

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 19, 2009
10 a.m. – Noon
Lane Transit District
3500 East 17th Avenue – Eugene, Oregon

MEMBERS PRESENT:

L. M. Reese, Chair, presiding	Mykal Taylor
Ann Angvick, Vice Chair	Bob Proctor
Hugh Massengill	Tara Sue Salusso
Kay Metzger	Kristine Sirmans
Aline Goddard	Jan Aho
Mark Phinney	

LTD BOARD MEMBER (ex officio)

Ed Necker

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES:

Scott Whethem

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mike Cetto	Jim Sano
Dave Quest	Irene Ferguson
Sherry Clark	Anne Louver
David Braunschweiger	Kris Lyon

LTD STAFF:

Terry Parker	Rand Stamm
Eileen Mugglewortz	Cosette Rees
	Tom Schwetz

1. INTRODUCTIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND AGENDA REVIEW

Mr. Reese called the meeting of the LTD Accessible Transportation Committee (ATC) to order at 10:01 a.m. and asked those present to introduce themselves.

No adjustments to the meeting agenda were offered.

2. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Mr. Cetto asked the committee and the LTD staff if LTD had considered using natural gas in its vehicles and hoped that the ATC might advocate for such a strategy.

Mr. Reese presented the Chair's report and noted that he had recently testified before the transportation committee with LTD General Manager Mark Pangborn.

3. MINUTES APPROVAL, MARCH 17, 2009

Mr. Massengill, seconded by Ms. Salusso, moved approval of the minutes of the March 17, 2009 ATC meeting. The motion passed unanimously, 11:0.

4. RIDESOURCE CALL CENTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RSCCAC)

Ms. Parker noted that it was the one-year anniversary of the RideSource call center and offered her congratulations to all of the staff and community members who had been involved with the project.

Mr. Stamm noted that the RSCCAC was made up of constituents and related organizations to help advise the RideSource Call Center and the ATC on related matters. He reported that the ATC Membership Committee had met on April 13, 2009 to consider applications for RSCCAC membership and directed the ATC members to the list of recommended applicants included in the agenda item summary materials.

Mr. Stamm noted that Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) representative Bob Proctor had been inadvertently omitted from the list of recommended applicants and that representatives from LCOG Senior and Disabled Services and Lane County DD Services also would need to be appointed to the RSCCAC.

Ms. Metzger suggested that one of the S&DS eligibility coordinators serve as a member of the RSCCAC.

Mr. Stamm, responding to a request from Ms. Parker, noted the names of the recommended RSCCAC applicants and briefly described the breakdown of the different agencies and organizations from which the applicants had come.

Mr. Stamm, responding to a question from Ms. Metzger, noted that LCOG would notify him of the name of their Senior and Disabled Services representative and that he then would notify the rest of the ATC and the RSCCAC applicants before he scheduled a meeting to discuss the agenda and bylaws of the RSCCAC.

Ms. Parker, responding to a question from Mr. Necker, noted that the approval of the LTD representatives to the RSCCAC most likely would need to go before the LTD Board of Directors as a consent calendar item at their next meeting. Mr. Stamm added that the RSCCAC would report to the ATC, who would in turn report directly to the LTD Board.

Mr. Stamm, responding to a question from Ms. Salusso, noted that the RSCCAC membership committee had been actively recruiting rider members through the Call Center as well as through other areas of LTD.

Ms. Parker noted that there still were a number of vacancies to be filled by rider representatives, non-medical providers, an ATC representative, and a representative from Lane County DD Services.

Mr. Stamm maintained that it had been a challenge to get community members to participate in the RideSource call center process and to apply to become RSCCAC members.

Ms. Parker and Mr. Stamm, responding to a question from Ms. Salusso, noted that more slots for non-medical providers than medical providers had been provided for the RSCCAC because there were a much wider variety of organizational types of applicants from the non-medical community.

Ms. Salusso commented that the distinctions between medical and non-medical providers (as they applied to the RSCCAC applicants) was often quite confusing.

Ms. Parker, responding to a question from Mr. Reese, expressed that it would be up to the ATC members if they wanted to appoint one of their members to the RSCCAC during the current meeting. Mr. Reese noted that, in the interest of time, it might be better to take action on the current list of recommended applicants and then return to the matter to appoint the ATC member if time allowed.

Mr. Massengill, seconded by Ms. Aho, moved to accept the list of recommended applicants as appointees to the RideSource Call Center Advisory Committee and to accept the recommended format regarding the same. The motion passed unanimously, 11:0.

