

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING/PUBLIC HEARING

Monday, November 10, 2008

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on November 6, 2008, and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District held a public hearing and special Board meeting on Monday, November 10, 2008, beginning at 5:30 p.m., in the Bascom/Tykeson Meeting Room in the Eugene Public Library, 100 West 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene, Oregon.

Present: Greg Evans, Vice President, presiding  
Dean Kortge  
Ed Necker  
Michael Dubick  
Gerry Gaydos  
Jeanne Schapper, Clerk of the Board  
Stefano Viggiano

Absent: Michael Eyster  
Doris Towery

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL** – Mr. Eyster called the special meeting of the Lane Transit District (LTD) Board of Directors to order and called the roll.

**PRELIMINARY REMARKS BY BOARD PRESIDENT** – Mr. Evans indicated that he would be presiding at the meeting in place of Board President Michael Eyster.

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

**PUBLIC HEARING ON 2009 SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS** – Mr. Vobora acknowledged the strong increase in LTD ridership but also emphasized that fares represented only about 15 percent of operating costs, with payroll tax revenues picking up the remainder. He said that while fuel costs had gone down recently, payroll tax revenues were also going down because of the poor economy. Mr. Vobora said that LTD had to balance its budget, and many parts of the community would see service reductions, even on well-used routes. He acknowledged that such reductions would be painful.

Mr. Vobora discussed the community outreach effort that had occurred since August 2008 and said the Board had received all public comments submitted to date. He said that the Board would act on the service reduction package on November 19, 2008. At this time, he did not know if other service reductions would be necessary during this coming year.

Mr. Vobora reported that LTD would implement the majority of the proposed changes in September 2009, but it was possible that some routes could be eliminated earlier.

Mr. Vobora provided a brief overview of the recommendations and noted changes made since the last hearing.

Mr. Evans reviewed the rules of the public hearing.

**Shelly Dunbar**, 1333 Oak Patch Road, Eugene, asked the Board to retain the #30 bus and maintain the current level of service on Oak Patch Road. She said that many people depended on the #30 and added that some people would not be able to walk the distance necessary to reach the bus stop.

**Karen McClain**, 6975 Bluebell Way, Springfield, spoke in regard to the #8X bus, clarifying that it was the later rather than earlier bus that was her concern. She first criticized the public hearing process as meaningless. She then criticized the counting method as flawed. She suggested that LTD was discriminating against the larger community with its concern that cutting elsewhere would have a bigger impact on transit-dependent riders. Ms. McClain said that her commute time would be doubled if the change was made. She said that she would now have to drive to work, which was a financial hardship. She expressed disappointment in the process and said that she would not support any LTD funding proposal and had lost confidence in the management of LTD.

**Linda Miller**, 1631 Adkins Street, Eugene, asked the Board to retain the #3X bus and noted that her count indicated an average of 28 passengers in the morning and 13 passengers in the afternoon. She felt that overcrowding on the buses also should be considered when reductions were contemplated. She thought that the #3X was cost-effective in comparison to the alternatives. She said that buses to the University of Oregon (UO) were packed to capacity already. People using other routes could be stranded downtown if other routes to the University were not added, and the need to transfer would add more travel time for commuters. With the deletion of the Breeze, more options would be lost.

**Tanya Truax**, 401 East 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Eugene, emphasized the importance of service to 1<sup>st</sup> and Jefferson streets on the #51 bus.

**Chris Baird**, 1600 Adkins Street, Eugene, said in an earlier e-mail to LTD staff that she had suggested limited service on the #3X bus during peak times and was asked by staff how she proposed LTD would pay for it. She pointed out that LTD received funding from the UO, and it made sense to her that the University's money should be spent to meet the needs of students and staff who used the #3X bus. Speaking to the question of supporting those who relied on the bus for their basic needs, she said that she needed the bus to get to work, and her employer supported LTD. If the bus was eliminated, she would have to ride 1-1/2 hours every day to travel three miles to work. She agreed with Ms. Miller about the limited options for #3X riders and full EmX buses traveling to UO and said that it would only get worse if the #3X were eliminated.

