



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

DATE OF MEETING: August 21, 2019

ITEM TITLE: TRANSIT TOMORROW: ADVANCEMENT OF PROPOSED NETWORK FOR FURTHER STUDY & IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

PRESENTER: Tom Schwetz, Director of Planning and Development

DIRECTOR: Aurora Jackson, General Manager

ACTION REQUESTED: Adoption

PURPOSE: At the request of the Board in early 2018, LTD staff and its consultants kicked off Transit Tomorrow, an evaluation of LTD's services, their performance, and the values they reflect. Though the District has made adjustments through annual reviews of route performance and has implemented larger changes to fixed-route transit service through EmX projects, Transit Tomorrow marks the first comprehensive look at the entire network in almost twenty years. A key question at the center of the analysis: does LTD's services still reflect the community's values and priorities for transit service?

Through stakeholder workshops, tabling at transit stations, presentations to community groups, committees, and elected bodies, Transit Tomorrow has gathered stakeholder and public input expressing a clear interest for LTD to allocate its available resources to expand access to frequent fixed-route service and to provide improved night and weekend access to transit.

Following two rounds of public consultation, two core design workshops with technical staff of partner agencies, and more than 18 months of technical analysis by consultants at Jarrett Walker & Associates (JWA), a leader in transit network planning and design, the Transit Tomorrow project team is now proposing significant changes to LTD's network for implementation in the next three years.

The proposed network in the draft plan seeks to balance improvements to the usefulness of transit services while increasing access to transit service across the region for a majority of jobs and residents, reflecting community values and priorities as well as the current conditions in the Eugene-Springfield metro area.

The Transit Tomorrow project team is requesting Board direction to proceed with implementation planning for the proposed network and guidance on the desired pace of implementation over the next three years.

ROLE OF THE BOARD: Provide staff with direction to proceed with implementation planning.

HISTORY: At the December 2017 Board of Directors' meeting, the Board awarded a contract to JWA to perform a comprehensive operational analysis (COA) that entailed a detailed study of LTD's transit service, including an assessment of existing strengths, areas for improvements, and options to better serve the community it serves. In an outreach program to engage the community in the decision-making process of the COA, LTD branded the project 'Transit Tomorrow'. Through Transit Tomorrow, LTD is evaluating the entire transit network in the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area.

The COA was developed in two phases and included two public outreach efforts as highlighted below.

- May 2018 the *Choices Report* was published
- June through August, 2018: Community Engagement, Phase 1
- January 2019: *Scenarios Report* was published
- January through February 2019: Community Engagement, Phase 2

On March 5, 2019, LTD's Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) spent their full meeting developing a recommendation for the Board's action on allocation of resources between provision of coverage and frequent fixed-route service for

the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area. Representatives from SPC conveyed their recommendation at the Board's March 20, 2019, regular meeting.

At the March 20, 2019, Board Meeting, the LTD Board of Directors adopted a resolution directing staff to develop a fixed-route service scenario for the Eugene/Springfield metropolitan area that focused 80-85 percent of the metro area resources on ridership-oriented (frequent) transit service, 15-20 percent on coverage service, with up to 5 percent on non-fixed route mobility options.

To implement this policy direction, project consultants from JWA led a Core Design Retreat on March 21-22, 2019. Technical staff from Eugene, Springfield, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Lane Council of Governments (LCOG), LTD staff, a UO Parking and Transportation representative, and Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation (BEST) staff participated in the intensive two-day workshop to develop a draft preferred scenario. Briefings, open to the broader public, were held at the end of each workshop day to summarize the work completed and collect input the progress and challenges arising as the designs developed. Local leaders, including LTD Board members, community members, and agency staff from LTD and its partners participated in the 4pm daily briefings.

In the weeks following the Design Retreat, project staff worked to confirm the routing and service parameters of the draft preferred scenario. Based on the staff assessment, JWA was given the green light to develop a refined network proposal and analyze outcomes in late April.

A Work Session was held with the LTD Board of Directors on July 17, 2019, to present findings of the project to date, the proposed network, and analysis prepared by JWA.

On August 6, 2019, the SPC was given a presentation of the proposed network and the project's findings to date from the JWA analysis. The committee then participated in small group discussions about the benefits of, and concerns about, the proposed network and outcomes, as well as topics of focus for the implementation process. The small group exercises were then followed by deliberation, concluding with the development of their recommendations to the Board.

