

MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 19, 2013

10 am – Noon

Lane Transit District Next Stop Center  
1099 Olive Street – Eugene, Oregon

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mary Otten, Chair

Pete Barron

Aline Goddard

Stephen Kwiatkowski

Ruth Linoz

Patti Little

Gail Lundeen

Bill Morganti

Eleanor Mulder

Ed Necker

Annie Saville, Vice Chair

Renee Van Norman

Scott Whetham

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES:

Paul Blaylock

OTHERS PRESENT:

Glen Adams

Ann Angvick

April Georgi

Fred Stoffer

STAFF:

Susan Hekimoglu

Cosette Rees

Kris Lyon

Janice Friend, captioner

**I. Call to order**

Ms. Otten called the meeting of the Accessible Transportation Committee (ATC) to order at 10:02 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**II. Introductions, Announcements, Agenda Review**

Those present introduced themselves.

There were no adjustments to the agenda but Mr. Necker pointed out that item V. on the agenda referenced page 15 of the packet when it should have been page 14.

**III. Audience Participation**

No members of the public wished to speak.

**IV. Minutes Approval, January 15, 2013**

**MOTION:** Mr. Morganti moved, seconded by Ms. Lundeen, to approve the January 15 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously, 14:0.

**V. Lane Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan**

a) Staff Presentation, Committee Discussion

LTD's current Lane Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan (The Plan) was last reviewed and approved by the LTD Board of Directors in 2009. LTD had updated The Plan to include transportation service needs of area veterans in Lane County. This update also presented the opportunity to educate and gain input from the public on LTD's approach and strategies for coordinating transportation service and programs for the area's vulnerable populations. A draft of the plan update was included in the agenda packet.

At its meeting on December 13, 2012, the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization designated LTD as the direct recipient of FTA Enhanced Mobility of Services and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds. In addition to being a relevant planning document, The Plan satisfied requirements specific to funds administered

through the FTA and ODOT Public Transit Division with expectations of planning and coordination of these resources.

Ms. Rees reported that the listing of programs and projects in the update was part of a new requirement. She said that The Plan served as a guideline to staff in putting together services and budgeting resources. One of the new points made in this update was that public transportation was a crucial piece in the community planning process, especially when housing was being developed.

Ms. Otten was curious about LTD's involvement in issues around homelessness and whether the site the City selected for the Opportunity Village had access to public transit.

Ms. Lyon had attended two of the Opportunity Village planning meetings. The Garfield and Roosevelt site was adjacent to an LTD bus stop. She added that there also had been proposals to make some of the Conestoga huts accessible for people with disabilities.

Ms. Rees commented that the City recently issued a couple of permits for low income housing to be located on the perimeter of the city where land was cheaper but there were no accessible nearby bus stops. This would create a new service pocket for Paratransit and would require some coordination. Ms. Rees said this was an example of the importance of considering access to transportation when planning for vulnerable populations. She mentioned that LTD typically had an opportunity to review plans before they had been approved.

Mr. Barron opined that the City should be required to seek input from LTD when it was planning for housing and Mr. Kwiatkowski agreed. Ms. Rees noted that the role of Public Transportation at ODOT was being reorganized and that they were seeking representatives from cities and counties to be engaged in the planning process to ensure that access to public transportation was considered.

Ms. Mulder called attention to Better Eugene Springfield Transportation (BEST) and said that it was a grassroots group that provided education and advocacy. Ms. Rees responded that LTD was not represented on BEST but that it could provide good feedback for LTD and should be watched.

Paul Blaylock reported that the information on bus stop signs for the 95 contained wrong information. Ms. Hekimoglu informed him that she had forward Mr. Blaylock's note about this to LTD's marketing staff and they would correct the signage.

b) Public Hearing

Ms. Otten opened the public hearing on the Lane Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan at 10:18 a.m.

Mr. Kwiatkowski indicated that he had no disagreements with the content of the plan.

There being no further requests to speak, Ms. Otten closed the public hearing.

c) ACTION: Recommend Adoption by LTD Board of Directors

**MOTION:** Mr. Barron moved, seconded by Mr. Morganti, to recommend to the LTD Board of Directors that it adopt the Lane Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan. The motion carried unanimously, 14:0.

**VI. Membership/Bylaws Review Committee Appointment**

Each year, a membership and Bylaws review committee was appointed to review current membership term expirations and recruit for new members. This committee also conducted a review of the ATC bylaws to determine if any modifications were needed. The Membership Committee would meet a couple of times to prepare its recommendations for presentation to the ATC at its May and/or June meetings.

