

FUNDAMENTALS OF A
SUCCESSFUL TRANSIT AGENCY:
AN EVALUATION OF LANE
TRANSIT DISTRICT

By
CATHERINE GIFFORD

A THESIS

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This thesis argues that Lane Transit District is an above-average mid-sized transit agency when comparing the agency's ridership data to similar-sized agencies. Lane Transit District has faced stiff criticism in recent years for its plan to expand its bus rapid transit system, EmX, into West Eugene. Rising from the opposition against the proposed new line is an even deeper seated questioning of LTD's operations. This thesis analyzes the opposition's assertions as well as statements made by LTD and its supporters. LTD benefits from its location, but also actively seeks to better its operations. LTD is fortunate to be situated in a community that is conducive to and supportive of transit. Additionally, LTD has maximized community support by working closely with the public, other agencies, and its largest stakeholders. Furthermore, LTD has established the best funding source currently available with a local payroll tax and federal funding for capital projects. Finally, a well-functioning board of directors as well as community-oriented staff provides the person-power behind LTD's success. Despite LTD's mistakes, as any agency is apt to make along the way, it has developed one of the strongest mid-sized transit systems in the United States.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Lane Transit District has made a name for itself in the national arena of mid-sized transit agencies as a leader in innovation and as a system that has succeeded in obtaining better-than average numbers on a variety of measurements of success.

Recently, however, Lane Transit District (LTD) has come under fire from members of the Eugene community who oppose the transit agency's proposal to add a new line to its bus rapid transit (BRT) system, EmX. Opponents have asserted that LTD is not as successful as it makes itself out to be. This thesis offers a critical take on the opponents' arguments, showing that LTD is, in fact, remarkably successful. It examines why LTD has been more successful than many of its peers and delves into what factors contribute to LTD's success.

Measuring a transit agency's success is a complicated task, as it is dependent on a variety of factors. One key indicator pivots on the goals a community has for its transit system. Yet how, in quantitative terms, can we accurately measure how transit agencies compare to one another in terms of effectiveness? Chapter II addresses this question, focusing on national standards and the new efforts LTD is making to improve its performance in relation to these national standards.

In explaining why a transit agency is successful, one needs to parse out two sets of factors that influence an agency's outcomes. One set of factors is essentially out of LTD's control; they are what I call "context-based factors," such as the population of the service area, the community's political tendencies, and the like. The second set of factors, which I call "issue-based factors," is either directly controlled by LTD or include elements that LTD has been able to influence, such as the source of its funding

and its governance structure. Chapter III looks at the context in which LTD is situated, focusing on how that context shapes opportunities and constraints for the transit agency. The following three chapters take on issues that LTD has been involved with that contribute to its operations. Chapter IV addresses how LTD has maximized community support, taking advantage of the favorable aspects of its context in order to improve its effectiveness. Chapter V discusses how LTD has developed a sound funding base, both at the local and federal level. Finally, Chapter VI addresses the last of the three issue-based factors, developing a workable organizational structure, including a discussion of LTD's Board of Directors as well as its staff.

The debate over the West Eugene EmX Expansion (WEEE) is used as a window through which to evaluate the traditional strategies LTD has implemented and whether or not LTD is still on a path to success and where it may need to change course. The criticism LTD has received over the new BRT line helps the community evaluate choices that LTD has made, whether recently or decades ago, and consider whether those choices still make sense given today's reality. The debate brings to the forefront alternatives to LTD's current structure and provides a means for evaluating LTD's processes.

Ultimately this thesis seeks to explain what characteristics make LTD a successful transit agency. It does not attempt to evaluate LTD's success on specific performance measures, but instead provides a general overview of the primary reasons why LTD is operating as well as it does in comparison to similar transit providers in other U.S. cities.

Methods

Research was conducted primarily through personal interviews, though some reports, newspaper articles, and webpages were also utilized. Most interviews were conducted in-person, though some email correspondence and phone interviews were used. Interviews were held over a three month period, January 2012 through March 2012. They began with leaders within LTD and then spread to LTD's major partners and stakeholders.

Persons interviewed were chosen for their familiarity with LTD, their diversity in relationships with LTD, availability, and by suggestion from previously interviewed persons. Many of the same questions were asked of each person; however, questions were also directed to fit the person's knowledge of LTD and his or her relationship with the agency. Please refer to Appendix A for a list of interviewed persons and his or her relationship to LTD.

Most individuals interviewed have professional ties to LTD or had a significant vested interest in the agency's actions. Users of LTD's services were not interviewed, but could provide an additional perspective in the analysis of the agency. Whereas those interviewed had intimate familiarity with the agency's operations from a high-level view, users have a greater sense of how operations were actually carried out and the user experience. Success is typically calculated from quantifiable measurements, and thus interviewees were selected for their knowledge regarding these indicators. Personal experiences and more immeasurable indicators could be important in a comprehensive review of the transit agency and could be garnered from users.

Chapter II: Measuring Success

The role transit should play in a community depends on the community and the people living there. Differences of opinions on transit are typically rooted in political ideology. For some, transit is another extension of an already over-reaching government that reallocates hard earned tax dollars. For others, public transit is a step towards achieving social equality as well as a necessary tool to abating air pollution and climate change. Some in the community think that LTD should simply do its job of moving people from where they are to where they want to go. Others think LTD should be planning for the future and influencing the way in which growth and development occur. Given the different goals people set forth for transit, developing some definitive measure of whether a transit agency is successful is impossible. Thus, this thesis will rely on common measurements for transit effectiveness such as annual boardings, service hours per capita, and boardings per hour.

Lane Transit District is currently working with twelve other mid-sized transit agencies nationwide as part of the American Bus Benchmarking Group (ABBG) (Johnson, 2012). ABBG is a consortium of transit agencies with 100 to 500 buses each that are collaborating in a confidential forum to learn how to create a set of key performance measures for making valid comparisons ("Abbg: About the," 2012). ABBG seeks to establish a set of metrics, a way to consistently measure these metrics, and then look at the resulting comparable data to learn best practices from one another.

Currently, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) collects information from all U.S. transit agencies that receive federal funding (which is virtually all transit agencies). The resulting data not only lack key performance measures, but they are

collected in differential and inconsistent ways. The FTA provides guidelines for how agencies are supposed to collect data, but the federal government does not have the resources to ensure that agencies are monitoring their performance the way they should. This lack of oversight means the submitted data has little credibility. Data submitted by each agency is published on the National Transit Database (NTD), which is open to the public. Therefore, it can be to an agency's advantage to inflate its measurements, creating the appearance that it is operating better than it actually is. Furthermore, NTD data is used by the FTA to apportion over \$5 billion in FTA funds; thus, it can be to an agency's advantage to alter its data ("National transit database," 2010).

The ABBG's goal is not to create standards that replace the FTA's. The FTA and most agencies across the United States are not seeking to improve these standards. Most transit agencies do not have the capacity to put in the effort needed to improve their data collection or are focusing their efforts elsewhere. The FTA receives data from over 660 agencies; thus improved policing of data collection would be both laborious and expensive ("National transit database," 2010).

The ABBG was established on April 1, 2011, with a handful of mid-sized transit agencies whose leaders realized that the best way to improve their operations was to learn from others. The group has grown over the past year and is open to any American mid-sized transit agency to join, as long as the total number of member agencies does not exceed 25 (Johnson, 2012). While there are many important benefits to being part of the group, the resources required to work to provide data and improve upon data collection are beyond the capacity or willingness of many transit providers. The group hopes to complete the creation of measuring tools by spring 2013.

The only way to discover best practices was first to create a set of key performance indicators and develop a means of consistently obtaining those statistics. From there, comparisons could be made between transit agencies, and then the question of *why* one agency is performing better than others in different respects could be addressed.

In order to determine success, the ABBG uses a modified version of Harvard Business School's Balanced Scorecard approach. The Balanced Scorecard approach helps monitor performance in comparison to goals in four areas: Customer, Growth and Learning, Internal Processes, and Financial. To these, the ABBG has added Environmental and Safety, which they deemed applicable for bus operations. It is from these benchmarks that the ABBG evaluates relative success. These success measurements are subdivided into different attributes (see Figure 1) ("Development of," 2012). Based on these attributes, the ABBG has developed 31 key performance indicators (see Figure 2) ("Development of," 2012). For the purposes of this thesis, Lane Transit District's success is assessed based on its relative performance under these metrics.

Each Success Dimension Focuses on Specific Attribute Groups			
Growth, Learning & Innovation	Growth and market (modal) share	Learning – organization and people	
Customer	Capacity Provision and Utilization	Service Quality	Service Availability
Internal Processes	Reliability and Availability	Asset Utilization	Efficiency / Productivity
Financial	Efficiency – level of input required to provide a level of capacity	Effectiveness – use of expenditures to meet customer needs	
Safety	Freedom from Person Accidents	Freedom from Asset Accidents	
Environment	CO2 Emissions and Alternative Energy Sources	Energy Efficiency	

Figure 1: American Bus Benchmarking Group balanced scorecard approach with attributes. Adapted from: American Bus Benchmarking Group, (2012). Development of a key performance indicator system. Imperial College London.

American Bus Benchmarking Group Phase 2011/2012 Key Performance Indicator System

Growth & Learning

- G1 Passenger Boardings (5-year % change)
- G2 Vehicle Miles and Hours (5-year % change)
- G3 Passengers per Revenue Mile & Hour
- G4 Staff Training (by staff category)

Customer

- C1 Customer Information (scheduled and real-time)
- C2 On-Time Performance (0 <= + 5)
- C3 Passenger Miles per Revenue Capacity Mile
- C4 Passenger Miles per Revenue Seat Mile

Internal Processes

- P1 Peak Fleet Utilization (not used split by cause)
- P2 Network Efficiency (revenue miles & hours per total miles & hours, non-revenue split by category)
- P3 Staff Productivity (total vehicle hours & miles per labour hour)
- P4 Staff Absenteeism Rate (by staff category)
- P5 Mean Distance/Time Between Road Calls
- P6 Lost Vehicle Miles (internal & external causes)

Financial

- F1 Total Cost per Total Vehicle Mile & Hour
- F2 Total Operating Cost per Total Vehicle Mile & Hour (F3 service operation, F4 maintenance, F5 administration)
- F6 Service Operation Cost per Revenue Mile & Hour
- F7 Service Operation Cost per Boarding & Pax Mile
- F8 Operating Cost Recovery (fare revenue & commercial revenue per operating cost)
- F9 Fare Revenue per Boarding & Pax Mile

Safety (& Security)

- S1 Number of Vehicle Accidents per Vehicle Mile & Hour (preventable & non-preventable)
- S2 Number of Staff Injuries per Staff Work Hours
- S3 Staff Lost Time from Accidents per Staff Work Hours
- S4 Number of Passenger Injuries per Boarding & Pax Mile
- S5 Number of 3rd Party Injuries per Vehicle Mile & Hour

Environmental

- E1 Diesel Fuel Consumption
- E2 CNG Fuel Consumption (per total vehicle mile, per pax mile, and per capacity mile)
- E3 CO2 Emissions per Total Vehicle Mile & Pax Mile

Figure 2: American Bus Benchmarking key performance indicators. Adapted from: American Bus Benchmarking Group, (2012). *Development of a key performance indicator system*. Imperial College London.

The ABBG is one of several transit groups working to establish better benchmarking. Others include international consortiums of large, urban agencies (International Bus Benchmarking Group) and an international group of suburban rail operators (International Suburban Rail Benchmarking Group). All of these groups are facilitated and managed by the Railway and Transport Strategy Centre (RTSC) at the Imperial College of London. The RTSC has decades of experience working with rail and bus groups to develop improved benchmarking.

The ability to correspond confidentially was an important principle to all agencies involved. For each set of measurements, there will always be some agency that ranks lowest. In order to ensure that agencies were putting forth accurate data and not trying to make themselves look better than they are, agencies had to know that their measurements were being kept secret. Agencies did not want the media or other outsiders to politicize the raw data. Any of the participating agencies could look as though they were doing poorly by cherry-picking selected data.

Two to three years down the road, when data collection is consistent and data is normalized, the ABBG may make the data public. Currently, in the development stage, none of the agencies feel that the data should be used by outsiders because the agencies are not measuring the same way, making the results incomparable. This thesis, however, uses the preliminary data in conjunction with NTD data to substantiate the proposition that LTD is a successful agency.

Being a member of the ABBG shows the effort LTD is making to improve itself. Membership in the ABBG means LTD is putting itself out there for the sake of improvement for itself and for transit overall. LTD's internal culture aims to be as

efficient as possible, with performance improvement being the number one goal. The ABBG represents a group of dedicated transit agencies that are willing to take the time and effort to raise the bar for all transit agencies.

Preliminary data indicates that LTD is operating above average in most metrics, those put forth by both the ABBG and the NTD. Due to confidentiality, this thesis cannot disclose specific ABBG data. As for the NTD, LTD performs above average in relation to its peers in many respects, including service hours, annual boardings, fare revenue, service hours per capita, and boardings per capita ("Lane transit district, 2011-2012 adopted budget" 2011). See Figure 3 for LTD's NTD data and Table 1 for how LTD compares to its peers ("Lane transit district, 2011-2012 adopted budget" 2011; National Transit Database Program, (2010). As mentioned previously, NTD data has little credibility due to lack of oversight. However, LTD's performance in many respects is so much greater than other agencies that, despite various uncertainties, even if numbers are simply ballpark figures, LTD may be considered relatively successful. As seen in Figure 4, LTD's ridership levels are increasing at a far greater rate than the population is growing, helping to prove its success in gaining riders (Lipkin, 2011).

