

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, September 21, 2010
10 am – Noon
Lane Transit District
3500 East 17th Avenue – Eugene, Oregon

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Hugh Massengill, Chair	Kay Metzger
Mary Otten, Vice Chair	Mark Phinney
Aline Goddard	Annie Saville
Bob Proctor	Scott Whetham

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES:

Paul Blaylock	Stefan Kwiatkowski
Mike Cetto	Bill Morganti

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ed Necker	Eleanor Mulder
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OTHERS PRESENT:

Misty Brazell	Kris Lyon
April Georgi	David Braunschweiger
Beth Mulcahey	Ruth Linoz

STAFF:

Terry Parker	Susan Hekimoglu
Rand Stamm	

I. Call to order

Mr. Massengill called the meeting of the Accessible Transportation Committee (ATC) to order.

II. Introductions, Announcements, Agenda Review

Those present introduced themselves.

III. Audience Participation

Mr. Cetto mentioned a letter he had written about formalizing a carbon sequestration program for LTD. He said that he sent it to the City of Eugene's Human Rights and Equity Department on September

20. Ms. Parker asked that Mr. Cetto leave Ms. Hekimoglu a copy of the letter, and staff would decide where at LTD it needed to land, in order to ensure he received a response.

Mr. Kwiatkowski noted that he liked the new audio announcements on the buses, but did not know why they were put in. He was worried that the public might consider it to be an unnecessary expense. Ms. Parker said that the announcements were done in-house. She said that bus drivers could speak to passengers through a microphone, in addition to the pre-recorded announcements. Ms. Saville explained that the announcements were now recorded using a professional voice-over artist. She said there had been a memo about it the week before. Mr. Massengill noted that louder announcements were welcome.

IV. ACTION: Minutes Approval, June 15, 2010

Mr. Proctor, seconded by Ms. Otten, moved that the minutes for June 15, 2010, meeting be approved as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

V. ACTION: Membership

Mr. Massengill explained that the ATC Membership Committee, composed of himself, Mr. Proctor, and Mr. Phinney, had made some recommendations, which were outlined in the meeting packet.

Ms. Hekimoglu stated that the Committee discussed a revision to the bylaws, which was outlined in the meeting packet.

Ms. Metzger asked if the bylaws were general enough. Ms. Parker stated that the bylaws has been revised and were general to region, and that the only specific agency on the Committee was the Area Agency on Aging. The rural agencies the ATC worked with had been the same for the past 25 years. The Committee had recommended repealing term limits in the bylaw revision to avoid having vacant positions (since turnover was so low in rural regional transportation agencies).

Ms. Hekimoglu explained that the at-large position would remain vacant for now, and a decision about it would be made later in the year.

Ms. Metzger noted that even the Area Agency on Aging position was general, because if Senior and Disabled Services (Lane Council of Governments) decided not to have the designation as the Area Agency on Aging, it could be housed at another agency. Ms. Hekimoglu stated her belief that if the Area Agency on Aging did go somewhere else, the new agency that housed it would come to the ATC committee.

Ms. Otten, seconded by Mr. Proctor, moved to change the bylaws as outlined on pages 14-20 of the meeting packet.

Mr. Phinney asked if Senior and Disabled Services gave up the role of housing and conducting services as the Lane County Area Agency on Aging, another bylaw change would be required. Ms. Metzger said that it would not, and that the new agency that housed it would become a member of the ATC committee.

The group determined that the name "Area Agency on Aging" was a designation, and an appropriate one.

Ms. Metzger referred to page 20 of the meeting packet, which read: "These bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of no less than fifty-one (51) percent, with no less than seven (7) days' notice to all Committee members in writing of the proposed changes to the rules."

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Ms. Hekimoglu noted that the proposed changes to the rules went out to Committee members via email on Thursday, September 16.

Mr. Massengill suggested waiting to vote on the proposed bylaw changes, and voting instead on membership.

