

Minutes Of The Accessible Transportation Committee - Tuesday, June 21, 2011

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Hugh Massengill, Chair, Bill Morganti, Mary Otten, Vice Chair, Eleanor Mulder, Misty Brazell, Mark Phinney, Aline Goddard, Annie Saville, Ruth Linoz, Kristine Sirmans, Gail Lundeen, Scott Whetham

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Kay Metzger, Reneé Van Norman

**LTD BOARD MEMBER (Ex Officio):** Ed Necker

**COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES:** Paul Blaylock, Stefan Kwiatkowski, Mike Cetto

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Debbie Bonds, captioner, Jill Fish, Lane County Developmental Disabilities, David Braunschweiger, SMS, Mark Person, PSU, Rob Cook, Fred Stoffer, SMS, Susan Elliott, PSU

**STAFF:** Susan Hekimoglu, Rand Stamm, Terry Parker

**Call to order:** Mr. Massengill called the meeting of the Accessible Transportation Committee (ATC) to order at 10:05 a.m.

**Introductions, Announcements, Agenda Review:** Those present introduced themselves.

Ms. Parker introduced Susan Eliot and Mark Person from PSU, who were consultants doing in-home, in-person assessments for LTD. They were interviewing key stakeholders in an effort to see how the in-home project was going, so that information was available if the program was to be replicated.

Mr. Massengill noted the “very bad opera music” being played at the EmX station downtown, loudly. He thought it was being played to encourage people not to loiter in the area. He said, jokingly, that it was almost a human rights violation. The library played “beautiful music.” Mr. Blaylock agreed.

**Audience Participation:** Rob Cook of Springfield said he was a “three master’s degree” specialist in education, international community development, and rehab teaching for the blind. He had worked with the American Council of the Blind Federal Access Board. In the last few years, Blind Signs© had been installed and tested at the Amazon Station, and while they had a use in some environments, they were only semi-permanent and were made of plastic. Mr. Cook stated that he was an advocate for the blind, and he held a patent on Navitech brand Detectable Guidance Marker (DGM). He also represented a detectable warning company. He passed around examples of Navitech DGMs, including a safe zone tactile warning map. He said that it presently was the least expensive, retrofit, permanently secured tactile warning product. It was made of flexible cement. Detectable warnings were different – they lowered the threshold and did not trip or skid. They had truncated siding and were placed in-line so that people who used mobility devices could easily travel over them. Springfield and Eugene were no longer using plastic detectable warnings. Less than one in a thousand errors in 20 years occurred with this product, which was less than \$15 per square foot.

Ms. Parker cautioned Mr. Cook that audience participation was not meant for product promotion.

Mr. Cook said he was presenting “best practices” and promoted the products, one of which he did not hold the patent on, from two disability points of view – his own blindness and the point of view of a person in a wheelchair who had tested the products. He stated that nearly every other industrialized country in the world had flexible cement DGMs, which were retrofit and could be laid down. Directionality should come first for the blind, and way finding should be “equal to or greater than,” ADA requirements.

Ms. Parker said that the U.S. Access Board was getting ready to publish for public comment guidelines for pedestrian and public right-of-way. The Access Board hoped they would be able to put

those out in late July or August. Senior and Disabled Services (SDS) Advocacy Committee had been very interested in the pedestrian and public right-of-way issue related to roundabouts. This came up in the guidelines. Staff would get information out about this to the ATC.

Mr. Cook said that Beezy Bentzen and Janet Barlow were the noted researchers in the field of pedestrian accessibility for the blind. Last month, they were doing directionality research at Western Michigan University, instead of spending another 34 years on inconclusive detectability research.

**ACTION: Minutes Approval, April 19, 2011:** Mr. Kwiatkowski noted that his comments on page 4 of the minutes were inaccurate. He proposed the following change:

~~Mr. Kwiatkowski asked why the West 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue option was abandoned. He said he was part of the Jefferson Westside Neighbors and he did not appreciate them speaking for him without his permission. Their Mr. Kwiatkowski lived in the neighborhood, but did not appreciate The Jefferson Westside Neighbors speaking for him. Their decision was not representative of his feelings about the West Eugene EmX route.~~

Mr. Kwiatkowski clarified, saying he was not a member of the Jefferson Westside Neighbors. He lived in the neighborhood, but had not shared his thoughts with the neighborhood association. He was not sure if he was even a member of the association.