Mr. Reese asked if any members of the ATC would be willing to serve as a committee representative to the RSCCAC. Ms. Aho responded that she might be willing to serve as an ATC representative to the RSCCAC if her schedule allowed for it.

5. WEST EUGENE EMX UPDATE

LTD Director of Development Services Tom Schwetz presented an update on the West Eugene EmX Extension (WEEE) project and briefly noted the history, most recent developments, and overall strategies surrounding the project.

Mr. Schwetz noted that LTD staff had been addressing federal environmental impact requirements with respect to the WEE and directed the ATC members to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) included in the agenda item summary materials. He further noted that staff had conducted a great deal of public outreach efforts with respect to the range of alternatives described in the DEIS.

Mr. Schwetz stated that the final version of the WEEE's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was expected to be released in January of 2010 to be followed by a 60-day review process that would include additional public outreach opportunities. He further stated that the EIS subsequently would be reviewed jointly by the LTD Board, the Eugene City Council, and the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) and that representatives from those three agencies also would be involved in the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative.

Mr. Schwetz briefed the ATC members on the alternative WEEE routes currently under consideration as described in the DEIS as well as the basic timeline for the WEEE project.

Mr. Schwetz, responding to a question from Mr. Whetham, noted that the westbound EmX buses would be departing either out of Bay S at the Eugene Station facility or from a new curbside station to be installed along West 11th Avenue in the downtown Eugene area.

Mr. Schwetz, responding to a question from Ms. Aho, commented that various combinations of the routes described in the DEIS might be considered.

Ms. Parker noted that the ATC had been heavily involved in the expansion of the EmX along Franklin Avenue, particularly with respect to the various accessibility issues involved, and asked if similar input might be needed from the ATC for the WEEE project. Mr. Schwetz noted that staff had

generally identified sites for potential EmX stations in the West Eugene area and that the ATC would be asked to provide input regarding various pedestrian and accessibility concerns related to the project. He noted that Ms. Angvick participated on the Corridor Committee.

Mr. Schwetz, responding to a question from Ms. Salusso, noted that an analysis of the various businesses, services, and housing complexes that aligned with the potential West Eugene EmX routes would be performed later in the WEEE process and would be drafted in conjunction with staff's ridership estimate analyses.

Mr. Schwetz recognized that the WEEE project potentially represented the most controversial project ever undertaken by LTD and hoped that, with respect to the complex political, environmental, and property acquisition matters involved, the LTD staff and Board of Directors would work closely with its regional partner agencies to determine the best manner in which to proceed with the WEEE project.

Mr. Necker commented that the West Eugene EmX would operate through four of the eight wards in the City of Eugene and that Councilors from those wards would be consulted throughout the development of the project.

Ms. Metzger suggested that representatives from the disabled community and related agencies might be able to provide input on which businesses and services would be best served by the WEEE project. Mr. Schwetz noted that the ATC could provide valuable input in that regard.

Mr. Schwetz, responding to a question from Ms. Metzger, noted that the recent closure of Hynix had negatively affected ridership along LTD's 36 West 18th Avenue route. He further noted that it was still to be determined how transit concerns at or around the Hynix plant would be addressed in the next five years.

Mr. Schwetz noted that the Church of the Nazarene was building a large church complex in West Eugene with a significant amount of parking that might eventually be used as an LTD Park & Ride facility. He noted that Church staff were very interested in having an EmX station at or near their building.

Ms. Aho commented that the potential Amazon Creek route might be located too far from West 11th Avenue.

The committee members discussed various permutations of the routes presented by Mr. Schwetz as part of the DEIS.

Mr. Schwetz, responding to a question from Mr. Proctor, described how dedicated bus lanes might be used along West 11th and West 13th Avenues in the WEEE project.

Ms. Rees noted that the committee members should feel free to approach staff with suggestions and feedback on the DEIS. She further noted that LTD had conducted an expanded Title VI meeting that had been geared toward minority and lower-income sections of the local population to solicit input regarding the WEEE project.

Mr. Schwetz, responding to a question from Ms. Parker, commented that the ATC could expect more information and more frequent updates from staff as the WEEE project progressed.

6.

RIDESOURCE BOUNDARY

Ms. Parker presented information on the RideSource Boundary and directed the committee members to the diagram regarding the same in their agenda item summary materials. She then further explained how that boundary related to ADA transit requirements for the region and described the most recent adjustments to the boundary.