Mr. Phinney, seconded by Ms. Otten moved that the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee accept the recommendations of the ATC Membership Committee for the Fiscal Year 2010-2011 membership roster and forward a recommendation of approval to the LTD Board of Directors. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Parker stated that the body could vote on bylaws at the next meeting.

VI. Accessible Services Program Work Plan

Ms. Parker referred to page 9 of the meeting packet, and reviewed the work plan for the Accessible Services Program as presented.

Mr. Proctor mentioned the Gas Voucher Program and mileage reimbursement. He stated that Child Welfare programs that issued mileage reimbursement to people who had non-Medicaid appointments received gas vouchers from Shell. He encouraged LTD to talk to the Department of Human Services about this program. Mr. Stamm explained that at the state level, existing models used in the Northwest Call Center were being examined, and the DHS program would also be reviewed.

Mr. Phinney noted that the Accessible Services Work Plan seemed like a lot of work. He said he could speak to the subcommittee about the EZ Access Half-Fair program. He explained that most of Health and Human Services Developmental Disabilities' clients used it.

Mr. Phinney mentioned the end of the three-day grace period for bus passes. He said that during the first month, about four people walked into his agency's office looking for help, but that hadn't happened in September, so he felt that people had become accustomed to the change.

Ms. Parker stated that the first month had been an issue because people had not budgeted for the change. In addition, LTD had announced it in May, but it did not start until July. She said that LTD had worked the issue out with agency purchases. She stated her belief that LTD was no longer hearing about it because it had been a few months since it started. She said she would get back to Mr. Phinney with notes about how it was going.

Mr. Whetham said that the process had smoothed out a lot. He noted that many people who needed the stickers depended on residential providers to secure them. Now that the providers' issues had been dealt with, the situation had improved.

Ms. Parker explained that Medicare previously sent out checks on the third or the fifth of the month. They continued to do send them, but staggered the checks throughout the month. LTD was also

dealing with budget issues, and had a committee working on fares to try to iron out fare issues. One of the issues had been resolved by no longer providing free service to people for the first three days of every month.

Mr. Kwiatkowski asked why people could not purchase, for example, an April bus pass on March 1st.

Ms. Parker said that had to do with control of bus pass inventory and accounting practices. When someone purchased a 3-month bus pass, they received the first month's pass, and subsequent passes were mailed to them prior to the next month but would check to verify her understanding of the process.

VII. UO Station Renovation/Gateway EmX Update

Gateway EmX Update: Joe McCormack of LTD Facilities Services explained that LTD had started test operations on the Gateway EmX Extension. This meant stations and busways had been completed, and signals were working. The functional pieces of the new EmX route were now operational, however some detail work still needed to be done (such as signage and landscaping). For the next couple of months, bus operators would continue to test the new corridor and training would begin by mid-November. He stated that revenue service would begin on January 9, 2011.

Mr. McCormack explained that at the Eugene Station, the EmX boarding bay would be moved to 10th Avenue. This was because when the Gateway EmX began operations, the EmX route would be a one-seat ride from downtown Eugene, out to RiverBend Hospital, around the Gateway loop and back to Eugene station via the Springfield Station. This created a new dynamic for buses in downtown Eugene, where currently, inbound and outbound buses both traveled on 10th Avenue in a single lane, which was projected to be the passing point. The inbound and outbound routing in downtown Eugene would be changed to travel inbound on 11th and outbound on 10th. This meant that Eugene Station boarding bays needed to be adjusted. Work would begin on 11th Avenue before the end of September, and would continue on 10th Avenue in November. The intent was to maintain a large area open to pedestrians on 10th, just north of the current EmX bay, on the north side of the McDonald Theatre near the Burrito Boy.

Mr. Morganti asked if the buses would unload passengers at 11th, and then travel around the block to 10th to load passengers. Mr. McCormack said that this was correct in some situations. He said that a safety valve was being built – two bays would be built at the Eugene station, one on 10th and one on 11th. The site on 11th was being built in case an EmX vehicle on 10th had not yet departed when the next bus arrived. LTD wished to let passengers off the bus on 11th rather than making them wait on board for the departing vehicle to exit the bay on 10th. He noted that LTD was confident that 90 percent of the time, the buses would depart on time, resulting in all boarding and deboarding to occur on 10th.

