

M I N U T E S

Eugene City Council  
Eugene Hilton, Studios B/C  
66 East 6th Avenue

February 12, 1990  
5:30 p.m.

COUNCILORS PRESENT: Mayor Jeff Miller, Ruth Bascom, Rob Bennett, Shawn Boles, Emily Schue, Freeman Holmer, Bobby Green, Debra Ehrman.

COUNCILORS ABSENT: Roger Rutan.

The February 12, 1990, joint work session of the Eugene City Council and the Lane Transit District (LTD) Board was called to order by His Honor Mayor Jeff Miller.

Members of the LTD Board introduced themselves. Those present included H. Thomas Andersen, Herbert Herzberg, Thom Montgomery, Keith Parks, Janet Calvert, Peter Brandt, and Tammy Fitch.

Phyllis Loobey, LTD General Manager, presented information about the "Partners in Transit" program. She indicated that one of the major goals of this work session is to formulate a process whereby the council and the board can work toward achieving an integrated transportation system.

Ms. Loobey provided an overview of LTD's function. LTD is a municipal corporation whose board members are appointed by the governor to a four-year term. The LTD Board is responsible for setting district policy. LTD is an integral part of the Regional Transportation Planning Process and is represented in TransPlan, a document which articulates the transportation plan for the Eugene/Springfield metropolitan area.

Ms. Bascom asked if the structure of LTD is similar to that of municipal corporations in other states. Ms. Loobey replied that LTD is similar to districts in other states in that its board members are all appointed. The principal differences among states has to do with whether the board is appointed or elected, who makes this appointment, and whether the district uses property tax, sales tax, or motor vehicle registration fees as its primary funding source.

LTD is unique in that it uses payroll tax for financing its operation. Responding to a question from Mr. Holmer, Ms. Loobey said that any employer who pays Federal taxes is subject to the payroll tax, with the exception of public employers and the self-employed. The current payroll tax rate as set by the board is .49 percent; the statutory maximum is .6 percent. Although

the board has authority to assess a tax against the self-employed, it has as yet not chosen to do so.

City Manager Mike Gleason stressed the importance of viewing LTD as part of the transportation system. Unique concepts have been generated in Transplan, one of which is working toward a 10-percent modal split. This is a goal which will take a great deal of commitment to achieve.

Mr. Gleason introduced Don Arkell, director of Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority (LRAPA) and Steff Viggiano, LTD Planning Director. Mr. Viggiano provided an overview to the "Partners in Transit" program. He said that LTD operates a radial-route system--a system in which bus routes emanate from a central station and return to the station after completing a trip. To complement this type of routing structure, the district operates a pulse timed-meet system at the downtown station. This means that buses are scheduled to arrive at the station at the same time, park for five minutes while riders transfer between buses, and then leave at the same time. This type of system is used to reduce the amount of time required for a trip that requires a transfer between buses.

Mr. Viggiano said that the radial system is the most commonly used routing structure for transit systems in the United States. Its main advantage is that it provides direct service to the downtown area and provides convenient transfers between buses. Its main disadvantage is that many riders must travel through downtown, which may be out of the direction they wish to travel, to complete their trip. Mr. Viggiano noted that the district has evaluated other routing concepts, but has determined that the radial system best fits with the level of bus service that is offered and with the geographic and developmental characteristics of the Eugene/Springfield metropolitan area.

Mr. Viggiano pointed out that the district does not operate a "pure" radial routing system. Several routes provide direct service to major trip generators without traveling through downtown Eugene. An example is a route that connects the Gateway and downtown Springfield areas with Lane Community College.

Mr. Viggiano reviewed some of the changes in ridership and service that have occurred between 1970 and the present. With the exception of the early 1980s, ridership in LTD has grown steadily over this period. In FY88-89, LTD ridership was at almost 4.5 million annual trips--the highest total ridership in the district's history.

