

MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, December 16, 2014  
10 am – Noon  
Next Stop Center – Eugene Station

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Annie Saville, Vice Chair, Presiding	Ruth Linoz
Misty Brazell	Gail Lundeen
Aline Goddard	Bill Morganti
Josh Haring	Eleanor Mulder
Rachel Jacobsen	Renee Van Norman
Stefan Kwiatkowski	Scott Whetham

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES: Hoover Chamblis

OTHERS PRESENT:

Richard Belcher	Max and Clara Kuhn
Dave Braunschweiger	Fred Stoffer
April Georgi	Andy Vobora

STAFF:

Susan Hekimoglu	Cosette Rees
Kris Lyon	Janice Friend, captioner

**I. Call to order**

Ms. Saville 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.

Mr. Morganti reported he had to move out of his house on 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue due to an expensive plumbing issue. Since December 4 he had been living in a group home on Janus Street in Springfield and he was unsure when he would be able to return home. He was finding the situation very stressful.

Mr. Chamblis commented that people in wheelchairs were unable to reach copies of the monthly "Bus Talk" newsletter on EmX buses or regular buses either. Ms. Hekimoglu said she would report this problem to LTD's Marketing staff.

### **III. Audience Participation**

No members of the public requested to speak.

### **IV. ACTION: Minutes Approval November 18, 2014**

**MOTION:** Ms. Mulder moved, seconded by Mr. Morganti, to approve the November minutes. The motion carried 10:0.

Josh Haring arrived at 10:08 a.m.

### **V. Special Recognition: Max and Clara Kuhn**

After operating public transportation services in Florence for nearly 20 years, Max and Clara Kuhn had retired and were selling their business to Josh Haring. The committee took this opportunity to thank them for their many years of dedication and to celebrate their accomplishments. Ms. Rees expressed appreciation for the work of the Kuhns, saying they were great public transit providers and community members who put heart into their business.

Ruth Linoz arrived at the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

Ms. Rees was confident that Mr. Haring would carry on the good work of the Kuhns. She presented them with a plaque. Committee members took a short break to enjoy refreshments.

### **VI. Annual Fare Review**

Before hearing Mr. Vobora's presentation, Ms. Rees asked for committee input on ideas for improving the safety of the increasing number of LTD riders who used scooters. Because many scooters tipped easily and there was no good way to secure them on vehicles, LTD was launching a campaign to encourage people to transfer from their scooters into regular seats. An effort also was being made to educate people to take such things into consideration when purchasing mobility devices.

To make it more clear that the front area in vehicles was reserved for people with disabilities or older adults while trying to avoid people feeling stigmatized when sitting there, LTD was considering adding to the fabric of the seats a mobility symbol in a contrasting color and designating the seating with stickers on the windows.

Ms. Brazell recalled a similar conversation a couple of years previously. Ms. Rees clarified that the decision had been to mark those seats but the way it was done seemed too subtle and did not succeed in discouraging people without disabilities from sitting in them. The ADA allowed

drivers to ask people sitting there to move so a person with a disability could use the seat but could not require them to do so.

Mr. Kwiatkowski commented that he believed people no longer felt stigmatized by sitting in a seat designated as being for a person with a disability. Mr. Chamblis added that young people needed to be educated on the hierarchy of needs and the importance of accommodating them.

Mr. Vobora responded that the "Courtesy is Contagious" campaign had been ongoing for several years and had been updated with new images and the "don't be that guy" message. It would be supplemented with additional signage and social media messages. He observed that people took cues off the behavior of other riders. Ms. Rees mentioned a video that included asking people to transfer from mobility devices and asking people to relinquish their seats if a person with a disability needed them. LTD was trying to educate both consumers and the general public about these issues and staff was visiting senior centers and participating in health fairs to get the word out.

Mr. Kwiatkowski suggested enlisting School District 4J to help educate young people.

Ms. Hekimoglu responded that many young people who used the reserved seats were not plugged in to regular media outlets or schools and staff was trying to identify the best ways to communicate with that group.

