

**NAME OF MEETING: LTD Accessible Transportation Committee**

**DATE OF MEETING: June 19, 2012**

**TO: Susan Hekimoglu**

**RECORDED BY: Mary Feldman**

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**ROUTING INFORMATION**

7/2/2012 mh  
(Date and initials)

Draft to staff

MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, June 19, 2012  
10 am – Noon  
Lane Transit District Next Stop Center  
1099 Olive Street – Eugene, Oregon

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Hugh Massengill, Chair	Bill Morganti
Misty Brazell	Eleanor Mulder
Mike Cetto	Ed Necker (LTD Board rep, ex officio)
Aline Goddard (after 10:10 a.m.)	Mary Otten, Vice Chair
Stefan Kwiatkowski	Annie Saville
Ruth Linoz	Reneé Van Norman
Patti Little	Scott Whetham
Gail Lundeen (after 10:10 a.m.)	

MEMBERS ABSENT:

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES:

Paul Blaylock	Sheila Thomas
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OTHERS PRESENT:

Debbie Bonds, captioner	April Georgi
Pete Barron	L.M. Reese
Charles Biggs	Fred Stoffer
David Braunschweiger	Dennis Turner

STAFF:

Susan Hekimoglu  
Terry Parker  
Cosette Rees  
Rand Stamm

**I. Call to order**

Mr. Massengill called the meeting of the Accessible Transportation Committee (ATC) to order at 10:04 a.m.

**II. Introductions, Announcements, Agenda Review**

Those present introduced themselves.

The committee recognized Ms. Hekimoglu for being named LTD's employee of the month.

Ms. Parker introduced Cosette Rees as the new Accessible and Customer Service Manager.

Mr. Massengill announced that his term on the committee was ending and he asked members to think about the election of new officers scheduled for later in the meeting.

There were no changes to the agenda.

**III. Audience Participation**

There were no comments by the public.

**IV. Minutes Approval, April 17, 2012**

Mr. Kwiatkowski pointed out two errors in the minutes. In the first sentence of the last paragraph on page 7, FDA should be changed to FTA (Federal Transportation Administration). On page 9, in the second paragraph under item VI, Ms. Saville had been misquoted (delete ~~strikeout~~, replace with italicized word): "Ms. Saville was ~~pleased~~ *concerned* by the change because turning off Pearl onto 5<sup>th</sup> was difficult for drivers of 40-foot buses."

**MOTION:** Ms. Mulder moved, seconded by Mr. Morganti, to approve

the minutes of April 17, 2012 as corrected. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **V. Membership for Fiscal Year 2012-2013**

The Executive Committee had reviewed the proposed membership roster for Fiscal Year 2012-2013, and recommended the following:

New Appointment: Pete Barron, representing Older Adults and Patti Little, representing the Area Agency on Aging.

Re-Appointments: Bill Morganti, representing people with mental and emotional disabilities; Misty Brazell, representing Metro Providers; Gail Lundeen, representing rural riders; and Mike Cetto, representing members at large.

Community Representative Appointment: L. M. Reese

Communities Representative Reappointments: Paul Blaylock, Jill Fish, Sheila Thomas

The proposed membership roster for FY13 would result in the continued vacancy on the West Lane County Rural Providers position. A communication was sent to the Florence Transportation Advisory Committee twice within the past several months to generate interest, to no avail.

**MOTION:** Ms. Otten moved, seconded by Mr. Morganti, that the Accessible Transportation Committee accept the membership nominations as presented for Fiscal Year 2012-13, and forward a recommendation of approval to the LTD Board of Directors. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Lundeen questioned whether Mr. Morganti could second the motion because he was on the slate of candidates. The group agreed that this was allowed.

Ms. Parker thanked everyone for serving on the committee and welcomed the new members. She particularly acknowledged Mr. Massengill for his leadership as chair.