ID Number: 0007
www.ltd.org
3500 East 17th Avenue
Eugene, OR 97403

Lane Transit District (LTD)

General Manager: Mr. Mark Pangborn
(541) 682-6100

General Information

Urbanized Area (UZA) Statistics - 2000 Census
Eugene, OR
Square Miles 68
Population 224,049
Population Ranking out of 465 UZAs 138
Other UZAs Served 145

Service Area Statistics
Square Miles 241
Population 293,100

Service Consumption

Annual Passenger Miles 46,025,758
Annual Unlinked Trips 11,668,439
Average Weekday Unlinked Trips ² 39,336
Average Saturday Unlinked Trips ² 18,473
Average Sunday Unlinked Trips ² 10,013

Service Supplied

Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles 5,776,252
Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours 412,455
Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service 293
Vehicles Available for Maximum Service 322
Base Period Requirement 89

Financial Information

Fare Revenues Earned \$7,391,720
Sources of Operating Funds Expended
Fare Revenues (18%) \$7,391,720
Local Funds (47%) \$19,422,362
State Funds (7%) \$2,744,547
Federal Assistance (25%) \$10,237,726
Other Funds (4%) \$1,490,537
Total Operating Funds Expended \$41,286,892
Sources of Capital Funds Expended
Local Funds (17%) \$5,032,452
State Funds (8%) \$2,430,390
Federal Assistance (75%) \$21,975,629
Other Funds (0%) \$0
Total Capital Funds Expended \$29,438,471

Summary Operating Expenses

Salary, Wages, Benefits \$28,576,288
Materials and Supplies \$3,360,817
Purchased Transportation \$6,884,192
Other Operating Expenses \$2,454,512
Total Operating Expenses \$41,284,809

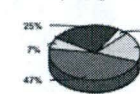
Reconciling Cash Expenditures

\$2,083

Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service and Uses of Capital Funds

Mode	Directly Operated	Purchased Transportation ¹	Revenue Vehicles	Systems and Guideways	Facilities and Stations	Other	Total
Bus	105	1	\$4,164,535	\$19,739,284	\$4,722,625	\$144,609	\$28,771,033
Demand Response	0	41	\$665,538	\$0	\$1,900	\$0	\$667,438
Demand Response - Taxi	0	137	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Vanpool	0	9	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	105	188	\$4,830,073	\$19,739,284	\$4,724,525	\$144,609	\$29,438,471

Sources of Operating Funds Expended



Sources of Capital Funds Expended



Modal Characteristics

Mode	Operating Expenses ¹	Fare Revenues ¹	Uses of Capital Funds	Annual Passenger Miles	Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles	Annual Unlinked Trips	Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours	Fixed Guideway Directional Route Miles	Vehicles Available for Maximum Service	Average Fleet Age in Years	Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service	Peak to Base Ratio	Percent Spares
Bus	\$33,317,058	\$7,064,784	\$28,771,033	41,547,353	3,536,936	11,362,475	282,107	3.2	120	8.1	108	1.15	13%
Demand Response	\$4,324,563	\$246,257	\$667,438	1,581,276	1,206,213	170,311	96,764	N/A	54	5.5	41	N/A	32%
Demand Response - Taxi	\$3,508,410	\$0	\$0	760,740	760,740	94,939	26,087	N/A	137	N/A	137	N/A	0%
Vanpool	\$134,778	\$80,679	\$0	2,136,389	271,363	31,714	5,497	N/A	11	2.4	9	N/A	22%

Performance Measures

Mode	Service Efficiency		Service Effectiveness		Service Effectiveness	
	Operating Expense per Vehicle Revenue Mile	Operating Expense per Vehicle Revenue Hour	Operating Expense per Passenger Mile	Operating Expense per Unlinked Passenger Trip	Unlinked Passenger Trips per Vehicle Revenue Mile	Unlinked Passenger Trips per Vehicle Revenue Hour
Bus	\$9.41	\$118.10	\$0.80	\$2.93	3.21	40.28
Demand Response	\$3.59	\$43.79	\$2.73	\$24.12	0.15	1.82
Demand Response - Taxi	\$4.61	\$134.49	\$4.61	\$36.95	0.12	3.64
Vanpool	\$0.50	\$24.52	\$0.06	\$4.25	0.12	5.77

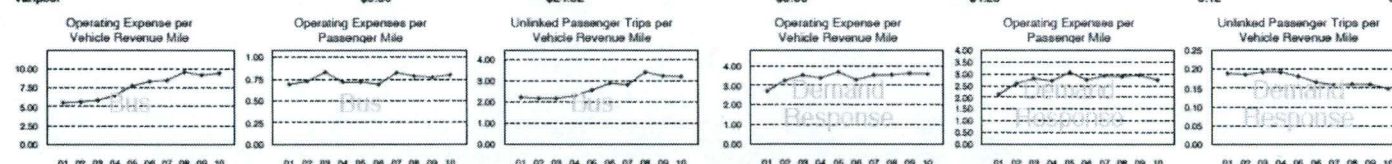


Figure 3: Lane Transit District National Transit Database 2010 data. Adapted from: National Transit Database Program, (2010). *Lane transit district (ltd)*. Retrieved from website:

http://www.ntdprogram.gov/ntdprogram/pubs/profiles/2010/agency_profiles/0007.pdf



Comparison of Operating Characteristics of Selected Transit Properties *
National Transit Database (NTD) Report Year 2009

System	Service Area Population	Revenue Hours	Annual Boardings	Passenger Miles	Fare Revenue	Peak Buses	Total Employees	Operating Expenses	Capital Exp. (Avg per Yr)	Service Area Population per:			Operating Expenses per:			Boardings per Rev Hr	Pass Miles per Rev Hr	Fare Recovery
										Rev Hrs	Boardings	Pass Miles	Rev Hr	Boarding	Pass Mile			
Ann Arbor, MI	204,530	186,623	6,029,637	19,524,689	\$3,137,393	62	187	\$18,530,999	\$4,082,743	0.91	29	95	\$99.30	\$3.07	\$0.95	32.3	104.6	17%
Bakersfield, CA	452,671	286,516	7,514,503	26,759,257	\$4,714,667	69	258	\$19,847,381	\$3,270,416	0.63	17	59	\$69.27	\$2.64	\$0.74	26.2	93.4	24%
Bellingham, WA	192,870	140,217	5,623,158	15,566,535	\$1,384,476	48	172	\$15,149,260	\$3,973,025	0.73	29	81	\$108.04	\$2.69	\$0.97	40.1	111.0	9%
Colorado Spr., CO	438,000	176,390	3,152,990	19,931,997	\$3,436,363	63	***	\$17,277,840	\$5,990,841	0.40	7	46	\$97.95	\$5.48	\$0.87	17.9	113.0	20%
Fort Collins, CO	118,652	73,121	1,904,229	5,235,787	\$839,968	23	80	\$6,026,704	\$1,667,295	0.62	16	44	\$82.42	\$3.16	\$1.15	26.0	71.6	14%
Livermore, CA	166,972	139,304	2,195,406	10,410,316	\$2,318,884	47	***	\$12,764,264	\$4,168,217	0.83	13	62	\$91.63	\$5.81	\$1.23	15.8	74.7	18%
Olympia, WA	155,000	194,041	4,298,328	19,144,343	\$2,306,799	56	212	\$20,829,024	\$3,696,177	1.25	28	124	\$107.34	\$4.85	\$1.09	22.2	98.7	11%
Reno, NV	319,977	260,447	8,449,134	26,853,831	\$7,012,490	57	290	\$27,334,223	\$9,030,027	0.81	26	84	\$104.95	\$3.24	\$1.02	32.4	103.1	26%
Salem, OR	206,500	159,896	4,746,944	15,643,452	\$3,231,769	59	176	\$17,349,035	\$2,827,001	0.77	23	76	\$108.50	\$3.65	\$1.11	29.7	97.8	19%
Santa Cruz, CA	254,538	223,768	6,026,920	36,553,939	\$8,010,509	82	264	\$31,954,331	\$7,885,184	0.88	24	144	\$142.80	\$5.30	\$0.87	26.9	163.4	25%
Vancouver, WA	361,660	275,743	8,201,190	34,730,798	\$6,670,570	83	322	\$28,669,170	\$7,149,795	0.76	17	96	\$103.97	\$4.62	\$0.83	22.5	126.0	23%
Mean (average)	263,561	200,448	6,499,258	22,779,674	\$4,141,994	63	230	\$20,747,056	\$5,389,767	0.80	21	114	\$102.59	\$3.35	\$0.97	27.7	108.9	19%
Lane Transit	291,600	289,316	11,732,650	42,993,939	\$6,639,924	101	334	\$33,232,440	\$10,936,487	0.99	40	147	\$114.87	\$2.83	\$0.77	40.6	148.6	20%
Portland, OR **	1,456,199	1,678,890	68,835,035	252,790,287	\$34,044,751	540	1,646	\$230,412,162	\$41,319,216	1.26	46	170	\$122.63	\$3.39	\$0.91	36.2	134.5	23%

* Properties were selected based on providing a level of service comparable to LTD or providing service to a local university.

** Portland, Oregon, statistics are not included in the mean and are provided for information purposes only. Data is for fixed-route bus service only (light rail is not included).

*** Fixed-route service is contracted service. No employee counts are reported to NTD for contracted services.

Table 1: Comparison of Operating Characteristics for LTD and similar transit agencies using NTD data. Adapted from: Lane Transit District, Finance Department. (2011). *Lane transit district fiscal year 2011-2012 adopted budget*. Retrieved from website: [http://www.ltd.org/pdf/finance/Adopted budget for website.pdf](http://www.ltd.org/pdf/finance/Adopted%20budget%20for%20website.pdf).

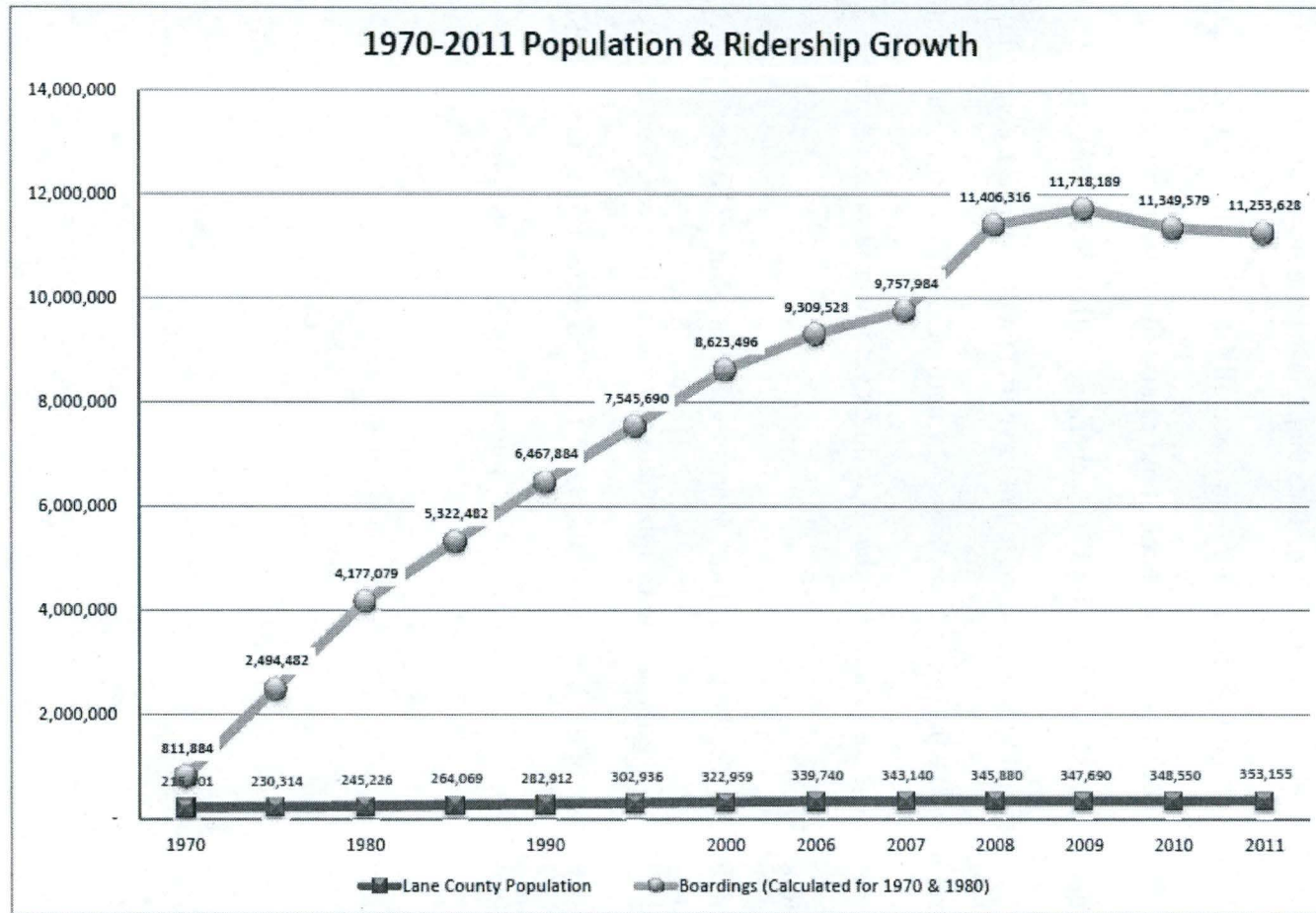


Figure 4: 1970-2011 Lane County Population and LTD Ridership Growth. Adapted from Lipkin, T. Lane Transit District, Finance Department. (2011). *1970-2011 population and ridership*

In Opposition

Opposition groups that have formed against LTD have hired their own researchers which have led them to believe that LTD is fudging its numbers to make itself look as though it is doing better than it actually is. Ridership spiked when EmX was introduced, according to opponents, not because of actual increases in ridership, but due to “manufactured new boardings” (Macherione, 2012). Riders are forced to transfer buses in Springfield when they used to not have to, and thus they are counted twice, creating roughly 750,000 extra boardings (Macherione, 2012). Furthermore, some question why LTD has reported higher boardings yet lower farebox revenues (Macherione, 2012).