Ms. Parker said staff could refer him to the City of Eugene to help him understand how neighborhood associations worked.

Mr. Morganti, seconded by Ms. Otten, moved to approve the April 19, 2011, minutes, with the proposed changes. The motion passed unanimously, 12:0.

**ACTION: Membership Committee appointment:** Ms. Hekimoglu asked for volunteers to participate in the Membership Committee during the summer, during which the Committee would recruit and prepare membership recommendations for the ATC for FY2011-2012. The Committee would report to the ATC in September.

Mr. Phinney, Mr. Morganti and Ms. Lundeen volunteered to serve on the Membership Committee. Ms. Hekimoglu said Mr. Massengill would participate as well as the Chair of the ATC.

Mr. Massengill appointed Mr. Phinney, Mr. Morganti and Ms. Lundeen to the Membership Committee.

**ACTION: Election of Officers for FY 2011-2012:** Ms. Hekimoglu said that both Mr. Massengill and Ms. Otten had agreed to continue to serve as Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, respectively, if that was the will of the ATC.

Mr. Massengill asked for nominations from the floor. There were none. Mr. Massengill closed nominations.

Ms. Otten, seconded by Ms. Mulder moved to approve the nominees by acclamation. The motion passed unanimously, 12:0.

**ATC Appreciation:** Mr. Massengill said he appreciated the ATC, and said that it was well-staffed. The ATC did useful work, and helped people get together who might not always be able to do so.

Ms. Parker said it was nice to see where the ATC had been prior to the summer break. It had been an "interesting year." The budget was part of ATC's responsibility. ATC was able to get through the budget process, which was ongoing. She appreciated ATC members' service. The strength of LTD's programs and services was due to LTD's contact with ATC members. ATC kept the District on task. She thanked providers including Mr. Braunschweiger and Mr. Stoffer. She thanked riders. Working together, the ATC had been able to deal with complex issues. She mentioned that LTD's General Manager, Mark Pangborn, would be leaving LTD after 29 years.

Mr. Necker said that LTD's incoming General Manager, Ron Kilcoyne, had been recommended by LTD Board member Greg Evans, who was active on a lot of APTA committees. Mr. Kilcoyne had 31 years of experience in transit.

Ms. Parker thanked Mr. Cetto for helping steer LTD toward more Braille. Because of his and Ms. Hekimoglu's work, more Braille was being used because they had found a way to print it in a shorter period of time. Mr. Cetto said it had "made his day" to have Braille.

**Program Updates:** Lane Transit District - Accessible Services Update: Wheelchair Securement Project Update: Ms. Parker said that Steve Rayack and David Lindelien, risk and safety staff at LTD, had joined forces with Operations to look at a securement system that was nearly 30 years old. LTD had decided there was not anything on the market with a four-point tie-down system that would integrate well into its operations. None would allow passengers to self-secure. As a result, LTD decided to at least maximize the effectiveness and safety features of the current system.

Mr. Necker said the current system was an optional three-point tie-down system with a lap belt and shoulder belt available.

Ms. Parker said that this system was not in place on every bus. Part of the issue was inconsistency. Pictures of everything had been taken, and LTD had met with Joe Zaworski of Oregon State University. They had discussed where straps should come from and go given the current system. At this time, often the inside strap against the wall was low and went up towards the center of the chair's gravity. The opposite side, the wall side, was often mounted higher, just because this was deemed to be a convenient place to mount the strap (not because it was the safest or most convenient position for the rider). LTD was trying to get both of the straps from these lower points to come up. The optimal place to put a strap was at or below the chair's center of gravity. This was different for different people, and different chairs.

Mr. Necker said having straps mounted low was a problem for self-securement. Ms. Parker said it was, but in order to get the best, safest securement, according to Dr. Zaworski, the best place to mount straps was down low. LTD was trying to get consistency in terms of this.

Ms. Parker said that in the previous year, LTD had been working to help riders know tie-downs were available. Decals the ATC had helped design were being installed in buses this summer.

Ms. Parker said that to make it safe, wheelchair users had to back their chairs all the way into the wall of the bus. This was an important part of securement. LTD would be working with Mr. Whetham and others to communicate with the community about maximizing the current system, which was a three-point system. The scooter strap would still be used, as it was fairly safe and there was no other way to secure scooters.

