

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

SPECIAL MEETING/WORK SESSION

Wednesday, February 26, 2003

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on February 9, 2003, and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District held its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, January 15, 2003, beginning at 5:30 p.m., in the LTD Board Room at 3500 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene.

Present: Susan Ban  
Gerry Gaydos, Vice President  
David Gant  
Dave Kleger  
Hillary Wylie, President, presiding  
Ken Hamm, General Manager  
Jo Sullivan, Recording Secretary

Absent: Patricia Hocken, Secretary  
Virginia Lauritsen, Treasurer

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Board President Hillary Wylie. Ms. Hocken, Mr. Kleger, Ms. Lauritsen, and Ms. Wylie were present. Ms. Ban arrived shortly after roll call. Mr. Gant arrived at 5:40 p.m. Mr. Gaydos was not yet present.

**BRT PHASE 1/SPRINGFIELD STATION UPDATE:** Mr. Hamm said that the District recently had received updated costs for the Phileas bus selected for bus rapid transit (BRT) service. The Phileas had been selected because it had everything the District wanted in a BRT bus, but it was turning out to be very expensive. The cost had risen dramatically largely because of the devaluation of the U.S. dollar against the Euro and because the costs for a number of the components required by LTD were much higher than originally estimated. Staff wanted to discuss a number of options for other buses with the Board.

Director of Maintenance Ron Berkshire reviewed the required and desired vehicle features. Staff believed that the most important feature, based on station designs to meet corridor restrictions, was to have doors on both sides of the bus. Other important aspects of purchasing a BRT bus were the manufacturing schedule, a "green" propulsion system, appearance/image, and automated guidance/docking. Mr. Berkshire then discussed a matrix showing the features available on several different types of buses. One bus manufacturer had suggested that LTD could ship standard articulated buses to another company to have left-side doors installed. One company in Denver was doing a lot of this type of work. Some risk was involved, including costs, timeline, and who would accept the liability if something went wrong with the bus afterward. It might be possible to receive standard articulated buses by the end of the calendar year, with a possible six-month delay for door installation. One manufacturer could not manufacture buses for LTD until 2006. An option to purchase buses with a CNG internal combustion engine would require that LTD install a pumping station. This infrastructure probably would cost around \$2 million.

Mr. Hamm said that staff believed that the price of technology would come down, and that there was a significant benefit in getting the infrastructure completed now and improving the bus technology later.

Purchasing Manager Jeanette Bailor said that technical proposals were due on April 4, and prices for those would be known by the end of April. If LTD were to purchase a NABI CNG bus with right-side doors, NABI probably could work five for LTD into Los Angeles' large order. If LTD wanted those buses modified, the District could not expect to receive them until 2006.

Assistant General Manager Mark Pangborn discussed a second matrix, BRT Vehicle Impacts, including cost, schedule, and travel time impact. BRT service, with exclusive rights-of-way, two-sided boarding, etc., was expected to reduce travel time in 20 years over conventional vehicles. If some of those features were lost, travel time would be affected. Ms. Ban said that appearance would not affect travel time, but could have a substantial effect on ridership gains if people were not willing to ride those buses.

Mr. Pangborn said that staff had put a hold on all design work until after the bus issue was resolved. He discussed problems that would be caused at certain stations, such as at 10<sup>th</sup> and High in Eugene, if the buses had only right-side doors. Mr. Kleger said he was frustrated by the possible need to give up having doors on both sides of the bus, because that was one of the major operational efficiencies. Mr. Gaydos said that if the corridor were designed for only right-side doors, he would not want the corridor to stay like that if different buses were purchased in the future.

Mr. Pangborn said that the Phileas bus, with automatic docking, would have the ability to pull within two inches of the station, for at-grade boarding. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) maximum was 2.5 inches. Articulated buses would not be as precise in pulling up to the station, so some kind of flip-down ramp would be needed to cover the gap. This would not be a lift and would be deployed quickly and automatically. Staff were assuming that the system still would be designed for at-grade boarding because it was so important in gaining efficiency.