Allan Pollock, the general manager for Cherriots, Salem-Keizer’s transit agency, defended LTD’s integrity saying that they are conducting their research based on acceptable models of the industry (Pollock, 2012). The process is too long and has too many people involved for significant corruption to occur (Pollock, 2012).

Chapter III: Context

About LTD

Lane Transit District was founded in 1970, replacing a financially insecure private transit company. The boundaries of LTD's service fall entirely within Lane County, Oregon, encompassing roughly 522 square miles ("Lane transit district, 2010-2011 comprehensive annual financial report" 2011). LTD serves the Eugene/Springfield metropolitan area as well as the smaller cities of Coburg, Creswell, Cottage Grove, Lowell, Veneta, and Junction City. With a fleet of 119 buses, LTD serves approximately 290,000 people and receives more than 11.2 million passenger boardings annually ("Lane transit district, 2010-2011 comprehensive annual financial report" 2011).

LTD provides two primary services: regular, fixed route service and demand-response/paratransit service for persons unable to use the fixed-route system. In addition to these services which most transit agencies provide, LTD introduced a bus rapid transit system in 2008 that mimics light rail service, but with much lower capital costs.

This chapter discusses the many community factors that shape LTD's operations.

Size

LTD is a mid-sized transit agency and thus is able to do larger projects that small agencies cannot accomplish due to lack of staff and financial resources. At the same time, LTD is small enough to build relationships and be innovative in ways that large transit agencies cannot. It's "not-too big, not-too small" size makes it adequate for innovation and experimentation.

Politics

Eugene, the largest city that LTD serves, is a progressive community with a record for being politically liberal (Barnard, 2010). Transit is a tool to many ends, particularly social equality and environmental improvements. Eugene is a progressive community that has long been known to support many groups of people, from the poor to the disabled to the youth. In addition to being humanitarian, the community also has a rich history for caring for the environment. The city has a record for protesting and campaigning to hold banks accountable, a chance for climate justice, and a solution to homelessness ("Occupy Eugene," 2012). Even the protestors against the West Eugene EmX Expansion (a proposed bus rapid transit line into West Eugene) say they support transit, just not in their neighborhoods. Proponents of the Our Money, Our Transit (OMOT) group say they want to see more buses everywhere, showing that even those who are fighting hard against LTD support quality transit service in the community.

Eugene is not just known for being vocally progressive, but Lane County voted predominately Democratic in the last presidential election (62 percent for Barack Obama) ("November 4, 2008 general election" 2008). Democrats are more likely to support transit efforts, as seen through the Amalgamated Transit Union's primary support for Democratic candidates (roughly 90 percent fund of donations going to Democrats in most elections) ("Amalgamated transit union:," 2012). These two statistics suggest that, in general, Eugene voters are predisposed to support transit.

Environmentalism

Eugene is known for being a hot spot for environmentalism. *The National Geographic* named Eugene the Top Green City in the US and *Popular Science* ranked Eugene fifth in its 50 Greenest Cities in America (City of Eugene sustainable Eugene;

Svoboda, 2008). One of the key components to environmentalism is creating more environmentally friendly transportation systems. Transit is often cited as being critical to the solution for climate change, water and air pollution, and preserving agricultural lands and open space. Because most residents embrace green practices, they are often supportive of Lane Transit District and its efforts to make Eugene a more sustainable community.

Eugene also has a plan for addressing climate change that includes supporting transit. Eugene's Climate and Energy Action Plan calls out mass transit as being crucial to reducing Eugene's energy use and contribution to climate change, as well as being critical to providing lower-cost, accessible transportation, which is particularly necessary with rising fossil fuel prices ("A community and climate energy action plan," 2010). This plan is used by city departments in their decision making, and thus LTD is supported by the city in this way.

Climate

Lane County has a long rainy season due to its Pacific Northwest maritime climate. This can make walking and bicycling less appealing than public-transit. As former LTD Board president, Gerry Gaydos, said, "some of us just aren't as hardy as others" meaning that for some, transit is the best option for getting places without having to combat the cold and rain.

The area is also prone to snow once or twice a season and usually receives a couple of inches each winter. Because the area does not get snow and ice regularly, most residents are not prepared for it and many look to transit to help them on the few snowy days each year. While these riders do not account for much in terms of

increasing ridership levels, they do help LTD gain community support by reaching out to those who do not typically ride transit.

State Land Use Planning and the Urban Growth Boundary

LTD also benefits from being within a state that supports transit planning. Oregon has 19 land use planning goals, one of which mandates that local and regional agencies develop transportation plans ("Oregon's statewide planning," 1973). This Oregon Administrative Rule helps to support LTD's long-range planning and helps ensure inter-agency coordination. By requiring municipalities to integrate land use and transportation planning, this rule encourages smart growth that promotes development along transportation corridors. Because the state emphasizes the connection between land use and transportation, it helps set LTD up for success.

Oregon's state land use laws also promote densifying urban areas in order to protect agricultural and forest lands. This plan requires communities such as Eugene and Springfield to develop urban growth boundaries (UGB). Urban growth boundaries are regional borders that attempt to control urban sprawl by essentially creating islands that forces development into the core. A strict UGB helps create communities with higher densities, which are naturally better served by transit.

Local Long-range Plans

Several important long-range plans supporting transit help LTD obtain community support as well as funding. *Envision Eugene* is a 20-year land-use plan that is currently under development and that fulfills Oregon's state land use law. The plan expresses the desire for transit-oriented development with compact growth along key transportation corridors ("Envision Eugene," 2012). These spokes for additional development channel growth where Eugene wants it—near downtown and along

corridors that do not affect established neighborhoods. Eugene-Springfield's current 20 year transportation plan, *TransPlan*, as well as Eugene's developing *Transportation System Plan*, both encourage transit and support bus rapid transit ("Transportation system plan" 2012). In order to fulfill the plans for a transit-oriented community, LTD must begin building infrastructure and programs today. These plans help provide the backbone of support for LTD's developments.

The University's Campus Planning Committee developed a Long Range Transportation Plan in 1973 that was revolutionary nationwide at that time. The plan created a priority-modes list that gave precedence in planning for certain transportation modes over others: "*Priority for movement is as follows: emergency vehicles, pedestrians and disabled persons, bicyclists, public transportation, motor-driven vehicles for service and, lastly, personal cars*" ("Long range campus transportation plan," 1976). The plan also stated that the University needs to work closely with Lane Transit District in order to carry out the plan. This plan helped, and continues to help, LTD work with one of its largest ridership groups and serves to increase ridership and efficiency.

Built-in Markets

Students are a built-in market for transit agencies since students are more apt to use buses than others in the community. Students typically have low budgets, they live relatively close to their primary destination (campus), and they are less likely to have cars than the general public—all factors that steer them towards using public transportation. Colleges and universities tend to further encourage students to use transit by offering bus passes and by providing limited and expensive parking (both are the case for Lane Community College and University of Oregon).

More than half of LTD's riders identify themselves as students, and of those, 45 percent attend the University of Oregon and 36 percent attend Lane Community College ("2011 Origin/Destination Study Research Report"). LTD's high ridership levels can be attributed largely to two big schools in the area: the University of Oregon (UO) and Lane Community College (LCC). The University of Oregon has nearly 25,000 students, 19 percent of which commute by bus, and 4,500 staff and faculty, of which 11 percent commute by bus ("Fall 2009 newsletter," 2009). Lane Community College has 36,000 students each year and over 1,000 staff members ("About Lane," 2011). A commute mode share is not conducted at LCC.

Andy Vobora, LTD's Director of Service, Planning, and Marketing, points to increasing enrollment at the community college and the university as the main drivers to LTD's recent ridership increases ("Ridership on LTD increases," 2012). The routes that service these areas are very strong, he says ("Ridership on LTD increases," 2012).

Vobora said in another interview, "We're encouraged by the fact that the numbers are starting to grow at a time when again, our resources and the number of service hours we have out on the street was reduced during this recession so it shows there is continuing strong demand for transit in our community and in the United States" (Brauer, 2012).

Besides the university and the community college, the hospital also provides a built-in market for LTD. As the largest employer in Lane County, with nearly 5,000 employees, PeaceHealth Medical Group utilizes LTD's services for employees as well as patients ("Lane County, Oregon," 2010).

4J School District School Choice

The 4J School District, which is encompassed by LTD, offers school choice, meaning all students have the right to apply to any school in the district. This means

that students can attend schools that are not in their neighborhood and thus may use public transit rather than a school bus to get to and from school. Nearly 4,470 students (2,596 elementary school, 782 middle school, 1,092 high school) of the nearly 17,000 total students used school choice to attend a school that was not their neighborhood school ("District facts, 4j").

Many of these students could not attend the school of their choice without LTD. LTD enables children to access schools that offer unique opportunities such as French, Spanish, and Japanese immersion programs or to remain with peers despite a move.

Rising Gas Prices and the Economy

Not unique to LTD, but a large factor in ridership increases, is rising gas prices. Fuel prices in the United States have skyrocketed from just over \$1 per gallon in 1999 to over \$4 in 2012 ("U.S. all grades," 2012). This trend doesn't appear to be slowing, with 2012 already setting records in Oregon for high gas prices ("Oregon gas price," 2012). Transit plays a critical role in providing transportation for those who cannot or choose not to pay for the increasing cost of driving a private vehicle.

While increasing gas prices are an essential ingredient in encouraging/forcing some drivers to switch to active transportation such as public transit, it is important that those systems (ie. high quality transit service) are in place when people need to make that switch. Creating a well-functioning transit system takes far longer than it does for gas prices to spike. Thus, LTD has had to prepare for many years to be a safeguard for many members of the community who are and will continue to be unable to afford high gas prices.

The economy in recent years has also boosted transit ridership. In 2009, the same year Lane County experienced its highest unemployment rate of 13.6 percent in

decades, LTD saw its highest ridership ever (Eyster, 2012; "Unemployment rate," 2012). As households saw their incomes drop, people turned to LTD as an affordable means of transportation. The role of transit is often to be there as a safety net for individuals and families that suddenly hit hard times. Many Lane County residents feel that transit is an essential part of a community, because while they may not utilize it presently, there may come a time or there previously was a time in their life when transit was a necessity. Beyond a personal level, many people support transit because they recognize that others in their community rely on transit or need it as a safety net.

Chapter IV: Maximizing Community Support

There are several factors that make Lane Transit District a successful agency that are simply a result of the characteristics of the community it is located in. These contributions to LTD's success are not just taken for granted by LTD, but are capitalized on. LTD works hard to build relationships with the public as well as other agencies to build the best infrastructure and provide the best service possible.

Routes and Schedules

Lane County is moderately sized and thus transit is a feasible, attractive mode of transportation for many commuters. Serving a mid-sized area does not automatically make a successful transit agency, but LTD has planned its routes and schedules to help people get around as best they can. LTD works with its riders, particularly its largest markets, the hospital and the University, to increase service on certain routes, add stops in key locations, and alter streetscapes to best serve locations.

LTD also enabled groups to purchase routes. For a while, the University of Oregon purchased certain express routes with LTD to better help students get to campus (Maffei, 2012). PeaceHealth also underwrote a park and ride with a shuttle for roughly 250 employees that LTD operated (Farrington, 2012).

Group Pass Program

LTD is fortunate to have several key built-in markets that help it keep ridership levels high. The University of Oregon, Lane Community College, and PeaceHealth Medical Center have always been major markets for LTD services. All of these institutions have had significant historic parking problems, and LTD has played a key role in alleviating parking and congestion woes. LTD does not take these markets for

granted, but has worked closely with each one to improve transportation options (Maffei, 2012).

One innovative program that LTD implemented was its Group Pass Program in which transit service is provided to all individuals of an organization for a set fee. The idea is that both users and non-users benefit from increased transit service and therefore everyone should help pay for the service. Users benefit by being able to use transit at no additional cost beyond an initial fee whereas pass holders who do not choose to ride transit benefit from the decreased demand for parking. Because non-users share in the cost of the passes, the price per person is dramatically reduced. Since pass holders can use transit for “free,” ridership tends to increase.

LTD calculated the price per employee/student using a formula that was premised on the program being revenue neutral (Vobora, 2012). Thus, LTD accepted the fare revenue generated by riders from a particular group prior to the Group Pass Program and then based the rate on 100 percent participation. For example, if before the Group Pass Program, a group had ten employees and one rode the bus, providing LTD with \$48 each month, then under the Group Pass Program, LTD would provide unlimited rides to all ten employees for \$4.80 per person per month. Over time, LTD standardized its group fare for all groups with the current rate being \$5.32 per participant per month. Some groups are considered “donors” since they are paying more than they are using if they weren’t in the program whereas some groups are “users” since they have higher ridership and LTD would be making more money if the group weren’t under the program.