Ms. Parker asked what the operational protocol would be for when the 11th back-up bay had to be used. She was concerned about consistency for passengers.

Mr. McCormack said that staff continued to work on that issue. He explained that the bus operator would get an indication, as they approached the 11th Avenue bay, as to whether the 10th Avenue bay was still occupied. He said that this was a point of concern for some who were working on the project.

Mr. McCormack said that some of the bus routes were timed very tightly, and at times buses circled the station waiting for their bay to be free. The Facilities Department wanted to avoid this situation.

Mr. Kwiatkowski said this was annoying as a passenger.

Ms. Metzger asked about using Alternative Work Concepts to train riders in using the Gateway EmX, specifically related to crossing near the roundabout, the High intensity Activated Cross Walk (HAWK) traffic signal system, and the rectangular flashing system.

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Mr. Whetham said that a week had been set aside in mid-October to schedule trainers to go out to learn the routes, and that training of riders would be available in November. Ms. Metzger said that training for these pedestrian environments would be a challenge.

Mr. McCormack said that operators would be occupied in October, but would be out "in the lanes" in November, and training of riders with disabilities would occur at that time.

Ms. Parker recalled that, to train operators for the EmX on the Franklin corridor, a notice got out to give trainers an opportunity to ride the route. She said this could be done again, however for some people, one-on-one training needed to happen.

Ms. Metzger mentioned the difficulty of training in the roundabout, and on new pedestrian devices. She said she was referring to pedestrians with disabilities.

Ms. Otten hoped operators would be trained to make clear announcements when they unloaded passengers on 11th. She noted that for passengers who could not see, they would not know where they were unless they were told. She asked if these changes would have an impact on existing Eugene station bays, and if so would there be updated station maps for passengers.

Mr. McCormack said that the Riders' Digest was being updated for the Gateway EmX start up. Ms. Parker said that the Riders' Digest and station maps would be done in Braille.

Mr. Morganti wanted station announcements to be made more clearly, for example, "Bay A as in apple," in order to help those who might not understand the enunciation clearly.

Mr. McCormack said that he would talk to the people at LTD who had the authority to change the announcements.

Ms. Parker and Mr. Kwiatkowski also mentioned operators speaking clearly into the microphones when making announcements. Ms. Parker said she would speak to the people in charge of announcements.

Ms. Saville said that the occasional automated announcements that require the Operator to select did not always work very well. She found it difficult to drive the bus and find the right automated announcement. She noted that it was easier to make the announcements herself.

Ms. Parker asked Ms. Saville to meet with her and the LTD training manager to discuss operational practices and guidelines.

UO Station: Mr. McCormack explained that in January of 2010, LTD and the University of Oregon began discussing possible changes to the University Station. He stated that there was a convergence of every mode of transportation at 13th Avenue and Kincaid Street. He said that the process was spawned by the City's re-paving of both Alder and 13th next year. LTD had received a Project Readiness grant from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) for project design, which required a shovel-ready project by January of 2011. He presented some of the options LTD was

examining, reviewing the "UO Station Options" PDF, found on the LTD website under "UO Station Comprehensive Renovation."

Mr. McCormack reviewed two design options: a) moving the entire station south of 13th Avenue on Kincaid (using either side of Kincaid, blocking street to all other traffic between 13th and 14th), or b) moving the entire station north of 13th Avenue on Kincaid (shifting all bays to the east side of Kincaid). Each option created a couple of more bays for growth.

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Mr. McCormack explained that, for the north of 13th design option, buses would take Alder up to 14th. The whole station would be on the east side of the street, between 11th and 13th. The traffic flow would remain the same for everybody. There would be room enough for one bus lane and one car lane. The designs were trying to create a no net loss to slight gain to parking in the area.

