

**SPECIAL MEETING  
LONGMONT CITY COUNCIL & TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD  
September 8, 2008**

The September 8, 2008 Special Meeting of the Longmont City Council and the Transportation Advisory Board was called to order by Mayor Roger Lange at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

**1. ROLL CALL**

City Clerk Valeria Skitt called the roll. Council Members present were: Mayor Roger Lange and Council members Karen Benker, Mary Blue, Brian Hansen, Sarah Levison, Sean McCoy, and Gabe Santos.

TAB Members present were: David McCulloch, Noella Fritz, Veronica Sommers, and Gary Hodges. Buzz Feldman was absent.

**2. FASTRACKS UPDATE**

Cal Marsella, General Manager of RTD, was present to discuss challenges and present options for moving forward on program both FasTracks and base bus system. RTD is facing a decrease in revenues while the cost of materials is up significantly.

Four options were discussed:

- 1) Build what we can afford by 2017 but not implement the entire program. Lines would be significantly shorter with new endpoints.
- 2) Stay within voter-approved revenue limits and extend schedule beyond 2017. Implement full program over time; the outside date is 2034.
- 3) Maintain original scope and schedule and seek additional revenue sources/opportunities (could require legislative approval for revenue measure and public vote). RTD is currently looking at different policies for transit funding and will also look at possibilities for federal funding.
- 4) Build what we can afford by 2017 with incremental service levels. Build the rest over an extended schedule as revenues allow.

Key recommendations for implementation were reviewed. RTD wants to keep on schedule as long as they can as well as protect federal funding eligibility by moving forward with Gold Line and East Corridors. Economic conditions will continue to be monitored. A comprehensive outreach plan to review options with the public and stakeholders is being developed. Public will be kept apprised. RTD will request public input on additional options and seek regional stakeholder input regarding implementation options.

**3. PUBLIC INVITED TO BE HEARD**

Loy Housewright, 1432 Elmhurst Lane, spent summer and rode public transit in Seattle, Washington. Seattle encouraging maximum housing density with 10-30 story apartment buildings where Longmont is still expanding horizontally. Sound Transit is operating commuter heavy rail in Seattle area and building light rail line. Users will need to connect to rail by bus. When commute is over, service ends. Seattle runs weekdays only. Even with high population

density there are only six trains in Seattle/Tacoma. The realities of commuter needs will dictate that Longmont will have similar service. Expecting 10-20 trains a day to Boulder – in for a surprise. The primary transport will still be by bus. Train riders going from Longmont to Boulder will still need to transfer to bus. Bus service will likely be reduced because of cost of rail. Longmont has shown little commitment to high-density housing, why bother?

Balwin Ranson, 700 Kimbark, had two questions. Does anyone know the rate at which our society subsidizes automobile transit and the rate at which we subsidize public transit. Will legislature use income tax to support public transportation? Society has to support mass transit. It is ridiculous to subsidize auto transit with the enormous consequences. Need to lobby legislature to subsidize public transit.

Mike Schnatzmeyer, 12001 Twilight Street, shared article from New York Times. Big capital banks and investors are moving away from exotic mortgage instruments but still have billions to invest in stable investments. Have \$250B war chest much of which to finance vital infrastructure. There may be opportunities that he hopes Blue Ribbon Panel is investigating. It might be we need some creative ideas. What is the viability of isolating the rail line from Boulder to Longmont and letting private entity fund it now? By being isolated beyond Boulder, would be complicated but it might be possible to allow the revenue to go back to the private entity paying for those improvements. Might also allow us to double track and get that done immediately possibly even to double track all the way to Fort Collins. There is huge opportunity that US public sector is in danger of losing. There is a boat load of capital available and it would be politically convenient to take advantage of it. RTD needs to give City of Longmont the highest benefit to pursue these options.

Comments/Suggestions from City Council and TAB Members:

Purchase and stock pile some building materials now.

If it looks like the issue with BNSF will be a real difficult situation, is there a possibility of taking a different route and looking at private right-of-way?

Option 1—is there a shortened segment beyond Boulder that makes sense that is not Longmont?

Options 3 and 4 both mention federal grant programs or funding. What is chance of getting federal funding?

If Option 3 is chosen and we go ahead with the original schedule with hopes of finding the money somewhere, do we run the risk of a major failure because the funds don't materialize? Do we face other risks as well?

Would any savings be realized if internal experts (engineers, designers, etc.) were utilized instead of contracting out?

Longmont residents would like to see a double track or a passing track for headways that supports higher passenger loads. Have to have frequency during rush hour to have high ridership.

Concern was expressed with an outgoing president and a different party in power in Congress, RTD should look at continuing resolution with federal budget until the new administration is sworn in.

Citizens would like to see a system that works all day long along with reasonable fares. It is hoped that RTD will do everything possible to bring forward the promise made to Longmont residents and bring good productive commuter rail before 2034 and, hopefully, within next 7-10 years. Maybe this is an opportunity to sit down with state to talk about additional financing. Believe the citizens of Longmont will be supportive.

Concern was expressed that if we were to only do peak hour service, will it be prorated or in competition with lines with 12-15 hour service?

Keep the City apprised about what is happening in the option where the line would be shortened...there's a huge area that would be impacted.

Can RTD commit to one of the options and still be flexible to change to another option?

There should be other options so that people see something for their 25+ years of paying taxes.

When looking at Option 3 and partnering with CDOT, they build roads. Don't think it will be an equal partnership and would be counter to the whole idea of public transit.

This area is woefully behind even compared to aging infrastructure on east coast.

When would the best time be to take this back to voters to ask for more money? In 2010, our road tax comes back for voter approval. Need to be cognizant to that. If that tax fails because it is competing with the RTD tax, we will be in a world of hurt.

What people voted on is what the people expect. The best way to approach it is not to play one party off the other. Try to be equitable and build it on the timeframe promised. Lot of thoughts about financial mechanisms. Bottom line may be that you don't know what voters will or will not be willing to do until they are asked. We want to help you as much as we can.

Cal Marsella appreciated the insightful comments and will be happy to come back again and again whenever needed.

Public hearing in Longmont will be at 6 p.m. on October 23 in the Library.

Meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.