LTD is deliberate in its timing for many of its pursuits, including developing the Group Bus Pass Program. The Associated Students of the University of Oregon

(ASUO) was the first to adopt the Group Pass Program in 1988. Former Assistant General Manager at LTD, Stefano Viggiano, first observed a group bus pass program at University of California Santa Barbara in 1982 (Pangborn, 2012). Several years later, the University of Oregon was in the midst of a controversial plan to construct a four-floor parking garage near the education building (Pangborn, 2012). Despite severe parking problems, students and staff protested the parking garage, and LTD stepped in with a viable alternative: a bus pass program (Pangborn, 2012). LTD pitched the idea to University administration, but due to financial problems with the University's general fund, the administration told LTD it would have to go to the student government (Pangborn, 2012). LTD worked closely with the ASUO to put together a ballot measure and worked with students to promote the idea. The vote passed in April 1988 and the ASUO was the first to contract with LTD in the Group Pass Program.

The Group Pass Program was started as a way of increasing ridership for LTD (Vobora, 2012). And increase ridership it did, with UO ridership more than doubling in the first year of the program (Vobora, 2012). University students, who generally have lower income levels than the population as a whole, are sensitive to transit fares; thus the concept of being able to ride for free greatly appealed to students ("Group pass program," 1991). When it began, the contract between the ASUO and LTD was approximately \$241, 850 from student incidental fees to operate for the year 1988-89 ("Group pass program," 1991). With roughly 16,000 students the contract worked out to be approximately \$4.50 per student per quarter ("Group pass program," 1991).

The ASUO believed that in order for students to pass the measure, a refund was necessary for students not wishing to use the service ("Group pass program," 1991). While the whole concept is based on the idea that non-users benefit and thus pay,

politically, it was necessary for LTD to at least offer an out for those who wanted a refund. LTD found that only 1 to 2 percent of students sought refunds each term ("Group pass program," 1991). Refunding fees has since been abolished as the program became well established. Non-users also benefited, with the total number of parking permit purchases decreasing by more than 1,000 permits the year the program was put into effect ("Group pass program," 1991).

Making transit more viable for students was critical not only because of parking problems, but also because it expanded the catchment area for student housing. As the University's student population grew, students were required to live farther away from campus and transit provided a viable means to get to campus. Furthermore, transit enabled students to access cheaper housing in Springfield, the Whitaker neighborhood, as well as farther south and west of campus, because housing located adjacent to the University has always been much more expensive than neighborhoods just slightly farther away. Transit, thus, makes attending college more feasible for lower-income students (Tepfer, 2012).

Just a few months after the UO Group Pass Program began, a contract was put into place for faculty and staff. Faculty and staff bus passes were funded using parking revenues from the University. This plan was essential because many UO employees, like students, cannot afford to live within walking or biking distance of campus. Public transit provides them with an option beyond driving.

Lane Community College joined LTD's Group Pass Program in September 2003 for its full time students. In 2010, LCC provided its employees with free monthly passes as well as a park and ride from the Em's stadium parking lot. Neither were used much and hence both were terminated after just a few months.

The UO and LCC are the largest purchasers of the Group Pass Program and between the two of them pay LTD \$1,281,331, or 17 percent of LTD's total passenger revenue ("Lane transit district, 2010-2011 comprehensive annual financial report" 2011). The UO pays for its passes through a mandatory incidental fee that is then allocated by the student government, the ASUO. At LCC, students are eligible for a bus pass when they pay a \$27 transportation fee ("Non-refundable transportation fee," 2011). LCC's contract with LTD in fiscal year 2010-2011 was \$797,169, much less than the service LTD provides, but a service LTD continues due to its commitment to students (Hayward, 2012).

Besides the universities, LTD's robust Group Pass Program brings in \$2,380,148, or 32 percent of LTD's passenger revenues ("Lane transit district, 2010-2011 comprehensive annual financial report" 2011). Including the universities, LTD's Group Pass Program serves 80-90 groups with approximately 45,000 employees and students enjoying the benefit of unlimited rides (Maffei, 2012).

In addition to serving the UO and LCC, LTD offered free bus passes to grade 6 to 12 students (approximately 25,000 students per year) from 2006 to 2011 through a special program funded by Oregon Department of Energy tax credit funds (Vobora, 2012). The program ended when the legislature cut the funding. Some groups, including the Springfield high schools and 21 school programs, found the service so essential that they joined the Group Pass Program using their own funding (Vobora, 2012). Smaller schools have also purchased the Group Passes for their students as a cheaper alternative to providing school buses (Gillespie, 2012).

Collaborating on Construction

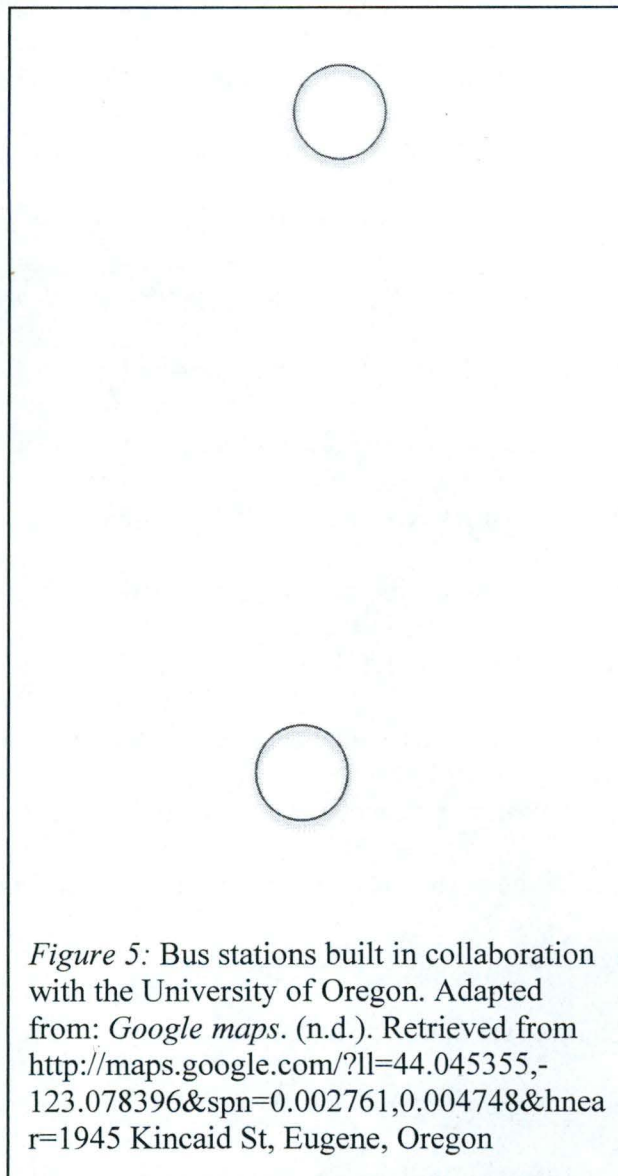
Bus transit typically does not require extensive capital construction like light rail does. However, LTD has taken a hands-on approach to creating both functional bus stations as well as bus rapid transit, which requires a separate lane and bus stops. To do such construction and to do it well requires significant collaboration with property owners, users, and interested parties. Many would argue that LTD is doing a poor job of such collaboration with the West Eugene EmX Expansion project as discussed later in this thesis. This section discusses ways LTD has worked with other groups in the past to develop successful projects.

University of Oregon

LTD has worked extensively for decades with the University in constructing facilities that benefit both the University and the community. In the early 1980s, Stefano Viggiano, assistant general manager at LTD, approached the University's Campus Planning office to discuss building a transit station on Kincaid Street across from the DuckStore (see Figure 5) (Tepfer, 2012, Google maps). The idea was that a transit station at this location would serve students better by improving operational efficiency. The two groups collaborated effectively to build the station, with LTD making improvements in the public right of way while UO made improvements on its property (Tepfer, 2012). Due to the synergies of the two groups, the final product looked seamless such that no one could tell that the project overlapped property lines and was the work of two major entities. In the summer of 2011, this transit station was remodeled, again with great collaboration between LTD and UO Campus Planning. This collaboration was also seen in the early 1990s when LTD and UO Campus

Planning worked together to build University Station across from the PLC building near 14th Avenue and Kincaid Street (see Figure 5) (Google maps).

When LTD staff decided to move forward with its plans for bus rapid transit, they met with the senior leadership of each of LTD's critical partners (PeaceHealth, the



University of Oregon, the City of Eugene, the City of Springfield, and Lane County) to get their support (Tepfer, 2012). The University of Oregon central administration put major support behind LTD's EmX line and mandated Campus Planning to help LTD in the best way possible (Tepfer, 2012). As a result, University staff served on committees, made it easy for LTD to acquire land for rights of way, gave up access rights to the campus by eliminating left turns from Franklin onto Agate and Onyx, and worked with adjacent neighborhoods (Tepfer, 2012). The University saw the EmX

line as a huge benefit for students, staff, and community members, helping them all get to and from campus easily, and minimizing the need for parking. By collaborating on the construction, the University was able to optimize EmX and help draw people into

the heart of campus, by directing them through major campus gateways rather than designing a system that would have people travel alongside the border of campus (Tepfer, 2012).

PeaceHealth

PeaceHealth is the largest contributor to the payroll tax and in turn LTD has long been a major transportation provider for the hospital. Until 2008, PeaceHealth's primary hospital in Lane County was located just blocks from the University and downtown Eugene. Due to its central location, PeaceHealth had major parking issues. A robust transit system that served the hospital and the University as well as an express bus from River Road, significantly helped alleviate these parking problems.

Hospital staff parking was more expensive than any other place in town (including downtown garages) and a parking space was difficult to find during overlapping shifts. Moreover, because trying to find parking often made staff late to work, public transit was an appealing alternative. LTD took advantage of this built-in market by working with PeaceHealth to provide optimal service for staff and patients.

After trying out a Group Pass Program, PeaceHealth decided that because not enough employees were taking advantage of the program, it would be much cheaper to replace the program with a consignment program that had the same net effect. PeaceHealth ended its Group Pass Program that had annual transit stickers adhered to employee badges and began offering employees free day or month passes.

By 2002, it became clear that PeaceHealth was outgrowing its landlocked facilities. PeaceHealth looked into infill, but due to the high price, the logistical difficulties, and the confinements of infilling, PeaceHealth opted to build a new campus on a greenfield site in Springfield off of RiverBend Drive. Because PeaceHealth is a

regional hospital that serves multiple counties, being located outside of central Eugene was not a major concern (Farrington, 2012). PeaceHealth did recognize the new location was more remote, and because of this geographical factor, committed to enhancing transportation facilities and options (Farrington, 2012).

LTD collaborated extensively with PeaceHealth to ensure that the hospital could have adequate access to transit. Just 17 months after PeaceHealth RiverBend opened, EmX Gateway began operating. While both projects would have happened regardless of the other, the collaboration between the two parties made the construction of the route even more effective. LTD worked with PeaceHealth to design a roadway that would accommodate the new bus rapid transit line and PeaceHealth developed its master plan with EmX in mind. For example, EmX has a station strategically located on the street right in front of the hospital. LTD and PeaceHealth are continuing to work together on siting transit stops in convenient locations that address the needs of PeaceHealth staff, patients, and visitors (Farrington, 2012).

PeaceHealth still maintains 104 licensed beds at its University District hospital (in comparison to the 344 licensed beds at RiverBend) and so today, EmX serves as an important shuttle that provides convenient service between the two campuses. PeaceHealth has a master plan for its RiverBend campus, with the hospital as the anchor, which includes consolidating operations, and even offering housing and food services in order to generate revenue (to fund hospital services because they are a non-profit) (Farrington, 2012). Currently, the campus includes the hospital and RiverBend Annex, which is an administration building and pharmacy. As the campus grows and the master plan comes to fruition, transit ridership is expected to increase (Farrington, 2012; Torrey, 2012).

PeaceHealth employees commute at equal or even greater rates since the hospital moved its primary facilities from the University District to its current location at RiverBend, despite the fact that the University location was more central than RiverBend (Farrington, 2012). PeaceHealth's director of land use planning and development, Phil Farrington, attributes LTD's quality of service as a primary reason why PeaceHealth employees have chosen to continue to utilize public transit. EmX, Farrington said, has proved a great success for increasing transit ridership to and from PeaceHealth RiverBend. PeaceHealth has seen an increase of roughly 20 percent in the number of free monthly passes provided to employees and an increase of approximately 25 percent in ridership levels since EmX Gateway began operating (Farrington, 2012).

Many PeaceHealth employees aren't able to use transit, however, due to their work schedules. Approximately two-thirds of PeaceHealth's staff arrive at or leave the hospital when transit service is not operating (Farrington, 2012). This means that even if a staff member can easily get to the hospital by transit, he or she cannot go home using transit because of the hours of operation, and thus the staff member must choose another alternative, most likely driving. PeaceHealth is fortunate that LTD runs on weekends, however, due to limited hours throughout the week, many cannot utilize the services.

