

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 15, 18, 2006
10 a.m. – Noon
Lane Transit District
3500 East 17th Avenue—Eugene, Oregon

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ed Necker, Chair	Ann Angvick, Vice Chair
Kathy Jenness	Scott Whetham
Aline Goddard	Evan Sloan
Bob Procter	Tara Salusso
Kirstin Sirmans	Dan Haun
Kay Christopher	L. M. Reese
Jan Aho	

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES:

Hugh Massengill

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Gordon Wyatt	Kay Metzger
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OTHERS PRESENT:

Mary Otten	Dave Kleger
Beth Mulcahey	Ed Derky
Lisa Sheridan	

STAFF:

Terry Parker, LTD Accessible Services Manager
Cossette Rees, LTD Marketing Representative
Graham Carey, LTD EmX Project Engineer
Will Mueller, LTD Service Planning Manager _____
John Dahl, LTD Operator Training Manager

INTRODUCTIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/AGENDA REVIEW

Mr. Necker called the meeting of the Lane Transit District (LTD) Accessible Transportation Committee (ATC) to order. Those present introduced themselves.

Mr. Necker reviewed the agenda. There were no changes suggested.

MINUTES APPROVAL

Mr. Reese, seconded by Ms. Christopher, moved to approve the minutes of April 18, 2006. The motion passed unanimously.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Necker solicited volunteers for the Membership Committee. Mr. Reese, Mr. Haun, and Mr. Necker volunteered to serve.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

a. EmX Pioneer Parkway Preferred Design

Mr. Carey provided a presentation on the proposed EmX route between downtown Springfield and the Gateway area, circulating large-scale photographs of spots along the route to illustrate his remarks. Members asked questions clarifying the route and lane designs.

Responding to a question from Mr. Necker regarding the position taken by Gateway Mall management regarding the bus station at that location, Mr. Carey said that their position seemed to be softening. He said that the company has a general policy that prohibited mass transit at its facilities, but he hoped to convince them that the local area was different from the other mall locations. Mr. Necker asked if the vehicles could use the existing bus station at the mall. Mr. Carey said yes, but vehicles would lose valuable travel time.

Responding to a question from Ms. Angvick about the number of stops on Pioneer Parkway, Mr. Carey said there were three proposed, and the design of the stops was similar to that proposed at Gateway Street. Mr. Whetham asked how many vehicles would travel the route. Mr. Carey said six vehicles would use it with operating hours between 5:30 a.m. to past 11 p.m., with ten-minute headways. Ms. Parker clarified that the EmX system did not change the hours of regular service, but rather added additional service.

Mr. Carey indicated he would return to the committee to provide future updates and to solicit input on various elements of the project.

b. Eugene Station Construction Update

Ms. Rees provided an update on construction at the Eugene Station, first sharing a handout with committee members that showed the new bay assignments at the station necessitated by construction to accommodate the EmX vehicles at new bays S and T. She said the new bay assignments would be effective on June 18. Ms. Rees said that LTD staff would be at the station June 18-21 to assist riders in finding their buses.

Ms. Rees pointed out Bay E, a possible new articulated bus bay that LTD would also like to construct during the summer to take advantage of the economies of scale provided by the EmX project, which would require temporarily moving the 60 and 66 buses to other bays. It was also possible that work could occur during the winter when the bay currently occupied by the 11 Thurston bus was available.

Ms. Rees indicated that raised line Braille copies of the diagram that was handed out were available.

Ms. Otten asked if LTD would keep the existing Braille signage up to date. Ms. Rees indicated that signs would be changed on June 19, meaning that for one day the signs would be wrong. Mr. Necker suggested that no signs would be better than incorrect signs. Ms. Rees assured the committee that LTD would make it a priority to have the new signs in place by June 18. Ms. Parker suggested that staff also update LTD's Web site with information about the Braille signs.

Ms. Christopher asked about the potential of establishing drop-off points outside the station to enable customers to make their transfers at a time of construction congestion. Ms. Rees indicated she would raise the suggestion at an upcoming service meeting. It was likely the drop-off point now on 10th Avenue could be affected by construction. Mr. Whetham said that if such drop-offs were established, operators needed to take care when making audio announcements because many people use them as a key for deboarding.

Mr. Necker suggested the possibility of "loosening" bus schedules to facilitate transfers.

Ms. Rees expressed appreciation for the input provided by the committee.

c. Summer LTD Service Review

Mr. Mueller distributed and reviewed a handout entitled *Rider's Digest Update Summer Service Adjustments*. He said that changes being proposed were few and were generally necessitated by the changes in bay assignments caused by construction. The changes were scheduled for the summer bid are expected to give continuity to service throughout the implementation of the Franklin EmX service.

