

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

SPECIAL MEETING

Monday, February 7, 2005

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on February 3, 2005, and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District held a special meeting on Monday, February 7, 2005, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the Bascom/Tykeson Room, Eugene Public Library, at 100 West 10th Avenue, Eugene.

Present: Gerry Gaydos, President, presiding
Dean Kortge
Debbie Davis
Mike Eyster
David Gant, Secretary
Dave Kleger, Treasurer
Ken Hamm, General Manager
Jo Sullivan, Clerk of the Board
Lynn Taylor, Minutes Recorder

Absent: Susan Ban, Vice President

CALL TO ORDER – Mr. Gaydos called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL – General Manager Ken Hamm called the roll.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADDITIONS TO AGENDA – Mr. Gaydos welcomed those present and stated that the Board wanted to hear their opinions. He said that comments would be limited to three minutes per speaker and written testimony could be submitted until March 9, 2005.

PRELIMINARY PUBLIC HEARING ON FY 2005-06 SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Staff Presentation – Director of Development Services Stefano Viggiano explained the public process and schedule of action on the recommended service adjustments. He said that another public hearing would be held on March 14, 2005; the Board would make its decision on March 16, 2005; and the changes would be incorporated into the budget and implemented in September 2005.

Mr. Viggiano reviewed the history of service improvements and decreases over the past several years. He explained proposed changes in the categories of operational fixes, deletions, and additions that were itemized on a spreadsheet entitled *Annual Route Review 2005 – Service Change Summary for FY 05-06*. He pointed out that most of the operational fixes addressed timing problems and the recommended deletions were based primarily on low ridership/productivity of a route, portion of a route, or trip. He said that recommended additions to the #78 route that served the University of Oregon would extend the route to serve Bailey Hill Road and add two early evening trips. He stressed that the service changes were still in the process of

development and public input was important to the Board and LTD staff. He said the proposed changes represented a slight increase in service of approximately .17 percent.

Mr. Kleger asked if the percent of service increased was based on hours of service on the road or for a particular route. Mr. Viggiano said the increase was for total service level on the entire system.

Mr. Kleger asked what the cost per service hour was. Mr. Viggiano replied that the direct cost was \$38 per hour and the fully allocated cost was \$91 per hour.

B. Public Hearing – Mr. Gaydos opened the public hearing and called for testimony.

C. Public Testimony

Valerie Harris of Springfield requested a list of LTD department directors. She asked that routes #18 and #19 not be cut as she depended on them for transportation. She said that previous cuts in routes had seriously disrupted her life and public transportation was the vein for people who could not afford or did not want cars and rode the bus daily. She said if LTD needed to make cuts, it should be to bus rapid transit (BRT) as it appeared that funds going to support BRT had eroded services elsewhere in the system. She asked that route #11 be restored and routed down B Street as she frequently mailed items and using that route enabled her to go directly to the post office with large packages; she was no longer able to do that because the change in route caused her to have to walk two blocks. She said that the new route down A Street was poorly designed and very unsafe for pedestrians as there were no crosswalks and the signage would be obscured by trees.

Fred Simmons of Springfield recognized that it was difficult to balance resources. He said that many low income people and people without vehicles were greatly impacted by cuts in services, particularly families with children. He commended staff for efforts to minimize the impacts on service. He urged the Board to put faces to the statistics and attempt to meet the test of the payroll tax increase and bring additional dollars into the system. He asked the Board to help those in the community who represented a minority, not in terms of race, ethnicity, or poverty, but those who depended on the Board's community guidance.

Fred Lorish of Eugene spoke about the #22 bus. He said that LTD staff had met with neighbors of the Crest Drive area and developed some ideas he wanted to share with the Board. He said he had lived in the Crest Drive neighborhood for 22 years and during that time LTD had done little to encourage ridership of public transit as an alternative to driving. He said the neighborhood understood the need to decrease automobile traffic whenever possible and the proposed cancellation of the 5:15 p.m. bus on route #22 made it impossible for 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. workers to use LTD as an alternative to driving. He said the present route times were designed to accommodate 4J School District students and not casual users or employees commuting to work. He added that the limited timeframe of the route made it not viable for people who worked outside of the central core of the city. He asked that LTD begin a dialogue with the Crest Drive Neighborhood Association on ways to increase ridership and the number of trips through the neighborhood, perhaps through grants or alternatives to large buses. He pointed out that LTD had decreased service to the neighborhood over the past 25 years as vehicular traffic had increased. He invited LTD to engage in a joint dialogue with the neighborhood on how to make public transportation viable. He said that fiscal constraints had caused LTD to become more narrow and inflexible while its charter talked about innovation; innovation followed citizen