Ms. Parker pointed out that while parking was more challenging, it was easier for members to use transit to get to the new downtown meeting location and it was more

centrally located to allow other people to attend as well. She observed that the committee had been influential in effecting change and in keeping LTD focused on providing good accessible services.

Because the meeting room was cramped for the number of people attending, members recommended that staff look for other space options downtown. Ms. Otten suggested meeting in a location such as the Atrium's Saul Room where listening devices were available.

Ms. Mulder appreciated meeting downtown.

Mr. Massengill said that serving on the committee had been a valuable experience for him and he acknowledged LTD for its accessibility work.

## **VI. Election of Officers for Fiscal Year 2012-13**

Mr. Massengill entertained nominations from the floor for the slate of officers for the next fiscal year. The committee was to elect both a Chair and a Vice Chair.

Ms. Otten indicated that she was willing to assume the role of Chair and Ms. Saville said that she would be willing to assist.

**MOTION:** Mr. Morganti, seconded by Mr. Kwiatkowski, nominated Mary Otten to serve as Chair for Fiscal Year 2012-13. There were no further nominations and Ms. Otten was unanimously elected.

**MOTION:** Ms. Linoz, seconded by Mr. Whetham, nominated Annie Saville to serve as Vice Chair for Fiscal Year 2012-13. There were no further nominations and Ms. Saville was unanimously elected.

## **VII. Coordinated Plan**

The Coordinated Plan Workgroup (Hugh Massengill, Bill Morganti, Gail Lundeen, Eleanor Mulder, Misty Brazell, and Renee Van Norman) met on May 22. Jan Aho, Executive Director of Pearl Buck, Inc., sat in for Ms. Van Norman. The workgroup discussed Lane County human service transportation at length and the planned inclusion of transportation for veterans and their families. The draft update would be presented to the ATC later this year.

Ms. Parker reported that in addition to updating the plan to include the grant for transportation for veterans, it also made sense to look at the plan now because of changes in the economic situation and to assess whether needs and priorities had changed.

Ms. Parker explained that other local planning efforts were underway and it made sense to look at how various plans related to each other. There was an obvious connection between housing and transportation planning, especially when addressing the housing needs for older adults. Medical services also had a transportation component, as illustrated by the development at RiverBend.

Ms. Parker said that she would continue working on the draft plan update during her transition to retirement over the next few months and that the updated plan would feed into the grant process in the fall. Ms. Parker told the committee that its work from September to December would be focused on the next two-year funding cycle and that anything the committee decided was a priority for funding needed to be reflected in the coordinated plan.

Mr. Morganti had a question about the location of the new veterans building and transportation issues. Ms. Parker was unsure of the status of the site selection process for that facility but said she had spoken with Andy Vobora about it and learned that LTD was unable to support some potential sites because it did not provide service at those locations and it would be too expensive to do so. It was unclear how much public input would influence the final decision.

Mr. Massengill said that he had been following this issue and believed that most of the proposed sites were well served by LTD. Mr. Necker noted that a potential site in Veneta posed some transportation problems but he believed that the one on Chad Drive would be readily served by 66 and 67, closer for RideSource, and less expensive. Mr. Stamm wondered whether the Chad site would be better served than the one at

RiverBend. The other site under consideration in Springfield was at Marcola Meadows which lacked transportation services.

Ms. Brazell recalled a conversation in May about transportation assessments for veterans but could not recall the types of needs that had been identified. Ms. Parker responded that transportation for veterans was a new focus and a new grant source and that some money had been allocated to start the service. She said that in September staff would report on how the service was going. The intent had been to make the service as easy and nonbureaucratic as possible and to get it started as quickly as possible. While it would be useful to conduct in-person follow-up interviews to identify transportation needs beyond VA appointments, the decision had been made not to do that immediately because it might discourage people from using the service if they were subjected to interviews and case management paperwork before the program was established.

