

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 20, 2008
10 a.m. – Noon
Lane Transit District Board Room
3500 East 17th Avenue – Eugene, Oregon

MEMBERS PRESENT:

L. M. Reese, Chair, presiding	Jan Aho
Aline Goddard	Kristine Sirmans
Hugh Massengill	

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES:

Ed Necker	Dave Kleger
Scott Whethem	

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ann Angvick, Vice Chair	Mykal Taylor
Evan Sloan	Bob Proctor
Kay Metzger	Mark Phinney
Tara Salusso	
Mary Otten	

OTHERS PRESENT:

Fred Stoffer	Marcia Maffei
Gail Lundeen	

STAFF:

Terry Parker, Accessible Services Manager	Rand Stamm, Human Services
Susan Hekimoglu, Accessible Services Coordinator	Transportation Specialist
Charlie Simmons, Facilities Manager	Angie Sifuentez, Marketing Representative

INTRODUCTIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AGENDA REVIEW

Mr. Reese called the Accessible Transportation Committee (ATC) to order. Those present introduced themselves.

Ms. Hekimoglu added an item to the agenda updating the committee on federal charter service regulations.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

No member of the audience wished to offer comment.

MINUTES APPROVAL—APRIL 15, 2008

Mr. Reese postponed consideration of the minutes due to a lack of a quorum.

FEDERAL CHARTER REGULATIONS UPDATE

Ms. Sifuentez updated the committee on recent changes made to the federal charter regulations governing Lane Transit District (LTD) operations for special events. In the past, LTD was required to provide notice to area providers and declare its intent to provide service. Recent changes in the rules now require notice to be given to private providers all over the United States via the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Website. LTD petitioned the FTA for an exception for the Olympic Trials, as many hours of work has gone into the planning for that event, which has been granted. She said LTD was not yet aware of what would occur in regard to bus service to the Oregon Country Fair, and she anticipated no private interest would express interest in providing bus service for football games, although there may be private interest in bus service for basketball games.

Mr. Kleger asked what rules existed to guarantee accessibility in such events. Ms. Sifuentez said that LTD initially wrote service specifications that included accessibility and bus size, but that the FTA only required information about the number of buses and service levels, but not about accessibility. Mr. Kleger advised Ms. Sifuentez to inform the FTA that the first time a disabled rider was denied service by a private provider; the FTA would be one of the litigants in a discrimination case in federal court. Ms. Sifuentez acknowledged the remarks and stressed LTD's emphasis on the heightened need for accessibility. Ms. Sifuentez noted that federal requirements provided that 30 percent of private fleets be ADA-accessible.

Responding to a question from Mr. Stamm, Ms. Sifuentez said that providers would be taken off the register of providers if they did not act in good faith. Mr. Stamm asked if LTD had to plan for service just in case the private provider could not fully provide the service. Ms. Sifuentez said that LTD could not plan for an event if a private provider bid on it. If that provider bowed out at the last moment, LTD would lack the necessary drivers and not be in a position to be able to respond. LTD could then file a complaint with the FTA, but it would be too late for that event to get service.

Ms. Maffei asked if LTD was becoming a brokerage for all events in the area, and if it was compensated for that. Ms. Sifuentez said that the only events that LTD would post would be work that it wanted to do. Responding to a follow-up question from Ms. Maffei, Ms. Sifuentez clarified that the Lane County Fair purchased the entire LTD system during the course of the fair, and thus it was not subject to charter regulations.

Ms. Parker said the committee's interest was in the provision of accessible services. Complaints about service must come from consumers, but LTD could provide information about upcoming events and who would be providing service so that consumers could try those systems. Ms. Sifuentez clarified that such complaints should go both to FTA and the federal Civil Rights Division.

EMX—PIONEER PARKWAY UPDATE

Mr. Simmons provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Pioneer Parkway EmX route, highlighting the details of the bus lane pedestrian crossing south of the intersection at

Centennial Boulevard and Pioneer Parkway. Members asked questions clarifying the details of the intersection's operations.

Ms. Aho arrived.

Ms. Parker asked if there was an opportunity to recalibrate the crossing time with testing. Mr. Simmons said he thought that might be difficult and pointed out there were standards governing the time of signals and the location of the crossing, which could be moved. He thought the sightlines in the area were good.