**Lindsay Elliott**, 425 South 39<sup>th</sup> Street, Springfield, stated that she was a rider of the #8X bus and strongly encouraged the Board to consider the needs of the riders of its express buses. She said the ridership of the later buses was higher than the earlier buses, and reductions to the earlier routes would inconvenience far fewer people. She was unwilling to lengthen her commute by 70 minutes each day, which was what would be required if the bus was eliminated. She encouraged LTD to maintain skeletal service for the express routes with the highest ridership. She suggested that the provision of mass transit was only one aspect of LTD's mission, and spoke of the environmental value of LTD's service. She said that LTD must attract car riders and suggested that express routes were a key element to serving that population. She thanked the Board for the service provided by the #8X bus to date and observed that she rode the bus 3,000 miles each year to and from work.

**Marion Walter**, 1846 Orchard Street, Eugene, asked the Board to pay special attention to wait times involved when making route changes. She said that people avoided using the bus if the wait times were too long. She asked when the Board was going to consider offering the voters a bond measure to underwrite improved service, suggesting that the cost was minimal and people would be happy to pay it. She asked what bus would be going up 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Mr. Vobora indicated that it would be the #28 bus.

**Emily Tarletsky**, 725 East 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene, represented the UO Club Crew Team. She said that elimination of the #92 bus would likely mean the end of the crew program given the higher costs participants would have to pay for other forms of transportation. She recommended that the Board consider eliminating the route in the winter months to save money. She said people who worked at the UO and Northwest Christian University also rode the 7:55 a.m. #92 bus back to campus with the team. She hoped the crew team would be larger next year and could continue to take advantage of the bus.

**Carol Seaton**, 1150 West 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene, offered the audience a true/false question based upon a situation involving an LTD bus and her grandchild and complained about an LTD rule she said the public did not know about. She submitted a proposal to each Board member and invited them to contact her.

**Megan Walsh**, 1537 Inchwood Avenue, Eugene, asked the Board to retain the #3X service as one of the few direct routes residents had to campus. She pointed out that student ridership on the route had skyrocketed over the past few years. It was a reliable route and served those students who were unable to afford housing near campus. She concurred with the remarks of those who spoke in favor of retaining the #3X and their suggestions for alternatives. She mentioned the student fees she paid to use the bus and said it did not make sense that one of the few direct routes to campus would be canceled. She added that she believed ridership numbers were higher than indicated by staff.

**Tammi Martin**, 89 North Polk Street, a rider of the #7X bus, said that the express bus riders were concerned about losing their service. The proposed changes would add commute time to and from work, and she believed it would likely drive people back into their cars. She acknowledged there could be higher ridership on other routes but thought the Board needed to consider that fact and the potential that additional commuters could impact the roads and bus travel times. She did not believe that her co-workers at the RiverBend campus accepted the time delays that occurred on the #12 bus--particularly when school started--which caused delays in travel time.

**Kathy Garland**, 1356 Victorian Way, stated her support for the #3X service. She said that the parking on campus was reduced considerably and there were few other options for UO staff and students. She said that buses were late to make connections to the EMX, and sometimes 15 minutes could be critical. She said there were 22,000 students on campus and their needs should be considered.

**Eve Siecinski**, 3293 Spearmint, a #3X bus rider, said that many UO staff and students recently started using the bus because parking fees had increased on campus and many parking spaces were eliminated. She thought that elimination of the #3X would be problematic for her and others. She said that reliable bus service was important to students and staff who depended on the bus. Ms. Siecinski agreed with others offering testimony that reduction of the route would mean that people would miss their connections. She observed that the #3X bus was always full.

**Bonnie Dominquez**, 3959 E Street, Springfield, said that Lane Community College students asked the District to fix the connection between the #11 bus and #85 bus. She said that students sometimes missed the downtown bus connection by only a minute and then had to wait for the next bus. She asked if buses going on to LCC could be held at the station to accommodate students who were traveling on buses arriving late for transfers.

**Ken Rivernider**, 140 Hamilton Street, Eugene, clarified the details of the new #57 bus route with Mr. Vobora. Mr. Rivernider believed that more buses were needed on the River Road corridor. Mr. Necker pointed out that the frequency of service meant that there would be no service reduction in the corridor--even with the elimination of the #52 bus.