Innovation

LTD has come to be known nationally in the industry as a cutting-edge agency, a mid-sized agency with big ideas. The Federal Transportation Administration has come to respect and support LTD's innovative projects while other agencies such as Salem-Keizer's, look to LTD as a model organization from which to learn from (Krochalis, 2012; Pollock, 2012). Former LTD board member and prominent businessman, Robert

Bennett, wants LTD to be able to compete effectively with other transportation modes. Currently LTD's market share is 3 to 5, percent which is very low compared to other transportation modes; Bennett wants LTD to have the tools to increase that market share to a more competitive 10 to 15 percent.

Wheelchair Accessible

LTD's goal to serve the whole community led it to develop the infrastructure that would allow people in wheelchairs to access its services. In 1985, LTD became the first transit agency in the country to be fully accessible to the elderly and disabled (Eyster, 2012). This meant putting in curb cuts near stops, incorporating ramps onto buses, becoming lift-equipped, and creating spaces for wheelchairs on buses. Five years later, when the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was moving through Congress, many transit agencies across the country were resisting the act because of what they perceived as a burden of having to accommodate people with disabilities, but LTD fully supported the ADA (Eyster, 2012).

The Breeze

LTD looks for innovative ways to improve its system and expand ridership by making its service more accessible. LTD developed the concept of The Breeze, a bus that went from the University campus to Valley River Center to downtown to the Fifth Street Public Market. Launched in 2001, the Breeze soon became a friendly and easy way to introduce students and community members to transit with a simple schedule and clear branding (Levis, 2012). The Breeze was a commuter system that competed with cars, said Bennett. The Breeze acted as a modern trolley car with easy to use vehicles and an on-time, frequent shuttle.

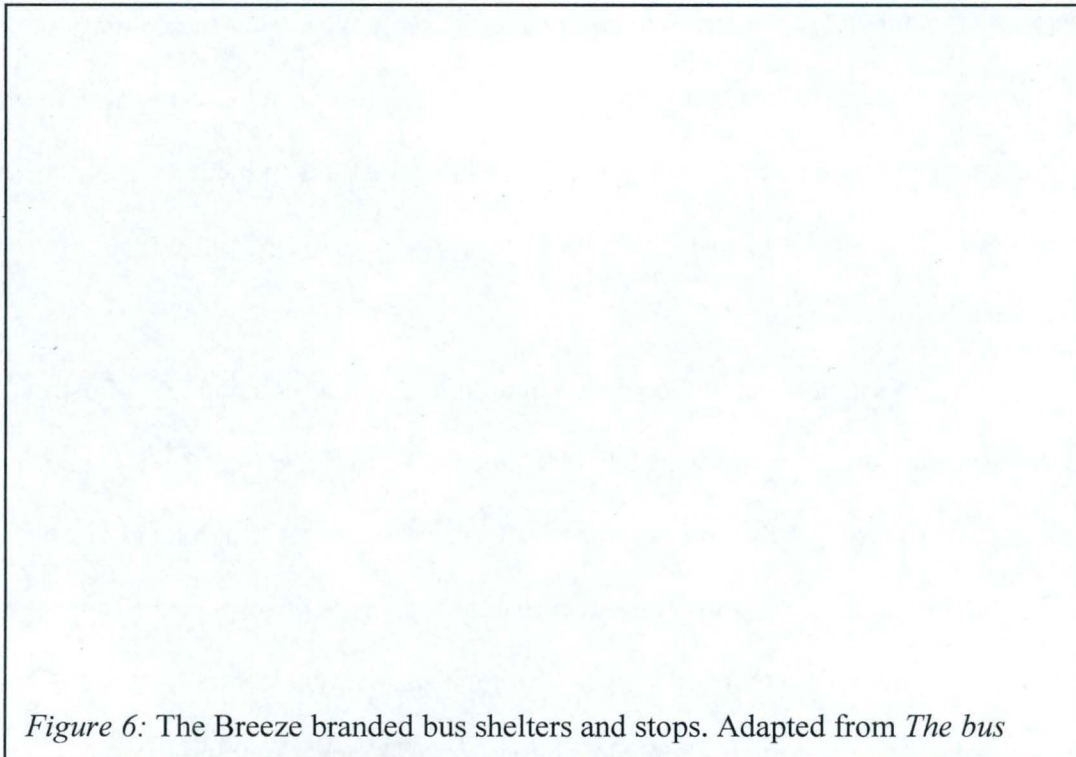


Figure 6: The Breeze branded bus shelters and stops. Adapted from The bus

The Breeze had a different look from LTD's normal buses, with shorter, quieter, hybrid buses whose paint color changed as the bus moved, as well as shelters and stops that were clearly demarcated (see Figure 6) ("The bus stops," 2005). The shuttle bus that came every 10 to 20 minutes and started at only 25 cents for non-pass holders to use made it simple for students and others in the community to "breeze around town" (Bolt, 2001).

The Breeze also was a way to encourage students to spend their money outside of the campus area and to visit three of Eugene's largest activity and shopping centers. LTD worked closely with the UO to ensure that such a route would be feasible and, using federal grant money, put the system into operation.

The Breeze vehicles began to fall apart and were replaced with regular, larger buses. The use of more cumbersome buses is one reason the service was cut, Bennett

argued. In April 2010, due to budget cuts, the Breeze was eliminated ("Ltd cuts 20," 2010).

Bicycle Racks

LTD sees buses as part of a suite of transportation options and realizes the importance of incorporating pedestrian and bicycle facilities into its operations. This is why LTD is ahead of the curve in terms of providing racks for bicycles on buses. LTD added bicycle racks to the front of its buses before doing so became popular (Gaydos, 2012). Whereas most agencies have spaces for two bicycles, LTD has triple racks (Inerfeld, 2012).

Articulated Buses

As LTD's ridership increases and buses become over-crowded, LTD has sought innovative ways to address the issue. LTD found that the only way to meet the demand for more buses in a cost-effective way was to incorporate articulated buses into its fleet. By using articulated buses, LTD has been able to serve more people with the same number of bus drivers.

EmX

What has made LTD both a national leader in mid-sized transit, as well as a contested agency locally, is the agency's implementation of bus rapid transit. Bus rapid transit is seen as a necessary, innovative step that fits the size and scope of the community. People from across the nation have come to see what LTD is doing with bus rapid transit, while some residents are fighting tooth and nail to stop it from moving into their neighborhoods.

The EmX was Viggiano's "brainchild" (Eyster, 2012). Viggiano traveled with the FTA to Curitiba, Brazil, to envision how to apply bus rapid transit in a smaller

community (Pangborn, 2012). Viggiano created white papers to educate congressmen about how bus rapid transit could be an inexpensive alternative to light rail. He helped bring a new form of transit to the United States, one that was appropriate for mid-sized communities.

EmX is an example of a project done due to the forethought of LTD's staff. LTD, along with other agencies, is anticipating significant congestion along key corridors as Eugene's population grows. While congestion, sprawl, and gas prices may not be a major problem facing Eugene today, it is far less expensive to put infrastructure in preemptively than it is to wait until the problem has become entrenched. EmX is about creating more efficient corridors in an effort to avoid the mistakes that Los Angeles and Seattle are encountering—having to retroactively construct transit infrastructure (Gaydos, 2012). Former LTD Board member, Robert Bennett, told neighborhoods, "This is a 25 year decision. We need to act now to have good transit in the future" (Bennett, 2012).

EmX was designed as a means of attracting choice riders, or those who are not reliant on public transportation. By offering a service that draws people out of their personal vehicles, LTD is helping to reduce the costly effects of single-occupancy driving: pollution, health problems, congestion, etc.. Bennett was and continues to be a great supporter of the EmX because he sees it as a sleek option that will allow LTD to gain a competitive edge over single-occupancy driving (see Figure 7) ("Emx History"). LTD is currently increasing its market share as a result of EmX and is doing better than anyone expected (Bennett, 2012).

Bennett's support hinged on creating a quality bus rapid transit line, not a half-hearted attempt. Bennett understood that having a dedicated lane or the promise of a

dedicated lane in the future (such as in Glenwood) was essential to having a successful, competitive transit service. His theory was that, in the future, when congestion is a

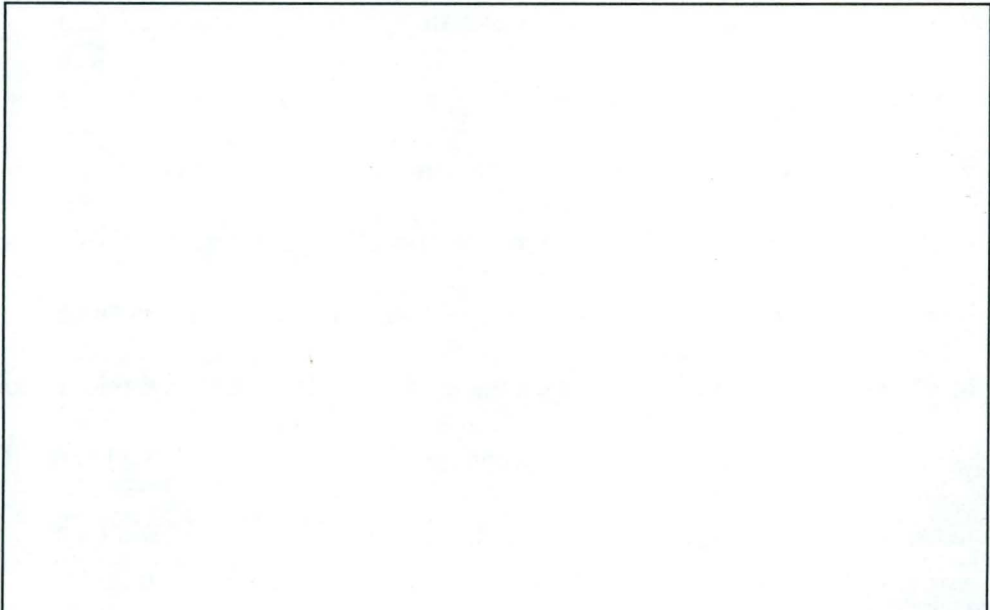


Figure 7: EmX bus at station, in designated lane. Emx history. (n.d.).

Retrieved from

<http://www.ltd.org/search/showresult.html?versionthread=45a4b83927fb252b751c741bf42c81a2>

serious issue, transit can gain its competitive edge by being faster than vehicles that are stuck in traffic during commute times (Bennett, 2012).

LTD saw EmX as a solution to current and future transportation problems. Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) will not allow significant development in West Eugene until transportation in the area is improved. ODOT will not give permits to allow for development until Eugene can show that it can handle increased traffic in that area (Torrey, 2012). When the West Eugene Parkway failed to pass City Council in 2006, a new solution was needed to address the ever-growing congestion issues. LTD offered a more environmentally and socially friendly solution to providing a sufficient transportation system in the area than the originally proposed West Eugene Parkway.

Bennett believes there's a silent majority that supports EmX, saying that bus rapid transit has energized transit in the community and that more people support LTD today because of it. He thinks EmX is worth fighting for (Bennett, 2012).

Creating a Culture of Collaboration

LTD has worked hard to develop beneficial relationships with its major partners. Over time, LTD has been able to create a culture in which interested parties engage and make sure that everyone is at the table. LTD has taught the University of Oregon and other agencies the benefit of maintaining an on-going professional relationship rather than just calling on the other group when needed (Tepfer, 2012). LTD now has regular interactions with its biggest collaborators: the cities, the county, and its major built-in markets.

LTD fosters relationships as much as possible. For example, LTD collaborates with the University's Planning, Public Policy, and Management (PPPM) program by hiring graduates of the department, and by commissioning studies through PPPM's Community Planning Workshop (Tepfer, 2012).

To develop the most beneficial service possible, staff at LTD interface regularly with leaders and agencies across the region to ensure that transit is well integrated with other initiatives and programs (Harding, 2012). LTD's goal to improve quality of life rather than just promote transit leads it to work hard to be a good partner in the community.

Alleviating Road Construction Congestion

LTD helps provide those facing road construction find an alternative. LTD has partnered with other local agencies to help the public know about upcoming roadway construction projects in the region and ways to get around amidst the construction

through a website: KeepUsMoving.info. LTD plays a key role in providing transit as an alternative to driving during construction, which helps mitigate congestion caused by the construction work.

While LTD does not normally market its Group Bus Pass Program, it does so at times during major road construction. For example, when I-105 was closed in 2005, LTD was proactive about getting businesses to join the Group Pass Program (Maffei, 2012). The area affected included major employers such as those in Valley River Center. Thus LTD sought to help employers ensure their employees could get to their jobs at a time when single-occupancy driving was unpredictable.

Transportation Options

LTD's goal is not simply to advance public transit, but to help promote a variety of transportation options. In 1995, Oregon Department of Transportation indicated that it wanted transit agencies to create transportation options programs (Maffei, 2012). Subsequently, LTD applied for \$50,000 through a state grant to start a transportation options program and received the funding (Maffei, 2012). LTD named their program Commuter Solutions, but it was later changed to point2point solutions. The goal of the program is to reduce vehicle miles travelled by promoting transportation options (Maffei, 2012). LTD's program, point2point solutions, is another way LTD provides alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle trips with solutions such as: walking, biking, transit, carpooling, telecommuting, using park and ride, and offering emergency ride home.

LTD is not unique in housing a transportation options program, but by doing so, it shows LTD's commitment to finding the best transportation for people and the community—not just supporting transit alone.

Event Shuttles

LTD provides service to segments of the population not normally served by public transportation when it provides shuttle service to events in the area, including sports games and the Country Fair. LTD plays a key role in lessening parking needs and traffic congestion by shuttling people from parking lots and their downtown stations to a variety of events that bring in thousands of visitors.

