

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, June 16, 2009
10 a.m. – Noon
Lane Transit District
3500 East 17th Avenue – Eugene, Oregon

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

LTD BOARD LIAISON MEMBER (ex officio)

Ed Necker

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES:

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Tara Sue Salusso	Kay Metzger
Jan Aho	Kristine Sirmans
	Mark Phinney
	Scott Whetham

OTHERS PRESENT:

David Braunschweiger	Kris Lyon
Irene Ferguson	Bill Morganti
Mike Huntington	Fred Stoffer
Gail Lundeen	

STAFF:

Terry Parker	Rand Stamm
Susan Hekimoglu	

1. INTRODUCTIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND AGENDA REVIEW

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

Mr. Proctor reported that Human Services had been granted funding for two years to continue a three-quarters time position which had been piloted over the past two years, helping with volunteer driver recruitment and working with the RideSource Call Center.

Mr. Reese announced that he had moved into an assisted living complex in east Springfield.

2. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was no audience participation.

3. ACTION – Bylaw Revision, Membership Appointment, Officer Nominations

Mr. Reese commented that this was the last meeting of the year, and that some items needed to be passed on to the LTD Board for their approval.

Membership Committee

Ms. Hekimoglu reported that the Membership Committee had met the week before, and one change discussed was the RideSource Call Center (RSCC) Advisory Committee. Rather than have that group be a stand-alone committee reporting to the ATC, it was decided it would be an ad hoc committee of the ATC, and would meet as needed. State requirements for the advisory committee were not entirely understood at this time.

Mr. Necker asked if there was a state requirement for the Call Center Advisory Committee. Mr. Stamm responded that it was somewhat up in the air at this time, and that contract development and negotiations were in progress with the Department of Human Services. DHS had not specified this state requirement in the new contract, he said. The language added by the Department of Justice did not specifically mandate a regional advisory committee, and so clarification was being sought about how it would work. An advisory committee was largely seen as helpful, though it was not yet clear if it was required. All brokerage contracts had been extended for another six months past the June 30 deadline, he said, and it would probably be October before it was known for sure. He expected the language would describe very broadly the types of membership required, but not specific numbers.

Ms. Hekimoglu added that to date there had not been a lot of business for that committee to consider. Plans were to have members meet to learn about the Call Center, take a tour and meet each other, and then they would meet as needed. She noted that on page 19 of the agenda packet was an addition to the bylaws for the RSCC Advisory Committee, under the Standing and Ad Hoc Committees section. The same make-up of the committee as was discussed last month would be used, she said. There were still a few vacancies. Two of the membership positions needed filling, but those would be filled by appointment from agencies such as Senior and Disabled Services and Lane County Developmental Disabilities, she noted.

The bylaws needed approval, Ms. Hekimoglu said, and since there was not a quorum present at the meeting, it was agreed to have those present vote and the remainder vote by email.

Ms. Parker suggested removing the word “all” in the sentence reading: “Composition: The voting membership of the Committee shall not exceed 18 and shall include representatives of *all* stakeholders of the RSCC operation....” Mr. Proctor noted that a correction was needed to include the Department of Human Services on page 21 of the agenda packet, Attachment A. Ms. Angvick noted an error under “Responsibilities” of the committee, where “quarterly meetings” needed to be removed. Ms. Hekimoglu read the new sentence for the

record, "The Committee will meet as needed throughout the year." She further clarified that the end of that sentence, "with odd and even year terms divided equally among the Committee" needed moving to the end of the last sentence in the previous paragraph, which would now read, "The term of service on the Standing Committee will be for two years, with odd and even year terms divided equally among the Committee."

Ms. Otten moved and Mr. Massengill seconded to approve the revisions to the Bylaws, as corrected, for Fiscal Year 2009-2010. The motion passed, with Ms. Goddard abstaining.

Nominating Committee

Ms. Hekimoglu said there had been six applications for membership and seven positions up for reappointment, as listed on pages 11-12 of the agenda packet. All those up for reappointment had agreed to be reappointed. She reminded those present that members could be appointed for three consecutive two-year terms, and after that a new application was required to appoint a member for a new first-term.

Mr. Necker noted that on page 12 under Community Representatives, Dave Kleger's name was included as reappointed, and on page 22 Mr. Kleger's position was listed as vacant. Ms. Hekimoglu said that although it was unclear if Mr. Kleger would be able to continue, due to health issues, his position was still filled until Mr. Kleger gave notification that he could no longer fill it.

Mr. Massengill moved and Mr. Proctor seconded to accept the membership roster for Fiscal Year 2009-2010 as presented and corrected. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Hekimoglu noted that there was a full membership roster for the first time she could remember. She said she would conduct a vote by email for the remaining members not present at today's meeting. Mr. Morganti requested notifications by phone or mail as he did not have email access.

Ms. Parker clarified for Community Representative positions that those positions allowed full participation in discussions, although they were not voting positions.

