

MINUTES

Lane Central Metropolitan Planning Organization
Citizen Advisory Committee
Lane Transit District Board Room—3500 East 17th Avenue
Eugene, Oregon

August 6, 2008
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: John Anderson, Wendy Butler-Boyesen, Dave Jacobson, Sarah Strand, Bill Morganti, Eleanor Mulder, Edward Winter, Webb Sussman , members; Kathi Wiederhold, Lane Council of Governments; Tom Schwetz, Andy Vobora, Connie Bloom Williams, Lane Transit District staff..

ABSENT: Diana Alldredge, Phillip Farrington, Damien Gilbert, Francesca Patricolo, members.

I. WELCOME

Mr. Sussman called the meeting of the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) to order. There was consensus to reorder the published agenda. Those present introduced themselves.

II. Discussion Items

1. EmX Activities

a. Franklin EmX Ridership—Mr. Schwetz offered a PowerPoint presentation which explained the LTD EmX history and other similar systems across the country. Responding to a question from Mr. Sussman, he said real time passenger information referred to when the next bus would arrive at a stop. Responding to a question from Mr. Jacobson, he said LTD was currently experimenting with signal prioritization throughout the system. Responding to a question from Mr. Winter, he added that fares would be collected on the system when the Gateway EmX section was implemented.

Ms. Strand arrived at 5:45 p.m.

Responding to a question from Mr. Winter, Mr. Schwetz explained that the 25 percent new riders figure referred to riders new to transit since EmX implementation.

Responding to a concern from Ms. Mulder regarding visibility of cyclists and safety issues, Mr. Vobora said he had observed cyclists in the boarding process and suggested boarding and deboarding etiquette was an education issue for customers. He said the announcement system would be enhanced to be tied to the door mechanism that would make customers aware of door closings. Committee members offered additional suggestions for consideration.

Responding to a question from Ms. Butler-Boyesen, Mr. Schwetz said he had not seen statistics related to automobile travel along the corridor, and it was difficult to assess due to other factors, such as the cost of gasoline. He stated that 2,500 trips per day had been added along the corridor since EmX began service.

Mr. Sussman was impressed with the first year ridership exceeding the 20 year forecast as well as ridership on Route 11 exceeding forecasts by 100 to 120 percent.

Responding to a question from Mr. Winter, Mr. Schwetz said many factors affected the operating costs of larger light rail systems such as those in Boston and Los Angeles compared to EmX, including vehicle capacity and fuel costs of electric compared to diesel. He added that other smaller systems were being developed, including Cleveland and Ann Arbor, which would offer more realistic comparisons.

Responding to a question from Mr. Winter, Mr. Vobora opined the entire LTD system was growing and that not all of the growth was influenced by EmX, adding this may change when the Gateway EmX system was implemented. Mr. Sussman added there was anecdotal evidence in the industrial area in West Eugene that bicycle riders who lived in Springfield took the EmX to downtown Eugene and completed their commute via bicycle.

Gateway EmX Station—deferred to a future meeting

- b. West Eugene EmX Extension—deferred to a future meeting
- c. Other
 - i. Guidance—deferred to a future meeting
 - ii. Real Time Information—deferred to a future meeting

2. Tour

Committee members toured the LTD facility from 6:10 p.m. to 6:50 p.m.

3. LTD Budget

a. Overview—Mr. Vobora offered a PowerPoint presentation which provided an overview of the LTD budget. He noted contributing factors included the elimination of non-productive routes and increased fuel costs.

Responding to a question from Ms. Mulder, Mr. Vobora said government agencies, including Lane Community College, school districts, cities, as well as tax exempt non-profit agencies, did not pay the payroll tax.

Responding to a question from Mr. Sussman, Mr. Vobora stated 80 foot articulated vehicles were in use in Europe, and the LTD stations were built to accommodate the longer vehicles in the future.

Responding to a question from Mr. Winter, Mr. Vobora said advertising revenue was a relatively small percentage of LTD's total revenue, totaling about \$400,000 annually.

Mr. Vobora said fuel costs increased expenditures from the General Fund by \$2 million during the past year. [not sure exactly how this should read—didn't make sense as it was]The Board had been very aggressive during the budget preparation to raise fares across the board approximately 25 percent, while at the same time attempting to be sensitive to not pricing themselves out of the market for customers.

