

MINUTES OF SPECIAL BRIEFING

LANE COUNTY MASS TRANSIT DISTRICT

January 23, 1979

Pursuant to notice given to the Register Guard for publication on January 18, 1979, a special briefing on the first draft of the Transit Development Program update for Lane County Mass Transit District was held by the board of directors, members of the budget committee and the Quantitative Objectives Citizens Advisory Committee at the City Hall, Eugene, Oregon, on January 23, 1979, at 7:30 p.m.

Present:

Board of Directors

Richard A. Booth, Secretary
Ted J. Langton, Treasurer
Kenneth H. Kohnen, President, presiding
Glenn E. Randall
Carolyn Roemer
Fred C. Dyer, General Manager
David Rynerson, Planning Director
Mavis Skipworth, Recording Secretary
News media representative:
Marvin Tims, Register Guard

Budget Committee

George Baker
Paul Bonney
Emerson Hamilton
Mary Lou McCarthy

Quantitative Objectives CAC

Judy Albrecht
Richard Jones

Absent:

Jack J. Craig
Daniel M. Herbert, Vice President

James Hengstler
Shirley Minor
Robert Moulton
Huibert Paul

The chairman advised that the purpose of this meeting was for a briefing session for the Transit Development Plan, to have a presentation of the first draft of the plan and discussion. He explained that the plan covers a three year period and is updated annually and projected forward another year. He recalled that during last year's budget committee meetings there was discussion on a need for a long range financial plan which he said has been included in this draft. He said it includes long range goals and objectives and short range plans for the three year program, and the budget is prepared annually to carry out those plans. He described how the Transit Development Program is one element in the total planning process for this area. He advised that the board had directed the staff to prepare some strategies for achieving a 25% farebox revenue to operating cost ratio, and that the board had subsequently selected Coordinated Alternative No. 1 as a basis for planning and it had been included in this draft.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: Clark Cox referred to the recent icy weather and urged that the Transit Development Program (TDP) contain a procedure for working with local general purpose government to revise the snow detour program and that a proposed \$12,000 for purchase of tire chains should also be included in the TDP. He spoke of continued interest of the Oregon Association of Railway Passengers in use of a Dial-A-Bus vehicle for shuttle service between Amtrak and the Eugene Mall, endorsing coordination with intercity public transportation modes to maximize

feasible passenger convenience. He expressed concern that a proposed U of O - South Eugene Connection would adversely affect service quality to LCC and patrons in the Harris Street area, and that a proposed Springfield - Valley River connection might eliminate 15 minute headway from the Eugene Mall to Valley River Center.

PRESENTATION OF FIRST DRAFT TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: A schedule of meetings for the TDP update process and budget committee meetings was distributed.

Mr. Rynerson presented a memo with attachments illustrating the differences between the Goals and Objectives of the 1979 Draft TDP and the adopted 1978 TDP, and gave a detailed explanation of recommendations for capital improvements, operating improvements, planning, marketing, and for additional recommendations derived from Alternative I of the January 9, 1979 board agenda material as well as a recommendation to reform the citizen input process.

Mr. Rynerson then gave a comprehensive explanation of the draft TDP document and its four sections: Communication - describing the processes by which agencies, citizens, and district employees can participate in decisions about transit policies and programming; Goals and Objectives - developing a series of concise statements summarizing the public input and providing overall direction for service planning; Planning and Analysis - to utilize adopted goals and policies as a guide for evaluating alternatives in transit programming; and Implementation of Recommendations - for providing a greater level of detail regarding implementation of the projects recommended in order to accomplish the district's goals and objectives.

DISCUSSION OF FIRST DRAFT TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: Mr. Booth said he wished to point out that the conclusions and the results are only staff opinion; that he believed they ignore any gain to be made through increased operating efficiencies, such as heavy maintenance and administrative staffing, as well as gains to be made through putting the buses on higher productivity routes.

Mr. Booth referred to the recommendation to reform citizen input process by instituting public briefings and disbanding the district's Citizens Advisory Committee. He said he believes too many meetings are held and the staff is proposing more; that the Citizens Advisory Committee would have been more successful had the board given more attention to its deliberations. He took exception to the service standard of access distance of bus stop within one-quarter mile as a theoretical approach and said a more practical application should be taken to serve more people in order to have a higher percentage of cost borne by the people served. He encouraged learning from other transit districts where the greatest market would be rather than setting a standard of 15 minute intervals and one-quarter mile access.

