement process. Mr. Bailey believed that there currently was a strong level of general conceptual support.

Mr. Viggiano stated that the maintenance and general upkeep of the medians most likely would be intergovernmental, but LTD would be responsible for maintaining any facility that it built. LTD placed a high priority on maintaining its capital assets in the community.

In response to operating costs, Mr. Viggiano stated that most of LTD's costs were tied to hours of service rather than miles. The major cost of operating buses was the operator wages, so if the operator could drive more quickly and provide more service, rather than being stuck in traffic, LTD would realize more efficiency. By moving the service along more quickly, LTD could provide an equivalent service at a reduced rate. Currently, a round trip from downtown Eugene to the Thurston area took 1.5 hours, and if LTD could operate that same route in one hour, the saved 20 minutes would represent significant cost savings.

Mr. Viggiano stated that the capacity goals were essential to the success of the project. As the community grew and congestion increased, the capacity of the corridor would need to be increased, and the BRT system would carry more people through the corridor in a much more efficient manner than adding more lanes. There were many examples of increased capacity using exclusive bus lanes. For example, in Curitiba, Brazil, the system carried 27,000 people in one lane per hour, in one direction. A typical freeway carried about 2,000 trips per hour. The theoretical capacity using exclusive bus lanes was very high.

Councilor Meisner added that BRT would work to the extent that the neighborhood connections were effective and worked. Costs and capacity depended upon all the other elements of BRT, such as pre-paid fares for rapid boarding, exclusive lanes for rapid travel, signal prioritization, etc.

With regard to the preferred design options, Councilor Meisner said that the Steering Committee was not making the design option decisions. Those decisions were being made during the public involvement process of the open house and the design workshops that were attended by affected citizens and business owners along each segment. The preferred designs were being forwarded to the Steering Committee from that process. Every problem could not be anticipated, but in regard to tree removal on the Franklin median, the choice to remove those trees actually came from the public involvement process. Staff and the Steering Committee were making every attempt possible to reach out and listen to the citizens and business owners and address problems as they were brought up.

Mayor Torrey added that he was confident that the public involvement process far exceeded the status quo, but he reiterated that LTD needed to make every attempt to reach out to the person who might say no to the process.

Councilor Rayor said that he hoped the project would maintain a lot of green space. He encouraged LTD to continue partnering with ODOT because BRT did a lot to help meet many statewide goals in terms of lowering emissions and developing a well-balanced transportation system. The perception of car drivers was the concern of taking lanes, but if ridership could indeed be increased, then the people who would not get out of their cars would have more room.

Councilor Rayor also suggested that LTD produce a newspaper insert for the local newspapers. He thought it would be more noticeable than an ad on an existing page.

With regard to the BRT Goal number 5, Councilor Rayor asked that LTD consider incorporating bicycle amenities into the BRT vehicles.

Mr. Bailey said that LTD continued to look at ways to promote bicycle use. With regard to the newspaper insert, Mr. Bailey was not sure it had been considered, but he thought it was a great suggestion.

Ms. Hocken stated, in response to Mayor Torrey's comment about reaching out to people who might have an objection, that in the Glenwood segment, staff had knocked on the door of every business within the Glenwood area to introduce the BRT proposal, invite them to the meetings, and discuss any concerns or questions they might have. The Glenwood businesses put together a committee to respond as a group to LTD, and she thought that it worked out very well. In fact, due to the public input in the Glenwood area, the seed design was changed and BRT would not travel on Franklin through Glenwood as was originally thought. The business owners were able to show enough problems with BRT on Franklin that alternate routing was selected as the preferred design.

Councilor Pape' asked if operating costs included the maintenance and depreciation of buses. Ms. Loobey responded that those costs were included. Councilor Pape' then asked

what the cost of the vehicles was expected to be. Ms. Loobey said that with a new design, the cost likely would be \$300,000 to \$400,000 per vehicle. A standard transit coach cost \$200,000, but it was expected that the BRT vehicle would carry a larger number of people. The design of the vehicle was largely unknown at this time. Several U.S. manufacturers were working on a prototype, and there were Buy America requirements that needed to be taken into account, so it would be some time before vehicle information would be available.

Ms. Loobey further stated that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) was so excited about the project that it was giving LTD demonstration money and would assist in getting LTD into the new start program, from which the FTA funded light and heavy rail. LTD was developing a system unlike any other system in the country. There was not one single element of BRT that was new, but LTD was the first to put those elements together into one system. LTD could not make BRT work by itself. Local units of government had to be willing to either enforce the policies or write new policies, and to make sure that the cooperation and coordination were there. BRT was a big deal for this community in terms of land use and transportation and the future of the community.

Over the years, there had been many transportation documents and policies that were not implemented or enforced. If BRT was to be the community's future within the issues of smart growth and transportation and land-use planning, then it needed to have everyone's support.

Councilor Pape' asked how BRT would link to high-speed rail. Mr. Vobora replied that LTD currently was conducting a downtown shuttle feasibility study that most likely would provide bus service to the train station. It would be critical to have a downtown shuttle that would link the train station to the BRT line and the Eugene Station.