Eugene is able to host large events such as the Olympic Trials because LTD makes transportation to these events possible. LTD has developed an efficient system that enables spectators to park in high school parking lots and then shuttles them to Hayward Field. The park and ride works because LTD has figured out how to make it easy for people to utilize the service. LTD has managed to create a system that is efficient at quickly transporting thousands of people (for example at the beginning and end of events).

Marketing

LTD uses marketing in a strategic way so as to make its services easy to understand and thus more accessible to the public. LTD's marketing is innovative and its educational programs are useful in making services simple and straight-forward. LTD's branding and structure of its Breeze line and later its EmX route differentiated these systems from general routes. This clear distinction makes the services easier, especially for those weary of using transit.

Funk/Levis & Associates are the strategic advisors for LTD and manage advertising and messaging for the transit agency. Anne Marie Levis, president of Funk/Levis & Associates, says that in addition to making transit friendly and accessible, marketing is essential to creating a vision for the community (Levis, 2012). Levis

believes that LTD is doing a great job of proactively addressing what will be tomorrow's problems such as rising gas prices, traffic congestion, and climate change (Levis, 2012). Transit agencies need to plan ahead and they also need to sell a vision of what transit can be and what a livable community looks like.

Happy Drivers, Happy Riders

LTD maintains good relations with the transit union and its bus drivers (Gaydos, 2012). LTD supports its drivers and ensures that they are well-trained. Drivers are LTD's ambassadors to the public and the administrative staff understands that selecting talented, friendly drivers is essential to community success.

In Opposition

While LTD has generally been able to maximize support from the community, there are some who think LTD is making bad decisions in addressing the community's transit needs. Levis described a shift in support for LTD over recent years, saying that 18 years ago, when she first came to Eugene, no one questioned LTD and in general the community considered it a good transit agency. Levis continued saying, the economy was better and most people saw LTD for what it is—forward thinking, innovative, and trying to build something great (Levis, 2012). When Tea Party-ism began to grow, the economy tanked, a new and ill-fitting general manager transitioned into leadership at LTD¹, and the West Eugene EmX Expansion (WEEE) moved forward, a “perfect storm” was created (Levis, 2012). As a result, the community lost its connection to

¹ General Manager Ken Hamm served from 2000 to 2006, but did not work well with LTD. Perhaps because he came from outside the area and did not understand the community or the culture at LTD or because he followed esteemed general manager, Phyllis Loobey, Hamm received stiff criticism from LTD employees, riders, and community leaders (“Hefty pay-out for,” 2006). He allegedly referred to Disney on multiple occasions and wanted LTD to operate more like Disney with its services, a proposal that did not fit well with the culture of the agency (Levis, 2012). Some say Hamm lost the confidence of the staff and the board (Levis, 2012).

LTD. Recent years have marked an all-time low for LTD in terms of community support, many say (Levis, 2012).

Many in the community, both those who support and those who don't support LTD, believe that LTD approached the WEEE project poorly. Springfield Mayor Christine Lundberg said that LTD "created a monster," when referring to the massive uprising that has come in response to the WEEE proposal (Lundberg, 2012). She said that LTD was way off track when it came to developing a public process for the WEEE project and that hopefully the agency's leaders have learned how to involve the public and how not to as a result (Lundberg, 2012). Because LTD did not tactfully approach businesses and residents of West Eugene, LTD has been faced with significant backlash. The multiple groups fighting LTD's proposal have spent thousands of hours and thousands of dollars in an effort to discredit LTD as an agency.

Some stakeholders involved in the WEEE are upset that LTD did not approach them before the agency received federal funding (Macherione, 2012). Instead, they argue, LTD insisted that it use the grant money because, if it does not use it for this project, the federal government would give the funds to another transit agency. Some say that rather than listening to what the stakeholders had to say, LTD received the money and in turn used that as an excuse to force a project upon an unhappy group of stakeholders.

On the other hand, Mayor Lundberg, as well as former LTD board member, Robert Bennett, believe that LTD needs to stand strong with its decisions. Lundberg and Bennett think that once an agency decides to carry something out, it needs to get people on its team rather than debating and appealing different interests (Bennett, 2012; Lundberg, 2012). Bennett said that LTD should have utilized other business owners

who were supportive of EmX to approach affected businesses (Bennett, 2012).

Encouraging people and groups that can relate to those that have concerns arguably would have been more effective than LTD staff working alone to try to convince affected people. However, rather than LTD employing this approach, bureaucrats and small business owners simply talked past one another, escalating the matter to a community-wide issue.

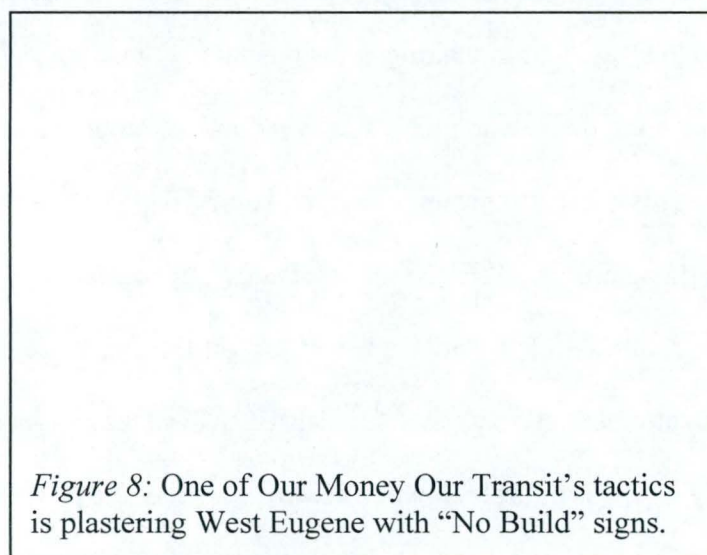
Many people, both residents and non-residents, view Eugene as an overwhelmingly active and vocal community. While community involvement is necessary and important, some believe LTD has allowed for too much public input and has allowed interest groups to sway it from making decisions that are best for the greater public. Some say there are times when LTD has failed to look at the larger picture and has focused instead on a small group of active people (Torrey, 2012). The first opposition group to form against the WEEE was a collection of residential homeowners that called themselves 3RT, Residents for Responsible Transit. The group acted quickly as soon as the alternatives analysis was released. After taking notice that one proposed route for the EmX was entirely down West 11th Avenue, the group lobbied to ensure that their section of 11th Avenue would not be affected. In response, LTD agreed to move the route away from the residential section of West 11th. Some point to LTD's move to change the route from entirely along West 11th as an example of an instance when the agency folded in the face of a small vocal group. Some opponents believe that that's not leadership; that's fear. LTD admits that in hindsight the board made a poor decision and claims to have learned from the experience.

Others think LTD has been too inflexible with its proposals. Rob Inerfeld, the transportation planning manager for the City of Eugene explained that LTD and the

City Council's adamant push for dedicated lanes everywhere for the EmX really hurt their efforts (Inerfeld, 2012). Rather than entering the project with the goal to improve service, LTD began with the resolute decision to have dedicated lanes throughout the entire West Eugene project. In the end, LTD has had to succumb to the reality that buses will need to run in traffic in areas that are not projected to be congested and where easement is too difficult.

Because LTD failed to approach the situation in a sensitive a way as it might have, the agency currently faces continuing and often emotional vocal opposition.

Opponents to WEEE felt blindsided, they became angry, and then they organized. Once



people organize against a project or group, they usually do not just go away (Bennett, 2012). The opposition is becoming more sophisticated and is maximizing its exposure, ensuring LTD, elected officials, and the public

hear their concerns (see Figure 8) (Bennett, 2012). Our Money Our Transit (OMOT), the most recent opposition group, has been effective at stoking fear among businesses and community members about the problems associated with EmX, despite the fact that LTD has mitigated most of the problems OMOT purports, says LTD's Director of Service Planning, Accessibility, and Marketing, Andy Vobora (Vobora, 2012). Some believe that OMOT widely distributes false, overly-dramatic information to encourage people to oppose EmX, and their tactics have been successful (Vobora, 2012).

Some in the community simply want LTD to offer basic service and stop trying to be innovative. Bob Macherione, spokesman for Our Money Our Transit, thinks LTD is distracted by these pioneering projects and its pursuit of federal funding to carry them out (Macherione, 2012). Macherione wants LTD to spend money putting drivers in buses and fulfilling basic bus service (Macherione, 2012).

Macherione believes that rather than providing basic service, LTD spends millions on innovative projects that do not pan out, such as hybrid buses. Opponents to LTD think that the agency attempts to gain community support by “greenwashing” (Macherione 2012). While LTD claims that its hybrid EmX buses are better for the environment, some believe they are in fact merely a marketing ploy. Some say that underneath the misleading green paint, the hybrid buses are fuel inefficient because they do not travel at the speeds required to have optimal fuel efficiency (Macherione, 2012). LTD’s, Andy Vobora, admits that the agency’s first EmX buses didn’t get improved gas mileage, but says that subsequent hybrid buses did and as LTD continues to purchase hybrid buses, its overall fleet average is going down (Vobora, 2012).

Others see LTD as an extremely expensive school bus service for university and college students (Macherione, 2012). University of Oregon campus planner, Fred Tepfer, disagrees. University of Oregon students pump tens of millions of dollars into the community and these students rely on transit to reach shopping centers, entertainment venues, restaurants, etc. (Tepfer, 2012). Eugene-Springfield simply would not be the robust community that it is without the UO, and thus it is important to support the type of transportation required to enable the UO to help the greater community, Tepfer says.

LTD has worked hard to gain support from the community by providing a variety of programs, implementing innovative services, and being a good community partner. As a result, many people appreciate the transit agency and respect its goals and actions. For others, however, LTD's objectives and actions don't mesh well and consequently are challenged.

Chapter V: Developing a Sound Funding Base

In addition to maximizing community support, LTD has been able to create a well-rounded, though not entirely adequate, funding system with local dollars funding operations while also aggressively pursuing federal dollars to construct quality infrastructure.

Employee Payroll Tax

Many argue that LTD utilizes the best local tax possible. When LTD was established as a special purpose public agency by the state legislature, it was aware and proactive when it asked for and received the right to levy a payroll tax. A payroll tax is more difficult to revoke than taxes which can be eliminated through a public vote; instead only the state legislature is empowered to make the change.

Other transit agencies in the state, such as Cherriots in Salem-Keizer and Rogue Valley Transportation Department in Medford, rely on property taxes as their primary form of local funding. The problem with property taxes is that they go back to the voters every few years and Oregon has property tax limitations. Measure 50 dictated that local property taxes could not increase more than 3 percent each year, which is typically less than or equal to inflation, meaning agencies are getting the same or smaller amount of money each year. Property taxes are levied by many agencies, such as the city, the county, the school district, and the community college, meaning that if LTD was also part of this tax, it would be competing with other agencies for any increases.

The benefit of this approach, however, is that in receiving property taxes, these agencies are not as tied to the economy (with the notable exception of the housing

crisis). Cherriots' general manager, Allan Pollock, explained that while he is able to forecast better due to more stable funding, Cherriots receives nowhere near as much funding as LTD does with the payroll tax, roughly one-third as much funding per capita (Pollock, 2012). Even during difficult economic times, LTD still receives twice as much funding as Cherriots (Pollock, 2012).

Cherriots envies the level of funding that LTD has been able to achieve. In the mid-1990s Cherriots tried to pass a payroll tax which required a public vote (Pollock, 2012). The community, particularly businesses, severely opposed the tax and voted against it by a margin of roughly 3 to 1 (Pollock, 2012). Then, facing budget issues, Cherriots again went to the public asking for additional funds via a five-year operating tax levy. Cherriots tried twice in 2006 and once in 2008, and all three times the vote failed (Pollock, 2012). As a result, Cherriots had to make even more severe cuts than LTD did and was forced to increase fares in both 2008 and 2010 (Pollock, 2012). In 2009, Cherriots reduced service and service levels and will likely face future cuts (Pollock, 2012).

Most transit agencies in the country are funded locally by a sales tax. Similar to the payroll tax, the sales tax is indexed to the growth and economy of the local community. Due to the great opposition of Oregonians to sales tax, such a tax would not be feasible for LTD to try to pass.

While the payroll tax is the best option for LTD as a feasible local revenue source, it is not adequate. The payroll tax is tied to the economy so that as the economy expands, LTD's funding increases, but during economic downturns, LTD faces cuts. To make matters worse, it is during economic declines when demand for LTD's services increase. This inconsistent funding makes planning for the future difficult.

LTD is susceptible to significant losses in revenue as major employers leave the area. This happened when Hynix, a manufacturer of silicon chips, eliminated its entire payroll in September 2008, laying off 1,100 employees (“2008-2009 comprehensive annual,” 2009). Combined with the loss of several smaller employers, LTD saw a decline in revenue of \$1.1 million, or 4.9 percent, that fiscal year (“2008-2009 comprehensive annual,” 2009).

Rising fuel prices also pose a serious problem to LTD’s budget. LTD’s expenses are relatively constant, with the notable exception of volatile fuel prices (Eyster, 2012). This is one reason LTD is beginning to look into buses that do not rely on fossil fuels as heavily, such as hybrid-electric buses.

The most successful transit agencies have local funding sources for capital projects (Inerfeld, 2012). Currently LTD uses a portion of its payroll tax and farebox revenues as matches for capital construction (Pangborn, 2012). This has enabled LTD to maximize federal funding.