**Janelle Halesworth**, 29851 Willow Creek Road, Eugene, representing Molecular Probes, asked the Board to retain the #36 bus route extension to Pitchford. She described her company and anticipated that it would expand and increase both production and its workforce. She reported that 66 percent of the company's workforce, when surveyed by Commuter Solutions, indicated that they would be very or somewhat likely to use LTD bus service. The company was looking into group pass options. She suggested that the Board consider removing two of the four #36 route extensions, which are the 5:20 p.m. and 6:20 p.m. pick-up times at Pitchford, due to low use. She suggested that one year was not enough time to gauge the success of the other extensions.

**Mark Unno**, 262 East 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene, spoke of the elimination of the #25 and #73 buses and the proposal to combine services on the #28 bus. He said that the #73 bus was the only route between south Eugene and the UO and that the bus was packed in peak periods while being virtually empty the remainder of the time. He asked if there were ways to increase efficiencies--other than through the elimination of routes. He noted that many special needs people lived in south Eugene for whom changing a bus would be a hardship. He asked if the decision makers had actually ridden the routes to test their theories in regard to the proposed changes, and asked if the testimony of those who were actual riders would be given consideration.

Mr. Evans emphasized that the Board was taking all the testimony it was hearing into careful consideration. Mr. Necker added he was a bus rider and was familiar with many of the routes in question.

**Tony Attilles**, 4115 West 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, #29, Eugene, said he was visually impaired and could only get around by bus. He said the #30 bus was proposed for deletion and that was his route to work. He asked that the route not be deleted as it was his only way to get around town. Regarding the proposal to delete routes #64 and #67, he said he also used those routes to reach various locations.

**Julia Green**, 275 West 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene, spoke on behalf of the #7X, which she used to reach work. Ridership on the route had grown over the seven years she had used the bus. She noted that two outbound and inbound routes were eliminated earlier in the year. She acknowledged the low ridership and indicated that the cuts increased ridership on other departure and arrival times. Many people had begun to use the bus because of increased gas prices, and now that prices were going down, it would be good to retain those individuals as bus users. She said the #12 was very busy and elimination of the #7 would increase crowding on that bus and make the ride a less pleasurable experience. She concurred with the remarks of those who spoke to the negative impact of increased automobiles on the road. She was unable to drive and

the elimination of the route would have a strong impact on her. She believed that it would be a good idea to retain the #7 bus to serve the commuters who worked in that area of Springfield.

**Stephanie Baker**, 1340 Washington Alley, Eugene, a UO student, said service reductions would make using the bus a less viable option for her. She asked for more evening hours on the #52 route in order to maintain adequate service to the UO.

**Matt Kauhuer**, 1554 Larkspur Loop, Eugene, a rider of the #60, said he was jealous of express riders because at least they had an alternative. He asked the Board to retain one morning and one afternoon run on the #60 bus. He said the elimination would leave a hole in that section of Eugene and the closest bus service was more than a mile away. If that was not an option, he asked if it would be possible for LTD to reroute the #66 or #67 buses in order to pick up part of that service.

**Sue Ann Parker**, 136 Lea Lane, Eugene, spoke in favor of retaining the #3X bus. She worked at the UO and that route was the best for her to get from home to work and back again. She said that the bus was very full for all the runs it made. Removing the route would make the commute very long for riders because of the need to make a connection at the downtown station. If the route were to be eliminated, she would likely have to drive to work because of the long days she worked. Ms. Parker said there was insufficient parking on campus to rely on a space each day and the price of a parking sticker or metered parking was cost-prohibitive. She said that she would probably have to seek employment in another city with good bus service. She noted the fact that the 6:11 p.m. departure time was eliminated and said that she would no longer have transportation after late classes in winter quarter, and three other people in her department would also be affected by that change.

