

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (ATC)

Tuesday, January 17, 2005
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Lane Transit District
3500 East 17th Avenue, Eugene, Oregon

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ed Necker, Chair	Ann Angvick, Vice Chair
Jan Aho	Aline Goddard
L. M. Reese	Ted Stevens
Evan Sloan	Bob Proctor
Tara Salusso	Kay Christopher
Kristine Sirmans	

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Hugh Massengill

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Gordon Wyatt	Kathy Jenness
Scott Whetham	Mark Phinney, Community Representative

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jill Adler	Beth Mulcahey
Ann Lauver	Ed Dirkey
Fred Stoffer	Dave Kleger
David Braunschweiger	Kay Metzger

STAFF:

Terry Parker, LTD Accessible Services Program Manager
Susan Hekimoglu, LTD Accessible Services Program Assistant
Charlie Simmons, LTD Facilities Manager
Sue Viggiano, LTD EmX Communications
Joe McCormack, LTD Planning Associate

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Necker called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

Mr. Stevens introduced Kay Metzger who would be taking over the direction of the LCOG Senior and Disabled Services upon Mr. Steven's retirement. Ms. Parker noted that Mr. Stevens represented the Area Agency on Aging (AAA), which was a special designation of membership on the ATC, and she looked forward to Ms. Metzger's participation.

MINUTES APPROVAL: Mr. Reese noted that he was absent for the December meeting, but his name had not been listed in the *Members Absent* column. Ms. Salusso said that under *Program Updates, #2) South Lane Wheels*, she wanted to clarify that Jack Roberts' last name had been misspelled, and Diana Gatchell had been a recognized guest rather than a speaker. Ms. Salusso moved that the Minutes of the meeting of December 2,

MOTION
VOTE

2005, be approved as amended. Mr. Reese seconded the motion, which carried unanimously with Necker, Angvick, Stevens, Aho, Goddard, Reese, Sloan, and Salusso voting in favor, and none opposed. Ms. Christopher and Mr. Proctor abstained.

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EMX UPDATE AND VEHICLE FLOOR TREATMENT: Ms. Viggiano was present to provide a construction and vehicle update. She said that the 2005 construction season had finished on a high note, with the downtown Eugene to East 11th portion near completion. The current construction was underway on Franklin east of Glenwood Blvd., through Glenwood. Four curbside stations would be constructed as well as one median station at McVay Highway. The focus group of people with visual disabilities had asked that the weekly construction updates provide more detailed, descriptive information regarding any construction detours and stop closures, etc. Ms. Viggiano said that she had incorporated more descriptive information in recent updates, and she asked the committee members to provide feedback if there was more that she could do. It was anticipated that in March 2006, the construction would move west on Franklin to the area between the I-5 interchange and East 11th Avenue. The construction was expected to be completed by August 15.

Ms. Sirmans arrived at the meeting.

The prototype vehicle was expected to be completed within the next week. It would undergo testing and be delivered to LTD in early summer. The EmX service start date was set for December 17, 2006.

In response to a question from Mr. Necker, Ms. Viggiano said that for every tree that would be removed for the EmX project; a tree would be planted in the downtown area. The new trees would be 2.5 inch to 3 inch caliper trees.

Ms. Viggiano displayed a rendering of the vehicle and said that it would have double doors on both sides. The outside of the vehicle would be painted green with large logos. The EmX logo also would be placed on the floor in the wheelchair bays for guidance as well as for artistic purposes. The committee discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the color selection for the inside of the vehicle. The lighter colors might be advantageous for people who had a visual disability, but the lighter colors also might be more apt to get marred up.

Ms. Aho arrived at the meeting.

Ms. Viggiano said that there would be one rear-facing and one forward-facing wheelchair bay on the vehicle.

Mr. Simmons said that the Eugene Station construction would begin after school was out in June. Bays S and T would be redesigned to accommodate the EmX service. He said that the design options would be shared with the ATC for feedback.