Ms. Goddard commented that service had been provided to a veteran for the first time that day. Ms. Parker added that nationally, veterans in rural areas had difficulty getting to the few VA clinics or hospitals in their states that were located only in a few larger cities (in Oregon the clinics were in Portland or Eugene and the hospitals were in Portland and Roseburg).

Answering a question from Ms. Linoz about whether service providers would be expected to report how many veterans they were transporting, Ms. Parker said that the RideSource Call Center would collect that information and that service providers would not be responsible for tracking it.

Answering a question from Mr. Necker, Ms. Parker explained that the \$1.2 million grant that had been received was for capital and not for operations. Those funds were being used to upgrade the telephone software for the RideSource Call Center. Presently, the center was using the LCOG telephone system but the demands at the call center were greater than the current system could handle. LTD was using some of its federal funds for older adults, people with disabilities, and low income for operations. If the demand for services to veterans increased, it may become necessary to seek additional funding for operations in the next grant cycle. Ms. Parker added that funding received from the Older Americans Act all went to volunteer escort services. That service may also be available to a veteran.

Ms. Linoz asked that staff share more information about veterans' needs in rural areas as services to veterans evolved. Ms. Parker commented that veterans had numerous networks and tended to be a group that supported its members without a lot of outside assistance. This was the first time that veteran's services was looking for additional resources to meet growing needs. She saw the primary task at this point as being to get the word out about the availability of new services and anticipated that the program would grow incrementally and would require significant outreach to identify needs. She believed that every service provider could help in that outreach effort.

Ms. Parker reported that she and Ms. Rees had attended a United Way work group for non-profits where they had concluded that there was a great deal of grant-writing activity occurring but transportation was not being included in those grant applications. By doing more networking, she hoped to spread the message that people needed transportation in order to participate in the programs for which funding was being sought. She observed that RideSource services provided a mature business model that could help maximize the use of many different revenue streams. She encouraged committee members and service providers to help carry that message to potential community partners.

Ms. Linoz was concerned that when funding became available, it was only useable if a program was already in place. She expressed hope that providers would be made aware when different types of funding were anticipated so they could develop appropriate programs to be in place to use those funds. Ms. Parker commented that new programs typically triggered a great deal of planning and anticipation but it usually took time before demand for the program's services was established. People had to find out about the service and change their behaviors in order to use it. Trust in a provider had to be built before people would take advantage of a new program.

Mr. Massengill pointed out that during the time he had served on the committee, gas prices had risen to such a degree that it was driving the need for public transportation as an alternative to private vehicles.

### **VIII. Mobility Devices Not Accommodated**



Planning Manager Will Mueller was unable to be present to discuss the impact of increased ridership on the frequency of not being able to accommodate persons with mobility devices.

The group proceeded with Agenda item IX Program Updates while Ms. Rees went to her office to retrieve maps that illustrated the situation.

Ms. Rees showed the committee maps that illustrated one month's worth of data on locations where operators reported that wheelchair boardings were being denied. After some operator training the previous fall, drivers were now able to provide more consistent data.

The maps showed a dot where a wheelchair was not accommodated and clusters of dots where wheelchair overloads occurred with greater frequency, primarily at the Springfield and Eugene Stations as would be expected. Ms. Parker had ridden EmX the previous day to see whether the pattern had changed over time. When the system routes had been changed in the fall of 2010 and 60-foot buses were introduced, there still had been only two wheelchair stations in the bigger buses so more people could be carried but not more mobility devices. By reviewing the distribution of the dots every year it would be possible to identify pressure points and work with planners to address the problems.

Mr. Kwiatkowski pointed out that the Thurston and River Road stations also seemed to have some problems. Mr. Barron reported that on two occasions since March two buses in a row had been unable to accommodate him at River Road. A standard-size bus had been dispatched to pick him up and he had been the only rider on it.

Mr. Necker believed that overloads on the 51 and 52 were the result of fewer buses running between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. Ms. Parker said that River Road had overloads for both chairs and other riders. She said that it would be useful to look at time points and analyze the problems in greater depth. She noted that people were beginning to figure out that they sometimes needed to change their travel patterns and take the bus before the one they really needed to avoid being denied boarding on the more crowded bus.