Mr. Simmons discussed the stations along the route and highlighted the mid-block crossings at the stations located in bus overlays. He shared a depiction of the mid-block crossings. Members asked questions clarifying the details of the crossing's operation.

Responding to a question from Mr. Necker, Mr. Simmons said he would have to check to see if the beacon at the mid-block crossings stopped traffic long enough for someone to completely cross the street. Mr. Reese noted his own experience at a similar crossing, where he had sufficient time to cross the entire street. He confirmed, in response to a follow-up question from Mr. Necker, that both buses and regular vehicular traffic had to stop for the beacon.

Mr. Simmons pointed out the roundabout at Pioneer Parkway and Hayden Bridge Road and said the City had removed the crosswalk at the station because there were crosswalks in the roundabout and stipulated that a path would be supplied from the station to the crosswalks. Ms. Parker asked if the station would be a high-use station for services. Mr. Simmons did not think so. He said the question of how fixed-route service met with EmX had not been decided, nor had the connections; he thought those connections would be key to how well the station worked. He acknowledged that crossing at the roundabout was a challenge and said that if it proved necessary, the crosswalk could be accommodated later.

Ms. Aho questioned the City's rationale. Mr. Simmons said he could not speak to that.

Ms. Parker said that roundabouts in general were challenging for everyone, but especially for those with disabilities, particularly the sight-impaired. She said if there was a pocket of residents who lived near the roundabout who required service; it could be a problem in regard to increased demand on RideSource. She suggested that Pheasant Station might be a better drop-off, and staff could train riders about the better route to use.

Ms. Hekimoglu noted the population that lived in the Lindale area, including several group homes and a nursing home. Mr. Simmons suggested that those living in the Lindale area could arrange for pickups at the Pheasant Station.

Ms. Parker asked whether the committee could provide input to the City of Springfield, noting that the process had reached the 70 percent design stage. Mr. Simmons reviewed the background of the discussion that occurred around the original design at both the advisory committee and council levels, which centered on the question of why there was a signalized intersection so near the roundabout. Mr. Necker asked if people could provide input to the Springfield City Council.

Mr. Simmons reviewed the process to date, saying that the Springfield City Council would not be involved in the 70 percent or 100 percent design stage, and it was now up to staff, and he anticipated at some point the staff would have to check in with the council. He did not think the

issue was confined to this location alone and had ramifications beyond EmX. He thought that Springfield needed to have more conversation about the issue. He did not know how the ATC could be involved. Ms. Parker suggested that an incident could spur future changes. Mr. Simmons said that new federal regulations could be issued about multi-use lanes that might require Springfield to make changes.

Mr. Simmons reviewed the project time line and suggested that there was time to make additional design changes if that became feasible. He thought that retrofitting would merely be a matter of money well-spent.

Mr. Reese asked if a location had been found for the Gateway Station. Mr. Simmons said yes. He confirmed that there would be a covered walkway from the station to Gateway Center. He said there also would be a new pedestrian crossing at Oakdale. The ring road would be reduced to two lanes, making it much easier to cross.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Reese solicited volunteers for the Membership Committee. Ms. Hekimoglu noted that Tara Salusso had volunteered for the committee. Mr. Massengill also volunteered. The Membership Committee would meet prior to the June ATC meeting to prepare a proposal for ATC consideration.

RIDESOURCE CALL CENTER UPDATE

Mr. Stoffer reported on the switch over to full operation at the call center, which was implemented on May 19, saying that the increased volume of calls had been handled efficiently. Staff realized that a few of the taxi operators had not responded to contract changes, and three operators had not been available for rides, requiring some last-minute work to assign all rides. He expected the operators to have their insurance in order in the next few days. Mr. Stamm concurred that things had gone well.

Ms. Goddard said from her perception, things went quite well, although last minute glitches had kept her in the office late. She indicated a need for another vehicle for the Diamond Express as the current vehicle was experiencing increased need for repairs. Ms. Parker said that there was funding for a new vehicle. Ms. Goddard added that she would see how well billing through the Call Center would go beginning on the next day.

Ms. Parker said that more work remained to be done to reach where LTD wanted to be with the Call Center in regard to the breadth of services that could be accommodated, including billing, but she believed that there were some very creative opportunities the agency could take advantage of in the future.