Ms. Hekimoglu asked for volunteers to serve on the committee. Mr. Kwiatkowski, Mr. Morganti, Mr. Barron, Ms. Linoz, and Ms. Otten all volunteered. Ms. Hekimoglu said that meetings would be scheduled to accommodate the schedules of the members.

Ms. Otten shared that her third and final term on the committee would expire this year. New officers would need to be elected at the June meeting.

**VII. Update: Crucial Connections**

The Crucial Connections transportation service was created to expand transportation services to older adults and people with disabilities who were unable to get

transportation through existing programs and services due to a variety of issues. The program utilized existing systems and integrated within the RideSource Call Center to take advantage of established communications infrastructure and procedures. Crucial Connections provided short-term transportation response by offering a limited number of trips for individuals who had no other transportation resources.

The program was primarily managed through Senior Connections at S&DS and the Ride Source Call Center and was modeled after the Community-based (waivered) Transportation Program utilizing S&DS' Area Coordinators to identify a service need. It did not require Medicaid eligibility as a condition. The program was available throughout Lane County and provided a coordinated approach that was both flexible and responsive. Any of the transportation providers that contracted with RideSource potentially could be utilized to provide this service.

Once service was authorized, trips were recorded and scheduled through the same process as for other trips handled through the Ride Source Call Center. Billing records were kept and applied to the program.

Ms. Lyon reported that the program was spending nearly all its funding and would look for more funding in the next discretionary grant funding cycle.

Ms. Rees observed that the program had been available for several years but was underutilized. At this point it was over-subscribed and careful monitoring was needed to ensure that funded rides met all the criteria. She said that Senior Connections, RideSource, and LTD staff made the determinations of eligibility.

Mr. Barron asked whether there was any evidence that people were abusing the program. Ms. Rees responded that there was not and the concern focused on the need for clear communication that the service was only for people with no other transportation options and that it was not a convenience but a last resort.

Answering Mr. Necker's question about deciding who was eligible, Ms. Lyon said that she and Ms. Angvick made the decision jointly and they were careful to think about all the other options that could be available to be sure all avenues had been explored before the money was expended.

Ms. Little suggested referring people who might need the service to the Disability Resource Connection at 541-682-4038 and ask either for the ADRC or Aging and Disability Resource Connection because a person who needed the ride they may need other services as well.

Answering Mr. Morganti's question, Ms. Rees said that the program was not limited to rural users but that it was most often used by rural residents because local residents were more likely to have other transportation options. She added that the program was partly funded by LTD general funds and there would be less money available in the next biennium.

### **VIII. Update: Non-Emergency Ambulance Service/CCOs**

#### **a) Non-emergency ambulance service**

Ms. Lyon reported that this was a completely different program than Crucial Connections. LTD had been asked to be part of a pilot project to serve Oregon Health Plan participants in need of non-emergent ambulance service. Work on the project had begun in September and it was now at the point where trips needing ambulances could be authorized. She described the difference between these trips and anything that had been offered in the past as being the need for medical monitoring during the trip. This was a new realm in transportation service for the Call Center and she and Ms. Angvick were working with the Lane County's eight ambulance service areas. Providers were primarily public fire and emergency rescue services.

A new ambulance billing portion of the Call Center software had recently been tested. Staff still needed to meet with additional providers and get some answers from the state about preauthorization requirements. Ms. Lyon anticipated that everything would be ready to begin providing service by March 1.

Ms. Georgi commented that as part of White Bird's non-emergency medical/mental health service it used the Cahoots van to provide transportation to the hospital. The service was available 11 a.m. until 3 a.m. and included a medic and crisis counselor as part of the transport team. She said that the service had no eligibility requirements.

#### **b) Update on CCOs**

Ms. Rees reminded the committee that the transition of Medicaid health services from the state to regional organizations occurred last August and that Trillium was Lane

County's CCO. The transportation component was now scheduled to be in place July 1. The CCOs would be held accountable by the state for managing the overall health of their members. In addition to including trips to and from medical appointments, transportation would also include such trips as going to the store to get fresh food.

Ms. Lyon had met with Trillium representatives several times and she had recently learned that Trillium intended to contract with LTD. This would mean a significant increase in calls coming through the Call Center and work on the necessary infrastructure to handle it was underway. There were still a number of details to work out in how billings and payments would be handled. Contractual agreements would also be needed with other CCOs for transportation services that involved trips between Lane and other counties. Ms. Rees pointed out that Lane County was fortunate to have a single CCO and one transportation brokerage. Ms. Lyon emphasized that LTD could only provide trips if they were cost neutral.