Many people, including leaders at LTD, believe that it would be best to have multiple funding sources to help stabilize revenue. While the payroll tax is substantial during prosperous economic times, its volatility needs to be balanced out with a more stable form of funding. Diversifying funding sources would help LTD provide more consistent service so that it can sustain itself through difficult economic times.

Funding from Political Champions

Eugene’s Congressman Peter DeFazio has helped obtain millions of dollars in funds for LTD’s capital developments. DeFazio is a senior member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and serves as the Ranking Member of the Highways and Transit Subcommittee. Consequently, DeFazio has been able to secure

millions of dollars to improve Lane County's transit. For example, DeFazio gained nearly \$15 million for LTD's Pioneer Parkway project alone ("Defazio secures," 2007). In turn, the Congressman can point to the success of LTD and show his constituents how the money he is securing is being spent and is helping the community.

The Congressman's success is tapering off, however, since he is no longer in the majority party and because the federal government is tightening its belt on earmarks. LTD was able to receive most of its federal funds through earmarks that DeFazio helped secure, but in 2010, Republicans convinced the public that Congress needed to cut expenses as part of an effort to start living within its means. Transit is on Congress' list of sectors targeted for significant cuts, and because there are no great champions for transit at the national level, Republicans may well continue to get their way.

Before Defazio's term of office, in the 1960s, 70s, 80s, and 90s, Congressman Mark Hatfield and Senator Bob Packwood brought home large sums of federal funding to Lane Transit District (Dietz, 2002). LTD worked with these federal legislators to obtain funding for its Eugene downtown station and its headquarters building (Gaydos, 2012).

While LTD is fortunate to have these champions to bring home federal dollars, the agency has also worked hard to get to know its federal legislators and work with them, something many transit districts do not spend time doing.

Support from Federal Transportation Administration

While all agencies receive federal formula funds each year, LTD actively pursues additional federal funding for projects, particularly long-range planning projects, more so than other transit agencies (Johnson, 2012). This additional federal funding is called discretionary funds. Discretionary funds used to primarily come in the

form of earmarks. However, recently the federal government has put a near standstill on earmarks as a means of reducing federal spending. Today discretionary funding comes in the form of new starts and small starts.

LTD has staff that is knowledgeable regarding federal transit laws and has familiarized themselves with FTA regulations. LTD has the leadership, forethought, and willingness to help transit in its community and across the nation (Gaydos, 2012). For example, LTD had the foresight to know it needed to convince the FTA to change funding rules to carve out more money for bus rapid transit, allowing LTD to receive funding for the EmX (Gaydos, 2012).

The FTA highly respects the work that LTD does because LTD's staff has been so innovative with its practices. The FTA's Tom Radmilovich and Rick Krochalis agreed that LTD is an above average transit agency and LTD's timing for involvement in projects such as bus rapid transit has enabled the agency to access federal funds. As previously mentioned, LTD was the first in the country to be fully accessible to wheelchair users and was also one of the first in the country to institute bus rapid transit. Because of these innovative services, LTD has gained a national reputation for being cutting edge and collaborative.

The FTA sees LTD as a disciplined agency that keeps the FTA informed (Krochalis, 2012). The FTA understands that LTD is doing the best it can and appreciates LTD's forward-thinking approach. As a result of LTD's pursuit of federal funds and its ability to put forth quality capital project ideas, the agency has been able to fund capital infrastructure that further advances its services.

Stretching its Dollars

LTD also makes good public investments by making sure its capital expenses last as long as possible. Rather than purchasing the latest and greatest buses regularly, LTD chooses long-lasting vehicles and often gets a longer life out of its vehicles than they are predicted to get (Gaydos, 2012). When constructing its headquarters building and the downtown stations, LTD made sure its products were attractive and built with durability in mind. Their construction was designed to be long-lasting, require minimal maintenance, and be environmentally-conscious (Gaydos, 2012). For example, LTD has used durable materials and has created bio-swales at the Springfield transfer station.

In Opposition

Many businesses have long opposed the employee payroll tax. Eugene business owner Robert Bennett said that while the payroll tax is not a deterrent to operating a business, he would like to see a broad-based tax (Bennett, 2012). When the LTD board was formed, businesses urged them to create a new tax that would offset the burden on employers. In the early 1970s, a county-wide vote was held for an income tax to support transit. The measure was defeated, showing that the community was not supportive of funding the transit agency with a broad-based tax.

Some business leaders assert that the payroll tax is taxation without representation because they don't directly elect their representatives. Gaydos disagrees whole-heartedly, saying that the public can go to the legislature to remove the payroll tax. In light of the recent disapproval of LTD, some business owners may do just that. Some area leaders, including former Eugene Mayor Jim Torrey and current Springfield Mayor Christine Lundberg, worry that LTD's recent initiatives have fostered so much disapproval that opposition groups may soon organize to eliminate the payroll tax.

Mayor Lundberg believes that a referendum is in the works that would put a measure regarding whether to continue the payroll tax on the Lane County election ballot (Lundberg, 2012).

Opponents to LTD say that the staff is overpaid and the cost of doing business should be far lower (Macherione, 2012). Some say that LTD's unionized bus drivers have been able to bargain for high salaries and pensions in a way that many in the private sector cannot. Bennett explained, however, that one cannot simply wish away unions and that people must accept that some costs will be higher in a unionized sector (Bennett, 2012). It is unfair to compare the public and private sectors, Bennett explained (Bennett, 2012).

WEEE opposition group, Our Money Our Transit, has been working at the federal level to undermine LTD's reputation in order to stop federal funding from assisting in the construction of what it sees as inappropriate transit for the community. While OMOT believes that the group is making progress in limiting federal funding, the FTA says otherwise. FTA officials say they listen to OMOT and ensure that LTD is doing due diligence, but understand that LTD has the power to make these local decisions (Krochalis, 2012). The FTA does not involve itself in local decision-making, but simply grants funding to qualified agencies and projects, looking at one project at a time (Krochalis, 2012).

Opposition leaders who have investigated LTD's finances question LTD's use of federal funding for operating expenses, saying that this is an unstable form of financing and that reliance on such money reflects poor planning (Macherione, 2012). FTA officials, however, explained some of the discrepancies OMOT described. LTD is in a unique position because it only recently became a district covering more than

200,000 people. Communities with populations under 200,000 are allowed to use formula funds for operating expenses, while those over 200,000 are not (Krochalis, 2012). The FTA allows LTD to use a certain percentage of its federal formula funding for operations as the transit agency undergoes the transition, but LTD actually has not done so recently (Krochalis, 2012). Additionally, recently, preventative maintenance was changed from being an operating expense to a capital expense by the FTA and thus LTD now uses federal funding to cover their preventative maintenance expenses (Krochalis, 2012). Furthermore, the fluctuations in the federal funds OMOT leaders point to can be attributed to the discretionary funding that was tied to one-time grant projects (Krochalis, 2012). Perhaps the main reason for the confusion is that while federal formula funds are relatively consistent, LTD can choose to use them differently year to year and thus funding may appear inconsistent in their accounting books (Krochalis, 2012). For example, LTD may choose to use its federal formula funds for capital expenses, preventative maintenance, or operating and planning in different amounts each year depending on its needs.

OMOT has carefully examined LTD's finances and has even gone as far as hiring its own accountant to delve into LTD's reports. OMOT believes that LTD has some serious underlying problems in its financing structure that will soon leave the agency bankrupt. The problem is, however, that public and private accounting are very different. Anything that OMOT releases will not have the audit trail that LTD has, because OMOT is a private group of citizens who are not required to provide documentation. LTD, on the other hand, is a public agency that is audited every year by an independent auditor and by the federal government every three years (Vobora, 2012).

OMOT also believes that, because LTD will be required to operate EmX regardless of ridership levels, general service will suffer. LTD is required to operate RideSource and EmX, but not general service, OMOT leaders purport. Thus, based on OMOT's calculations, constructing more EmX lines will result in diminished general service (Macherione, 2012). The FTA, however, does not want these situations to occur and thus does its own operating cost analysis before granting the money. The FTA ensures that EmX does not eat up general service funding.

Many who oppose LTD's WEEE don't care that most of the funding for the project comes from federal dollars and that if LTD doesn't get the money, another transit agency will. Some see tax dollars as tax dollars regardless of which level of government it comes from. Furthermore, with the federal government facing significant economic difficulties, they argue that this is not the time to be taking money for local problems.

Chapter VI: Developing a Workable Organizational Structure

Despite ongoing funding challenges and community resistance at times, LTD has developed a working structure that functions well from the bus drivers to the administrative staff to the board of directors. LTD as an agency is designed in such a way as to foster a working structure that operates to create high performance levels.

Appointed Board of Directors

While LTD's board of directors has been under attack by some in the community recently because some board members do not make decisions that everyone agrees with, its structure has been designed to promote good leaders and decision makers. The board is given the primary task of hiring, firing, and disciplining the general manager. They also deal with some policy matters and oversee and advise the bargaining contract and benefits plan for workers. Beyond its oversight of the general manager, the board tries as much as possible not to interfere with the management of other employees or operations (Gillespie, 2012). While the board does discuss broad directions for LTD, it does not discuss specific events or micromanage operations (Eyster, 2012).

Unlike most transit agency boards of directors in the nation, LTD's board is comprised of members who were appointed as citizens by the governor. Most transit boards have members that are appointed, but whose members serve on another governmental body as elected officials. A handful of other members of transit boards are directly elected to their seats.

LTD's appointment process is one of the most contentious elements of the transit agency's operations. Many people in the community feel that LTD's board is not

directly accountable to the citizens because board members are not elected representatives, and therefore the public cannot easily remove an unwanted board member from his or her seat.

Those in support of LTD's appointment process say that voting would not be an effective means of selecting a board because there may be dozens of candidates and the ability and likelihood of voters to vote based on an informed decision for such a local, perhaps seemingly insignificant position, is slim. Current board member, Gary Gillespie, recalls approximately 30 applicants for the position he currently holds (Gillespie, 2012). With such a large candidate pool, few voters would likely have the time or willingness to research each platform before voting.

An elected board would likely eliminate a large sector of qualified candidates due to the high cost of running an election, both monetarily and time-wise. Running a campaign is an expensive endeavor and with potentially dozens of candidates, a runoff would likely be inevitable, making for an even more expensive campaign (Gillespie, 2012). 4J school board member, Anne Marie Levis, said she spent \$10,000 of her own money just to run for her position, and said, "you can buy and sell an election" (Levis, 2012). Because of the similarities between the two boards (LTD's board and the school board) as far as jurisdiction is concerned, it can be assumed that a campaign for a seat on LTD's board would likely cost roughly the same as for the school board. Gillespie says that he could not have afforded a campaign, showing that qualified candidates would be priced out of running for the position (Gillespie, 2012).

Salem-Keizer's transit agency, Cherriots, has a directly elected board, but few people desire to be on the board, in part because of the costs (both financial and time) of running a campaign (Pollock, 2012). Cherriots' general manager, Allan Pollock,

believes there would be more interest in being on the board if positions were appointed rather than elected (Pollock, 2012).

Because of the high cost of running a campaign, elected board members may be more accountable to their benefactors (Gillespie, 2012). There are many large companies with interests in transit: tire, engine, and bus manufacturers, asphalt companies, and the like. These interest groups would likely be willing to help fund candidates who will later support their companies through the decisions subsequently made on the board. Rather than making decisions that are in the best interest of the community, an elected board member may be focused on appealing to his or her donors.

Moreover, elected officials often have difficulties making long term commitments because the community fears change in the present rather than focusing on long term benefits. Such short-term thinking as well as an obligation to benefactors may create a board that is less responsive to the needs of the community.

LTD's board has long been comprised of a diverse group of community members, each of which brings unique expertise, experience, political preferences, and personalities. Despite such a variety, members are respectful to each other and appreciate what each other bring to the table (Gillespie, 2012). Such diversity could not be guaranteed with an elected board the way it can be controlled through an appointment process.

Rather than pandering to a constituency, board members look at the district in its entirety and make decisions to benefit the whole region. Because board members don't have to seek approval directly from ward constituents, members see their role as providing for the whole district. Because transit is a regional issue, it is imperative that

board members see themselves as representatives of the region, not just certain areas (Eyster, 2012).

Applicants undergo a process, which some say is quite rigorous, but others say is very simple. Gillespie is one who believes the selection process is extensive and results in the appointment of qualified members (Gillespie, 2012). He explained that candidates fill out an application, which is then screened through a panel. They undergo background checks, and interview with and present to the Senate Rules Committee (Gillespie, 2012). Eyster agrees that he went through a rigorous and selective appointment process that was based on his abilities, not because he spent a large sum of money and schmoozed with a bunch of people (Eyster, 2012).

Elected board members may create a volatile governing board that changes easily with political whims. While different seats are on different timelines based on varying term expirations, the board would still be prone to political shifts, and the composition of the board could easily change within a few years. This, Gillespie explains, is not in the community's best interest when it comes to transportation planning (Gillespie, 2012). Transportation requires long-term planning and long-term commitments that consider long-term benefits, goals, and what is in the best interest of the community in the future. A board whose composition quickly changed in terms of political views would result in indecision and reversing of decisions, and thus thwart progress of any kind.

Board members can be easily removed by the governor at any time. Thus community members with concerns can bring them to the governor, who can in turn swiftly remove any individual or the entire board if he or she sees fit. Empowering the governor to remove a board member represents a much less difficult, expensive process

than impeaching an official. The process helps ensure that the board is held responsible for its decisions. Furthermore, term limits of four years (most members serve two terms), help ensure that members are not entrenched in LTD politics.