Mr. Viggiano indicated that the University of Oregon pre-paid program has been largely responsible for the substantial growth recognized by LTD. By paying \$4.50 per term in fees, this program entitles students to ride the bus anywhere in the city. A regular monthly pass would cost \$21 and a student term pass would cost \$44 per term.

Mr. Viggiano said that the most common destination for riders is the Eugene downtown area, followed by the University of Oregon, Lane Community college,

and Valley River Center. Responding to a question from Ms. Ehrman, Mr. Viggiano explained that University of Oregon ridership is monitored both by driver counts and annual counts taken at the University transfer station.

Ms. Schue asked whether the pre-paid program has had an effect on parking problems at the University of Oregon. Mr. Viggiano responded that the pre-paid program, in conjunction with a sharp increase in parking permit fees, have been instrumental in alleviating parking problems at the University.

Mr. Green inquired whether Lane Community College (LCC) has the same ridership program as the University of Oregon. In response, Mr. Viggiano said that LCC has asked about having the same type of ridership program and although LTD is considering it for the future, current service capacities will not allow it.

Ms. Bascom commented that in its report, LTD alludes to the fact that opening Willamette Street might cause riders to miss their transfers because they would need to deal with additional traffic. She said that she did not recognize this as a problem and asked for a response. Mr. Viggiano agreed that opening Willamette Street will most likely not cause a substantial increase in missed transfers, but could result in an increase in complaints from riders regarding the convenience and safety of transfers.

Ms. Loobey stated that the modal split, which represents the number of trips that will be taken by any particular mode of transportation, has been an issue of great controversy. Local units of government have found it difficult to agree what the modal split should actually be. By focusing on the modal split, attention is directed away from the need to achieving an integrated transportation system.

Ms. Loobey emphasized that simply establishing a modal split goal will not precipitate a change in the use of automobiles. In order to effect such a change, local governments need to enact and enforce code and planning regulations which support the attainment of a modal split.

Ms. Loobey noted that as an example, the Eugene Code does not currently require convenient transit access to major shopping developments. As a result, the new Safeway/Shopko development on West 11th has no on-site bus access. Fred Meyer, which is located next door, however, requested bus access and has its own sheltered bus stop. As a result, the modal split for Fred Meyer is much greater than for Safeway/Shopko.

Responding to a question from Ms. Ehrman, Ms. Loobey said that Fred Meyer does incur additional costs associated with bus access. Most often in these type of agreements the development pays for and maintains the flatwork while LTD assumes responsibility for the shelter.

Mr. Boles suggested that there might be a way for LTD to be supported by

systems development charges to help pay for costs associated with providing public transportation and asked whether LTD has looked into this. Ms. Loobey responded that this has not yet been considered.

Mr. Gleason stressed that if this community focused on a 10-percent modal split and worked hard to achieve it, it could make significant progress. He noted that although the transportation plan assumes the modal split will be achieved, this is rarely the case. An integrated transportation strategy is required to achieve Clean Air Act standards with the modal split as its key component.

Mr. Boles asked whether achievement of the 10-percent modal split goal would insure adequate air quality. Don Arkell, director of LRAPA, said that alternative mode programs are consistent with good air-quality practices. He added that the Clean Air Act stipulates that Federal funding will be severely restricted to cities that fail to meet Federal air-quality standards.

Those present generated a list of topics for important future consideration.

- 1) Consistency in code requirements
- 2) The new downtown transfer station
- 3) Airport shuttle
- 4) LTD's capacity to provide service as related to the City's requirements for parking downtown
- 5) Mechanisms for achieving goals
- 6) Assessing the true cost of private automobile use
- 7) City and LTD reaction to the pre-paid programs
- 8) Analyzing the merit of parking structures
- 9) "Fun and functional" shuttles
- 10) The impact of the TransPlan on the Ferry Street Bridge congestion problem
- 11) Community-wide free bus service
- 12) Automobile emission standards
- 13) Specific modal split goals
- 14) Future discussions between council and LTD
- 15) Forecast of fuel resources that will be needed in the future to support transportation
- 16) Relationship of public and private transit to intercity transit
- 17) Independent bus systems
- 18) Governmental incentive program for bus ridership

Mr. Bennett stressed the importance of setting an attainable modal-split goal and identifying a set of strategies to work toward accomplishing this goal. He also requested that LTD provide a work plan on what it would take to reach the modal split goal. Mr. Brandt agreed that the assumptions of achieving a 10-percent modal split are unrealistic and do a disservice to attempts targeted at achieving that goal.