Mr. Morganti said that "no one used shoulder straps" on the bus that he could see. Mr. Parker said

many people did not know these were available. In addition, most riders preferred to self-secure, and these required assistance. In addition, some operators were only trained to these systems once. Last fall, repetitive training for operators on these had begun. The lap and shoulder belts were optional and were not required. Mr. Necker said he had seen some people use the shoulder belts.

Ms. Parker said that for real safety, lap and shoulder belts had to be used. Belts on wheelchairs were not built to the specifications of seat belts.

Mr. Kwiatkowski asked what the lap and shoulder belts were attached to. Ms. Parker said they were attached to the wall of the bus.

Mr. Necker and Ms. Lundeen mentioned the Q'Straint video the ATC had seen. Ms. Parker said that the video Q'Straint had shown the ATC showed only what happened in small paratransit vehicles during a crash. Only Oregon State had studied what happened in big, 40-foot buses during an accident. Big buses did not stop as quickly as paratransit vehicles, and what occurred in paratransit vehicles during accidents would not occur in big buses. She did not mean to downplay the seriousness of what could happen in any bus crash.

Mr. Stamm said the ADA reduced the g-force requirement because they had recognized that larger buses crashed differently than smaller buses. Ms. Parker said Dr. Jaworski had written a paper about it. Ms. Parker added that OSU was applying for a grant to support Dr. Jaworski's work on studying the movement patterns in smaller vehicles.

Mr. Massengill asked if wheelchairs had priority on buses. He had noticed people coming into the bus with shopping carts, which took up a bay where wheelchairs were supposed to go. Ms. Parker said the driver, in these situations would have to ask the person to move their shopping cart. The ADA said that securement stations needed to remain clear if wheelchair users needed them. However, if a person was sitting in the area who had a physical disability, but was not in a wheelchair, the driver could not require this person to move, but could only ask. Ms. Saville noted that she often had to ask people with a lot of items to get off the bus to make room for wheelchair users.

*RideSource Shopper*: Mr. Stamm said that the *RideSource Shopper* program had been around for decades. It provided specific trips that encompassed specific neighborhoods to specific neighborhood stores. It allowed individuals who were ADA paratransit eligible to do their grocery shopping at specific times to specific locations. A lower fare was charged, and the bus operator helped riders load groceries on and off the vehicle, which was equipped with racks for products. It was a less costly trip because it was coordinated and grouped, so it benefitted LTD to provide the service and riders to use the service.

The program was being reviewed by staff and an intern who was working with the graphics department to create marketing materials and communications. LTD surveyed *RideSource* riders about where they wanted to go for shopping to determine if new destinations should be added to Shopper routes. Winco and Walmart were identified as new destinations riders were interested in. Routes had been added to go to these destinations on the *RideSource Shopper*. Mr. Stamm distributed several versions of the ***RideSource Shopper Schedule***. A letter would be sent out to all current and potential users. Materials were being developed for transportation coordinators, who could provide information about the Shopper when presenting transportation options during eligibility assessments. A bus wrap would be put on the vehicle to make it stand out.

Ms. Parker asked ATC members for their preferences about the design of the schedule. The group discussed design options and their preferences. Many thought that a map showing the different areas

of town would be good additions to the schedules. Many thought where a rider lived was the most important piece of information on the schedule. The second-most important piece of information was the day of the week. It was noted that the printed schedule was not easy to understand.

Mr. Stamm said that one of the changes would be to split the Bethel schedules into "East Bethel" and "West Bethel," to make it easier for residents to understand. Ms. Parker said that the weekly schedule of the Shopper could not be changed to make the printed materials easier to understand.

Mr. Cetto asked if the Shopper went to Veneta. Mr. Stamm said it did not.

Mr. Whetham thought the addition of Walmart and Winco would increase ridership on the Shopper.

Ms. Parker thought the phone number should be larger.

Mr. Cetto asked if LTD had gotten his message about a friend in Veneta who could use more bus service in Veneta. Ms. Hekimoglu said his message had been received and had been forwarded to LTD planners.