Mr. Whetham said that in travel training, people going to work or school were being taught to take an earlier bus if they normally would ride one likely to be at capacity.

Ms. Parker said that people denied boarding should not rely on the operator to report but should call Accessible Services also when they missed two buses in a row so it was clear that it was the same person who had not been accommodated twice. She agreed to e-mail the new phone numbers to members.

Ms. Parker explained that which vehicle was sent out to pick up a wheelchair user who was not accommodated would depend on which driver and vehicle was most readily available. In Mr. Barron's case the available vehicle had been a full-sized bus, although he reported that three RideSource vehicles had driven past him while he was waiting. Ms. Parker informed the group that the possibility of RideSource providing back up was being explored and that while the two systems were separate, some connection between them should be made.

Mr. Massengill reported having seen a man with a shopping cart using the wheelchair station recently. Ms. Parker explained that the ADA required drivers to ask people to vacate their seats if they were blocking the wheelchair station with a shopping cart and someone with a wheelchair needed to use the space. While the ADA set a minimum standard, she said that it would be possible for LTD to go beyond that standard by creating a policy to require riders to move their belongings in order to provide access to a person using a wheelchair. The committee could consider this and make a recommendation if it chose.

Mr. Whetham commented that this illustrated a difficult situation and that the outcome often depended on how the operator presented the request that people move. Ms. Saville said that she rarely encountered any problems when she asked someone to move so a wheelchair could be accommodated. Mr. Whetham reiterated that it all came down to the drivers' presentation. Ms. Saville added that some drivers were good at it and others were not particularly helpful and did not want to get involved.

Ms. Linoz remarked that new housing downtown was likely to change many people's travel patterns.

Referring to the crowding problems in the River Road area, Mr. Blaylock suggested going back to running a bus every 15 minutes. Mr. Necker responded that this would be a good solution but that it was financially impossible at this time. Mr. Whetham said

that trip planning was critical for riders who needed to be somewhere at a specific time.

Mr. Blaylock also wondered why Chambers was not the route of choice for River Road instead of Washington and Jefferson where the bus often was stopped by a passing train. Ms. Saville responded that the Washington-Jefferson routing was used so that 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Railroad Blvd could be served. Her experience was that the bus usually could be on time despite train traffic. Mr. Kwiatkowski brought up the idea of changing the 51 and 52 routes so only one had to contend with the train tracks and there was a brief discussion of this idea.

## **IX. Program Updates**

### **a) ATC Chair's Report**

Mr. Massengill had nothing additional to report.

### **b) Lane Transit District**

1) Accessible Services Update: The Accessible Services staff moved into offices located upstairs at the Eugene station in early June. As previously reported, Accessible Services and Customer Services had merged into one department. Former LTD Marketing Representative, Cosette Rees, was hired to manage the new department. Ms. Rees began her new position on June 4. Benefits of this merger already were being felt as having the Accessible Service staff downtown provided on-site support to Customer Service on related questions and clarification. It was fortunate that Terry Parker remained at the District through June to complete the manager transition.

2) LTD Board Recap: At its May 16 meeting, the LTD Board approved the proposed fare increase. The adult cash fare will increase by \$0.25 to \$1.75 and the Day Pass fare will increase by \$0.50 to \$3.50. The EZ Access Half Fare and Youth Fare will increase by \$0.10 to \$0.85, with the Half Fare Day Pass increasing from \$1.50 to \$1.75. The RideSource Fare will increase from \$3.00 to \$3.50. Fare increases will be effective July 1, 2012. Group Pass rates also will increase as of January 2, 2013. Monthly and Quarterly Bus Pass prices will not change.