Committee members raised a concern about the changes being proposed to the 28 Hilyard bus because of the impact it would have on service to the Hilyard Community Center. The committee briefly discussed other routes that come near the center and concluded that the 27 Fairmount was not a viable option for many people as the nearest stop was too

far from the center. Ms. Parker indicated staff would do some trip planning for the Hilyard Center to identify some travel options and provide that information to the committee.

Ms. Angvick asked if the Hilyard Community Center staff were aware of the changes being proposed. Ms. Parker said that was a good question. (Note: LTD and Hilyard Center staff will meet on June 14 to review.)

d. Hybrid Technology Update

Mr. Dahl provided an update on the hybrid technology LTD will have on the new EmX vehicles. He said that LTD planned to purchase six hybrid vehicles. Staff had traveled to Seattle to learn about any problems that Seattle's transit service had experienced with the hybrid vehicles it owned, the same as the ones LTD proposes to purchase. Staff had found Seattle's experience had been very positive. The buses were reliable and quiet. Mr. Dahl indicated the lack of noise from the vehicles could be a safety issue as buses approached the stations. The maintenance record for the vehicles was very good and he did not anticipate LTD would have problems with them.

Ms. Otten asked if it was possible to add something to the buses to create noise to alert the visually impaired they were there, particularly at the driveways of the station. Mr. Dahl indicated that once the vehicle was engaged in drive, it was audible. It was only when the vehicle was sitting still at a lay over point that it was not audible.

PROGRAM AND PROJECT UPDATES

a. LTD Updates—ATC Follow-up from April Meeting, LTD Updates

Ms. Parker reported that as suggested by the committee, Ms. Rees had gone to Willamalane Parks and Recreation District to sign up patrons for the EZ Access card, and 24 people signed up. People had appreciated that LTD staff had come to the facility.

Ms. Parker reported that she met with Joe Zaworski to confer with him of LTD's concerns regarding the EmX vehicle's accessibility features. New Flyer is the company that is producing the vehicle for Bud Rapid Transit services in Eugene and Cleveland, Ohio. The company was reconfiguring the rear-facing bay based on that input.

Ms. Parker referred to the district's securement policy, saying that currently, LTD required all mobility devices to be secured. The same would be true of the EmX vehicles in regard to the forward-facing bay. However, in the rear bay there was no strap system but there was a three-sided containment area. She noted that some systems did not require forward-facing wheelchair passengers to be secured, and asked the committee how it felt about such an approach. Mr. Kleger suggested that one thing to consider was

the maximum speed traveled by the buses. He said that having been through some test panic stops, he could state that it took all his strength to keep from sliding.

Responding to a question from Ms. Jenness, Ms. Parker said that she understood that Portland's buses required mobility devices to be secured. However, such securements were not required on MAX trains; the light rail system in Portland.

Mr. Reese noted his own experience traveling on a bus that made a sudden stop and said if he had not been secured, he would have ended up next to the driver.

Ms. Jenness pointed out that an unsecured wheelchair could do harm to other riders in the case of a panic stop.

Mr. Necker believed that initially, the policy should remain unchanged. If experience proved that the securement was not necessary, LTD could consider a policy change. There was general support for Mr. Necker's comments.

Ms. Rees said that LTD would have the vehicles available during operator training so people could test the securement system and the rear-facing bay. She believed that many people would come to prefer the rear-facing bay, but acknowledged that was a personal preference and some might not like it. Mr. Whetham pointed out that those who did not like the rear-facing bay would only have to wait ten minutes for the next bus if the forward-facing bay was occupied.

Ms. Parker suggested that the committee revisit the policy issue after LTD had some experience with the vehicles.

Ms. Parker shared statistics regarding mobility device and bicycle boardings for April 2006.

Ms. Parker noted the inclusion of information about the budget in the packet was in response to committee questions at the last meeting. She said that information about the licensing requirements for service animals was also included, as well as an update on LTD board activities.

Ms. Parker called the committee's attention to the Web site www.KeepUsMoving.info for information regarding local road construction activities in summer 2006.

b. Program Updates—South Lane Wheels, Oakridge, Florence,

Ms. Parker called the committee's attention to the program updates included in the meeting packet.

Ms. Salusso reported that South Lane Wheels was busy and had hired a new trainer who she hoped to send to an upcoming Train-the-Trainer event in Olympia, Washington. The

trainer was excited about his role and was developing a new driver's training manual. She said that South Lane Wheels had put in its first vehicle order. Ms. Parker noted that LTD was in the process but had not yet placed orders for new vehicles. Ms. Salusso said that South Lane Wheels had also begun to develop an augmented route in Cottage Grove.

Mr. Braunschweiger reported that RideSource was very busy and the last week had been the busiest week ever, with 400 daily weekday boardings.

Mr. Necker adjourned the meeting at 11:47 a.m.

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)