

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, November 16, 2010
10 am – Noon
Lane Transit District
3500 East 17th Avenue – Eugene, Oregon

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Hugh Massengill, Chair
Mary Otten, Vice Chair
Misty Brazell
Aline Goddard
Gail Lundeen

Bill Morganti
Eleanor Mulder
Annie Saville
Reneé Van Norman
Scott Whetham

ABSENT:

Ruth Linoz
Kay Metzger

Mark Phinney
Kristine Sirmans

LTD BOARD MEMBERS:

Ed Necker

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES:

Paul Blaylock
Amber Perry

Stefan Kiatkowski

OTHERS PRESENT:

David Braunschweiger
Fred Stoffer

STAFF:

Susan Hekimoglu
Terry Parker

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.

Mr. Whetham announced that former ATC member Kathy Jenness' recent surgery had gone well. She was feeling good and people could visit at any time. Ms. Hekimoglu passed around a card for people to sign for Ms. Jenness.

III. Audience Participation

There was no one in the audience who wished to address the committee.

IV. ACTION: Minutes Approval, October 19, 2010

Ms. Parker noted that page 5 of the minutes read "ATC would see those amendments in December." She noted that while the minutes were correct, the ATC would not meet in December, so the amendments to the Lane Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan would be seen at the January 18 meeting.

Mr. Morganti, seconded by Ms. Otten, moved that the minutes for October 21, 2010, be approved as submitted. The motion passed unanimously, 10:0.

V. Lane Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan Amendment

Ms. Parker noted that the Lane Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan (The Plan) was relatively new. The original Plan basically listed all the different agencies with which LTD coordinated transportation. In 2009, The Plan was updated to include emerging developments, such as the introduction of the RideSource Call Center. However, as the new discretionary grant cycle started, if a new project is selected that is not reflected in The Plan, The Plan would need to be amended. Therefore, the ATC would be presented with an amendment to the Plan if it is critical to project selection.

Ms. Parker noted that an amendment would be a general update with the biggest change being made to Section 7, Emerging Developments. She was not sure whether new census information would be updated, since many of the programs LTD worked with relied on census data, released every ten years. The 2010 census data was not yet available.

What is known to have changed between the time The Plan was created and the present was the economic situation and the 2010 Census. How this would present in discretionary grant project selections remained to be seen. One item that was mentioned in The Plan but not discussed in its entirety was the future of the RideSource Call Center and LTD's Mobility Management project, which tried to coordinate things into a one-stop call center. The RideSource Call Center was using software that did not allow building into the future. Required software updates would be costly. The ATC would be grappling with how much money to take from one project in order to help support the RideSource Call Center.

Ms. Parker explained that the plan also did not have a list of the current projects funded through the discretionary grant program. The Grant Review Committee, which would bring their recommendations to the ATC, had to evaluate whether or not current projects needed to continue. She reminded the ATC that one of the highest priorities listed in the plan was to maintain existing service. This needed to be kept in mind, and was a good reason why The Plan needed to acknowledge current projects and

provide a basis for analyzing their viability.

Ms. Parker explained that the amendment also would add an appendix (Appendix I) to the plan that would include the current Accessible Services budget.

Ms. Lundeen wanted to confirm that LTD reviewed how agencies with current projects were handling these funds.

Ms. Parker said that LTD did do this, but the analysis was not formally recorded in terms of The Plan. LTD monitored projects monthly through reports submitted to LTD from the agencies. She mentioned the Crucial Connections project as an example. She explained that the money that funded it was available through the Call Center, but Senior and Disabled Services (S&DS) case managers, Senior Connections workers that did assessments, and Alternative Work Concepts could all access those funds for immediate-need transportation. These funds had not been spent as quickly as anticipated, because FTA rules had not yet been known and LTD's imposed rules were more restrictive than necessary. This was part of the needed discussion at the level of the Grant Review Committee – did programs not spend some funds because they needed less than anticipated, or because LTD rules were too restrictive?