INNOVATIONS GRANT FUNDING

Ms. Parker provided background on the grant funding process, reporting on the recent meeting of the State Public Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC) where Mr. Stamm and Mr. Whethem had presented information about LTD's Innovations Grant applications. The committee had deferred a decision to its July meeting, where LTD would have another opportunity to make a presentation. Ms. Parker described one of LTD's applications, which was for a Mobility Management project involving a case management approach to special transportation needs.

Responding to a question from Ms. Maffei, Ms. Parker anticipated the case management function would be housed at Lane Council of Governments' Senior and Disabled Services.

JOB ACCESS REVERSE COMMUTE

Ms. Parker provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) Program, intended to get those few resources and options to and from work. She noted the \$407,000 in grant funding available to LTD to fund projects at the local level and described the competitive grant process that would occur. She noted that projects must address needs that are included in the Lane Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. LTD had identified, for instance, that non-traditional work shifts present a difficult transportation challenge as does providing transportation to areas of the county that do not have public transit.

Responding to a question from Ms. Aho, Ms. Parker confirmed that volunteer-related costs such as mileage reimbursement could be funded through the program.

Ms. Parker noted the upcoming public grant workshop on May 28.

ESPA MOBILITY PLANNING INSTITUTE

Ms. Parker called attention to the Mobility Planning Services Institute Action Plan, included in the meeting packet. She said the focus of the plan was on the integration of transportation services into a centralized model using the Call Center. She said that everyone involved put their interests on the table and discussed service from a case management perspective. She said that those participating acknowledged not everyone could be on *RideSource*, yet there was a need to balance the existing needs with the bottom line. She reviewed the outcomes associated with that focus, which included introduction of the Call Center in a positive way that created understanding, commitment, and was inclusive of all parties; and to establish and maintain flexible and system-wide positive communication links between a wide variety of stakeholders and consumers.

Mr. Massengill determined from Ms. Parker that JARC funding was focused on work trips and could potentially be used to transport someone who might lose his or her job due to being kicked off the fixed-route transit system. Ms. Parker pointed out that many of those who used the system did not have jobs or the bus was not available when they needed it. She thought that Voc Rehab could specifically be aided by a JARC grant.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Rhody Express

Ms. Sirmans reported that Rhody Express was gearing up for the ADA paratransit process. It appeared the start date would be moved to up to August 1 rather than September 1. She said the agency also was working on its Dial-a-Ride booklet.

South Lane Wheels

There was no report.

Diamond Express

Ms. Goddard said the agency was feeling the impact of increased fuel prices. She said that the number of passengers riding the bus at 7 a.m. was averaging about 17 and there were about 26-27 people riding at night. She said that Medicaid trips also were increasing because of rising gas prices. Ms. Goddard noted the Diamond Express vehicle was experiencing some mechanical problems.

RideSource

Mr. Stoffer noted the current focus on opening the Call Center. He said service was at near record levels. He hoped that by the end of the week, the Call Center would be running smoothly and anticipated that there would be challenging tests of the system to come after the Memorial Day holiday, which typically has a high demand time, and the beginning of the month, which also was busy.

Alternative Work Concepts

Mr. Whethem said he was receiving a lot of referrals and hoped to be able to refer some of them to the new case manager. He said that transit hosts were averaging about 1,200 scheduled transfers.

Lane Transit District

Ms. Parker said there was funding for a new vehicle for Diamond Express, but it had not been ordered. Also in regard to the Diamond Express, she noted that the fare had not been increased in some time while fares had been increased in other areas. She suggested the committee discuss that process.

Ms. Parker referred to the update provided in the meeting packet and highlighted the items related to the Revised Oregon Ethics Law, the prohibition of the use of walkers with seats on LTD buses, the extension of funding for transportation services for the homeless, and the impact of increased fuels costs on LTD.

Mr. Massengill asked how much lead time LTD needed to increase fares. Ms. Parker said that it required public notice and two public hearings and the process consumed about two months' time; she reported that LTD had just increased fares and there was discussion about whether additional increases were necessary.

White Bird

There was no report.

Mr. Reese adjourned the meeting at 11:46 p.m.

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)