

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (ATC)

**Tuesday, March 21, 2006
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
Kathy Jenness	Kay Metzger
Jan Aho	Aline Goddard
Scott Whetham	L. M. Reese
Evan Sloan	Bob Proctor
Tara Salusso	Kristine Sirmans

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES:

Hugh Massengill

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Gordon Wyatt	Kay Christopher
Mark Phinney, Community Representative	

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mary Otten	Mike Thomas
Dave Kleger	Glen Adams
Beth Mulcahey	Dan Haun

STAFF:

Terry Parker, LTD Accessible Services Manager
Susan Hekimoglu, LTD Accessible Services Assistant

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Ms. Aho announced that Mr. Haun would be taking her place on the Committee for the duration of her term. Ms. Goddard invited committee members to the annual Tree Planting Festival in Oakridge that would take place from April 27 to May 1, 2006. Events at the festival included a carnival, fair, a 10k Salmon Fun Run, and a grand parade. She handed out brochures for the event.

**MOTION
VOTE**

MINUTES APPROVAL. Ms. Salusso moved that the minutes of the meeting of January 17, 2006, be approved as presented. Mr. Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with Necker, Angvick, Jenness, Metzger, Aho, Goddard, Whetham, Reese, Sloan, Proctor, Salusso, and Sirmans voting in favor, and none opposed.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT: With Ted Steven's departure from the committee, there was an open position on the Executive Committee. Mr. Necker appointed Mr. Proctor to serve on the Executive Committee until June 30, 2006. Mr. Proctor accepted

the appointment. The Executive Committee included Mr. Necker, Ms. Angvick, and Mr. Proctor.

FISCAL YEAR 2006-07 SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION FUND BUDGET. Ms. Parker said that Mr. Necker, Ms. Angvick, and Mr. Proctor had met recently as the budget committee to prepare a proposal for allocation of Special Transportation Funds. The Special Transportation Fund (STF) consisted of cigarette tax revenue that each county received annually on a formula based on population. LTD was the STF agency for Lane County. The STF was allocated on an In-District and Out-of-District basis. In-District was allocated to those services that were provided within the Lane Transit District's service area.

Mr. Proctor said that the budget committee had reviewed the availability of funds. He said that the notes in the agenda packet covered most of the issues that the committee had considered in arriving at the proposal for the Fiscal Year 2006-07 (FY07) STF budget allocations. One issue that was considered was those programs that would receive additional grant funding versus those that did not currently have any easily developed resources and for which STF funds were more critical.

Ms. Parker then reviewed the proposed STF allocations that were included in the agenda packet. She noted that the In-District revenue had been spent out with no reserves over the past two years. That for In-District services we must "live within our means" and only have the annual formula allocation to distribute. The Out-of-District allocation had received a boost of funding in the late 1990s with the addition of new state revenue sources that were incorporated into the statewide STF program. These funds had been put into an Out-of-District Fund reserve to be used as local match for capital purchases and other special projects for services outside of the LTD service area. The Committee had been very conscientious about using that reserve for volunteer escort and vehicle replacement, but had not been putting more money into the reserve. Over the past two years, it was recognized that the spending of the Out-of-District reserve needed to be slowed in order to continue to have some reserve to support the match requirements of vehicle purchases for the rural programs.

There was a slight decrease for FY07 in STF distribution for Lane County. The budget committee had reviewed the allocation and other factors, such as what other grant funding would be available. In order to maintain the same funding for the In-District programs, the budget committee was recommending decreasing the **RideSource** budget the entire amount of the STF decrease in order to leave other, smaller In-District programs at the FY06 funding levels. **RideSource** had the advantage of having LTD general funds included in its budget.

LTD had applied for and was successful in receiving funding through the State discretionary grant program that would assist in maintaining funding levels for Out-of-District services that have relied on STF formula funds. In the Out-of-District allocations, the **RideSource** Escort would not receive an STF allocation for FY07 because LTD had received a two-year grant to fund the program at a higher level. This recommendation would help to maintain the rural STF reserves. In addition, South Lane Wheels would not receive an Out-of-District STF allocation because of several other grant funding sources that had been secured, including a two-year preventative maintenance grant (\$19,800 for two years), and a transfer of nearly

\$50,000 in Out-of-District reserves in FY07 to support LTD's purchase of seven vehicles to be leased to South Lane Wheels.