Councilor Pape' then asked if the proposed BRT system met with what Mr. Viggiano observed in Curitiba, Brazil. Mr. Viggiano said that the Curitiba system looked very similar to what LTD was proposing, such as pre-paid fares, dedicated busways, transit signal priority, etc. The Curitiba system carried 75 percent of the trips on transit, which was a phenomenal figure. It was a very productive system, and in Curitiba, land-use was tied to the transit system. Most commercial development was adjacent to the transit corridors. Automobile travel was funneled to streets located one block away from the transit corridors, and development density decreased in areas away from the corridors. A conscious decision was made 30 years ago in Curitiba to develop the city around its transit system. Compared with other Brazilian cities, Curitiba had a higher standard of living, it was a much cleaner community, and it was very environmentally friendly. Because of such successful planning, Curitiba was a model city that was visited by people from all over the world. LTD was operating in a different environment, but Mr. Viggiano said that there was a lot of what Curitiba had done well that would apply within the local environment.

Councilor Pape' stated that he was a believer in the BRT proposal and asked if the pilot corridor was successful, what LTD had planned beyond the pilot corridor. Mr. Viggiano referred to a map that depicted what the BRT system might look like in 20 years. The map depicted a total of five BRT routes, four of which would travel cross-town and one that would circumvent the cities. Mr. Viggiano thought that the second line most likely would be a north-south route.



Mr. Kleger stated that once the entire system was built, and thinking conceptually with the way the area was growing, at some point LTD would be planning to convert the BRT lines to rail. One of the issues that prompted the BRT proposal was the Rail Feasibility Study that was conducted as part of the early TransPlan drafting. One of the outcomes of that study was that in 20 years' time, the community would have the density to justify a light-rail investment, and it recommended beginning to reserve those corridors now. If LTD waited until the community had the density that would justify a light-rail investment, the costs to purchase right-of-way along the corridors would be prohibitive.

Councilor Taylor asked if LTD was planning a link to the airport from the Eugene Station. She also suggested that LTD consider allowing people to bring bikes aboard the BRT vehicles rather than having to stop to attach bikes to a bike rack located on the front or back of the vehicle. In addition, she asked if LTD had considered allowing people to bring their dogs on the bus. Lastly, she asked why LTD thought it could fill the BRT buses, and if the population was expected to grow that rapidly to justify the proposal.

Mr. Bailey responded that LTD continued to struggle with finding an effective way to serve the airport. Whether or not airport service would be a feeder route to the BRT system or an express route to the downtown area was unknown at this time. LTD was committed to seeking a way to efficiently serve the airport area. In response to Councilor Taylor's comments about bringing bikes and dogs on the buses, Mr. Bailey said that LTD was very committed to not only making travel times convenient, but also convenient to people's lives.

Mr. Bailey said that LTD believed that BRT would work well because ridership had been increasing for some time and it was expected to continue to increase because the community was growing much faster than LTD could keep up with standard service. BRT was a different type of service that could carve out a competitive advantage. It was similar to a rail or metro-type of service, which typically attracted choice riders.

Councilor Kelly stated that after the Council had deferred the funding for more airport parking, he had met with Mr. Vobora to discuss the airport transit situation. LTD had hired an intern who would work closely with the city and who would conduct an airport transit study.

Councilor Kelly agreed with the Mayor that LTD needed to be assertive in its outreach to potential opponents, and in terms of the tree issues, particularly the Eugene Tree Foundation. LTD needed to specify and be honest about what the trade-offs were.

Councilor Kelly then asked about the timeline for Phase Two of the pilot corridor, and about how LTD planned to mitigate the routing on West 11<sup>th</sup> where currently there was on-street parking. Mr. Carey responded that LTD would mitigate the loss of parking on the southern side of 11th Avenue on an individual basis.

Mr. Bailey noted that it was time for the Council to leave for its meeting at 7:30 p.m., and he said that LTD would make a note of any further questions or comments the Council had and respond to them in writing.

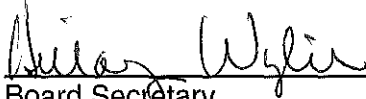
Councilor Nathanson stated that she would appreciate answers to several questions she had. She asked how the prepaid fares would work, given that there were many people who

already used prepaid fare instruments. In addition, she asked about purchasing of corridor right-of-way now rather than waiting until later. She asked if LTD already was looking for places where it might purchase property to straighten the route, rather than having to make many right- or left-angle turns. With regard to the airport service, Councilor Nathanson said that while it might not be practical for regular bus service, and she asked if LTD had considered a different type of shuttle for the airport, such as a smaller van-type bus or on-demand shuttle service. Finally, Councilor Nathanson thanked the LTD Board for its participation in the North-end Scoping Group. Mr. Bennett and Mr. Kortge had been participating, and Councilor Nathanson was very pleased that they could take the time to be involved. She also appreciated the presence of LTD staff at those meetings.

Mayor Torrey thanked the LTD Board for inviting the Council to this meeting, and Mr. Bailey thanked the Council for its efforts and time and recognized Councilor Meisner for his contribution to the BRT Steering Committee. Mr. Bailey reiterated that LTD would respond in writing to any questions and comments that had not been addressed during the discussion.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, Mr. Bailey adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

5

  
Board Secretary