

MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 21, 2008  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Lane Transit District  
3500 East 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Eugene, Oregon

MEMBERS PRESENT:

L. M. Reese, Chair, presiding	Mykal Taylor
Ann Angvick, Vice Chair	Bob Proctor
Hugh Massengill	Mary Otten
Aline Goddard	Mark Phinney
Tara Sue Salusso	

LTD BOARD MEMBER (ex officio)

Ed Necker

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jan Aho	Kay Metzger
Evan Sloan	Kristine Sirmans

OTHERS PRESENT:

Kathy Jenness	Ann Lauver
Kris Lyon	Eleanor Mulder
David Braunschweiger	Sherry Clark
Beth Mulcahey	Gail Lundeen

STAFF:

Terry Parker	Rand Stamm
Susan Hekimoglu	Andy Vobora

**INTRODUCTIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND AGENDA REVIEW**

Mr. Reese called the Accessible Transportation Committee (ACT) meeting to order and those present introduced themselves.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

Kathy Jenness, community recruiter and liaison between Lane Independent Living Alliance and Project Rise, explained that Project Rise was recruiting 45 women from both Eugene and Portland who had physical disabilities, required or needed some form of accommodation, and had depressive symptomology. She said the women would participate in a 12-week cognitive behavioral therapy intervention. She described project activities and distributed informational flyers. She said participants would receive a stipend and asked committee members to distribute the information through their respective agencies.

Mr. Reese announced that Olive Plaza would hold its annual bazaar on November 7 and 8. He provided informational flyers.

#### **MINUTES APPROVAL – JUNE 17, 2008**

Ms. Otten, seconded by Mr. Phinney, moved to approve the June 17, 2008, minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **ACTION: CALL CENTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Mr. Stamm said the ATC was being asked to authorize the formation of an advisory committee as a subcommittee of the ATC and to direct staff to collect applications for membership. He said each brokerage formed an advisory committee to help provide guidance on operations and problem resolution. He reviewed the proposed membership roster that included representation from riders, advocates, care providers, transportation providers, medical providers, etc., and said there would be no more than 18 voting members. He said the RideSource brokerage manager would serve as staff to the advisory committee and the ATC could appoint other ex-officio members as it deemed appropriate.

Mr. Massengill asked if the advisory committee would change the workload of the ATC. Mr. Stamm said the advisory committee would report periodically to the ATC and might occasionally ask the ATC to forward items to the LTD Board for information and/or approval. He said the advisory committee also would provide periodic informational reports to the Department of Human Services. He did not anticipate any significant increase in the ATC's workload.

In response to a question from Ms. Salusso, Mr. Stamm said the ATC would review applications and make recommendations for membership. He hoped to begin development of bylaws in January 2009, and expected that initially, the advisory committee would meet monthly, but that once it was up and running, it would meet quarterly.

Ms. Parker noted that an administrative team had designed the structure of the advisory committee and emphasized the importance of having consumer representatives on the body to share needs and concerns.

Mr. Massengill, seconded by Ms. Angvick, moved that the Accessible Transportation Committee authorize the formation of the RideSource Call Center Advisory Committee as a subcommittee of the Accessible Transportation Committee and direct staff to collect applications for membership. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **ACTION: SOUTH LANE NON MEDICAL FUNDING**

Ms. Parker said the call center, in addition to Medicaid medical transportation, provided Medicaid non-medical services under two contracts. She described the history of the contracts and said the call center provided an opportunity to reorganize those services. She said moving the services into the call center meant that providers could charge a fully allocated rate, but that also meant funds were spent more quickly. She said that grant funds allocated as the local match would be exhausted by the end of October and additional funds were needed to maintain Medicaid non-medical transportation services in South Lane County. She proposed using \$20,000 from Special Transportation Fund (STF) Out-of-District reserve funds to continue services through the end of the year and explained that the

reserve funds typically were used as match for replacement vehicles in the rural fleet, which included South Lane, Florence, and Oakridge.

Mr. Massengill asked if there would be a problem if any of the funds were unspent by the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Parker said that depended type of funds and grant allocation; STF allowed unspent funds to be carried over to the next year as a reserve.

Ms. Angvick asked if it was likely that the grant for the next two years also would fall short of what was needed. Ms. Parker said during the next grant cycle, the District had a guaranteed pool of money to plan for and a review committee would recommend allocations to various programs based on priorities.

Mr. Phinney asked if there were other expenses that likely were to require reserve funds. Ms. Parker replied that typically, reserve funds were not used for operations, but only for capital match. She expected that reserve funds would be replenished before they were required for capital expenditures.