Ms. Parker expressed her view that the Grant Review Committee's charge of weighing projects was one of the most difficult tasks of the Discretionary Grant Program, especially if less funding was available. When these conversations were in writing, it made the process more transparent. She reiterated her point that LTD was trying to use the Lane Coordinated Plan in a way that was most helpful to LTD and its partner agencies.

Ms. Parker stated that a draft Lane Coordinated Plan update would be completed later in the fiscal year, unless there were Discretionary Grant project proposals submitted that were not currently reflected in The Plan.

Mr. Necker asked when the new census data would be available. It was determined that it would not be available for two or three years. Ms. Parker said that some of the data would come out intermittently in those two or three years. She said Lane Council of Governments (LCOG), or Portland State University (PSU), would be the first to get the data.

Mr. Necker asked if census data was included in the Lane Coordinated Plan.

Ms. Parker said that demographic data was used in The Plan, to show the growth in the aging population. It would show the growing demand for services. Larger senior and disabled populations would need transportation services. However, the funding streams might not keep pace with that growth.

Ms. Mulder thought census information might start being released in April, 2011.

Ms. Parker said that LTD would check with LCOG about when the data might start becoming available. She did not think it was critical to update the data in the Lane Coordinated Plan right away. What was more critical was looking at what the pressures were in transportation services. Part of this was revenue based, the other based on demand.

Ms. Parker said that the next grant process, which would occur in two years, should include the 2010 census data. She explained that some funds were distributed based on population, such as the Special Transportation Fund. At this time, these funds were being distributed based on 2000 census

data. She said that the fund did not use Portland State University data, because its data was not official census data. She predicted that Lane County's population will have dropped since 2000.

Ms. Parker explained that some funding streams were based on census data, and others were based on other distribution factors. In terms of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Lane County was treated as an area with a population over 200,000. The FTA had three brackets – populations under 50,000; 50,000-200,000 population, and populations over 200,000. Special transportation and disabled funds from the state were based on population counts. The difference between areas with a population over 200,000 and areas with smaller populations was that areas with over 200,000 people got funding directly from the FTA, whereas areas with populations under 200,000 got their FTA funding from the state. Because LTD helped smaller areas in Lane County as well as the metropolitan area of Eugene/Springfield, LTD got some FTA funding directly from the FTA and some from the state.

VI. Discretionary Grant Update

a) Review Application and Timeline

Ms. Parker referred to the *Discretionary Grant Program for Lane County* packet and timeline, which started on page 14 of the agenda packet. She explained that LTD was using the same process as they had in previous years. Lane County had a non-guaranteed, targeted allocation from the state. The state and the FTA had to make sure there was equitable geographic distribution of grants. Targeted allocations made it easier for LTD to plan. Grants were due to the state by the end of January. LTD would submit a combined application. In order to do this, LTD had to solicit project proposals. This process had been initiated, and the first workshop had been held on November 11. One new program had come to the workshop (a program that had not submitted an application in the past). In some cases, programs that applied were streamlined and combined into already-existing LTD programs.

Ms. Parker reviewed the timeline, on page 17 of the agenda packet. She noted the tight schedule, which was due partly to the required 30-day open public comment period which had to occur before the January 31, 2011, due date. She noted that, since the original grant workshop had been held on Veteran's Day, LTD would offer one-on-one meetings to applicants.

b) Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Programs

Ms. Parker, referring to page 19 of the agenda packet, noted that the total amounts available from the JARC and New Freedom programs were \$543,529 and \$294,905, respectively. This money was received directly from the FTA, as these programs were available only in the metropolitan Eugene/Springfield area. LTD had used JARC funds as match to obtain additional funds through Lane County Developmental Disabilities. New Freedom was a mobility management program and funded projects that coordinated and consolidated services so that consumers could access services more easily. This program could fund anything happening through the RideSource Call Center. Therefore, these funds would be examined as a possible way of upgrading the Call Center's software. Both the JARC and the New Freedom funds could fund mobility management projects.

Mr. Kwiatkowski asked if any of the money would go to Full Access Brokerage for their fixed route.