Ms. Parker noted that the recent revisions to the boundary had allowed LTD to maintain current service levels and that a very low number of riders had been adversely affected. She further noted that more serious revisions to the boundary might become necessary if LTD revenues continued to decline into Fiscal Year 2011, which might necessitate additional LTD service cuts.

Ms. Parker, responding to a question from Mr. Massengill, noted that LTD was under no legal requirement to adjust the RideSource boundary inward and further noted that the boundary had in the past represented LTD's minimum satisfaction of ADA requirements.

Mr. Necker, responding to a question from Mr. Massengill, noted that although the American Public Transit Association had been advocating for increased federal funding for programs such as RideSource, there did not appear to be any significant changes to the federal funding sources on the horizon for the RideSource program.

Ms. Parker provided a brief explanation of the nature of federal funding mechanisms as they pertained to local transit services such as RideSource. She maintained that federal transit funding mechanisms were a very politicized process.

7. ACCESSIBLE PATHWAYS

Ms. Parker directed the committee members to pictures of the roadways and the LTD shelter near Winco in Springfield and noted that concerns recently had been raised that wheelchair and disabled access to the shelter and the surrounding businesses was insufficient. She noted that LTD was responsible for the accessibility of the bus stop and the shelter under the ADA, but that beyond the stop onto the public right of way, the responsibility for accessibility needs generally fell to the City of Springfield and then to the owners or tenants of the property.

Mr. Reese noted that wheelchair users traveling on LTD to the Winco location in Springfield currently needed to traverse the parking lot behind rows of parked cars in order to access the store.

Mr. Stamm drew a rough diagram for the benefit of the committee demonstrating the nature of the accessible LTD bus shelter near the Winco location along Olympic Street in Springfield and used the diagram to demonstrate the accessibility problems of the site.

Ms. Parker, responding to a question from Ms. Salusso, noted that the relationship between the property owners and tenants of the businesses of near the Winco location was somewhat complicated with respect to their various accessibility obligations and jurisdictions under the ADA.

The committee members briefly discussed the bus shelter near the Winco in Springfield and how the shelter and corresponding structures related to sidewalks, parking lots, and curb cuts within the area.

Mr. Stamm noted that the development area across Olympic Street from Winco was being constructed with much better regard for accessibility needs.

Ms. Salusso noted that the discussion surrounding the bus shelter near the Winco location in Springfield might serve as an effective point of reference for discussions of similar public accessibility problems in the future.

Ms. Parker, responding to a question from Ms. Aho, noted that the cost for making accessibility improvements generally depended on the type of improvement that was needed and varied widely from location to location.

Ms. Aho suggested that the ATC draft a letter to the property owners of the Springfield Winco location to let them know specifically what kinds of accessibility concerns had been raised.

Mr. Reese noted that a wheelchair user had been hit by a car in the Winco parking lot approximately eight to ten years ago.

Ms. Parker suggested that it might be good to have an official LTD resource, possibly in conjunction with a capital improvement project, in place to help identify accessibility problems such as the ones that existed at the Winco location in Springfield.

Ms. Parker maintained that local business owners most likely would be more receptive to input and suggestions from the ATC than larger corporate businesses in the area.

Ms. Metzger agreed with Ms. Aho's suggestion that a letter on behalf of the ATC to local property and business owners alerting them to accessibility issues might be useful. Mr. Necker agreed and further suggested that a letter from the LTD Board of Directors concerning accessibility issues might be useful as well.

Ms. Parker noted that LTD staff would be conducting further research to better understand local planning codes and other matters related to accessibility issues before returning to the ATC with information they might choose to include in a draft letter. She hoped that the staff research would allow the ATC to help create integrated accessibility systems rather than isolated pockets of accessible transportation structures.

Ms. Salusso maintained that any letter drafted to local businesses, property owners, and city government representatives would need to include a firm statement from the ATC regarding the mission and overall goals of the committee. She hoped that such a letter would be perceived as part of the solution to local accessibility problems rather than as an antagonistic attempt to interfere with local business practices.

Ms. Parker expressed that it would be important to take into account the legal responsibilities of various business and local governments with respect to their accessibility.

Ms. Aho noted that most members of the community were not fully aware of the logistics behind mobility devices such as wheelchairs and suggested that the ATC might focus on disseminating information and increasing the awareness of such matters.