Ms. Parker noted that the RideSource in Veneta had been discontinued because riders wanted to shop in Eugene or Springfield, not in Veneta. This had been deemed to be too expensive, and community leaders did not like LTD taking consumers out of the community to shop. In addition, ridership had dropped off. Also, fixed route riders were not eligible for the RideSource Shopper, which was only for ADA eligible riders.

Mr. Cetto thought patrons should be heard. Mr. Stamm said that LTD was working with the stores it planned to visit with the RideSource Shopper. Ms. Lundeen noted that Coburg did not have a place to shop. Ms. Parker said one person in Coburg was served by the RideSource Shopper. She had been grandfathered into the system when Coburg stopped being served.

Ms. Lundeen said that some members of the aging population "should not be on the road."

Ms. Linoz said that the local Kiwanis Club provided a free shopper in Creswell. It went only to local the store.

Ms. Parker said some consumers did not think about the cost of transportation when going to other communities for cheaper store prices.

Mr. Phinney asked how the Shopper worked on days when two stores were listed on the schedule. Mr. Stamm said it visited both stores. It would drop people off at one store, then travel to the next store.

Mr. Kwiatkowski said if he was a disabled rural bus rider, he would take a rural route to Eugene or Springfield, and take an LTD fixed route to shop. He would take the opposite route home. Mr. Stamm said RideSource was a service for people who could not use fixed routes. Ms. Hekimoglu noted that some people were conditionally eligible and could use both fixed route and RideSource.

Mr. Stamm clarified that people could be conditionally eligible if distance or barriers prevented riders from using a certain type of trip. Ms. Parker added that the ability to shop and carry groceries was not part of a functional assessment.

Mr. Necker thought version 4 of the schedule seemed to be the most logical.

RideSource ADA paratransit: Mr. Braunschweiger said that RideSource was working on a driver training handbook. There also had been some changes to the Driver's Manifest, which LTD would review. The RideSource Call Center was moving into its third year and would be renewing its contracts with providers in July.

Mr. Stamm added that the Call Center handled the scheduling of 13,900 trips in April. This was the highest number it had ever scheduled in one month. This number was 5,000 higher than the number of trips scheduled in April three years ago.

Ms. Parker said that LTD had had a conversation with Lane County Developmental Disabilities about training for drivers or customer service representatives about being aware of risky situations riders might be in. She asked if this training was happening. Mr. Braunschweiger said it would be done in two months. Ms. Parker said certain people in the community were required to report situations of potential abuse. LTD drivers were not required to report, but drivers would be trained anyway.

Mr. Phinney said this was Mandatory Abuse Reporter training, which was required for anyone who worked for county developmental disabilities programs or foster or group homes. In the last couple of years, RideSource drivers had been the first reporter of suspicions of abuse. Training would help drivers know what to do in these situations. Mr. Braunschweiger said this was covered in driver training, but not in depth. He thought the training would be helpful. Ms. Fish encouraged Mr. Braunschweiger to coordinate this training with Adult Protective Services (APS) at SDS. Mr. Braunschweiger said that he would talk to her further about this.

Ms. Linoz said a representative of APS would be at her driver meeting in July. Ms. Brazell said that DHS volunteers in the Call Center were mandatory reporters. She said she could work with Mr. Braunschweiger on coordinating this training.

Mr. Phinney said there were three different agencies that had separate protective service investigators – Child Welfare, Senior and Disabled Services, and Developmental Disability Services.

Ms. Brazell clarified that mandatory reporters were required to report abuse of seniors, people with disabilities, and children.

Ms. Parker recommended coordinating the training into one. Fifty percent of the Call Center's business was from people who received Medicaid services. The other fifty percent were ADA and other services. Any kind of training LTD could have to monitor workers, internally and externally, would be good.

Mr. Necker said Karen Hyatt had done a mandatory reporting training for ShelterCare employees.

South Lane County: Ms. Linoz said she did not know that her drivers were not mandatory reporters. Training was helpful.

South Lane Wheels was working on finding tactful ways to handle clients and customers who had body odor and hygiene issues. The windows in paratransit vehicles cannot be opened for air to flow through the vehicle.