Ms. Parker explained that these services were not funded with this pot of money. LTD provided services through the RideSource Call Center with this funding. This did not mean these pots could not be used for Full Access Brokerage services.

Ms. Hekimoglu explained that Mr. Kwiatkowski was asking about the Full Access Brokerage's annual bus pass program. She explained that this was strictly an LTD fixed route program.

Ms. Otten asked about a fall back plan if there were a weather event that precluded physical attendance at the Public Hearing and ATC Consideration of Funding Proposal meeting on January 18.

Ms. Parker said that LTD would look at contingency planning for the meeting.

Ms. Goddard, referring to the JARC and New Freedom money, asked if there was any funding related to those services for rural areas such as Oakridge.

Ms. Parker said that this money was available through the state, and that smaller communities such as Oakridge or Cottage Grove had to apply directly to the state to access these funds. She said that LTD could help her with this. She said that South Lane Wheels had successfully applied for state funding for these services the previous year.

c) ACTION: Grant Review Committee Authorization

Ms. Parker explained that because of the tight timeframe, the Grant Review Committee would not be able to get its list of projects to the ATC, in addition to holding a 30-day public comment period, by the January 31 deadline unless the ATC gave the Grant Review Committee permission to publicize its preliminary list of projects without ATC approval, prior to the January 18 meeting.

Mr. Necker asked how the public would be informed of the preliminary list and the public comment period.

Ms. Parker said that there would be an announcement in the *Register-Guard* and on LTD's Website, and the list would be emailed to LTD's large distribution list. Mr. Necker noted that the only public forum would be held on January 18.

Ms. Hekimoglu explained that the meeting would be preceded by a 30-day comment period, from December 17 through January 17, during which members of the public could call or write LTD with comment. She explained that she had met with Public Transit Division staff about the grant, and they had said that LTD's proposed timelines and actions were acceptable.

Mr. Whetham, seconded by Ms. Otten, moved to grant authority to the Grant Review Committee to publicize its proposed prioritized project list prior to the next ATC meeting, scheduled for January 18, 2011. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Hekimoglu explained that the LTD board had given LTD general manager, Mark Pangborn, authority to sign off on certain grant applications. This grant would therefore go directly to Mr. Pangborn for approval and be presented to the LTD Board as an information item only. Ms. Parker stated that the LTD Board had never changed grant decisions made by the ATC. This process streamlined administrative tasks. Mr. Necker added that the LTD Board did not feel the need to go through the same grant review processes as the ATC and the Grant Review Committee.

Mr. Morganti asked how applicants could get in touch with Grant Review Committee members.

Ms. Hekimoglu explained that public comments and applicant comments would not be made directly to Grant Review Committee members. She said she would communicate anything Mr. Morganti needed

by mail or by telephone.

VII. Budget Update

Ms. Parker explained that the Accessible Services Program (ASP) budget was more complicated than the entire LTD budget, partly because of the number of pots of money used to fund it. She noted that the ASP budget would be examined more closely by the Grant Review Committee, but she thought it prudent to review it with the entire ATC.

Ms. Parker, referring to the *ASP budget spreadsheet*, mentioned the different programs and agencies served by the budget (referring only to the Discretionary Grant programs). She explained that the Accessible Services fund totaled about \$5.4 million, without the Medicaid side of the business, which Mr. Stamm oversaw. There was a different fund for Medicaid dollars because LTD was required to keep track of that money separately. There was some overlap between community-based, non-medical services for people who were Medicaid-eligible and the ASP budget.

Ms. Parker explained that Special Mobility Services was a contractor, and the ADA Paratransit service was the program they provided. The total funding for that contract in FY '10 and FY '11 was \$2.4 million, which was partially funded through the Discretionary Grant funds. She continued to review the *ASP budget spreadsheet*. She noted that the Discretionary Grant funds (5310 federal and state funds) made up \$1.3 million allocated the last time LTD went through the process. If Jobs and Transportation Act (JTA) funding was added to this amount, the total pot of money was about \$3 million for FY '10 and FY '11.

