

Dear LTD Board of Directors,

ATU 757 is excited to be addressing you this evening. The package that will be presented to you tonight shows a level of respect for the front-line workers that we have been seeking since March. The package as presented will serve as the definitive beginning of a new partnership between Lane Transit District and ATU 757. When we look into the past, ATU partnered with community leaders in Portland when Rose City Transit was on the precipice of bankruptcy. They went down to the Oregon Legislature in March of 1969 to lobby for the creation of Mass Transportation Districts. In 1970, this legislation ultimately allowed LTD to come into existence when Emerald Transportation System shut down. As LTD embarks on its 50th year of existence, with 48 of those years working with ATU, we have a chance to create new partnership that will lead Eugene out of this current pandemic and rebuild a better transit system to serve our community. Our labor contract was called the “Partnership Agreement” until 2004. This term ended after the strike settled the contract in 2005, but ATU’s desire is to get back to the spirit of what once was, two parties working hand in hand to better serve our community. This work truly began in earnest back in March of 2020.

The impact of COVID-19 on the world and our workplace cannot be denied. It truly could have splintered our two parties. Early and continuous communication between ATU and LTD created the bedrock of LTD's response to COVID-19 pandemic in our community. The early flexibility granted by ATU allowed LTD to respond quickly to an ever changing situation while also creating work that helped LTD retain more of the highly qualified workforce when the 2020/2021 Budget created the need for the largest layoff in the history of Lane Transit District. That moment could have been a serious point of division between our organizations. Instead, LTD and ATU went to the Oregon Legislature to advocate for additional flexibility in the uses of STIF dollars. This effort ultimately paid off in the passage of Senate Bill 1601. The leaders of both organizations continued their discussions on how to bring back the members that were laid off as quickly and prudently as possible while also recognizing the incredibly difficult work that was being performed by those that remained for the last 6 months. These front-line workers kept showing up into an unknown and potentially unsafe environment, sometimes going to extreme measures to ensure their own safety and their family’s safety when they would return home. The amount of stress this created in the workforce was unprecedented. As front-line workers, the safety of our homes was not available to us to allow us to continue to earn a living, necessitating the risk to continue reporting in person every day.

ATU looks at the future with an optimistic view, excited to embark on the next 50 years with LTD as Partners. This package will mark the beginning of that higher level of Partnership. I urge you to pass the package as presented and ask for your continued support of both parties. Thank you for the opportunity to give this Public Testimony tonight.

ATU 757