SPC members expressed support for the proposed network overall and recommended that implementation include a thoughtful process and communication strategy that promotes the positive aspects of the proposed changes. SPC members discussed the merits of rolling out the network changes all at once as compared to a phased approach over two years with primary changes occurring in the first year. While both approaches were acceptable to SPC members, most advocated for the changes to be implemented as quickly as could reasonably be achieved with the guidance that the changes and timing of changes be clearly articulated to stakeholders.

The draft plan was finalized by JWA staff in August 2019. It analyzes the proposed network in terms of residential and employment proximity to transit, access to jobs by transit, passenger transit travel times from key locations, and a summary of operational components of the network. Contributing appendices include:

- An analysis of the potential impacts of the proposed network on LTD's paratransit service (branded RideSource) along with the potential for non-fixed-route mobility in selected areas. This work has been conducted by AMMA Transit Planning, experts in on-demand and accessible services.
- A review of LTD's Service Policy and service standards with recommendations for improvement based on a peer review. This work was conducted by scheduling expert Dan Boyle of Dan Boyle & Associates (DBA). Additional work would be needed to fully flesh out the service policy changes to support the goals and objectives of the proposed network.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- The Transit Tomorrow team has gathered stakeholder and public input expressing a desire for LTD to allocate its available resources to expand access to frequent fixed-route service and to provide improved night and weekend access to transit.

- The Board directed staff to develop a proposed network that allocates 80-85 percent of the metro area resources on ridership-oriented (frequent) transit service, 15-20 percent on coverage service, and up to 5 percent on non-fixed-route mobility options.
- The proposed network focuses approximately 83 percent of resources on ridership and 17 percent on coverage. Some non-fixed-route mobility options have been explored, although more evaluation is needed. At this time, non-fixed-route mobility options are not included in the proposed network.
- The proposed network would result in a 20 percent increase in weekend service, consistent with the public conversation about added service.
- While the proposed network would make changes such that some community members would be farther from transit, the technical analysis concludes that the proposed network would provide significant travel time and access benefits for the Eugene-Springfield community overall, including communities of concern (people of color, people in poverty, persons with disabilities, and older adults).
- The SPC expressed support for the proposed network overall and recommended that the Board direct staff to develop a thoughtful process for implementation and communication. Most SPC members advocated for the changes to be implemented as quickly as could reasonably be achieved with the guidance that the changes and timing of changes be clearly articulated to stakeholders.
- There are service and operational considerations that need to be taken into consideration before LTD would be prepared to roll out modified service. If directed to proceed with implementation planning, staff will conduct additional technical analyses to better understand the feasibility of various implementation scenarios. This work will form the basis of the implementation plan that will be presented to the Board in December 2019.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- Based on the above stated considerations, staff recommends that the proposed network be advanced for additional study and implementation planning.
- Additionally, staff recommends that the pace of implementation should occur as quickly as reasonable but be primarily informed by the detailed service and operational analysis that will occur as part of the implementation planning step. Reasonableness may mean that some phasing of the roll out would occur.
 - For example, construction of the Santa Clara Transit Station is anticipated to be complete in December 2020; therefore, staff recommends that the timing of changes that rely on this new station being operational align with the construction schedule.

ALTERNATIVES:

As it relates to implementation planning for the proposed network:

- The Board could direct staff to proceed with implementation planning for the proposed network.
- The Board could defer their direction to proceed with implementation planning to a future meeting.

With respect to guidance on the desired pace of implementation over the next three years:

- The Board could concur with staff recommendations to implement as quickly as reasonable but the pace of change should primarily be informed by additional service and operational analysis.
- The Board could guide staff to pursue an implementation plan that makes all changes at one time, as informed by additional service and operational analysis.
- The Board could direct staff to implement changes in a phased approach over the full 3-year timeframe as informed by additional service and operational analysis.

NEXT STEPS:

- If advanced for implementation planning, the proposed network will be refined further through engagement with LTD's stakeholders.
- The operational details for transitioning to the new service will be developed including analysis of: bus stop changes, fleet requirements, driver rostering requirements, communication and marketing needs, etc.
- SPC and the Board will be updated on input received through engagement activities and will be provided opportunities to weigh in on, and provide direction about, the implementation process.
- Staff will seek direction from the Board (anticipated in January 2020) to proceed with implementation.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:

- 1) Transit Tomorrow Executive Summary
- 2) Transit Tomorrow Draft Plan
- 3) Transit Tomorrow Draft Plan Appendix A,B, & C
- 4) Resolution No. 2019-08-21-050

PROPOSED MOTION: I move adoption of LTD Resolution No. 2019-08-21-050:

It is hereby resolved that the LTD Board of Directors approves the advancement of the proposed network for further study and implementation planning.