SHELTER UPDATE: Mr. McCormack provided an update on the grant-funded shelters that were being installed at strategic locations to benefit seniors and people with disabilities.

Mr. McCormack provided some background on the shelter styles. The new design was open with no glass panels. The previous design with the glass panels were very difficult and expensive to maintain due to vandalism, such as etching. The new design included bench seating around the posts and trash receptacles. They were virtually vandal resistant.

The new design was very well received by the adjacent property owners, and the loss of wind protection appeared to be the biggest concern of the riders. Ms. Christopher said that as a bus operator, it was sometimes difficult to deploy the lift due to the space between the curb and the bench or trash can in order for the rider to remain under the shelter while boarding. She thought that if the trash receptacle was located on the outside of the shelter, it would help. Mr. Reese said that he appreciated the shelter placement at the Ulhorn River Court facility.

Ms. Christopher asked how the decision was made to remove shelters that would not be replaced. Mr. McCormack said that it was an operational decision based on low ridership at the location.

The shelters under the Discretionary grant funding would be located at 7th and G in Springfield; on Harlow Road just west of I-5; on West Amazon and Larchmont near the Emerald Valley Assisted Living facility; at 24th and Chambers; at River Road and Court; on Country Club Road; at Oak and 16th; at Goodpasture Island Road and Alexander Loop; and one in Cottage Grove on the south side of Main at Highway 99.

Seven of the ten shelters were installed, and it was expected that the last three would be completed by the end of February.

Another option that LTD is trying is sandblasting a design into the glass panels, which helps cut down on vandalism. Currently, there is a sandblasted panel shelter on Hilyard across from the Hilyard Community Center, which is a high use, highly visible location. To date, there have been no reports of vandalism at that test shelter.

Mr. McCormack further reported that LTD and the City of Eugene were partnering to creating more center islands (refuge islands) in crosswalks at some major bus stops. The city had funding for 10 islands.

In response to a question about the variety of seat designs in the shelters, Mr. McCormack said that available space was a factor as was the number of seats in the design for the more heavily used locations. Adding the attached seating to the columns was the more costly option, so if there was room, a bench was more desirable.

FIXED-ROUTE OPERATIONAL ISSUES: Ms. Parker discussed the issue of people in wheelchairs not being accommodated due to the wheelchair bays being full. This had been a growing issue among wheelchair users and others particularly with the current service provision. LTD experienced a significant increase in ridership in September and October, and as a result, the wheelchair bays were full more often, and not only with wheelchairs, but with walkers and other equipment. LTD bus operators keep track of this information and weekly reports indicate the number of times “wheelchairs not accommodated” is reported by Operators.

Ms. Parker said that she was reviewing the information to see if there were patterns to when and where wheelchair users were being left behind. There also were a few instances where two or more people who were traveling together were being left behind.

There were a couple of spots that already were standing out as a pattern. One was the shopping area at River Road, south of Silver Lane. It appeared that wheelchair ridership coming from north River Road was high. Another spot was on the west side of Coburg, south of Club Road (North end of the Ferry Street Bridge). Ms. Parker said that other than those two locations, the incidents of being left behind were scattered and varied.

Staff were keeping tabs on the issue and looking for solutions. On the routes where there was ½-hour headways, staff were suggesting that people take the bus ½ hour earlier than the one they wanted. The adjustments to service that would be in effect on February 5, might also help alleviate some of the problem.

Another operational issue that was emerging that also was affecting wheelchair ridership was oversize baggage. Staff were considering an operational policy regarding size limits. Shopping carts and other large luggage were being placed in the wheelchair bays. Theoretically, the wheelchair users had priority. Walkers also were a factor as they were being made larger, and people tended to load them up with packages and other items.

Ms. Christopher agreed that it was a growing problem. She had seen riders bringing many bags of groceries aboard and needing to make two or three trips to get all of their packages on the bus.

Ms. Angvick said that many of the ShelterCare clients who used wheeled carts were told by the bus operators that they had to unload the cart and fold it. Ms. Christopher said that was not the case, and it was only baby strollers that needed to be folded, and that was mostly so that people would not allow their small children to ride in the stroller while riding on the bus. It was safer to have their small children in their laps.