3) Also, in May, the LTD Budget Committee met to review the proposed Fiscal Year 2012-2013 budget. The Committee approved the budget as presented. The next regular meeting of the LTD Board was scheduled for Wednesday, June 20. At that meeting it would hold public hearings and take action on the supplemental budget for Fiscal Year 2011-2012 and the proposed Fiscal Year 2012-2013 budget.

c) *RideSource* Call Center

Mr. Braunschweiger reported that staff was reviewing software options. Mr. Stamm added that software replacement was a major project for the center. The responses to Requests for Proposals had been received and were being evaluated. The implementation of Community Care Organizations (CCOs) would change how Medicaid transportation was provided and this major change needed to be factored in to the software update. *RideSource* would need to negotiate and work with the Lane County CCO and also with other regional CCOs around the state since it would provide transportation to regions outside Lane County (notably Portland and Roseburg).

Mr. Necker was curious about information becoming more interchangeable with the new software update. Mr. Stamm explained that the center was moving toward a more comprehensive and widely used software but he added that brokerages around the state were not consistent in the software they used so a coordinated interface was not yet a reality. He was encouraged that there did seem to be some effort to develop better coordination among call centers round the country.

Ms. Little inquired whether LTD anticipated having a contract with the new Lane County CCO. Mr. Stamm hoped this would be the case but he cautioned that as Lane County was to be one of the first CCOs beginning August 1 and there were many other complicated details to work out in this complex coordination effort, the transportation component had been delayed until January 1.

Ms. Parker noted another level of coordination in the software environment. *Ride Connection* in Portland and the Vancouver, Washington transit agency also had received veterans' grants and were discussing software development with LTD. She was encouraged by the synergy and coordination at such a high technical level among the three transit agencies.

Ms. Rees reported that transportation advocate Lynn Peterson from the Governor's office had visited and toured the previous week and had been keenly interested in the

RideSource Call Center. Staff had given a presentation about service, partnerships, and the importance of keeping transportation at the local level. Representative Nancy Nathanson also had been present and she had advocated for continuing with a local brokerage. Ms. Rees described it as an insightful and good meeting that provided a good opportunity to showcase the call center.

d) RideSource ADA Paratransit

Mr. Braunschweiger reported that fiscal year-end numbers were being reviewed as staff looked toward the future. There was moderate growth in ADA transportation. In the next couple of years he anticipated greater diversification and increased use of taxis which now accounted for 6-7 percent of rides. He pointed out that greater diversification would reduce the need for the fleet to grow as much as it had in the past in order to accommodate the new services. He also said that the RideSource fleet was aging and that increasingly expensive repairs would have to be considered in the next few years. He concluded by saying the interaction between the various programs seemed to be working well.

Mr. Braunschweiger referred to a question Mr. Necker had posed at the previous meeting about the fare increase and its impact on people who worked at places like Goodwill and other supported places of employment. He had reviewed ridership to see how many people were getting help with the fare. Fares for those under the DD services contract were paid by that program. About 53 percent of riders to the four largest employment locations (Goodwill, ARC, Pearl Buck Center, and Lane Community College Supportive Employment) were under the DD services program so rode for free and the other 47 percent were ADA riders and about 6 percent of them paid cash fare. Most people were using tickets instead of paying the cash fare and in general, looking at the entire RideSource program, of the ADA riders who paid fare, about 20 percent paid in cash and others paid with ride tickets.

Mr. Necker stated that it appeared that the fare increase would not have as significant an impact as he had feared. Mr. Braunschweiger acknowledged that in certain cases the impact may be greater but there was insufficient data at this time to make that determination.

Ms. Parker added that the effect of the fare increase could not be measured immediately and she suggested looking again in six to nine months to assess the number of people who ride, the average number of trips people take when paying their

own fare and the number when agencies were paying for the trips. Past analysis indicated that when the cost of the trip was subsidized, individuals rode more.