**Josephine Co**, 3065 West 15h Avenue, Eugene, identified herself as a UO employee and long-time bus rider. She rode both the #30 and #78 buses and said that lately the #78 bus was very crowded. She suggested that articulated buses be employed on the route in peak hours. She said that elimination of the #30 bus would make the situation worse. She suggested that the route be retained at peak times. She said that one of her neighbors also used the #30 bus but had to leave the hearing early. Ms. Co also noted that the #30 route was a major factor in her home purchase. She said that children and physically challenged persons lived on her street and also needed service, at least part of the day.

**Jon Hines**, 830 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Springfield, spoke in support of retaining the #66 bus. He said the bus was full with two wheelchairs on it during inbound journeys, and he believed that the reduction of the #64 bus would mean an even fuller bus. The bus was usually two to four minutes late now, and he feared it would get worse. He also was concerned about the elimination of the #3X bus and the impact that would have on the ridership of the #51 and #66 buses. Mr. Hines also expressed concern about the elimination of the #13 bus going downtown as it was very heavily used. He suggested that some of those riders would choose RideSource, and did not think that service to the hospital should be reduced as it was very difficult for some people in wheelchairs to access McKenzie-Willamette Hospital. He suggested that operation once an hour might be an option that could maintain service and save money.

**Misha Seymour**, 1313 Lincoln Street, #307, opposed the elimination of the bus routes. He called for reductions in administrative salaries if money was the problem. He said the #30 had been in place for years.

**Rose M. Reynolds**, 541 Helen Street, Eugene, spoke in support of retaining the #3X service. She did not have a car and could not afford to buy one. If she had one, she could not afford parking. She was the main breadwinner in her family and worked Sunday through Friday and saw her children at limited times during those days. If she took regular service and had to transfer, it would add 30 minutes to one hour to her trip and take time from her children. She said that if the service was cut, she would have to find a place closer to the UO; but it was difficult to find a place that fit her family and was within her budget. She said it was not just a financial issue.

**Mel Barnes**, 1473 B Street, Springfield, thanked the Board for sending the bus to the senior center. He mentioned that he did rider training for a senior facility in Springfield.

**Shepard Dale**, 895 West 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene, felt it was a misstep to add the EmX Extension to Gateway before expanding to West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

There being no further comments from the public, Mr. Evans closed the public hearing and called on staff for comments.

Mr. Vobora clarified that the #67 bus was not being deleted, but in fact, service was being increased during peak travel times. He believed that there would be adequate capacity to accommodate mobility devices along the Coburg corridor.

Speaking to service in Eugene, Mr. Vobora said that staff examined many options involving a number of combinations, all of which added cost to the District. He said LTD was trying to meet cross-town demand. He acknowledged that asking people to transfer at the Amazon Station was not an ideal situation, but staff had not been able to find another option without adding additional cost.

Mr. Vobora indicated that he would follow up with Mr. Hines to clarify his testimony regarding service to McKenzie-Willamette Hospital, noting that there was still service to the hospital on G Street via the #18 bus.

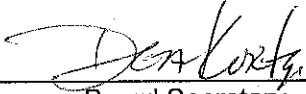
Mr. Vobora noted the Board's direction for a 14.5 percent reduction. He indicated that staff would review the comments and anticipated there could be some tradeoffs involved to satisfy some of the changes sought by those offering testimony.

Mr. Evans suggested that there was a potential for new state and federal funding, but those funds would not be available in time to stop implementation of the service cuts. He asked about the potential of delaying the service cuts pending resolution of that issue. Mr. Vobora indicated that it might be possible to delay the reductions planned for February 2009. He suggested that the Board could consider that question at its December 5 meeting during review of the Long-Range Financial Plan.

Mr. Kortge stated his belief that the Board was essentially playing a guessing game in regard to what reductions would be needed, and in the end, it would come down to a pure "gut" decision. Mr. Evans advocated for a plastic bag fee that could be used to generate revenue for transit. Mr. Viggiano believed that there were opportunities for additional revenue from the state legislature. The revenue would not come in time for the fiscal year under discussion. In addition, payroll tax revenues may come in below projections. He stated that the Board would discuss this further at its upcoming strategic planning work session.

Mr. Evans congratulated Mr. Kortge and Mr. Eyster for their reappointment to the Board.

**ADJOURNMENT** – The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

  
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Board Secretary

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