

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

Monday, February 11, 2008

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on February 7, 2008, and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District held a special Board meeting/public hearing on fare and service proposals on Monday, February 11, 2008, beginning at 5:30 p.m., in the Bascom-Tykeson Room of the Eugene Public Library, 100 West 10th Avenue, Eugene, Oregon.

Present: Gerry Gaydos, President, presiding
Debbie Davis, Treasurer
Michael Dubick
Mike Eyster, Vice President
Greg Evans
Stefano Viggiano, Acting General Manager
Jo Sullivan, Clerk of the Board
Lynn Taylor, Minutes Recorder

Absent: Dean Kortge, Secretary

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL – Mr. Gaydos called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. and called the roll.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS BY BOARD PRESIDENT – Mr. Gaydos introduced Ed Necker, who had been appointed to the vacant position on the Board by Governor Kulongoski, and was awaiting Senate confirmation.

Mr. Gaydos remarked that he was proud to be a part of the LTD organization as the District moved forward with transportation solutions for the future. He looked forward to hearing comments from the public.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA – There were no announcements or additions to the agenda.

PRELIMINARY PUBLIC HEARING ON FY 2008-09 FARE RECOMMENDATIONS – Director of Service Planning, Accessibility and Marketing Andy Vobora reviewed the pricing proposal summary for 2008-09. He noted that a preliminary review of changes in both fares and service had been conducted at the Board's January 2008 meeting, a second public hearing would be held on March 10 and the Board Service Committee would meet between the hearings to discuss proposed changes. He said there could be adjustments to the proposed changes based on the public involvement prior to final action by the Board at its March 19 meeting.

Mr. Vobora reviewed potential changes to cash fares, day pass prices, and group pass prices. He said that in the recommendation, the senior fare would be phased out, the adult category extended to age 65, and the qualifying age for the Honored Rider program lowered to age 65. Additionally, the holiday taxi reimbursement would be raised from \$10.00 to \$20.00, the

RideSource fare would be increased from \$2.50 to \$3.00 per trip, and the summer youth pass program would be retained. He used a table to illustrate discounts and incentives used to encourage purchase of prepaid instruments. He noted that the price of fuel had increased 221 percent since 2000 and that had a significant effect on the District's fare pricing.

Public Hearing on Proposed Fare Changes: Mr. Gaydos opened the public hearing and called for testimony.

Valerie Anne of Springfield expressed concern with the RideSource fare increase. She said that many riders were on fixed and limited incomes and their resources were stretched to the limit. She felt that some people would no longer be able to use the service and that would limit their ability to leave their homes. She proposed leaving the fare at \$2.50 so the senior and disabled riders on fixed incomes could continue to use the service.

There being no further testimony, Mr. Gaydos closed the public hearing.

Staff Comments: Mr. Vobora explained that RideSource was a necessary but costly service for people who could not use LTD's fixed route service. He explained that a round-trip bus ride cost the District approximately \$6.00 to provide, while a round-trip on RideSource cost \$47.00 to provide.

Mr. Necker remarked that the price increase might also promote more judicious use of RideSource.

PRELIMINARY PUBLIC HEARING ON FY 2008-09 SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS –

Mr. Vobora characterized service changes as falling into one of several categories: adjust operational problems in the system, provide enhancements, redesign service areas, and eliminate substandard service. He said that information for service changes was collected from a variety of sources, including the automated passenger counting and vehicle location systems, bus operators, passengers, and customer service employees. He said the District was continuing to explore ways to provide more opportunities for public input. He noted that the Phase One changes to address the new RiverBend hospital complex had been approved by the Board, and the hearing would focus on the Phase Two proposed changes.

Service Planning Manager Will Mueller used a slide presentation of route maps to illustrate the service recommendations. He noted that in some cases the route configuration had not been finalized. He said the deletions represented the lowest productivity routes. He reviewed the Phase Two service additions and said there were many other needs in the community that the district was unable to meet, such as service to new areas, more trips on routes, and alleviating crowding on buses. He said there were several services eliminated during the 2002 cuts that staff hoped to restore eventually.