Mr. McCormack noted that the general consensus LTD got from local business owners and from the university was to leave the traffic flow as it was; which would mean using the design that put the station north of 13th. This option offered a number of benefits, including potential operational savings. In addition, all buses would have their own assigned bay. South-bound buses would be assigned to the bay between 13th and 12th, and would turn down 12th, then down Alder southbound. Another possible route would be to turn down 11th and then down Patterson southbound.

Ms. Linoz asked if there was concern about how difficult it was to turn left onto Kincaid from 13th. Mr. McCormack said that there was. He said that LTD was looking into easing this by shifting parking or bus routes. Ms. Linoz thought a traffic signal might help. Mr. McCormack said that creative methods of traffic control were being examined at 13th and Kincaid and at 11th and Kincaid.

Mr. McCormack stated that a public open house would be held on October 12th at the Wesley Center at 1236 Kincaid, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. LTD would present its initial designs and get feedback on them.

Mr. Massengill asked if LTD had received a grant to build the new bus station. Mr. McCormack said they had not, but the point of the design grant was to get to the point of seeking funding to build the station.

Ms. Hekimoglu said she would email the committee about the open house.

VIII. West Eugene EmX Project Update

Tom Schwetz, LTD Planning and Development Director; John Evans, Project Manager; and Cosette Rees, Marketing Representative were present to provide an update on the West Eugene EmX project. Mr. Schwetz explained that the project was entering the decision-making phase, and the official Alternatives Analysis Report was nearing completion. It was being reviewed by the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA), which would be finished by the beginning of October. The report would include an evaluation of all of the route options. The two route options remained. One would travel west on 6th/7th, south on Garfield, and west on West 11th and to Commerce; the second option would travel west on 13th, north on Chambers and west on West 11th. As part of the analysis, future transit demand had been modeled, as had future congestion levels and environmental issues, including the impact to trees in the affected areas. The City of Eugene defined charter trees as trees that existed within the City limits in 1915, and measured a certain diameter. Taking those trees would require a community vote. Therefore, the routes designed for the West Eugene EmX avoided those identified trees. In the first two EmX projects, more trees were planted than were taken. The process

would involve various committees examining the Alternatives Analysis Report. Perhaps the ATC could be one of these committees. Ultimately, the City Council, the LTD Board, and the Metropolitan Policy Committee all had to agree on a given route.

Mr. Schwetz noted that there was a lot of misinformation in the community about the West Eugene EmX project. In response, an FAQ document was now on the LTD website (under *Let's Talk about EmX*). He said he would get a copy of it to the ATC. Several members of the City Council, the LTD Board, and the Metropolitan Policy Committee had been invited to serve on a joint locally preferred alternative committee. This body was made up of Mike Eyster, Gary Gillespie, Greg Evans, Kitty Piercy, Chris Pryor, Andrea Ortiz, Rob Handy, and Sonny Chickering. This group would be meeting regularly, looking into the details and developing a joint recommendation for the three bodies that would facilitate decision making about the West Eugene EmX route. He expected the three bodies to have chosen an alternative alignment by February 2011.

Mr. Schwetz noted that his team had conducted a range of surveys in the community. Riders, the business community, and the general public had been surveyed. The results showed a good amount of support for the West Eugene EmX Project. While there had been skepticism about EmX, once people saw the Franklin Boulevard EmX in action, many of their minds were changed.

Mr. Schwetz clarified that there was a no-build option and an option called the Transportation System Management (TSM) option (about which information was available on the LTD website), which tried to accomplish the same things with less capital outlay. The FTA wanted the TSM option as a baseline in comparison to the build options.

Ms. Parker asked if the Alternatives Analysis Report would use congestion projections.

Mr. Schwetz said that it would, and would use the LCOG model. Transit was part of what was modeled. For the no-build option, in which regular buses would continue to operate, a travel time was calculated and was compared to the build alternative. The analysis showed that the build options had significantly lower travel times.