involvement. In response to a question from Mr. Kortge, he explained that the Crest Drive neighborhood was bounded by Willamette Street and Chambers Street from 18th Avenue south.

Lydell Harris (no address given) asked what the Board was thinking as people did not know where to go or what routes to use given the constant changes. He suggested that routes remain unchanged for at least two years while LTD found out what people who rode the buses wanted. He said that people were beginning to use their cars in frustration. He objected to being called a "guest" as he felt he was not being served. He asked the Board to know its customer base and find out what riders wanted and they would return to the system.

Julian Buck of Eugene spoke regarding the proposals to eliminate service on route #76 in his area and eliminate summer service. He said there were few trips on the route currently and few other transportation options for residents aside from a car. He said that it was a long trip from his neighborhood to the University and included a large elevation change that could be dangerous in bad weather. He realized that students did not need the service when school was not in session, but many of the students who lived in the Westmoreland and South Hills areas were graduate students who needed service year-round. He said that the graduate students who rented in those areas considered the availability of bus service when choosing a location as otherwise those areas were not convenient to downtown and the University.

Kathleen Brandt of Eugene thanked the Board for holding a public hearing. She said she was a regular bus rider who lived off City View Street and eliminating the #76 and #22 routes would have a great impact on her life. She was not certain what alternatives were available to her. She said she had been a strong advocate of LTD and used the bus whenever possible. She had recently asked the 4J School District for permission to ride the school bus when she volunteered at Crest Drive Elementary School to avoid having to drive her car. She said it would be difficult to continue advocating for LTD with the elimination of South Hills service. She disagreed with a previous speaker and felt the Board did listen to its riders.

Chris Phillips of City View Street in Eugene asked the Board not to eliminate the last LTD service near his home. He said he purchased his home deliberately on a bus route so that he could commute by bus and avoid the need for an additional car. He said that moving to follow bus service would have a considerable financial cost, plus many hours for house hunting, which he could not afford. He said that LTD was spending millions of dollars on BRT in the belief that to keep an increased ridership it needed to provide fast trips, but LTD also needed to maintain its current ridership. He said that eliminating service to outlying areas where people lived who might be lured to use BRT to commute could turn them away now and they might not return. He said that even if moving to follow the bus service was feasible, he had no guarantee that service would not be cancelled in the future in that area. He urged the Board to provide reliable service in order to attract and retain regular riders. He said that using a park and ride service would still require him to purchase another vehicle and it would be a small additional expense to drive straight through to the University. He commented that many riders he had spoken to would still need summer service.

Josephine Co of Eugene said she had been a community member for 22 years, was a former LTD employee and now worked for the University providing services to graduate students. She said that those students did go to school year-round and she was very concerned about the elimination of #76 services. She thanked LTD for the two bus stops along Chambers Street that avoided a long walk to the hill. She said that she loved riding the bus as it saved her time, money, and effort and eased congestion on campus. She said the bus was her only transportation at the moment and like Mr. Phillips, she was looking for property to purchase and

the availability of public transit was important. She inquired about the possibility of the #13 route going to Fairview if the #18 and #19 routes were eliminated. She said that there were many new houses being built in that area.

William R. Coolman of Panorama Drive in Eugene said that he needed to take the #76 to get downtown to catch the #82 to commute to Lane Community College (LCC) and asked that the #76 not be eliminated. He said that riding a bike or walking were not feasible alternatives as he carried a French horn, a backpack, and a laptop computer. He said that his parents' schedules did not permit them to give him rides to school. He indicated he had previously lived on the #22 route in the Crest Drive area and noted that stops on that route had been cut over the years. He appreciated public transit services, but observed that services were being slowly strangled.