Office Nominations

Ms. Hekimoglu said the Membership Committee recommended to nominate L.M. Reese as Chair and Hugh Massengill as Vice Chair. Mr. Reese noted this would be his last year as Chair, if elected. He asked for further nominations for Chair; there were no further nominations.

Ms. Otten, seconded by Mr. Proctor, moved that nominations be closed and Mr. Reese be elected by acclamation. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Reese opened nominations for Vice Chair. There were no further nominations.

Mr. Massengill was elected unanimously as Vice Chair.

4. UO WAYFINDING STUDY FOR PEOPLE WITH COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

McKay Sohlberg, from the University of Oregon Communications Disorders and Sciences Department, introduced her assistant, Jason Trudeau, Senior Computer Programmer. She remarked that she and a colleague had received some grants from the Federal Transportation Agency to specifically work with assistive technology for people with cognitive impairments. Her group was looking at ways technology could help people navigate within their communities, and they were involved in a number of projects for which she wanted to provide an update.

The name of the work group she represented was called Travel, Recreation, Education and Knowledge (TREK). One of the reasons they started this work, she noted, was that there seemed to be quite a bit of help for accessibility for those with physical and sensory impairments and less for those with cognitive impairments. In their studies they had looked at where people with such impairments traveled and had catalogued these destinations. They also created navigation wish lists of places these people wished they could go, but were unable. It became very apparent that people were not getting out much, other than for food shopping and medical appointments, and that accessible transportation was much less available on weekends.

Ms. Sohlberg said they had taken a year to develop a framework of navigation called ACT (Activities of Community Transportation) that was relevant for people with cognitive impairment. Previous work had focused on planning and getting out the door, while the current project dealt with problem-solving once out in the community. They did a large literature review, created focus groups with bus drivers, people with cognitive impairments, and care providers and then did validation studies in New York and Eugene/ Springfield, checking to see that their ACTs model contained all the necessary steps. Steps included knowing the destination, planning and scheduling a trip, getting out the door on time, navigating to bus stops or other areas, identifying the correct vehicle, reaching the destination and similar steps for the return trip. Beyond these steps it was important to identify the support network that was necessary to make the trip happen, including such support as care providers, transportation, and skill-learning.

Two experiments had been completed in the past year, Ms. Sohlberg continued. The first experiment looked at initial orientation. It was known from previous work that people with cognitive impairments were partially homebound and that they performed best on way-finding tasks with audio instruction. Everybody had difficulty with the initial orientation, she noted. Studies focused on differences between those with Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) and those with age, gender and education-matched, non-injured peers in order to understand the particular needs of those with ABI.

Three types of instruction were given: cardinal instruction (e.g., “face north and walk down A Street,”) left-right instruction, and landmark instruction, in order to understand how those with cognitive impairments would respond. All three types of instructions were given at four different locations, while research assistants followed the participants, took field notes and interviewed people after instructions were followed. Participants wore head phones that were connected to the base site, so that communication could occur.

The study’s hypothesis proved to be true, that people with brain injuries performed worse than control subjects when performing cardinal and left-right directions. A surprising finding, however, was that on the landmark directions, control subjects and those with brain injuries performed equally well, and both groups preferred landmark directions. When confusion occurred, 25% of the ABI group guessed which way to go, while only 4% of the control group guessed.

Ms. Sohlberg reported that their next study considered that people would become lost or disoriented, and was designed with different challenges, such as one direction in a series missing, a street sign that was actually hidden from view, and wrong destination information. Participants wore special glasses that transmitted to the base site what they were seeing. They were connected audibly by phone lines and were prompted to just start talking if they felt lost or confused. Also someone followed each participant to make sure they were safe. Overall, as expected, ABI participants had more difficulty than control subjects in dealing with the challenges and needed more assistance. Assistance was given to reorient participants using landmarks.

Implications of these studies, she said, were 1) that initial orientation was critical to success and landmarks provided the best method, 2) and that when off-track, some individuals were able to use street knowledge to problem-solve and those with more severe cognitive challenges required more explicit, step-by-step instructions, but they were able to be re-oriented.

She said they could envision service models where a person could call to get help. Another study was being considered, using android cell phones which could be programmed to help with problem-solving when participants needed re-orientation. With the next year of funding they hoped to come up with a problem-solving matrix that would give a generic problem-solving sequence of steps to take. No matter how good the system was, she said, a safety net was needed, particularly for managing anxiety.

Responding to questions about cell phone directions programs, Ms. Sohlberg said there was currently work being done to build data bases for future GIS navigation programs for bike and walking paths. Ms. Otten noted there were audio GPS programs for the blind, which worked well, but were very expensive so far. The research group was aware of these programs and hoped to make this kind of assistance more available and affordable for those with cognitive impairments.

Ms. Parker remarked that for the future “communication central” plan, Lane Transit District already had a Call Center with call takers that were present during certain hours. She suggested that one position at the Call Center could be specialized to cover assistance for cognitively impaired travelers. Ms. Sohlberg commented that a central call center would be a great support for the times when more generic audio support was not sufficient. She also saw that making more places accessible was an important component.