Mr. Kwiatkowski asked if the turnaround point would be Commerce. Mr. Schwetz said that it would. Originally, the team had examined the route ending as far west as the Cone development. However, there were significant environmental issues west of Beltline. This was an expense that did not make sense. The goal was for the EmX west terminus to be a logical place. He noted that the Walmart and Target stops had some of the highest ridership along the West 11th corridor.

Ms. Otten asked if, in the analysis of the options, possible impact and changes to existing routes and traffic flows were considered (in terms of making people walk further). She noted that 6th/7th was not pedestrian friendly.

Mr. Schwetz explained that as part of the development of the alternatives, future networks that would exist under different alternatives were analyzed. When EmX would be implemented, it was intended to replace the current system on the corridor. Sixth/7th between Jefferson and Garfield were part of the future corridors for Hwy 99 and River Road. He explained that the team had looked into how to ensure pedestrian and bicycle modes of transportation could safely connect with EmX stations. He agreed that 6th/7th was not pedestrian friendly. He explained that the City had future plans to make at least part of 6th/7th better in terms of pedestrian friendliness. The City was responsible for 6th/7th east of Jefferson; ODOT was responsible for 6th/7th west of Jefferson. EmX stops were further apart than traditional LTD bus routes. Generally, people were willing to walk further to the higher quality service. However, with the implementation of EmX on Gateway and in West Eugene, there would be situations

where passengers would have to walk further to utilize the service.

Ms. Parker stated that there were people who did not want the West Eugene EmX service. She stated that some people were making uninformed comments about the needs of older adults and people with disabilities along the corridor. It was important to speak up about the issues from the true perspective of people with disabilities or older adults.

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Mr. Schwetz proposed reviewing each option with the ATC. Ms. Otten said she would be interested in participating in the process. Mr. Schwetz and Ms. Parker decided to speak more about setting up a meeting.

Ms. Rees said she was working on outreach for the West Eugene EmX Project. She noted that there were well-organized opposition groups that were against the West Eugene EmX Project. She was looking to launch two outreach strategies. The first was an informational strategy, which involved getting accurate information to the public. She explained that letters to property owners whose properties would be impacted on each of the route options were sent out, and said that the team would be happy to speak with them one-on-one to talk about impacts to their properties, since changes could still be made at this point in the process. Meetings with 60 property owners had happened in the last five weeks. Most of the time, by the time these conversations were over, the property owners were relieved, and typically became supporters of the project. The team would also meet with groups like ATC to get out accurate information, and would put accurate information on the LTD website. Decision makers on the City Council, the LTD Board, and the Metropolitan Policy Committee were influenced by the public, so the team was also ensuring they had accurate information and were taking a long-term view of the project and the benefits it could have for the community.

Ms. Rees explained that she was also implementing an "I Support EmX" campaign to persuade people that the project was a positive one. She was also using social media to promote the project and to disseminate accurate information. She wanted to educate the ATC and get their input on the project.

Mr. Cetto thought the EmX buses were too noisy. He said he was against the project, and asked Ms. Rees to try to change his mind. Ms. Rees said she would like to hear his feedback. She said she would email the FAQ to Ms. Hekimoglu to distribute to the ATC. She encouraged ATC members to sign up for EmX e-newsletters, which would include project updates and Q&As.

Ms. Otten asked which groups were against the project. Ms. Rees mentioned Residents for Responsible Rapid Transit (RRRT). She had asked to meet with them and asked them for information, but they had not responded. Another group was called Our Money, Our Transit. She thought the groups had good concerns. She did not want to minimize or trivialize their concerns, but it had been hard for her to communicate with them. She said staff also was learning from the Envision Eugene process. RRRT had suggested a person for the West Eugene Corridor Committee, an advisory group to staff. This was the only person who had come forward formally. This person was also the one to whom Ms. Rees had made her requests for contact with RRRT, but she had not responded. She thought the strategy of continuing to put out accurate information was a good one. She stated that the benefit and the value of EmX would be apparent in 20 years when traffic was more congested. Most, but not all, of the businesses staff had met with were happy with the outcome of the meetings. She asked ATC members to send her ideas and suggestions at any time.