The budget committee planned to review more closely the other rural programs during the FY08 budget discussions.

Ms. Salusso said that she was surprised by the elimination of the Out-of-District allocation. She said that she understood some of the justifications, yet she was surprised that she was not included in any of the discussions or considerations in the choice to eliminate that funding. She said that it was true that South Lane Wheels had received grant funding for maintenance, which was much needed to improve their maintenance program. South Lane Wheels previously spent about \$2,000 annually on maintenance, so even with the maintenance grant; South Lane Wheels would be facing approximately \$8,000 in lost operating revenue. Ms. Parker said that she was sorry that she had neglected to mention in her verbal report and the information provided in the summary report that there was a large increase in Federal 5311 funding for small cities, which would amount to approximately \$53,000 for South Lane Wheels in added revenue in FY07. Florence would receive approximately \$27,000 additional funding from the Federal 5311 Small Cities program. The budget committee had considered both the addition of \$53,000 in Federal 5311 funding and the additional reserves draw down for South Lane Wheels in its recommendation to eliminate the \$11,540 STF allocation, which would remain in the reserve fund for later use. Ms. Salusso said that in early discussions of the Federal 5311 funds, the indication had been that the Out-of-District STF allocation could be used as the local match for the 5311 funds. She added that the loss of the STF funding, South Lane Wheels would need to raise the 5311 match on its own. Ms. Salusso said that she understood the need to shore up the STF Out-of-District reserves.

Ms. Salusso asked if she was correct in her understanding that Florence and Oakridge would not be receiving an increase in 5311 funds because it was not an equitable distribution. Ms. Parker said that Oakridge was funded through Federal 5311 Inter-City funding, which was different than the Federal 5311 Small City funding, and Oakridge would be on a very tight budget in FY07. Florence would receive an increase of about \$27,000 in Federal 5311 funding. The STF allocation was not enough to cover the local match requirements in Florence either, so staff had gone before the Florence City Council to request additional funding for the City of Florence for the local match for the 5311 funds. The meeting had gone well, and was hopeful that the Florence City Council would approve that request.

The budget committee also had discussed the fact that STF funds were used as match funds for the 5311 funds, but acknowledged that the STF funds now were inadequate to match the higher levels in 5311 funds. The advantageous position for South Lane Wheels was that it had other money for the local match, while Oakridge had limited resources for that match. Staff planned to go before the City of Oakridge for additional match next year.

Ms. Salusso said that it was true that South Lane Wheels had an impressive fundraising activity, but it was likely that over time that status would not be able to be maintained.

Ms. Parker said that at a recent Public Transit Advisory Committee meeting, she had asked the about the 5311 revenue and whether or not it could be sustained at the new, higher

level. She was told that the 5311 revenue was good through FY09 by federal authority that supported rural services. There could be increases each year through FY09 in 5311 funds, and the challenge would be in raising the match for those increased funds. The budget committee felt that South Lane Wheels was in a better position than other rural programs to meet the match requirements on its own and had support through other LTD grants and use of the Out-of-District reserve.

Mr. Necker added assured Ms. Salusso that the budget committee recommendation to eliminate the STF Out-of-District allocation to South Lane Wheels was in no way punitive, nor did it set a precedent for future allocations, but for now, shoring up the reserves when South Lane Wheels had another option was, in his opinion, a wise decision. The recommendation got considerable discussion.

Ms. Metzger said that she understood that at this time, there was no input to the reserves, so the nearly \$50,000 in reserve draw down for vehicle match was significant. She asked how soon the new vehicles being purchased in FY07 would need to be replaced. Ms. Parker said that these vehicles lasted anywhere from four to eight years based on use. South Lane Wheels would be expanding its fleet as well as replacing some vehicles, probably resulting in less mileage per vehicle. Ms. Parker said that she was concerned about the vehicles in Oakridge and Florence. She added that managing a fleet of newer vehicles was much less expensive than managing a fleet of older vehicles. The *Rhody Express* was a one-vehicle operation, and the vehicle had approximately 90,000 miles on it. The *Diamond Express* was operating a relatively new vehicle, but that vehicle operated the furthest every day, three round trips between Oakridge and Eugene, and that vehicle also would need to be replaced sooner. It was important to protect the resource so that there was an equitable distribution amongst rural providers. South Lane Wheels will have a few more older vehicles that likely will be cycled out during the next grant period as well. Once the reserve is depleted, the real challenge will be to determine how to begin replenishing the reserve it seems reasonable to start making some adjustments now.