Mr. Booth expressed disagreement with a statement under Conclusions that "the farebox revenue/operating cost objective works at cross purposes to ridership goals to some extent;" that if the district allocates its resources to where the market is, those goals actually work in concert to increase ridership.

Mr. Bonney expressed the opinion that it is a basic premise that increasing fares will drive away riders, and perhaps when new buses are put into service a fare increase would be more acceptable. He said he did not believe a 25% ratio could be achieved.

Mr. Langton said he believed the T-2000 goals are unrealistic and the district is projecting needs based on that plan, although a need has not been shown for the proposed expenditures of acquiring additional land and buildings. He said he was opposed to the district making such a commitment based on the T-2000 goals.

Mr. Booth asserted that the proposals from staff had nothing to do with operating efficiency but referred to changes in routing and increasing fares instead of improving efficiencies in the maintenance department. Mr. Randall reminded that a recent study had been conducted on the maintenance program and a report presented to the board. He said the staff has presented precisely what the board had directed and that staff is doing a good job in providing what the board requests. Mr. Booth said he did not mean to criticize staff but the board has been lax in not asking for these kinds of things.

Mr. Hamilton recommended several specific revisions to the TDP draft. He referred to page 8, under the heading of Goals, and took exception to the sentence "They should be few in number and require amending only rarely," saying he believed there should not be a limit to the number of goals for a transit district; that if they are unattainable, perhaps they should be restated. He also expressed objection to line 18 of page 10 "Short range goals and objectives which result in major service reductions would be inconsistent with the T-2000 goals..." Mr. Hamilton then requested that the words "at this time" be added to the second Finding, under the heading of Financial on page 12 to read "Farebox revenue cannot at this time fully support public transit service." He expressed opposition to line 13 of page 26 which stated that money saved by service reductions can be put to other purposes, and asked that the statement include resource reduction. He also disagreed with the Conclusions on page 32, line 14 which state "farebox revenue/operating cost objective works at cross purposes to ridership goals to some extent," and to lines 22 and 23 which state "The quantitative objectives, listed on page 14, are set at levels which will be difficult to attain," and asked that it be restated in a positive manner.

Mr. Randall was excused from the meeting.

Mr. Baker said he agreed that the T-2000 goals may not be reached but the district should attempt to increase ridership and improve results. He suggested the TDP should address itself even more strongly to going after more riders and commuters, and he would like to see the district become aggressive in marketing to get more ridership in order to send revenues up and cost per person down. He suggested the budget committee should consider putting more money and staff time into express routes and park n' ride to encourage commuter riders.

Mr. Langton said it was his opinion that the district is presently 35% too big for the public it is serving. Mr. Dyer said it is the board's prerogative to determine the size of the operation, and explained that the TDP indicates a reasonable process for board determination of level of service to serve the community. He said the present facilities are barely adequate for the size of the fleet and that he believed it would be practical to acquire land for future needs before further cost increases occur and while desired property is available as there would be greater operating costs if the operation had to later be moved to areas where vacant land would still be available.

In discussion of the advisability of fare increases, Mr. Jones commented on the large increase in the cost of operating an automobile that has occurred within the past three years and said he believed an increase in bus fare would still make bus riding a bargain. He said he was pleased that the TDP was starting to get headed in the right direction.

Ms. Albrecht observed that people will continue to have automobiles and use them, but that it could be hard on a lot of people who depend upon the buses if fares were raised to 40¢ a ride.

Ms. McCarthy encouraged additional marketing to seek more riders from the university and LCC, and to work with the chamber in encouraging people who work downtown to ride the bus. Mr. Booth suggested that fare increases should keep pace with inflation, but Ms. McCarthy commented that perhaps the incomes of riders would not keep up with inflation. Mr. Baker said it is hoped that the makeup of bus riders would change over the next few years, and Mr. Jones said it is an objective of the LTD committee in the chamber to work with the marketing director to develop positive programs.

The meeting was adjourned.


Secretary