Mr. Necker said that at the LTD Board meeting at which the fare increase was approved, he had suggested leaving the RideSource fare at \$3 instead of increasing it to \$3.50 but he had ended up voting for the increase. Mr. Braunschweiger said that people could continue using their \$3 cards until they were used up so any real changes in ridership could not be measured for a few months.

e) South Lane County (Cottage Grove)

Ms. Linoz reported that analog communication had been a problem and they had resorted to using cell phones as back up so testing of digital radios on ten buses had begun in April. The results had been awesome, providing coverage all the way to Vancouver, Washington. By the end of May all vehicles had been upgraded to digital resulting in happier drivers and dispatchers. A state discretionary grant and a local donor had covered the costs.

f) West Lane County (Florence)

There was no report.

g) East Lane County (Oakridge)

Ms. Goddard apologized for being late to the meeting and said that parking had been a problem. She reported that things were busy in Oakridge and that the city had no money. She was operating from an old school building and expected to have to move soon because there were insufficient funds to keep the building operational.

She reported that the Diamond Express had been down for two weeks. Last month drivers had reported deer tracks around the old public works building where the bus and vans were parked inside a locked and fenced area. They had kept this sighting confidential because of the danger of people shooting the vehicles if they thought deer were in the area.

Ms. Goddard wished Ms. Parker well upon her retirement.

h) White Bird Clinic

Ms. Georgi reported that June was a busy month and that White Bird was implementing several changes that would maximize the resources available for clients.

She complimented Ms. Parker for being a good spokesperson for the mental health field in disability issues.

Ms. Parker mentioned that White Bird performed assessments for people with specific issues around mental health, drug addiction and alcohol, which were difficult areas to assess. She proposed including White Bird in LTD's assessment team in order to improve coordination of services for people who were identified as needing services that could be provided by the RideSource Call Center. She credited the committee and the questions it posed during last year's review of the White Bird contract with making this need for coordination obvious.

Ms. Little asked whether White Bird had the ability to determine whether an individual was ADA-eligible. Ms. Parker responded that this was something to work on. She thought that what the White Bird assessment team was doing was consistent with what was happening under the ADA but a comparison would need to be done. She was confident that White Bird would be a resource for others in the community that may benefit from their services.

Ms. Parker added that she had met with members of the Senior Companion Program the previous day and found that people receiving those services were not connected to RideSource and that again coordination among programs, agencies, and services was an important need.

i) Other

Ms. Parker announced that LTD staff member Tom Schwetz would meet later that evening with the Eugene Human Rights Commission about the West Eugene EmX and how locating stops further apart affected people with disabilities. Ms. Parker was concerned that nondisabled people were speaking for people with disabilities and that specific issues around specific disabilities and the specific concerns of older people had not been identified. There was a danger that people with disabilities and older adults were being used as part of an argument that was political in nature. Ms. Parker emphasized the importance of LTD hearing directly from people who had specific concerns about EmX.

Mr. Morganti brought up the issue of non-disabled people making decisions for people with disabilities in relation to the Oregon Health Plan allowing only one hearing aid

every five years which he considered unfair to people like him who used two hearing aids.

Noting that at least one person on the Human Rights Commission used a wheelchair, Ms. Otten said that there were legitimate concerns about EmX and that members of the commission should not be accused of ill intent for raising issues.

Ms. Parker clarified that because of the ADA, people who could not use EmX and were ADA-eligible had RideSource as a back-up. Her point had been that LTD needed to hear people with disabilities speak to their specific issues so LTD could understand those issues and could work to mitigate them.

Ms. Linoz was curious whether in the assessments of riders, anyone had claimed a miniature horse as a service animal. Ms. Parker said that had not happened locally but Mr. Kwiatkowski said that he was aware of a horse being used as a service animal elsewhere.

Ms. Parker reminded the committee that she would be working on the coordinated plan in the weeks ahead and would continue working with Ms. Hekimoglu through the fall grant process.

## **X. Adjourn**

The next regularly scheduled meeting was set for Tuesday, September 18, 2012.

Mr. Massengill adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

*(Recorded by Mary Feldman)*