Mr. Proctor, seconded by Ms. Otten, moved that the Accessible Transportation Committee accept the staff recommendation to allocate \$20,000 from the STF Out-of-District reserve fund to maintain the Medicaid Non-Medical transportation program in South Lane County. The motion passed unanimously.

## **ANNUAL ROUTE REVIEW**

Mr. Vobora distributed a system map, summary of changes and community report discussing the district's financial situation. He said factors that were causing the budget gap included rising fuel costs and even though those were decreasing, payroll tax revenue was declining due to economic factors such as closure of the Hynix facility. He indicated that transit agencies across the nation were being affected by the poor economy. He said the proposed reductions represented a 14.5 percent cut in service, but did not solve the budget gap and managers were reviewing other options for further reducing costs.

Mr. Vobora reviewed the public outreach activities related to the proposed cuts and indicated that some routing modifications had occurred as a result of input from riders. He said a final public hearing was scheduled for November 10.

Ms. Parker pointed out that deletion of routes in the north and south would impact *RideSource* boundaries.

Ms. Otten commented that in terms of fairness, *RideSource* should conform to the regular service as much as possible. She asked if cuts were based on number of riders or were other factors involved. She said it appeared that Saturday buses were well used and hourly service would not be adequate to meet the demand. Mr. Vobora said cuts were based in part on numbers, but that the District's goal was to maintain strong service along major travel corridors, including frequency during peak hours. He said in some instances, 60-foot buses would be used to expand capacity and avoid leaving people behind.

Ms. Otten said the District's financial problems were cyclical and asked what was being done to find more stable revenue sources because riders' need for service did not change.

Mr. Vobora said the community and consumer groups needed to be advocates for transit funding at the state and federal levels. He hoped to see an increase in paratransit funding and an increase in the payroll tax during the next legislative session. He also expected the LTD Board to explore other revenue options to broaden the District's funding base, such as a

property tax. He said federal funding for bus replacement and more flexibility in the use of federal formula funds were possible in the future, but there were no short-term solutions.

Ms. Otten commented that the service reductions and route changes would have a large impact on people who were blind or visually impaired and those who were cognitively impaired and that updating stop announcements and text-based route descriptions would be critical to clarifying those changes and preventing people from switching to RideSource. Mr. Vobora agreed and said that marketing funds could be used to assist riders to understand service changes.

Mr. Vobora concluded his presentation and responded to questions about specific route changes from committee members and the audience.

## **PROGRAM UPDATES**

**Lane Transit District** - Ms. Parker reported that a prototype for revision to the layout of the EmX vehicle was being developed. She said the intent was to have one full rear-facing bay and a second bay that could be either forward- or rear-facing. She described several structural issues that had to be resolved and said that various mobility devices would be used to test the reconfiguration.

Ms. Parker said the discretionary grant program was being reorganized and more responsibility had been transferred to the local level. She said the State would give more weight to the local review process and concern itself only with whether a project was eligible for funding. She said grant applications were due in early January 2009, and the ATC would receive recommendations from the grant review committee and hold a public hearing in February.

Ms. Salusso asked how decisions about the amount and timing of matching funds would be made. Ms. Parker responded that the review committee would make those decisions at its November 5 meeting.

**South Lane Wheels/Cottage Grove** - Ms. Salusso reported that the annual campaign was launched in October with three months to raise \$30,000 in order to qualify for a \$15,000 challenge grant. She recently participated in leadership training and two staff members were attending a training conference in Denver. She said ridership continued to grow and staff were conducting outreach to inform the public about South Lane Wheels as a community resource.

**White Bird Clinic** - Ms. Lauver reported an increased demand for service and the agency was considering reducing the number of rides offered per month to clients. She said the reduction would be implemented in November and its impact evaluated.

**Diamond Express/Oakridge** - Ms. Goddard reported that Diamond Express was extremely busy and some Lane Community College students were using the service at least three times per week. She said that had caused some concern about the capacity of the 28-person buses.

**RideSource/Eugene, Springfield** - Mr. Braunschweiger said there had been a slight lull in ridership following the fare increase in July, but last week had been the busiest ever, so ridership had rebounded.

Ms. Lyon said the call center, in addition to South Lane medical and non-medical Medicaid calls, was now taking calls for Florence ADA service. She said the center averaged 600-800 incoming calls per day.

**Alternative Work Concepts** - Ms. Parker said that Alternative Work Concepts staff was in Denver at a conference presenting information on transit sensitivity training. She said AWC staff also had provided training to LTD operators.

Mr. Reese adjourned the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

*(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)*