Ms. Parker said that travel training was fairly new for most community groups, but that it was being recognized that public transit offered cost savings over paratransit systems. Having Alternative Work Concepts in Lane County was a great asset, she noted, but most places throughout the country had no such system yet.

5. ACTION: Minutes Approval, May 19, 2009

Mr. Massengill moved and Ms. Taylor seconded that the minutes for May 19, 2009 be approved. Ms. Lundeen noted a correction that she had been present at the meeting and was marked as absent. The vote was unanimous to approve the minutes as corrected.

Ms. Hekimoglu agreed to include the minutes approval vote in the email she planned to send after the meeting to those voting members absent from the meeting.

6. ATC – SUMMER MEETING SCHEDULE

Mr. Reese announced there would be no further meetings during the summer, and that the next meeting was scheduled for October 20, 2009 at 10:00 am.

Ms. Parker remarked that the summer was a time for LTD staff to regroup and gear up for coming projects. All the discretionary grants had been gone through this year, she said, and the next large project was updating of the coordinated plan. By October that plan would be prepared, she said, and she would also have time in September for an extended vacation. Mr. Reese added that the Executive Committee could take care of anything that might come up in the interim.

7. EmX CURBSIDE BOARDING TEST

Mr. Reese announced that at 11:45 some members would be leaving the meeting to check out curbside loading of the EmX, since there would be times that the EmX would need to pick up passengers from the curbside. Ms. Hekimoglu added that there would be some construction at the Walnut station in July, and that the EmX would go curbside, which meant that those using mobility devices would board through the front doors via a ramp. Ms. Parker said that there also needed to be future thought about the next EmX vehicles to be built, for such possibilities as making the forward-facing bay able to turn to become a rear-facing bay so that a potential of two rear-facing bays could exist for such times as when curbside loading was necessary.

8. PROGRAM UPDATES

Lane Transit District

Ms. Hekimoglu noted that LTD's update was written up on page 13 of the meeting packet.

Ms. Parker provided LTD budget updates. She had heard from Lane County Developmental Disabilities that they were wanting to update the LTD contract for transportation. She also noted that for Senior and Disabled Services it did not look like the transportation for those getting non-medical transportation was at risk. Currently there was an effort being made, she said, to get more funding for elderly and disabled transportation by removing wealthier seniors from certain programs and using the savings to fund services for lower income seniors, including medical appointment transportation. There had been news that the lobbyist from AARP was not in support of this change, although there was a strategy in play to win the support of AARP.

Mr. Necker reported that there was no word yet from the legislature. Ms. Parker said that June 30 was the last day before the budget had to be completed.

South Lane Wheels/ Cottage Grove - No report.

Rhody Express/ Florence - No report.

Diamond Express/ Oakridge: Ms. Goddard said that the number of rides had been down the past two weeks because of classes being out at LCC. An incident had occurred on the bus last week, she reported, where a deputy sheriff pulled the bus over. There were two state police cars, an Oakridge police car and the deputy sheriff present, she said. The deputy

asked the driver to step out, kept the riders seated and quiet, and the officers escorted a young man off the bus.

RideSource: Mr. Braunschweiger reported that some training for office staff had happened a few weeks before. New buses should arrive within the next couple weeks, he said, and by mid-July they should receive their new scheduling software.

Senior & Disabled Services – Mobility Management: Mr. Stamm said things were proceeding well. The past couple of weeks the form for interviewing new clients had been refined to more fully address the main goal of understanding the transportation abilities of the clients, where they needed to go overall, and what capabilities they might have to use different forms of transportation. Responding to a question by Mr. Necker about whether applications were always written, Mr. Stamm said that currently ADA paratransit began with a written request for service, though the necessity of that was being questioned.

Ms. Parker said it had been a struggle to break the old mold and see the whole process with new eyes. It was also a challenge to ensure that all fourteen call handlers made consistent decisions about rides.

Mr. Stamm responded to Mr. Necker that the software did have space for the amount of information needed to make the decisions consistently. The challenge was to make sure that the information being entered was consistent, with appropriate training so that the interpretation of the information was also consistent.

RideSource Call Center: Ms. Lyon reported that new two-year contracts had been sent out last week to all the transportation providers, with current contracts ending on June 30. She said there were twenty-one providers in the County plus two from Coos County. They were looking at the possibility of needing to expand the Call Center's staff and providers if the Oregon Health Plan expanded their OHP Plus program.

Mr. Braunschweiger added that this week, LTD and the Call Center had completed the necessary work to issue day passes for Diamond Express for eligible riders and hoped that soon this service would expand to include Rhody Express as well.

Alternative Work Concepts - No report.

Ms. Hekimoglu noted it was Ms. Taylor's last meeting. Ms. Taylor said she had thoroughly enjoyed her time as a member. Other members thanked her for her service. Ms. Hekimoglu added that a recruitment process would be done to fill the bus operator representative seat being vacated by Ms. Taylor.

Mr. Reese adjourned the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

(Recorded by Judy Burton)