Public Hearing on Proposed Service Changes: Mr. Gaydos opened the public hearing and called for testimony.

Dennis Turner of Lindale Drive, Springfield, asked if more frequent stops and times would be established for the #12 route. Mr. Vobora replied that the stops would be the same on the existing portion of the route and the new section would have stops established along International Way and in front of the new hospital; a timetable would be published later in the spring describing the 20-minute frequency.

Kathleen Peterson of Umanski Lane, Veneta, said she traveled to Royal Caribbean and connections were difficult for Royal Caribbean employees; they would not ride the bus if they could not get home in the evening when they had to work later than 5:30 or 6:00 p.m. She wondered if ridership was declining on some routes because of connectivity problems. She said that better connectivity and later service would improve ridership.

Mr. Vobora agreed that the service package for Veneta had not provided good connectivity. He believed that the proposed changes would improve that.

Helen Cope of Spy Glass Road, Eugene, requested additional service on the #60 route. She was pleased to see the bus in her area, but hoped that service could be provided mid-morning and mid-afternoon. She understood that service had been cut due to lack of ridership, but said the area was growing and might be able to support additional service.

Roger Rasmussen of Honeycomb Drive, Eugene, stated that he rode the #95 and understood that riders who boarded at River Road were counted as Spring Creek in system statistics. He said that ridership was starting to increase and hoped that the #95 would not be rerouted. He suggested diverting the #52 route onto Spring Meadow to Beacon to River Road.

Annette Plummer of Riverview Street, Eugene, said she rode the #60 route and asked if eliminating the evening Valley River Center routing would enable her to reach her destination sooner.

Mr. Mueller said she would be able to reach her destination and arrive sooner.

Dianne Brause of Lost Valley Lane, Dexter, said she lived at Lost Valley Educational Center, which housed between 25 and 65 adults. She said that more people were getting jobs in town but the #93 schedule made it difficult to use the bus to commute. She wanted to support the transit system and hoped that service could be added to the #93 route.

David Cohen of Potter Street, Eugene, spoke regarding elimination of Saturday service on the #28 route. He said he used that service to go to the gym. He said the alternative routes were less convenient and suggested curtailing the Hilyard Street route instead of eliminating it. He commented that lowering the Honored Rider age from 70 to 65 would result in a \$1,000.00 loss for each person over a five-year period.

Valerie Anne of Springfield submitted a petition with over 100 signatures and written comments regarding the #93 route. She said the changes to the route particularly affected her because it was her access to employment, and if the reservoir loop were eliminated she would lose her job. She said several other riders were facing the same situation. She said other riders depended on the service to get to town, as they did not own a car or qualify for other transportation services. She encouraged LTD to retain the #93 reservoir loop and save resources by postponing the next EmX phase. She provided several examples of how people in that area would be greatly inconvenienced if the service were eliminated, including youth participating in recreational activities.

Myra Clark of Willamette Street, Eugene, commented that the #11 was very late at times on the inbound service in the mornings and afternoons. She said #73 and #24 were scheduled to alternate service in the South Hills, but were now arriving and departing at the same time and

that was inconvenient, as was returning to the Eugene Station to catch another bus instead of having routes that served the outskirts of the city.

Mr. Vobora explained that the #73 and #24 routes served very different destinations; one served downtown and the other served the University of Oregon.

Lucas Murphy of C Street, Springfield, said he rode buses throughout the system. He said that the #11, #12, #13, #41, and #43 buses were often crowded and ridership was increasing; he was pleased to see the service additions. He liked the #18/#19 service, but it was difficult to make connections with EmX on #18. He said the #11 was often late inbound to the Springfield Station. He asked if the #18/#19 stop could be moved to 12th Street and B Avenue. He said trees obscured the sign for that stop and it was necessary to step into the roadway to flag the bus. He suggested a stop on 10th and Main streets for the incoming #11 and hoped #11 service on B Street could be every 30 minutes. He hoped there could be an 11:40 p.m. service for Springfield residents.