Ms. Parker explained that additionally, another \$867,000 was allocated from Special Transportation Operating (STO), a new grant source that was made up of General Fund money from the state. LTD did not anticipate receiving General Fund money from the state this time around due to statewide budget issues. Another \$262,000 had come from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) money. These two sources of funding (totaling about \$1 million) would not be available in the coming year. Project maintenance costs alone would total about \$3 million for most of the projects in the budget for FY '12 and FY '13. This could be paid for if \$1.7 million in JTA 5310 funds were again provided to LTD (this had yet to be determined). Therefore, even though the budget will have lost nearly \$1 million in STO and ARRA funds, about \$3 million was still available for FY '12 and FY '13 (if the \$1.7 million in JTA funds were awarded). She said that the state had told her the JTA money was composed of federal highway money that was flexed to the FTA to distribute at states' discretions to use for projects other than highway projects. If the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) saw that as a viable option, LTD would receive some portion of those funds in the upcoming grant cycle. The best case scenario was that the ASP budget would break even over the next biennium. The worst case scenario was that the APS budget would be under-funded by \$1.7 million. In the grant review process, applicants' projects would be prioritized down a list that projected more funding than was available. Then, top priority projects would be funded, and as the next funding became available, projects further down the list would be funded. Therefore, the prioritization process was critical.

Ms. Otten asked when Ms. Parker would hear about the JTA funds from the state. Ms. Parker said she had asked staff at the Public Transit Division, who had indicated that JTA money would be available. Ms. Otten asked if there was a deadline by which LTD would know. Ms. Parker said the deadline was through the Legislature, and was probably not until spring. She said that it would happen through the Oregon Transportation Commission's (OTC) Legislative Session. She thought the funding was in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which had been programmed. However, sometimes projects were programmed and then not funded. She thought the

prospects for some of the money was good. Mr. Necker asked if the decision would be made by the end of the Legislative Session, or if it went from the Legislature to ODOT for approval. Ms. Parker explained that the OTC had the final word, so it would go through ODOT for approval. Ms. Hekimoglu shared that LTD was just now preparing to order vehicles from JTA money from the last grant cycle, which had come late in the process.

Ms. Parker added that the state had not even guaranteed the last half of the funding from the previous grant cycle. Until there was a continuing resolution to get the same funding as last time, funding would not be released to LTD. LTD was one of three agencies that had had to put their vehicle purchases on hold for this reason.

Mr. Massengill stated that the Grant Review Committee would meet to prioritize the list of applications, and then ask the ATC to vote on the prioritization. Later, if additional funding came in, who would determine who got the funding? Ms. Parker said that the Grant Review Committee would vote on the funding because they would create a project priority list. If \$2 million was available, and there were \$4 million worth of requests, some awards might be awarded partially, or not at all, based on the award LTD as a whole received. She mentioned that the ATC had decided that, if more funding was made available, the highest-prioritized programs would be fully funded before programs further down the list were partially funded. Ms. Hekimoglu stated that the Grant Review Committee would reconvene to bring their list to the ATC when LTD learned about the JTA money in 2011. Ms. Parker noted that this may not be necessary, and that prioritization decisions could be made before the LTD's JTA funds were disclosed.

Ms. Hekimoglu noted that in the previous year, when ARRA money had come in, the issue was brought back before the ATC. She noted that it would come to the ATC at least as an information item.

Ms. Parker explained that it was a complicated process, and LTD did not want to lose out on its ability to use match money because of guidelines that were too rigid. LTD had been so successful because flexibility around different funding sources had been maintained.

Ms. Brazell asked if the Grant Review Committee would have more detailed descriptions of the projects at their November 30 meeting.

Ms. Parker said that the Grant Review Committee could review existing projects at the November 30 meeting, since the deadline for project submission was not until December 3. The projects would be reviewed in the context of what was known about them at present.

Mr. Massengill stated that the process made sense, but that the process was probably frustrating to programs that were planning to apply because they did not know how much money was available. However, he thought most applicants would understand why this was.