Mr. Pangborn stated that beyond the cost and delivery time issues, there were public relations issues in not using the Phileas bus, because that was what the community was expecting. Some of the buses under consideration were closer to the sleek, "train-like" appearance than others. He then discussed prices for different bus purchases, including doors on both sides, construction and design issues, and the cost of delay per year. Until April, staff would not know who was bidding on this bus purchase. After a bus was selected, the design team could resume work. However, it was likely that a construction season would be lost. Another consideration was that the heavier the bus, the greater the effect on fuel mileage would be. CNG buses would be more expensive to maintain, and there would be costs for maintaining the pumping station, as well. Hybrid-electric propulsion systems were the cleanest, and CNG and clean diesel were being used in many areas. Eugene/Springfield still was in an attainment area, with no restrictions on emissions, as long as it continued to meet national standards.

Mr. Berkshire said that LTD staff had convinced the rest of the nation's transit systems that appearance and image were very important for BRT, which was the reason the new NABI bus looked like it did. Mr. Kleger said he had no question in his mind that new customers preferred the new AVS buses used for the Breeze service over the standard transit buses.

After additional discussion of the desired elements for BRT buses, Mr. Gant commented that the New Flyer buses would fail in four of them, succeeding only in the schedule category. Mr. Viggiano said that staff did not believe that the New Flyer was the right BRT vehicle, but it might be the only option available at that time. If so, staff would want to present the issues honestly to the community, letting people know that the preferred bus was not feasibly available and other buses would be purchased for the interim and then could be used on regular fixed-route service.

Mr. Gant said that LTD had to be open to the possibility that the community might reject a standard bus for this service. Mr. Hamm noted that there were different groups to present these issues to, such as current riders, stakeholders along the corridor, community partners, and the general community. Staff had discussed which would be more difficult to present to the community, a cost of \$1.6 million per bus, or issues of appearance, etc. The District might need to ask the community that question.

Ms. Hocken asked if the Phileas was a lot "greener" than the New Flyer Option D. Mr. Berkshire said that there were no facts to compare, but from what he knew of the two vehicles, he would say that the Phileas would be a little cleaner, but that they actually would be very close. Ms. Hocken asked if it would be fair to say that both were significantly cleaner than the buses LTD currently was operating. Mr. Berkshire said that it would.

Ms. Hocken said that although these buses would be noisier, if they were not running in residential neighborhoods, maybe that was not as important. If the issues with the doors, bikes, and ADA requirements could be resolved, then what LTD would be giving up would be the sleeker appearance. She said she was trying to separate the substance from the image, even though the image was important in the community.

Mr. Gant asked about the chances that LTD could raise the extra money for the vehicles. Director of Finance and Information Technology Diane Hellekson said that all vehicles would be debt financed and LTD was well under the ceiling, so the issue was whether the community would accept the idea of \$1.6 million buses. Mr. Gaydos said that the \$1.6 million number was not yet a real number, and then the costs for additional delays would have to be added in.

Ms. Wylie asked what staff recommended. Mr. Hamm replied that staff thought the smartest approach was to go with an articulated, clean diesel bus with doors on both sides. With a bidder on the current RFP for articulated buses, the order could be expanded to obtain five for BRT. Those could be shipped to a factory to add doors on the left side. That would add six months, and then LTD would be on schedule with completion and construction of the corridor.

Mr. Pangborn said he thought he heard the Board saying that there were two courses to follow from that point: (1) to craft a way to sample public opinion that had the highest opportunity for acceptance regarding the trade-off of meeting community expectations; and (2) to get where LTD needed to be as quickly as possible, explore standard articulated buses with doors on both sides, and do the same with hybrid-electric buses, considering cost, scheduling, and availability issues. He thought that staff should begin exploring these issues while sampling the community.