Answering Ms. Lundeen's question about it requiring more space for a mobility device when a person transferred to a regular seat, Ms. Rees said it was worth sacrificing some space capacity in order to avoid a safety hazard.

Committee members generally favored LTD being more aggressive in laying out the territory at the front of vehicles for the use of people with disabilities and seniors and they supported an education campaign.

Ms. Linoz encouraged dispelling the illusion that tie-downs provided adequate security for all devices.

Mr. Whetham asked that travel trainers be involved as the education campaign developed.

Ms. Rees commented that the video she mentioned used a crash test dummy and would be the most impactful educational tool.

Mr. Vobora suggested placing a brochure at local mobility device sales outlets that asked “are you going to use transit?” Ms. Saville recommended providing information for guardians and talking points for teachers when they were taking children on field trips.

LTD Customer Services and Planning Director Andy Vobora presented information on LTD’s annual fare review. He reminded the committee that the board looked at one aspect of the fare structure each year and made small incremental adjustments. Last year, passes had been the focus and this year, it was scheduled to be the 10-ride ticket books. Because there had been few service additions and the economy was only improving slowly, Mr. Vobora was forwarding a recommendation to the board’s Finance Committee to skip the review this year and make no fare changes. He noted that some in the business community whose payroll taxes supported LTD questioned how much users paid.

Mr. Kwiatkowski liked buying ticket books in advance and using them. Mr. Vobora indicated they were a popular replacement for tokens. He informed the group that LTD was still evaluating implementation of an electronic fare management system that allowed pricing flexibility through the use of radio frequency chips or magnetic strips. This enhancement had been in the capital improvement program for some time and was expensive. Staff wanted to avoid purchasing something with high operating costs. Mr. Vobora expected a Request for Proposals to be ready early next year.

Ms. Linoz hoped an electronic fare system would incorporate fare coverage for other partner agencies so if someone rode LTD and wanted to go to Oakridge or South Lane it would be a smooth transfer. Mr. Vobora was unsure whether the budget would allow for this feature.

Mr. Kwiatkowski wanted the regular coin and paper fare options to continue and opposed acquiring an electronic system if it led to additional service cutbacks. He saw it as a low priority. Mr. Vobora thanked him for the feedback and said LTD would continue accepting cash as long as the US government also accepted it.

## **VII. EmX Policy Questions**

Mr. Vobora shared the slide show used for the West Eugene EmX fall training for operators. It displayed the project map and route design map showing where EmX would be in mixed traffic without exclusive lanes. To avoid slowing service, lanes were being added around the busiest intersections where traffic tended to build up. BAT lanes were added in some sections on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> avenues. Transfer points to other routes would be reviewed with the community before being finalized.

The project involved rebuilding more than five miles of sidewalks (many of them wider), two new bicycle/pedestrian bridges crossing the Amazon, two signalized mid-block pedestrian

crossings, moving utility poles, and building 320 curb ramps to comply with the latest ADA standards. New trees would be planted at a ratio of about 2:1 with those cut down and 55 trees were recently planted on side streets near 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> avenues. A turnaround/driver rest area and new stops on 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue at Target would be added. Due to heavy congestion an exclusive lane with a jump would be built at the westernmost signalized station.

Mr. Vobora reported a new policy would involve asking people to disembark at the last stop prior to the turnaround where the driver would take a break. Mr. Kwiatkowski and Mr. Chamblis brought up the issue of people not using the signals to cross a street safely after they got off the bus.

Mr. Vobora said the other policy issue was around signaling a driver to stop at a station. Currently EmX vehicles stopped at every median station but for curbside stops riders had to ring a bell. It would be more consistent with the regular bus if customers had to signal for all stops.

Mr. Kwiatkowski asked for improvement of the signage on the vehicles about the yellow button being a signal for bikes. Mr. Vobora agreed to look into that.

Mr. Vobora asked for input on a related policy issue. The signal buttons on the newest articulated buses were not recessed and were causing a problem by ringing when someone bumped against them. This had raised the question of whether to stick with buttons or move to pull cords on EmX vehicles. He pointed out that sometimes buses were too full for people to access the buttons near the doors. They also forced people to get up to push the button while the bus was still moving. Changing to pull cords would increase accessibility for everyone. To avoid having a mixture of systems on different vehicles, consideration was being given to retrofitting the older fleet with pull cords.