8. ATC SUMMER MEETING SCHEDULE

Ms. Parker commented that the ATC would need to meet in June to address membership and officer elections for the next Fiscal Year. She asked the ATC members if they would want to meet in July, August and September.

The committee members discussed their respective schedules and availability for the ATC summer meetings.

Ms. Metzger commented that the ATC should postpone its summer meetings if there were not enough agenda items to warrant a full meeting of the committee each month.

Ms. Parker noted that the updates to the Lane Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan would need to be initiated early in the fall.

Ms. Parker, responding to a question from Ms. Salusso, noted that the process surrounding the Coordinated Plan update had not yet been finalized and that she hoped that the update would utilize community meetings and discussions with various interest groups.

9. PROGRAM UPDATES

Ms. Parker noted Mr. Reese's recent letter to Congressman Peter DeFazio regarding LTD's request for funding of replacement buses as part of the 2009 Surface Transportation Authorization and read a copy of the April 15, 2009 letter for the benefit of the committee.

Ms. Parker offered updates on recent LTD White Line Overload reports and reported on a number of recent incidents where riders had been left behind. Ms. Parker noted that LTD planning staff regularly reviewed the White Line reports to identify trends and overload patterns within LTD service areas.

Ms. Parker commented that recent state budget shortfalls had the potential to result in service cuts to LTD. She noted that elimination of services to persons with developmental disabilities was likely to be one of the most unfortunate service cuts faced by LTD. She noted that she did not know if non-medical transit services for elderly and disabled riders were likely to be cut as well. She further noted that she would have more information regarding the likelihood of LTD service cuts at the June ATC meeting.

Ms. Salusso reported that South Lane Wheels had been selected for a federally funded signs and shelter project and that the project would begin on June 16. She further reported an upcoming online fundraising auction at southlanewheels.org.

Ms. Sirmans reported that the accessible transportation committee in Florence had provided feedback on both a brochure and new bus design details for the Rhody Express.

Ms. Goddard noted that a new bus had been ordered for Diamond Express. Ms. Parker added that three more vehicles were expected to be purchased using federal stimulus funds in the near future. Mr. Stamm noted that the new Diamond Express vehicle was a larger bus that would allow them to significantly increase their capacity.

Ms. Goddard, responding to a question from a community member, stated that the round trip fare for Diamond Express service from Oak Ridge to Eugene was \$5.00 and one-way service was \$2.50. She proceeded to provide a basic overview of the Diamond Express services for the benefit of the committee and the community members who were present.

Anne Lauver from the White Bird Clinic in Eugene noted that their organization would be celebrating its fortieth anniversary with a block party on May 31. She noted that there continued to be a strong community need for White Bird's services.

Ms. Metzger noted that the Mobility Management section of LTD's Senior & Disabled Services department continued to work with RideSource Call Center to help further refine the efforts of the Call Center eligibility project.

Mr. Whetham reported that Alternative Work Concepts (AWC) continued to receive a significant number of referrals through the RideSource Call Center and hoped that representatives from AWC might become part of the ADA eligibility assessment process for the call center. He further noted that he would like to partner with representatives from Ms. Metzger's office to help AWC perform assessments of local AWC transit services.

Mr. Braunschweiger noted that ridership for the RideSource program continued to grow although not quite at the accelerated rate of the past two years. He further noted that new resources continued to be added to the program including new vehicles and new operational scheduling software that was scheduled to go online sometime in June or July of 2009. He noted that a private transit provider had been contacted about providing ADA service in the near future and that additional ADA staff training would be provided for RideSource employees later in the summer.

Ms. Lyon noted that RideSource was nearly ready to roll out a program to purchase Diamond Express tickets for riders on the OHP Plus program. She hoped that the program might also be expanded in the future to include tickets for Rhody Express. She further noted that RideSource was investigating the use of common carriers such as Greyhound and Amtrak to transport OHP Plus program members from Eugene to Salem and Portland.

Mr. Proctor thanked Mr. Stamm and the other meeting attendees who had provided the updates regarding the RideSource program for their efforts and for their willingness to assist the ATC.

A community member hoped that the overhead announcements on LTD buses and related transportation services might be adjusted to include ADA information regarding priority seating for elderly and disabled riders similar to announcements used on Tri-Met vehicles in Portland. He felt that the information listed on signs on buses was often ignored and hoped that an audible announcement might be more effective.

Mr. Reese adjourned the meeting at 12:02 p.m.

(Recorded by Wade Hicks)