IX. LTD – New Bus Purchase – Vehicle Specifications

LTD Service Planning, Accessibility, and Marketing Director Andy Vobora stated that he had been participating in the planning for LTD's next bus purchase. He noted that LTD buses lasted a long time. The buses LTD was retiring had been put into service in 1991. This fall, three of the five new 60-foot articulated buses had gone into service. With service being reduced, bigger capacity buses were needed. The next purchase would be of 15 40-foot hybrid buses, which would eliminate the remainder of the high-floor, lift-equipped buses. The Meeting Agenda Opportunities for feedback as to the interior design of the new buses. The design of the designated seating area for older adults and people with disabilities was being examined. Some riders respected the designation; some did not. One of the options that staff were considering was to redesign the designated seats with new colors (bright green rather than blue), and marking the floors near the seats to call attention to the fact that the seats were designated priority seating for older adults and people with disabilities.

Mr. Vobora distributed photos of the design. He thought the message that the seats were designated would start to get out in a new way with the new design. The newest EmX buses had an EmX logo screened into the flooring in the designated seating area. In the photo, a disabled symbol was on the floor, along with the words "Priority Seating for Seniors and Disabled." Another option was changing the color of the flooring in the designated area.

Mr. Morganti stated that he used a cane, and liked to sit in the front left-hand seat so he could hang his cane on the bar. He suggested putting a bar on the right-hand side as well. Mr. Cetto said he did not like to sit sideways. Mr. Vobora noted that this was another good reason why the entire area, including the first row of forward-facing seats, needed to be clearly marked as priority seating.

Ms. Parker suggested making the designated area go a little bit further back, so that mobile people who were disabled did not have to move when a rider with a mobility device got on the bus.

Mr. Stamm stated that the Americans with Disabilities Act was in a public comment process about a new set of standards that dealt with design, seat designation, and graphics.

Ms. Georgi encouraged Mr. Vobora to put the disabled symbol on the walkway rather than under the seats. Mr. Massengill thought the redesign was a good thing. He noted that he saw a lot of well-meaning but confused non-senior, non-disabled riders on the bus who sat in the priority seating.

Ms. Linoz asked how these riders were dealt with. Mr. Vobora said it was a challenge. Ms. Saville said that the situations could go a variety of ways. On good days, people who needed to move did so without being asked. On the worst days, people who needed to did not move, even when asked. Usually, people were cooperative. She thought the new design would help, except when a bus might be overloaded.

Mr. Morganti reminded the ATC that not all disabilities were visible. Mr. Vobora said seating configurations could also be examined, and more flip seats could be added for people with carts or loads. He asked ATC members to send comments to him within the next four to six weeks to pass on to the design committee.

Ms. Otten noted her concern with the silent nature of hybrid cars. She asked if hybrid buses posed the same problem. Mr. Vobora said that the diesel engine would always run on hybrid buses. Mr. Cetto said he could not hear a diesel engine on the back of a 40-foot bus if he was standing in front of it.

Mr. Vobora mentioned the bells on the EmX buses. He said he would talk to people in charge of the fleet about adding bells to the new buses.

X. Program Updates

Ms. Parker passed around bus posters and window signs that were being designed to make people aware that the buses had lap and shoulder belts available for people who used mobility devices. The posters would be placed in the overhead poster holders near the priority seating area. Operators would be reminded of this during fall training. These were a required safety feature of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but people were not required to use them. The poster displayed a person in a manual wheelchair wearing a lap and shoulder belt. She asked for feedback.

Mr. Morganti suggested having belts available for all riders. Ms. Parker said this was not required, but the ADA did require belts in the priority seating bay for people in mobility devices.

XI. Adjournment

Mr. Massengill adjourned the meeting at 12:04 p.m.