## **IX. Program Updates**

### **a) ATC Chair's Report**

Ms. Otten reminded committee members that she was ineligible to serve another term.

### **b) Lane Transit District**

Software Update: Ms. Lyon reported that staff had been unable to find a software package that met the needs of RideSource so a new system was being developed internally. The next step would be requesting proposals for writing software which could be then be purchased and customized by other districts as well.

Ms. Otten hoped that the software would be accessible to people who used assistive technology so people with disabilities would be eligible for the jobs that used the software. Ms. Lyon said that the platform would be one on which LTD could continue to build and that accessibility would be a part of it. She added that providers would continue using a web-based system so would not need any hardware components to utilize the new system.

Transportation Reimbursement Program: Another project underway at the Call Center was the Transportation Reimbursement program that would reimburse Oregon Health Plan members for mileage, meals and lodging when they used their own vehicles or

traveled out of the area for medical services. The program was modeled on one developed by Rogue Valley Transportation District's Translink and would use a debit card system which would be more efficient and timely for clients than reimbursing with checks. Debit card costs typically were paid by the merchant. Ms. Lyon said that it was similar to the current taxi trip request system in which clients requested preauthorization and then received verification forms to be signed at the medical office showing they had been at an appointment. Preauthorization would be needed two or three days in advance of the trip but there would be processes in place for urgent need cases. This new program was scheduled to begin July 1.

Public Transit Advisory Committee: Ms. Rees announced that she was serving on a newly established work group for the Oregon Department of Transportation Public Transit Division. The group was reviewing the vision, mission, priorities, activities, and committee representation of the Public Transit Advisory Committee. The Public Transit Division had reorganized to have regional transportation coordinators (the committee had met David Galati at the previous meeting) and this would provide more opportunities for local engagement with ODOT.

Website Storefront: LTD was launching a website store front through which people could purchase passes. Agencies would be required to purchase their passes this way which would increase efficiency. Responding to questions, Ms. Rees was unsure whether Pay Pal as well as credit cards would be an option for paying for the passes. Passes would either be mailed or delivered to outlets. This would result in fewer interruptions for customer service staff when they were interacting with customers needing help in person.

Ms. Linoz asked if UO football shuttle passes would be handled through the website storefront. Ms. Rees explained that those passes were different and LTD had been the secondary contractor for them last year so it was unclear what would happen for the 2013 football season.

Service Planning: Ms. Rees reminded committee members that the winter service changes had gone into effect February 3. LTD had decided not to change the 51 and 40 routes and there was a minor change to the outbound 52 in the downtown area. She said she would provide the details on that at the next meeting.



c) *RideSource* Call Center

Ms. Angvick reported a relatively busy January with more than 1,000 calls on three days and over 12,000 Medicaid medical rides. She and Ms. Lyon had trained four ambulance companies for the non-emergency ambulance program and the first ride for that program had been that morning.

d) *RideSource* ADA Paratransit.

Glen Adams said that demand continued to increase. Two drivers had left and replacements were now being hired. The first ADA qualified taxi provider had expressed an interest in providing rides at night and in the early mornings and Mr. Adams saw a need for that service.

e) South Lane County (Cottage Grove)

Ms. Linoz reported that recent research on health in Lane County had found a strong link between smoking and health. She said that more trips were being provided to smoking cessation classes for people without other transportation.

f) West Lane County (Florence)

There was no representative from Florence.

g) East Lane County (Oakridge)

Ms. Goddard explained that her arm was in a sling due to an accident involving a cat. She reported that ODOT was using a new spray for de-icing that resulted in vehicles needing a lot of windshield cleaning. Two new drivers were to be hired. The big bus was in the shop with an oil leak.

Responding to Ms. Linoz's comment about seeing a Diamond Express vehicle in Cottage Grove, Ms. Goddard explained that it could have been involved in training or may have been transporting clients to South Lane Peace Health.

h) White Bird Clinic

Ms. Georgi said that things also were busy at White Bird. Qualified clients were grateful to receive a consistent number of rides each month. She hoped to have sufficient funding through the rest of the year so the number of rides would not have to be reduced significantly but said that the number was being cut from four to three per month next month to decrease the likelihood of having to reduce the number further.

i) Other

Mr. Whetham reported that Alternative Work Concepts had added staff. He said that KVAL had done a feature on a man who used the bus for his courier work for social service agencies.

**IX. Adjourn**

The next regularly scheduled meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, March 19, 2013 at 10 a.m.

Ms. Otten adjourned the meeting at 11:17 a.m.

*(Recorded by Mary Feldman)*