Ms. Christopher added that it also was a problem with people who had grocery carts that were full and heavy needing to use the lift for loading. The lifts were being used frequently with each lift deployment taking time, often being the cause for a late arrival at the Eugene Station. Another issue was the large bags of returnable cans that were being brought aboard. There truly was no place to put these things so that they are secure, not blocking the aisle, and/or not taking up another seat.

Mr. Stevens asked if it was possible to change the physical configuration of the interior of the bus, such as taking out a seat or putting additional flip-up seats, or something like that. Ms. Parker said that seats also were at a premium, with many routes experiencing standing room only at peak times, but she would be sure that staff consider this option when discussing the issue.

Ms. Christopher added that another dilemma with oversize carry-ons was keeping the aisle clear when people sit on the side-facing seats with large bags in front of their feet.

Committee members thought that creating additional space inside the bus by using flip-up seats was a good idea. Mr. Necker noted that the **RideSource** rule was that

whatever someone carried onto the vehicle must fit in his or her lap. It was suggested that LTD's policy could include that whatever was brought on board must be done so in one trip, and that it be in a cart or be able to fit on one's lap.

Ms. Angvick said that some stores in the past have offered free taxi rides to people who spend a certain amount of money, and she thought there could be some partnering opportunities for a service like that. Mr. Reese said that would not work for people who use electric wheelchairs. Ms. Parker noted that some **RideSource** riders use **RideSource** to the store, **and** then take a taxi home with their purchases. She added that the **RideSource** Shopper service has a three-bag limit for its riders.

Ms. Parker said that the committee would be discussing this issue more over time as more data is collected from the operators. She noted that it is easier for bus operators to accept that people who were traveling from the Amtrak Station, for instance, with their luggage need to get home but that the situation becomes more stressful and difficult to manage when it is the same people bringing large carts on every trip that they take on the bus.

Another committee suggestion was to provide lockers at the stations. Ms. Salusso was concerned about people who's only transportation option was the bus, particularly people who were homeless and did not have the security of leaving their belongings behind. Ms. Christopher said that it was not such a problem during off-peak hours. She thought that if it was approached with sensitivity, people could be encouraged via *BusTalk* or via signs on the bus to ride during off-peak hours if they anticipated having larger carry-ons.

Ms. Parker thanked the committee for the input and said that this issue would continue to be discussed in the coming months.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY: The Current State of Transportation for People with Disabilities in the United States: Ms. Parker asked for a workgroup to be formed to review this document to see how services in Lane County measured up and/or if there were opportunities to improve based on the report. Mr. Necker and Mr. Reese volunteered to review the document. Staff would get full copies out and organize a review meeting of this workgroup, which would then report back to the ATC.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DISABILITY LAW GUIDANCE, Use of "Segways" on Transportation Vehicles and Origin-to-Destination Service: Ms. Parker said that she wanted to bring two law guidance articles from the Office of Civil Rights at the Department of Transportation to the attention of the committee. The first was with regard to the Segway, a two-wheeled self balancing personal transport system. The Segway was not designed as a mobility device, but in the event that it was being used as a mobility device by a person with a disability, the guidance from the Department of Transportation was that the transportation agency was obligated to allow the person and his/her device onto the transit vehicle. The issue had not yet come up for LTD. The question on how to secure them on board was not addressed. Oregon State University has a Segway that we might be able to use to test how best to secure.

The second publication also was disability law guidance from the Department of Transportation that addressed obligations of transit providers to ensure that eligible passengers received "origin-to-destination" service. Basically, this law guidance focuses on

certain circumstances and situations, such as during sidewalk construction or due to icy weather, when a provider may need to offer assistance beyond the curb. And was written to ensure that paratransit providers got people to pick up and drop off locations that the riders could successfully use.

ADJOURN: There being no further business; Mr. Necker adjourned the meeting at 12:02 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 21, 2006.