Denise Gosar of Eugene related that she was self-employed and lived in a home on River Road that was purchased in part because it was on bus routes. She said she was lucky that the routes she relied upon the most, #51/52 and #40, were only being changed slightly and her only concern was that a trip in the late evening around 10:30 p.m. would remain. She said that late night trip was important for people with employment options outside of normal business hours. She questioned why bus riders were penalized when the real problem was with people driving cars with only one or two people in them who caused problems for transit. She asked what LTD was doing to increase ridership on current routes. She said that congestion often caused delays of 30 minutes or more and wondered why the community was still behind in promoting the use of mass transit. She preferred to see LTD promoting ridership on the current system than focusing on faster trips through BRT.

Jen Davis of Eugene spoke in support of route #22. She said she was a regular rider who did own a car but preferred the bus to commute to the University. She enjoyed using the bus because of the opportunity to see people in her community. She said she was not a 4J student and it was difficult to catch the 5:20 p.m. bus. She asked if the trip could be scheduled somewhat later. She said a major challenge in the West Hills was the elevation gain and suggested that ridership might be increased if the route went up the Old Lorane Highway where there were many houses along the road. She urged that #22 service in the West Hills not be eliminated as there was good use of the route with the exception of the 5:20 p.m. trip. She commended LTD for its exceptional efforts to provide services to riders during the ice storm last year.

Michele Neill of Eugene spoke in support of the #18 and #19 Fairview loop routes. She said it was a 10-block walk from Fairview to Centennial Boulevard and she was no longer well enough to do that. She said there were 172 households in McKenzie Village in the #18/19 area and many people used those buses to get to the Springfield Station and had opened up a wide variety of grocery and other shopping options for residents, almost one-third of who were on disability incomes. She noted that increases in service over the past six years had been a great advantage to those who lived in the area and for three years a grant had paid fares for the disabled, which had significantly increased ridership. She said it was difficult to even afford a bus pass on disability income and urged the Board to retain services to the Fairview area. She submitted a petition to keep the bus service with 44 signatures she had collected in less than two hours. She related that she had used the bus to go to the hospital when she had a heart attack last year. She noted that the bus was not available for her to attend the hearing and she had to obtain a ride from a friend.

Dorothy Ehli of Eugene remarked that a friend of hers was very concerned about elimination of early bus service and had commented, "You can't count on the buses anymore." She thought that was the saddest comment she had heard in 50 years of riding the bus.

D. Closure of Public Hearing – There being no one else wishing to testify, Mr. Gaydos closed the public hearing.

RECESS AND MOVE TO LTD CONFERENCE ROOM AT 1099 OLIVE STREET – Mr. Gaydos recessed the meeting at 6:50 p.m. The Board then moved to the LTD conference room at the Eugene Station. Mr. Gaydos reconvened the meeting and noted that the Board had recessed after the public hearing for the move and was now back in session. He stated that he would entertain a motion to exclude the press from the following executive session.

Mr. Kortge moved that the press be excluded from the executive session. Mr. Kleger seconded. Mr. Eyster said that he thought it had been to LTD's advantage to have the press present in the past, but he assumed that Mr. Gaydos had a reason for asking for the motion, which is why he would support it.

There was no further discussion, and the motion carried as follows:

AYES: Davis, Eyster, Gant, Gaydos, Kleger, Kortge (6)
NAYS: None
ABSTENTIONS: None
EXCUSED: Ban


EXECUTIVE (NON-PUBLIC) SESSION PURSUANT TO ORS 192.660(2)(D), LABOR NEGOTIATIONS

MOTION Mr. Kortge moved that the Board meet in Executive Session pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(d), to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to carry on labor negotiations; pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(f), to consider information that is exempt by law from public inspection; and pursuant to ORS 40.225, lawyer-client privilege. Mr. Kleger provided the second.

VOTE The motion was approved as follows:
AYES: Davis, Eyster, Gant, Gaydos, Kleger, Kortge (6)
NAYS: None
ABSENTIONS: None
EXCUSED: Ban

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT

Following the executive session, the Board returned to open session. There was no further discussion, and the meeting was adjourned.



Board Secretary