Ms. Hekimoglu had noticed many people stood in the doorway area of the vehicle and she wondered how they would reach a pull cord.

Ms. Rees emphasized the importance of this question before another large vehicle purchase was underway. Mr. Vobora added that any changes for what was needed on new vehicles needed to be added to the capital improvement program now because it would go out for public review in January.

Ms. Lundeen wondered why regular signals would be used on West 11<sup>th</sup> instead of flashing red or yellow as was used in Springfield. Mr. Vobora answered that this choice was made by traffic engineers in each city and was not LTD's decision.

Mr. Vobora continued by describing problems with ramps and said approval had just been given for a bridge plate for mobility devices instead of the telescoping ramp that did not always clear the gap. Another issue on the new vehicles was the wider rear door that shortened the space for bikes so they did not fit in the rack. Staff was searching for a different system to accommodate bikes on the seven new vehicles.

Mr. Vobora showed a video that was available online and Ms. Saville commented it should be shown to everyone who did not like LTD.

Ms. Rees asked members who had feedback to send it to Ms. Hekimoglu. Staff would come back to the committee as additional policy issues arose. She shared that some of the upgrades would include newer generation fare machines that were more ADA compliant, had voice activation capability, and allowed for the purchase of more tickets. Ms. Van Norman commented that the enhancements were awesome.

Mr. Vobora said the annual route review was beginning. One change would involve Route 95 serving the new state mental hospital in Junction City after the facility was completed. Another improvement was the extension of Route 12 up Gateway and along Chad Drive to serve the new Veterans Clinic.

Ms. Mulder asked about increasing service to Bascom Village. Mr. Vobora answered that Route 96 already had been extended closer to Bascom Village. Since the entire area was changing, LTD would be looking at how it served that area.

Kris Lyon, David Braunschweiger, Richard Belcher arrived at the meeting at 11:19 a.m.

Mr. Vobora told committee members that as the route review list was firmed up, they would be asked for input on prioritization.

### **VIII. Program Updates**

#### **a. Lane Transit District**

Accessible Services staff had presented to the Oakridge Mayor and City Council the survey findings and discussed potential changes to services in the Oakridge area. An on-board survey of current riders would be completed and additional outreach at Ray's Market in Oakridge on December 20 and January 10 would seek additional input from residents. LTD staff also would meet with various interest groups in the Oakridge/Westfir area during the next month.

The Discretionary Grant project applications were due January 13, 2015 and the Grant Review Committee would meet several times in January to review them and prepare a funding

recommendation. Ms. Hekimoglu expected a status quo process this year as the funding had not increased at all.

b. White Bird Clinic

Ms. Georgi had to leave the meeting early, and provided her report early. She said the program was going well and was able to provide clients with four one-way rides each per month. Most people were happy with that. Customizing the Springfield Cahoots van had presented some challenges and Ms. Georgi expected it to be operational by the end of December.

c. RideSource Call Center Advisory Committee

Ms. Lyon reported the committee's next meeting would be in February.

Referring to minutes from the previous month, Ms. Linoz asked about a concern over the capacity of providers and the statement that it was up to providers to respond to demand. She wondered how this was being communicated to providers. Ms. Lyon replied the issue involved same-day trips in the Eugene-Springfield area and the ability to respond to that need. She said the issue had been resolved and staff was working on informing providers. Mr. Braunschweiger added that a natural feedback loop was created when providers were called and they said they were unable to help with a trip.

Responding to a question from Mr. Chamblis about how rides were delegated to subcontractors, Mr. Braunschweiger explained that the decision was based on the lowest cost for the needed mode of transport. Most providers reached capacity every day.