Ms. Parker explained that LTD was lucky because they had decided to use last year's money for vehicle replacement. Therefore, LTD was able to catch up on this aspect of their operations. This would create a problem two or three years in the future, however, when LTD would have to replace its entire fleet (minus those vehicles that had just been purchased). She hoped the recession would dissipate in that time.

Mr. Necker suggested replacing vehicles on a staggered basis. Ms. Parker thought this was a good idea. She said that LTD also wanted to make sure they had some vehicles for agencies that could use used equipment. She said that planning needed to be done for longer than a two-year period. Much of the 5310 and ARRA monies had been used for capital projects. However, the funding also allowed

for purchased services, such as through a contractor, such as Special Mobility Services. During the last grant cycle, LTD was able to “switch out” nearly \$1 million to purchased services and use other grant money for the vehicle replacement purchase, which was significant for this program and for LTD. LTD’s contribution for the current fiscal year for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) services was only 20 percent of the total, which was very low. Usually, LTD’s contribution was much higher. It was low because the agency had been able to exchange purchased services for vehicle replacement. Therefore, LTD had \$1 million less in cuts to fixed routes because of the work of the ATC.

Mr. Necker stated that the LTD Board appreciated any and all funds the ATC could acquire through discretionary grants.

VIII. Program Updates

a. ATC Chair’s Report

Mr. Massengill again recommended working on the Grant Review Committee, saying it was a wonderful way to learn how the LTD system worked.

b. Lane Transit District

Ms. Parker reviewed LTD’s program updates, found on pages 12 and 13 of the agenda packet.

Ms. Hekimoglu said she would schedule a group tour of the Gateway EmX route after December 6 (the service start date was January 9, 2011). Ms. Parker said the bike route along the Gateway EmX system was very interesting. Mr. Whetham noted the new cross lights and flashing red lights on the route. Mr. Kwiatkowski mentioned the new High-intensity Activated crossWalk (HAWK) signals and the yellow beacons on the route. Mr. Whetham mentioned the sensor crosswalk on the route on International Way.

Ms. Parker noted that new intersections along the corridor were fitted with audible signaling; however old intersections did not have it. She thought all new projects would be fitted with audible signaling.

Mr. Whetham stated that individual trainings would be available for those who wanted to use the old intersections that did not have audible signaling.

Ms. Parker noted that LTD was facing a \$3.5 million operating budget shortfall in 2012.

Mr. Necker explained that the cuts that had been made to LTD services had been made in June and September. In January, further changes would take place, mostly in Springfield due to the opening of the Gateway EmX service. Ms. Mulder asked if this was the reason the *Rider’s Digest* only covered September 19 through January 8. Ms. Parker said that it was. Ms. Hekimoglu stated that the new *Rider’s Digest* would be available in December.

Ms. Parker stated that all operators had recently gone through training about lap belts and seat belts for mobility devices (this was a re-training). Riders were not required to use these, but the ADA required that they be available. There were now posters on the busses related to the belts, and a decal would go on bus windows to make riders aware of the availability of the belts. Mr. Necker said that this training was important. Ms. Parker said that the safety belts were being advertised to riders because LTD busses had only a two-point tie-down system for mobility devices, rather than a full, four-point tie-down system. The use of the belts was more critical for riders in mobility devices on buses that had only a two-point system. She said LTD was evaluating securement on the buses.

Ms. Parker reminded the ATC of the customization of preferred seating areas on the new 40-foot busses that had been ordered. She asked the group what color the seating should be. Ms. Mulder suggested a color that would mask dirt, and that was as durable as possible. Ms. Lundeen suggested making the seats a color that made the section as obvious as possible, in order to preclude people without disabilities from sitting there. Ms. Saville and Mr. Kwiatkowski agreed. Mr. Kwiatkowski suggested a color that stood out, and that was obviously not blue. Ms. Parker said that red could be used.