Responding to a question from Ms. Butler-Boyesen, Mr. Vobora said relatively few tokens were sold, and the program was expensive to administer.

Responding to a question from Mr. Morganti, Mr. Vobora said standing loads on a 40 foot bus were 70 people, the Breeze had a standing load of 58 to 60, articulated buses had a standing load of 100 to 105, he estimated 80 foot buses would accommodate 130 or 140 people.

Responding to a question from Mr. Sussman regarding tourist fares, Mr. Vobora said day passes were very flexible. While three and five day, and family passes had been looked at, administration added complexity to the fare system. Flexibility would increase when fare boxes were upgraded to be fully automated, which would incur a significant capital cost.

Ms. Mulder suggested that the public should be informed that the lower the age for Honored Rider fares actually decreased the costs to RideSource.

Mr. Anderson left at 7:10 p.m.

i. Dynamics of ridership fuel costs and revenues, impacts of paratransit—
Mr. Vobora said RideSource, which was a federally mandated service, was a door to door service that incurred significant costs, costing the district approximately \$46.00 per round trip per passenger. He said approximately 12 percent of the total bus service hours were utilized by RideSource. He said that taxis were used at night when the demand was lower. Additionally, LTD recently assumed responsibility for Medicare and Medicaid trips previously handled by Lane County Senior & Disabled Services. The calls were brokered through the dispatch center, with RideSource providing some service and area taxis providing service.

b. Process/Schedule for Service Cut Decisions—The committee discussed a variety of issues related to schedule and route redesign. Responding to a question from Mr. Sussman regarding the subsidy for specialized runs, Mr. Vobora explained the group bus program for the University of Oregon (U of O) was purchased by individual students through incidental fees established by the Associated Students of the University of Oregon (ASUO). Mr. Vobora said staff had been directed by the Board to identify a 15 to 20 percent reduction in service hours, or \$3.5 million in the General Fund. Operating reserves would be used this year to avoid cutting services. This would provide an opportunity to talk with the community regarding types of service cuts that would be made. He reviewed the document entitled ***FY2009-10 Budget Development Process and Schedule***. Outreach efforts would include booths at the Lane County Fair, the Eugene Celebration and Fiesta Latina, in addition to Board hosted town hall meetings in each of the sub-districts by the end of September.

Responding to a question from Ms. Butler-Boyesen, Mr. Vobora said the Willow Creek route served businesses other than Hynix Semiconductor Manufacturing (Hynix), noting it was a limited amount of service that did not carry many people. It would probably be eliminated in the redesign.

Responding to a question from Ms. Mulder, Mr. Vobora said the impacts of Country Coach, Monaco Coach Corporation (Monaco) and Hynix closures on payroll taxes would not be known for several months.

Responding to a question from Mr. Winter regarding *Park and Ride*, Mr. Vobora said LTD had been leasing the River Road Park and Ride site for \$1 a year from Lane County. When Lane County decided to liquidate the site, LTD paid \$2.2 million to acquire the site. Additional sites to meet Park and Ride demands were being researched by staff.

- c. Legislative Efforts (local, state, federal)

This agenda item was deferred to a future meeting.

4. Commuter Solutions Activity

Due to time constraints, Mr. Schwetz agreed to return to a future meeting with the Commuter Solutions Activity presentation. Ms. Williams briefly responded to questions from the committee.

Responding to a question from Ms. Butler-Boyesen, Ms. Williams explained how the free ride home program worked for participants. She said the Commuter Solutions budget was funded through the MPO process, a \$5,000 contribution from local governments, a \$5,000 contribution as well as in kind services including office space, and equipment from LTD, and \$111,000 annually from the State of Oregon. She distributed several brochures to committee members.

- a. Increased Group Pass Program Activity
- b. Increased Rideshare Activity
- c. Increased School Pass Activity

This agenda item was deferred to a future meeting.

5. Sustainability Planning at LTD

- a. Policy
- b. Planning Status
- c. Biofuels

This agenda item was deferred to a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

(Recorded by Linda Henry)

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