Mr. Chamblis corrected his previous statement that he had problems with ramps on RideSource by saying he meant he had problems with the lifts on RideSource and the vehicles of subcontractors because his new chair was exactly 30-1/2 inches long and 26 inches wide and the wheels had to be turned to fit. Ms. Hekimoglu thanked Mr. Chamblis for the clarification.

d. RideSource Call Center

Mr. Belcher reported the center was moving toward new software, a new phone system, and a remodel in the spring to allow for more staff to handle the demand. Jerry's Taxi was not available now due to a recent death in the company and some new providers were being added.

e. RideSource ADA paratransit

Mr. Braunschweiger said the software project was in its early stages and would take a few months to configure. He looked forward to the remodel because of the challenges of sharing

space in the Call Center. The new space was intended to create a division between RideSource ADA activities and Call Center activities.

Mr. Kwiatkowski asked about a new vehicle. Mr. Braunschweiger responded that the new Shopper vehicle had arrived and looked good but some paperwork was yet to be completed. It would be the first kneeling, low-floor ramp vehicle for RideSource and while more expensive than the regular vans it would be a more efficient way of doing transports.

Answering Ms. Brazell's question about the capacity of additional staff, Mr. Braunschweiger said it was dependent on funding but he hoped the remodel would add enough capacity to cover the next five years of growth.

f. South Lane County (Cottage Grove)

Ms. Linoz announced South Lane had survived the crash of a server but some e-mails may continue to bounce as control of the website domain was reestablished. Her staff had learned it was possible to do things manually without major impact on service. She was curious how much of future discretionary grant funds should be invested in technology.

g. West Lane County (Florence)

Mr. Haring reported that the pilot project of serving the casino had wrapped up. The route for the Rhody Express would continue to serve the casino, and other adjustments would be made to return the route to a 60-minute loop, which would restore the 8<sup>th</sup> trip that was lost when the pilot project began. The route map and timetable were being finalized and the recommendation would be presented to the Florence City Council.

h. East Lane County (Oakridge)

Ms. Goddard had few wheelchair requests but many issues involving people bringing large quantities of groceries onboard. There was no way to secure them and little overhead space so people had to hold everything on their laps. She said she could use another van. Vehicles had been ice-free in the mornings so far. She reported there was no security in the lot where 11 vehicles were parked and she recently discovered that someone was living there.

i. Alternative Work Concepts

Mr. Whetham reported that things were essentially status quo for Alternative Work Concepts (AWC) which was again fully staffed and the new AWC location was open for business. In mid-January he hoped to move the LTD Transit Host office downstairs to the west side of the Customer Service counter. Travel training was down slightly as expected for this time of year. As the weather improved he expected the ADA assessment process would get busier as well. A few more Easy Access applications were being processed and mostly involved interviews with people who lacked the appropriate paperwork.



j. Other

Ms. Jacobsen asked that Senior and Disability Services be added to the list for program updates. She noted that after a great deal of feedback, the agency's name had changed from "Senior and Disabled Services" to "Senior and Disability Services." She observed that an official name change required addressing numerous legal matters. Another change at S&DS was the new policy that offices would be closed when the local school district was closed due to inclement weather. The Florence office had closed the previous week during a severe windstorm.

Ms. Jacobsen shared information and literature on Oregon Project Independence (OPI) that paid for in-home services for people who were not Medicaid-eligible. OPI had expanded to include younger adults aged 19-59 who had disabilities. The program was a priority and provided quick intakes. It also had added medication reminders, emergency alerts, and one-time services that included yard clean-up.

Ms. Jacobsen described the new PEARLS program that provided in-home counseling for older adults with depression, many of whom had problems with transportation to receive mental health care. The only qualifications were that someone be over 60 and not Medicaid-eligible. There currently were openings for new clients. Another program with openings served people 55 and older who were caring for a relative who was someone else's child. Ms. Jacobsen concluded her report by saying three case management positions were open and would close the next day.

Members appreciated learning about S&DS's programs.

**IX. Adjourn**

Ms. Rees wished everyone a happy and safe holiday. She said she was grateful for committee members every month.

The next regular meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, January 20, 2015 at 10 a.m. at the Next Stop Center.

The meeting adjourned at 11:44 a.m.

*(Recorded by Mary Feldman)*