Mr. Whetham stated that the more the color contrasted, the better. However, the contrasting color might point out people's limitations. Ms. Parker noted that the operator trainer wished to be sensitive to people with disabilities who did not want to stand out. However, people with disabilities were not required to use the seats. Mr. Necker said that people in wheelchairs had priority in that area. Seating for the elderly and disabled, however, depended on the driver and the manners of who was sitting there.

Ms. Parker mentioned the modesty panel on 40-foot buses and noted that the preferred seating was moving back another row of forward facing seats, so the color of the seats would be important. Ms. Brazell said the contrast did not matter much (she said the colors were complimentary, so those who sat in the area should not feel different), and would be helpful for those who were visually impaired.

Ms. Parker said that some people would feel offended because of the different color in the priority seating area. She asked if the ATC thought the benefit of the contrasting colors in the priority seating area outweighed the potential feelings of being offended. Ms. Hekimoglu noted that the order would be placed in early January, before the ATC would meet again. Mr. Whetham thought Ms. Parker's point that those with disabilities were not required to sit in the priority seating areas was a good one.

Mr. Massengill asked Ms. Hekimoglu to let the ATC know what decision was made about the color of the seating.

c. RideSource Call Center

Mr. Stamm explained that the *RideSource* software upgrade was moving ahead. The Call Center had volunteered to be audited through the Department of Human Services (DHS). It was a technical assistance audit and the Call Center thought it was a good opportunity to learn if they were doing everything correctly before a required audit occurred. The final findings of the audit were not yet released, but the auditor had told Mr. Stamm the Call Center was on target. The Call Center administrative staff was in the process of doing quality assurance office audits of their contracted transportation providers. This was done on a regular basis with contracted transportation providers' vehicles to ensure they met contract standards. The Call Center was now also auditing contractors' offices and office procedures. The eligibility assessment process was moving forward, and in February, the Call Center would host the quarterly brokerage meeting for the State of Oregon. At these meetings, Oregon brokerage personnel came together to discuss operational issues and projects.

d. RideSource ADA Paratransit Service

Mr. Braunschweiger noted that service demand continued to increase. All new vehicles were in service, and a full complement of drivers was available.

e. South Lane County

Ms. Parker stated that LTD had received a notice that South Lane Wheels had changed some of their Route●Around●Town operations and had reduced their hours from 8-6 to 10-2. The previous year, LTD had been concerned that there was a duplication of service, because the LTD bus came to Cottage Grove and made a circuit through town. This was the same circuit the Route●Around●Town did. Reducing hours reduced that duplication. South Lane had also doubled fares. Financially, the agency was running on the edge and needed to make cuts.

Mr. Kwiatkowski agreed that there was a duplication of service in Cottage Grove. He did note that the LTD bus left Eugene Station at 10 on weekdays, and the next bus did not come until 2:30. Therefore, it made sense for the Route●Around●Town to run from 10 until 2.

f. West Lane County

Ms. Parker asked Ms. Hekimoglu to speak about Florence's transportation system plan survey.

Ms. Hekimoglu noted that West Lane County had received a grant to compile a new transportation plan. The transportation advisory committee was planning a free service day for the Saturday after Thanksgiving, in partnership with the merchants of Old Town. Surveys were developed to help compile the new transportation system plan. Surveys had gone out with water bills, on the bus, and through employers to determine workers' transportation needs.

g. East Lane County

Ms. Goddard said that Oakridge was very busy. Lane Community College students seemed to have accepted the available schedules. Studded, all-weather tires were being installed on some vehicles (these lasted only two years). Snow was expected.

h. Pearl Buck

Ms. Van Norman said that children were getting to the Pearl Buck Preschool very well, and were getting on and off the bus in a timely manner.

IX. Adjournment

Mr. Massengill noted that it was nice to have Mr. Necker available to access Board information, noting that Mr. Necker was once a member of the ATC, and was now an LTD Board member. Mr. Necker shared his story of becoming involved with LTD Boards.

Mr. Massengill noted that the next meeting would occur on January 18. He adjourned the meeting at 11:41 a.m.