Mr. Mueller stated that restoring late night service was a high priority. He said LTD had requested a stop at 5th and Main but was turned down by the City. He said if Main Street became two-ways it might be feasible to route a bus in both directions. He said the ongoing challenge was to balance route schedules to make transfers work, and decisions were based on the greatest benefit to the greatest number of people.

DeAnn Weiler of Clear Lake Road, Eugene, stated that eliminating the #93 reservoir loop would cut off an entire community. She said there was no alternative service and other people were unable to attend the hearing because there was no later bus on the route. She said many people would be faced with moving or quitting their jobs if the loop was eliminated.

Kayla Sweeney of Perkins Road, Veneta, suggested routing the #93 down Hunter and then looping around Perkins and offering service later in the evening and on Sundays. She agreed with those who spoke against eliminating the reservoir loop. She rode the #11 to Thurston and the buses were often overcrowded. She suggested ten-minute service before and after school to accommodate students. She remarked that it was very difficult for people in the back of the bus to disembark when buses were crowded. She thought that stops should be checked regularly to make sure signs were not obscured.

Michael Nebbe of Irvington Drive, Eugene, said he worked at Country Coach in Junction City and rode the #95. He said if the Irvington section were eliminated, he would be unable to go to work. He said there was high ridership on the route and more service, not less, was needed. He expressed concern with the need to go to the Eugene Station to catch another bus to get home and recommended small hubs outside of the downtown area. He hoped that later service could be offered on the #52 and other routes so people could use them to go home after work or in the evening.

Paula Ward of Green Oaks Drive, Eugene, stated that she lived along the #93 route and had two disabled young adults who could not drive. She said they would face many problems if service was cut. She questioned why people over 70 years of age who did not have the same responsibilities as workers and those raising families should be allowed to ride for free. She felt those older riders should pay half fare like disabled riders. She said many people depended on the #93.

Mel Barnes of C Street, Springfield, distributed a list of suggested route changes to Board members and briefly reviewed his recommendations. He said he provided transit system orientation to people as a volunteer at the senior center and as a bus buddy.

Moshe Immerman of Washington Street, Eugene, thanked LTD Board members and staff for listening to the public's comments. He discussed possibilities for expanding service despite declining revenues, including serving as a model program linked to air quality and global warming for which grant funds might be available. He said that use of synthetic oil increased fuel economy and listed other products that could produce similar results and reduced environmental impacts. He exhorted LTD to stay with its vision and suggested making free rides for senior citizens means-tested.

Board/Staff Comments: In response to some speakers' comments, Mr. Gaydos said that the District did not generate a profit; the system was subsidized by a payroll tax and the farebox represented only about 17 percent of revenue.

There being no further comments Mr. Gaydos closed the public hearing.

Mr. Vobora thanked speakers for their comments and said those would be considered when staff developed the final service recommendations.

Mr. Evans asked if staff had considered any options for the #93 that would allow for some service on the reservoir loop and whether earlier and later trips could be added to the #7 instead of just eliminating the two morning and two evening trips as proposed. Mr. Vobora said that some of Mr. Evans' ideas, as well as ideas suggested by speakers, had been considered, but the concern was that overall ridership was already low and it would be difficult to try to create a schedule to fit the needs of one segment of the population. He said that all of the suggestions would be reviewed by staff before the final proposal was presented to the Board.

Mr. Evans asked if staff had suggestions for addressing the problem of inbound trips and connections with transfers. Mr. Mueller replied that some trips needed more time to get to the station and that created problems with transfer but the only way to speed up those trips was to eliminate a portion of the route. He said efforts to make those connections were an ongoing part of designing the system.

Mr. Vobora noted that EmX was the solution to congestion as it moved the bus out of traffic and allowed it to keep moving and make connections. He said that "streamlining" the system meant that the goal was to achieve the highest productivity for the resources available.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.


Board Secretary