Ms. Lauritsen did not agree. She thought the District should sell the concept rather than ask. She thought it was an internal decision, not a decision to scatter all over the community.

Ms. Ban thought there was a way to frame the issue without asking. The District should let the community know that these were the hard decisions that LTD had to make. Everyone was making second-choice decisions because of the economy, and she thought the community would understand.

Ms. Wylie thought the community would let LTD know if the District couldn't afford this system. They had said that BRT would hurt the regular system, and the District had said this would be a system that would help. She thought this was a decision the Board would have to look at in light of the current economy.

Mr. Kleger agreed with taking a businesslike approach in making the decision, and said that the effectiveness of doors on both sides was important. He thought it would be easier to adjust the height of the platform to a different vehicle in the future than to adjust the roadways, etc.

Ms. Lauritsen left the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Mr. Hamm said that the buses mentioned that evening were samples of what was in the marketplace. The important issue at that point was that LTD was looking at articulated buses with certain elements as compared with products in the foreign market.

Ms. Hocken suggested discussing this issue with the BRT Steering Committee at its next meeting, because it was made up of a cross section of stakeholders. Ms. Wylie thought that input regarding the balancing of the schedule versus "green" propulsion systems would be important.

Mr. Berkshire said that doors on both sides remained the number one priority on the list and asked if the Board had a preference for "green" versus schedule. Mr. Gaydos thought the schedule would be delayed no matter what. He said he would be concerned if LTD went through another construction season. He did not think the District would meet the coming construction season because of the door issue, so he agreed with Ms. Hocken to move "green" up on the list.

Mr. Pangborn said that the design was close to 100 percent in the Eugene section, unless it had to be redesigned because of the doors, and was close to 80 percent to 90 percent in the Springfield section, with a couple of exceptions. He reviewed the Phase 1 budget in terms of design, development, and construction. The first phase was still within the realm of the budget, but there also still was the potential to go farther. Missing a construction season might cost in terms of inflation, but also would give LTD the opportunity to review and cut costs.

**SPRINGFIELD STATION:** Facilities Maintenance Manager Charlie Simmons told the Board that the design for the Springfield Station had moved along as scheduled and the budget had been kept on a tight line. However, about two weeks previously staff had learned that LTD would receive only \$2 million of its request for funding to complete the station. The bill had been marked up in the Senate at \$6 million and in the House at \$2 million. Generally those bills would go to conference committee and be funded somewhere in the middle. That did not happen, and now this project was not fully funded. A total of \$5.8 million was available for the station, and Mr. Simmons said that LTD could not build anything vertical for that amount. If the joint development were removed, the project would have to be redesigned.

Ms. Wylie stated that the Springfield Station Steering Committee had worked for three years to learn about the process, settle on a site, and work on the design. She said that it was important

to find a way to build this station. The project was about three-fourths of the way through design, at a cost of about \$1.1 million.

Ms. Ban said she felt more comfortable asking for \$2 million for this facility than for buses, when a lower-cost bus could be found. This station was a long-term commitment to the community, and a crucial piece of BRT and for the city of Springfield and the larger community. Mr. Simmons added that it was important for fixed-route service, as well.

Ms. Hocken said that the Board needed to look at the overall picture of capital projects to see if they wanted this project more than something else on the list. She knew they had done that before, but said she could not make this decision without doing it again.

Mr. Hamm said that Springfield had said it wanted to do a redevelopment plan for Glenwood, so LTD had planned no major improvements associated with BRT until then. Now Springfield was demanding that LTD put in new sidewalks, bikeways, vegetation, etc., at station locations, which was never agreed to or included in cost estimates. LTD had asked for the City to be partners in the joint development piece at the Springfield Station. Now staff were wondering what the message to the City of Springfield should be. Mr. Hamm said that staff would be talking to Springfield representatives about these issues.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Ms. Wylie thanked staff for bringing the Board up to date on these issues. Since the time was getting late, she suggested postponing the discussion on the strategic plan to a work session in March. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.



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Board Secretary

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