Mr. Gleason emphasized that he believes the modal split is the wrong number on which to plan. He explained that the modal split does not account for changing transportation patterns which, over time, may encourage or

discourage automobile use and throw off the modal split. Mr. Boles requested an analysis and set of mechanisms for achieving measurable change in the current mix of transportation.

Ms. Ehrman commented that thus far, achieving modal split goals has not been a priority, and agreed with Mr. Bennett that if the City wants to achieve its goal, it must identify specific strategies for goal achievement and set these as a priority.

Ms. Bascom said that because the 10-percent modal split is a goal worth achieving, it should remain. She concurred with Mr. Bennett that specific strategies for achieving this goal need to be implemented to ensure goal attainment.

Mr. Brandt asked for the council's reaction to having a transportation program offered to City employees that is similar to the University pre-paid program. Ms. Schue reminded councilors that this issue was raised last year during the World Veterans Games in an attempt to reduce air pollution, and although this type of program was strongly encouraged, no action was taken. Mr. Gleason said that staff has been working with the transit authority to determine if a pre-paid program could be obtained. Staff has ascertained that such a program would cost approximately \$20,000 annually. If the council wants to do this, it is possible.

Mr. Boles pointed out that a pre-paid program provides an incentive to City employees. As the increase in the cost of parking permits provided students with a disincentive for automobile use, the City needs a similar disincentive, such as an increase in City parking rates. Mr. Gleason indicated that as a direct result of council action, parking rates will be increasing. He noted that it is important that the parking program continues to increase its fees so that the fees more closely represent the "true" cost of providing parking.

Mr. Holmer said that while he appreciates a proposal which would allow City employees to take part in a pre-paid program, this discussion should first go before the City Budget Committee. Responding to a question from Ms. Schue, Ms. Loobey said that LTD has determined that they have sufficient capacity to accommodate City employees on a pre-paid program. Although they are anticipating an increase in additional equipment in 1.5 years, they don't currently have sufficient capacity to accommodate LCC.

Responding to a question from Mr. Miller, Ms. Loobey said that it would be difficult for LTD to provide bus service to all the elementary, middle, and high schools because of the "a.m. peak problem" which would require LTD to have a substantially larger fleet to service needs during the morning; not all the buses would be in active service at other times.

Apparent council consensus was for staff and LTD to cooperatively generate a work plan with strategies that can be accomplished to enhance ridership.

Ms. Calvert indicated that a subcommittee is working on the issue of the downtown transfer station and solicited discussion. Responding to a question from Ms. Bascom about the need for a covered downtown station, Mr. Andersen said that the committee is looking at a rectangular configuration for the new transfer station; such a station would probably involve mixed-use, and although this might not mean an enclosed structure, some protection against the elements is needed.

Ms. Ehrman asked whether it is possible for the City to use money generated from vehicle registration to help fund the transfer station. Ms. Loobey said that if State Ballot Measure One is approved statewide, local option motor vehicle registration fees could be used for transit.

Mr. Brandt pointed out that it is not money concerns, as LTD has the potential to pay for a new station, but ambivalence regarding site location, that is preventing transfer station relocation. He stressed that money will not be spent on a station until a definitive plan for street opening is set forth.

Mr. Andersen commented that one of the proposed sites is a mixed-use development on the lot across from City Hall, and asked for the council's reaction to sharing its proposed City Hall building with buses on the bottom floor. General council sentiment was that the City would be willing to consider this as an option.

Mr. Bennett suggested that the City Council and the transit district board on a quarterly basis.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Gleason  
City Manager

(Recorded by Traci Northman)  
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