**MOTION
VOTE**

There being no further discussion, Ms. Angvick moved that the STF Budget for Fiscal Year 2006-07 be approved as presented. Mr. Reese seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote, with Necker, Angvick, Aho, Reese, Sloan, and Proctor voting in favor, and none opposed. Ms. Salusso, Mr. Whetham, Ms. Goddard, Ms. Metzger, Ms. Sirmans, and Ms. Jenness abstained from voting as representatives of agencies that receive STF funding.

Ms. Parker noted that the budget would be presented to the LTD Budget Committee on April 26 and 27, 2006, and if approved by that Committee would be forwarded to the LTD Board in June for approval.

EMX VEHICLE – INTERIOR DESIGN UPDATE: Ms. Parker introduced Maintenance Supervisor George Trauger, EmX Public Relations Representative Sue Viggiano, and Facilities Maintenance Manager Charlie Simmons to provide updated information about the EmX vehicle interior design.

Mr. Trauger showed photos of the actual pilot vehicle that had been constructed for the Cleveland transit order. He noted that some of the features of LTD's EmX vehicle would be

different that what was shown in the photographs, such as the seating configuration. Ms. Viggiano distributed a printed layout of the LTD vehicle design.

The vehicle was being produced by New Flyer Industries. It would be an articulated (jointed) 60 foot vehicle featuring doors on both sides of the vehicle. It would include two wheelchair bays, one forward-facing and one rear facing. There would also be space in the rear trailer of the vehicle for bicycles to be brought on board. There would be no bike rack on the outside of the vehicle. The vehicle would hold 100 passengers, including 42 seats. It would have a flip ramp at the mid-vehicle doors that would close the gap between the platform and the door of the vehicle.

Originally, the EmX service would be free fare, and eventually, it was anticipated that pre-paid fares only would be utilized.

The service is designed to stop at each of the EmX stations along the corridor. There would be stop-request buttons located throughout the vehicle for the possibility that, in the future, it is decided that these are needed.

Several questions and concerns were raised, including the degree of slope in the wheelchair bays; what type of wheelchair securement would be used; what the stop policy would be, i.e., all stops at all hours of the day, during peak hours only, etc., and what type of stop request device would be used. There was concern about the angle of the back rest in the rear-facing bay. It was thought that the back rest be cantered rather than angled and be placed as close to the window as possible. It also was pointed out that the flip-ramp needed to be painted yellow on both sides. Staff would research the issues raised and provide answers and explanations at the next ATC meeting.

Several issues were raised by the committee, including the degree of slope in the wheelchair bays; what type of wheelchair securement would be used; what the stop policy would be, i.e., all stops at all hours of the day, during peak hours only, etc., and what type of stop device would be used, tape or buttons; that the back rest be cantered forward (toward the passenger) rather than angled back (with the “headrest” area further away from the passenger) and be placed as close to the window as possible. It was also pointed out that the flip-ramp needed to be painted yellow on both sides. Staff would research and provide more detail at the next ATC meeting.

Other EmX issues that staff were working on include redesign of the bus bays at the Eugene Station and training for people with disabilities. Substantial bay changes would occur in the summer of 2006 during construction of the EmX bays. Staff also would present information on the Pioneer Parkway EmX work at the next meeting.

Ms. Parker added that she and Mr. Simmons had been gathering more information on Accessible Pedestrian Devices (APDs), an acronym for audible signaling. The National Transit Institute would be conducting a workshop in Portland, and staff were coordinating with Tri-Met staff in order to attend that workshop. Staff also had forwarded the information to Eugene and Springfield as well as to County and local ODOT staff with invitations to participate. LTD was working to bring all the parties into the same room to discuss the options related to APDs.

Mr. Reese asked about the Open House that was planned for the proposed Pioneer Parkway EmX extension. He had received a notice in the mail, but would not be able to go to the event. Staff noted that much of the information was on the Website, and people could look at it there and submit their comments via email, regular mail, or by phone as well.