Ms. Parker asked about LTD's clean-up kits. Ms. Saville displayed the biohazard kit given to LTD

drivers, which allowed drivers to clean up bio-hazardous materials and included rubber gloves, a biohazard bag, caution tape and a container of a substance that was absorbent and removed odors. Ms. Parker said she would help Ms. Linoz get these kits. Ms. Linoz said South Lane Wheels already had such kits. Ms. Goddard said Diamond Express called the cleaning lady to clean buses at night if something happened. She said she went to riders' homes to speak to them about hygiene issues if necessary. Ms. Parker said certain medications could cause odors.

West Lane County: Ms. Sirmans had no update. Ms. Hekimoglu reported that she had recently been in the area because LTD had granted money to Rhody Express in the last discretionary grant process to do bus stop improvements. The bus stops had been re-done, and given new signs. Poles had been re-painted with rust-resistant material. Six bus shelters had been added, and another would be added soon.

East Lane County: Ms. Goddard said Diamond Express was getting evicted again. She had received a letter from the City of Oakridge. Diamond Express vans had to move by July 21 because the City was going to use the area for the library. Therefore, Diamond Express's vans were in Public Works' old spaces. The City was allowing them to be there rent-free, but the land was on the market to sell. Diamond Express had been busy.

White Bird Clinic: Ms. Parker said LTD was in the process of updating its service contracts, and was looking at grantee spending. White Bird had had to reduce its spending in order to not run out of money during the current fiscal year. The agency was providing day passes and taxi trips for people with mental and emotional disabilities and the homeless. They had been "slammed" this past year. They primarily were helping people get to and from treatment. Their budget had not been cut by LTD, but actually had gone up; however, gas prices and the cost of taxi rides had increased.

Mr. Necker asked if the City of Eugene still furnished White Bird with a vehicle. Ms. Parker said the City provided the CAHOOTS service and had added a CAHOOTS vehicle. The City was doing a lot. LTD's services were augmented with taxi service. White Bird provided transportation to those who could not use RideSource. Mr. Necker said these were not emergency rides like those that required CAHOOTS, but White Bird did provide transportation to those with mental illnesses.

Ms. Parker said White Bird tried to get people into counseling, and transported them to and from counseling appointments.

Pearl Buck Center, Inc.: Ms. Parker said Pearl Buck's preschool transportation was doing fine. LTD had increased the money the agency had to contribute to the service next year because of its cost. Pearl Buck also was writing additional grants to get that match portion. LTD covered more than 60 percent of the cost, and Pearl Buck had to come up with about 40 percent, or \$50,000.

Mr. Phinney asked if Pearl Buck's prior contribution was 10 percent. Ms. Parker said it had been 40 percent, but it had been based on a marginal cost, not the full cost. When LTD had switched to a cost allocation model, the cost of this program was shown to be much higher, especially when considering administrative costs. LTD had held Pearl Buck harmless for two years, but it was now time for them to start contributing more. They had been given time to plan.

Mr. Blaylock suggested White Bird use Airport Taxi. He had found it to be more affordable than other companies. Mr. Stamm said Airport Taxi did not contract with the Call Center.

Ms. Parker said LTD was trying to get more providers in the Call Center cross-trained to do ADA paratransit trips as well as Medicaid trips. Taxi companies were hesitant to do this because they had

to comply with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) drug and alcohol requirements, which was expensive and required random drug testing.

Mr. Stamm said three new providers were starting on July 1, but none were taxi companies. One did have a sedan in its fleet. Staff were working with two taxi companies that were showing some interest in ADA service. One already had a drug and alcohol policy that might comply with the FTA's requirements.

Ms. Otten asked if this FTA requirement was a new requirement. When she lived in Baltimore about eight years ago, taxis were the backbone of paratransit. Mr. Stamm said it was not a new requirement. Ms. Parker said she was not sure all transit agencies complied with this rule. In addition, taxis were much more competitive in larger cities.

Ms. Linoz mentioned the background check criteria. Ms. Parker said this was a DHS requirement. LTD could pay for the cost of this as part of administration. Mr. Stamm said that the state legislature wanted DHS to cut administrative costs.

Mr. Morganti asked what the geographic boundaries for RideSource were. Ms. Parker said it was comparable to the metro LTD system – it was limited to Eugene and Springfield. A rural trip provider would have to be used to get the rider into the metro area.

Ms. Parker said that the ADA did not require the same services in rural areas. It was limited and commuter-based.

**Adjourn:** Mr. Massengill adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m., noting that the next meeting would be held on September 20, 2011.