Supporters of an appointed board think that being elected does not necessarily make a board member any better than an appointed member. Former LTD board president, Gerry Gaydos, questioned whether elected officials made better decisions than appointed officials, whereas Levis pointed to the numerous elected officials in office today as examples of poor decision makers who were elected to office (Levis, 2012). Elected officials are voted in for many arbitrary reasons and are not necessarily the most qualified candidates (Skov, 2012). LTD has had many well-functioning boards comprised of people invested in the community and who make the best decisions they can based on the information available (Levis, 2012).

A board comprised of elected officials from other boards/councils, as is typical for most transit boards, would also pose problems. Elected officials such as city councilors and county commissioners already serve on numerous boards and their primary interests likely do not lie in transit. Furthermore, the composition of the board would be troubled because LTD covers the entire county. Because Eugene is far larger than the rest of the county, it would have the majority of representatives and likely the presidential seat. Rather than seeing themselves as representatives of an entire region, board members would likely have their primary interests in their respective community, and the dominance of Eugene representatives could cause friction with other partners (Inerfeld, 2012). Additionally, members of a board that was comprised in this fashion would likely only serve a couple of years (Inerfeld, 2012). There is strength in

continuity and perpetual shifting in membership could seriously detract from the ability of the board to make informed decisions.

Good Leadership and Culture of Service

Many of LTD's past and current high-level staff, including people such as Phillis Loobey, Mark Pangborn, Stefano Viggiano, Tom Schwetz, and Andy Vobora, have helped create a positive culture at LTD. They saw, and continue to see, LTD not as a bus company, but as a public agency that should make the community better (Eyster, 2012). The staff at LTD have complementary skills that have enabled LTD to accomplish a lot over the past few decades (Tepfer, 2012).

Loobey, who served as General Manager from 1979 to 2000, instilled a sense of professionalism and commitment to public transit at LTD. She encouraged continual innovation despite a public that was resistant to change, understanding that transit is a long-term commitment and that a lot of effort is required to work with opposition groups.

Rather than being a "transit-wonk," Pangborn is a people-person who was successful in building relationships (Inerfeld, 2012). Before taking the role as general manager from 2005 to 2011, Pangborn worked under Loobey for decades, learning from her how to be a strong leader for the agency and in the community.

Viggiano approached opposition groups by engaging them rather than confronting the obstacle. As opposed to fighting an opponent, it was easier, better for all parties, and in the end, better for the project for Viggiano to assimilate and absorb the issue into the project. As Viggiano helped the federal government see the benefits of bus rapid transit, he also built a vision for the community to embrace bus rapid transit, and helped bring into construction the first two lines of the EmX.

Learning from Mistakes

LTD has learned a great deal from its experience with WEEE. Despite following the federal government's proposed process for projects and moving forward with the WEEE using the same methods employed in the previous two corridors, LTD encountered unexpected conflict due to the many factors that came into play for the particular area at that particular time. LTD staff realizes that in the future it may be forced to disagree with the federal government's process for community engagement because it does not work in this community. LTD recognizes that each project must be dealt with individually and that heading into WEEE without fully comprehending the situation meant setting themselves up for resistance (ie. the worst recession in Eugene's history, a rising conservative sector, the West Eugene Parkway still in memory, etc.) (Vobora, 2012). LTD admits that they haven't had much opposition in the past and thus their small staff and board were not equipped to handle controversy and did not have the skills to deal with resistance. LTD got behind in the situation and was forced to play catch-up with opposition groups.

In the future, LTD staff will require city leaders for the project to be on board and provide support. LTD needs the respective city to advocate for the project and not abandon the agency when faced with opposition. Eugene's City Council directed LTD to pursue West 11th as the next EmX corridor, but when disagreement developed, the city's leadership took a step back and played a neutral role. As LTD continues through the public process, community members persistently bring up the West Eugene Parkway and complain about city policies, decisions and policies LTD has no authority over and do not have the time or capacity to address. LTD will ensure, now, that the respective city is in support of a project before moving forward.

In Opposition

Many community members believe that LTD's board should be directly elected by the public in order to hold members more accountable. Rather than looking out for the district as a whole, some want members to appeal to their neighborhood's interests and concerns. They also want direct control over who represents their neighborhood. Springfield Mayor Christine Lundberg said that elected representatives understand that they must be representative if they are to be re-elected and that this is a good thing because decision making shouldn't be isolated (Lundberg, 2012). Lundberg does not think that an elected board would be distracted by short-term interests, but that elected officials are elected to make good decisions for the community in the long term and that is what they do (Lundberg, 2012).

Robert Bennett, who served on the board from 1992 to 2000, agrees that the board should be elected. Bennett says that it was quite easy for him to get on the board in 1992 because not many people were applying for the position. Under those circumstances, Bennett says, with few people seeking the position, it would make sense to appoint, but currently, with more people applying for a seat on the board, it would be better to take the selection to the voters (Bennett, 2012).

Bennett described the selection process as more a formality than rigorous. He was asked by then-LTD general manager, Phyllis Loobey, to apply for the position. His interview with the governor was not focused on his qualifications, but more just to prove that he (Bennett) "can stand on two legs and speak English." The governor did not really select him, Bennett said, but rather approved whatever LTD's general manager recommended (Bennett, 2012).

While he supports an appointed board, former Eugene mayor, Jim Torrey, suggested that LTD's board has experienced consistency largely because Oregon has had a democratic governor for the past twenty-five years (Torrey, 2012). The political structure that exists now has supported a well-functioning board, but if Oregon were to elect a republican governor, LTD's board could experience significant changes (Torrey, 2012).

For many in the community, appealing to the governor to remove a board member is not enough or does not work. Some community members feel that if they are to be taxed for transit, they should have direct control over the governing body of the transit agency. Many believe appealing to the governor would be fruitless since the governor listens to the board, LTD staff, and other leaders in the community.

Additionally, some believe that LTD has far too large an administrative staff. (Macherione, 2012). Many others say that LTD is under-staffed and could be doing much more if it had additional staff members. Cherriot's general manager, Allan Pollock, however, said that LTD's number of administrative staff is typical for its size, so questioning LTD's staffing levels is perhaps a question for transit agencies in general (Pollock, 2012). Supporters of LTD say the agency has done a good job of analyzing the lowest number of staff needed to provide adequate service (Torrey, 2012).

Conclusion

As discussed in this thesis, LTD has proven itself to be a national leader in terms of its innovative programs, unique funding model, and high ridership levels. It has achieved ridership levels that many other mid-sized agencies strive for. LTD performs well when compared to other agencies using statistics provided through the National Transit Database and through the American Bus Benchmarking Group. LTD performs well above-average in most key performance measures in both data sets.

It is no mere accident that LTD is so successful. While LTD is fortunate to be located in a setting that is conducive to strong transit, LTD has worked vigorously to provide quality transit service. There is no doubt that LTD's location in a liberal university town with strict land use laws has contributed significantly to its success, but LTD's context is just a piece of the puzzle explaining high ridership levels.

LTD has worked long and hard over the years to engage the community and gain support from the public. By collaborating with the area's biggest ridership markets, other agencies, and the public as a whole, LTD has been able to implement projects and provide better service in ways it otherwise could not have. LTD is forward-thinking and innovative in its approach, making decisions that will positively affect the future of transportation in the community.

In addition to maximizing community support, LTD has developed a funding structure that ensures its services are well supported. LTD's high level of ridership can be attributed in significant part to a high level of service that is provided through a payroll tax. While the payroll tax has its faults—being unstable and somewhat contentious—it is currently the best option available. Beyond the payroll tax, which

primarily funds operations, LTD has quality infrastructure with its buses, shelters, and stations mainly funded through federal sources. LTD has worked through several avenues to obtain substantial federal funds. Both through strong relationships with political leaders who have passed earmarks that benefit LTD as well as through worthy proposals to the FTA, LTD has been able to fund capital projects that make innovations such as wheelchair accessibility, The Breeze, and EmX possible.

Finally, LTD has designed its working structure to foster innovation and enduring success. Staff members are hired because of their commitment to transit and their dedication to the community and they are led by managers who know how to work with the public and with other agencies to achieve success. The board of director's members are selected based on merit and have helped shape LTD into the progressive agency it is today.

In regards to the recent EmX debate, it is important to remember that LTD has become so successful due to its forward thinking actions. LTD is an agency that thinks about what future needs will be rather than simply addressing today's demands. For LTD to simply focus on providing basic service to fit current need would be to lose its edge on begin ahead of the curve. For LTD to stop being revolutionary would be setting the community up for failure in the future as so many cities have done in the past, resulting in far more costly measures to be taken later.

It is vitally important for LTD to continue on its path despite opposition. The agency has much to learn from its approach in West Eugene and learn which methods of engagement with the public are successful and which are not. Opposition groups that have arisen as a result of WEEE have used tactics to tarnish LTD's reputation, but their arguments are often not supported by a full examination of the facts. Rather than

looking at LTD as a whole and the successes it has been able to achieve, opposition groups focus on facts and figures taken out of context to prove that LTD is a lying, self-preserving agency that is more concerned with the personal careers of its staff members than the larger community interest. While it is beneficial to have watchdog groups to ensure agencies are fulfilling their duties, it is important that these groups use facts and figures to make reasoned arguments rather than cherry-pick data to support particular causes.

Over the years, LTD has made a number of mistakes, including hiring an ill-fitting general manager, purchasing hybrid buses that did not achieve greater gas mileage, and engaging the community poorly with WEEE. Despite these stumbles, which are of the sort that all agencies encounter along the way, LTD continues to strive for success in providing quality transit service to the community.

LTD is a nationwide leader among mid-sized transit agencies and other cities and agencies can learn a great deal from LTD's successes. LTD's commitment to continuous improvement is demonstrated by the agency's involvement with the American Bus Benchmarking Group. As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, the ABBG is a group of mid-sized transit agencies that are working together to develop a set of key performance measures. Using metrics and consistent measuring processes, the ABBG compiles comparable data that can consequently be used as a launch pad for learning best practices. As the ABBG's work progresses, LTD can learn from other transit agencies' successes as well as share what policies and practices work well for LTD. While LTD will no doubt continue to learn from ABBG and other collaborators about where it still needs to improve, the discussion of LTD's innovative structure,

collaborative approach, and overall development and design process discussed in this thesis provides ample evidence that it is on the road to long term success.

Next Steps

LTD's future has many unknowns as the West Eugene EmX Expansion progresses and LTD ventures into new areas for EmX lines. More can be researched regarding the West Eugene EmX Expansion, including more investigative research into the area's history with the West Eugene Parkway. Unpacking more of the details behind the WEEE can better reveal how LTD can approach future projects.

More technical research can be done on LTD's operations, particularly as it relates to the ABBG. While this thesis took a general approach in explaining the qualitative characteristics that make LTD successful, there are many quantifiable, engineering-related reasons for LTD's successes. For example, factors such as average bus speed, bus capacity, and fleet age are all important for a transit agency's operations and are important for an in-depth analysis.

Additional interviews could be conducted that incorporate more views of opposition groups as well as users. Transit riders could contribute considerable information about the human experience using LTD's services. Transit is a tangible, experiential practice and thus it would be valuable to learn if LTD is successful in offering a positive rider experience.

While there remain many opportunities for further research, this thesis provides an overview of how LTD functions as an agency and within its setting. Additional exploration can help unearth more reasons behind LTD's success as well as where the agency has room to improve.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEWED PERSONS

Name	Relationship to LTD
Robert Bennett	Former Member, LTD Board of Directors
Mike Eyster	President, LTD Board of Directors
Phil Farrington	Director of Land Use Planning and Development, PeaceHealth
Gerry Gaydos	Former President, LTD Board of Directors
Gary Gillespie	Member, LTD Board of Directors
Terri Harding	Senior Planner, City of Eugene
Jennifer Hayward	Sustainability Coordinator, Lane Community College
Rob Inerfeld	Transportation Planning Manager, City of Eugene
Mark Johnson	Director of Transit Operations, LTD
Rick Krochalis	Regional Administrator, Federal Transit Authority
Anne Marie Levis	President, Funk/Levis and Associates (strategic advisors for LTD)
Christine Lundberg	Mayor, City of Springfield
Bob Macherione	Spokesperson, Our Money, Our Transit
Marcia Maffei	Employer Program Coordinator, point2point solutions
Mark Pangborn	Former General Manager, LTD
Allan Pollock	General Manager, Cherriots
Tom Schwetz	Director of Planning and Development, LTD
Josh Skov	Member, EmX Steering Committee
Fred Tepfer	Planning Associate, University of Oregon
Jim Torrey	Former Mayor, City of Eugene
Andy Vobora	Director of Service Planning, Accessibility, and Marketing

APPENDIX B: ABBREVIATIONS

ABBG	American Bus Benchmarking Group
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ASUO	Associated Students of the University of Oregon
BRT	Bus rapid transit
EmX	Emerald Express, LTD's bus rapid transit system
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
LCC	Lane Community College
LTD	Lane Transit District
NTD	National Transit Database
ODOT	Oregon Department of Transportation
OMOT	Our Money, Our Transit
PPPM	Planning, Public Policy, and Management (Department at the University of Oregon)
RTSC	Railway and Transport Strategy Centre
UGB	Urban growth boundary
UO	University of Oregon
WEEE	West Eugene EmX Expansion

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