Mr. Reese said that he thought there was a question as to whether or not the Pioneer Parkway extension would be built or not. Ms. Parker clarified that staff were seeking input on the design of the corridor. The project was moving forward. Mr. Proctor added that the Open House announcement stated that “a decision whether to pursue construction of the second corridor is nearing,” which sounded like the project was in jeopardy. Mr. Kleger responded that pursuing grant funding for the project would depend on the early design decisions that needed to be made. If those design decisions were not made now, then LTD would miss the current round of grant opportunities, which would push the project back.

ANNUAL ROUTE REVIEW UPDATE: Ms. Parker introduced LTD Service Planning Manager, Will Mueller, to provide the update regarding service changes being proposed for September 2006. Mr. Mueller handed out a Service Change Summary for FY06-07.

Mr. Mueller said that in addition to the EmX bay construction in bays S and T at the Eugene Station, staff now were considering an additional articulated bus bay somewhere along the area of sections D, E, F, and G. Staff have been working to determine where buses would be relocated to during the summer construction. Staff were hoping that the changes being made for the summer construction would work through the fall and right up until the start of the EmX service in December when minor adjustments would be made. The #11 Thurston route would be eliminated from the Eugene Station with the start of EmX service. Staff would have more information for the committee in April or May. Ms. Parker added that she was working with Mr. Whetham and LTD Marketing Representative Cosette Rees on a training plan for the bay changes with the intent of training people with disabilities prior to the effective date of the changes. Ms. Parker also noted that staff would be available on the platforms to assist riders at the time the changes are made.

Following two public hearings, the Board had approved a package of service changes that resulted in a 2.28 percent increase in service. The service changes mostly would be effective on September 17. Mr. Mueller reviewed the service changes and noted that routes 22 and 76 would experience an elimination of summer service, but that change would not be effective until the summer of 2007. Mr. Mueller also highlighted the elimination of the City View loop on route #76. He said that proposal received a lot of testimony in opposition of eliminating the loop, but the loop just was not meeting the minimum service standard for ridership.

Mr. Mueller said that there remained many unmet needs in the community, and at this time, looking ahead to next year, there was only one percent allocated for service improvements. Some routes have experienced ridership increases of 10 and 25 percent during this past year, and overall, ridership had increased by 11 percent. The increases were being attributed to the new school bus pass program and the high cost of gas.

LTD UPDATES: Ms. Parker said that she had included a couple items of interest in the ATC agenda packet that were self explanatory. 1) LTD Board update: Ms. Parker said that at its March 15 meeting, the LTD Board had approved a proposal by staff to eliminate

smoking in the plaza area of the Eugene Station. The plaza area was located near Olive Street on the corner of Olive and 10th across from the Library. In addition, the Board had given its approval for LTD to go forward with planning the Medical Medicaid Brokerage/Call Center for Lane County. Unless there was a fatal flaw, LTD would be in the brokerage business within the next year or two, which would dramatically change the nature of the work in the Accessible Services Program. LTD was hosting a meeting in early April to bring the Human Services program directors together to discuss the project.

Ms. Parker said that Federal and State guidelines for a public transportation, human service plan needed to begin moving forward in order for Lane County to take advantage of some new federal money called New Freedom and Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC). It was anticipated that the state and LTD would enter into a two-year development contract as of July 1, 2006. It would be important to get the brokerage operational during the two-year developmental stage in order to work out any problems prior to the beginning of the operations contract period. The complexity of developing the software that could communicate to the vehicle, staff, and the providers was the most complex issue that would take some time to work out. The state managed some Medicaid software, and staff from several agencies would be developing dispatch software that would be compatible. The software would also allow the brokerage to combine trips in a way that was not currently being done, so other brokerage managers around the state were excited about the software development.

Mr. Kleger referred to the Easter Seals Project Action document about Taxicab service that was included in the packet. He noted that the document did not address the issue of taxicabs charging an extra fee to deploy a ramp or lift. He had heard about this fee from several people who indicated that if they filed a complaint about it, the taxi operator simply would terminate the service altogether. He asked if the federal government had indicated that abandoning service to avoid complying with the law was discrimination. Ms. Parker said that the question had been posed to Michael Winter at the Office of Civil Rights during his visit to Eugene. Unfortunately, because the taxi companies were privately owned, they were not obligated to provide accessible vehicles.

PROGRAM UPDATES: Due to lack of time, program updates were deferred to the next meeting.

ADJOURN: There being no further discussion; the meeting was adjourned at 12:02 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 18.