

MINUTES OF MEETING  
ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, April 21, 2015  
10 a.m. - Noon  
Next Stop Center - Eugene Station  
1099 Olive Street, Eugene, Oregon

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Pete Barron, Chair	Annie Saville, Vice Chair
Josh Haring	Gail Lundeen
Paul Blaylock	Bill Morganti
Misty Brazell	Eleanor Mulder
Aline Goddard	Ed Necker, ex officio
Rachel Jacobsen	Tim Shearer
Stefan Kwiatkowski	Renee Van Norman
Scott Whetham	

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES:

David Braunschweiger	Kris Lyon
Chris Henry	Dennis Turner
Sasha Luftig	Nathan Banks
April Georgi	

STAFF:

Susan Hekimoglu	Cosette Rees
Janice Friend, captioner	

**I. Call to Order**

Mr. Barron called the meeting of the Accessible Transportation Committee (ATC) to order.

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

Those present introduced themselves. There were no changes to the agenda.

Mr. Blaylock announced that a round trip ticket on Amtrak between Eugene and Seattle was \$82.00 for the 5:30 a.m. departure.

**III. Audience Participation**

There was no one wishing to speak.

**IV. Minutes Approval: February 17, 2015**

**MOTION:** Mr. Morganti moved to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2015, meeting.

Mr. Kwiatkowski asked that the word "monkey" be removed from language discussing surveying in the section of the minutes related to the Annual Route Review.

Mr. Necker asked that the second sentence in the paragraph beginning with the word "Timepoint" on page 8 be corrected to reflect he mentioned that 51, not 52, was often delayed by trains.

Mr. Shearer provided the second. The minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

#### **V. Moving Ahead Sounding Board**

LTD Development Planner, Sasha Luftig distributed a flyer explaining LTD's MovingAhead program, which was a cooperative partnership of the City of Eugene, LTD, regional partners and the community to improve the primary roads and make the community safer and more accessible for everyone. She said the program addressed vehicle traffic, bicycling and walking. She said seven corridors were being examined initially and information about infrastructure needs would be gathered in corridor-specific workshops. That information would be compiled and up to four corridors would be selected to move into the second phase of refining corridor concepts and conducting studies of environmental impacts and benefits.

Ms. Luftig said a MovingAhead Sounding Board would be formed, consisting of representatives from a wide range of community entities, to obtain feedback from those entities to inform the program and report back on the program's progress.

City of Eugene Transportation Planning Engineer, Chris Henry said the MovingAhead planning process would be launched during May 2015 with a series of community meetings, and the scope would be narrowed to four priority corridors in the fall. He said in addition to providing safer and more accessible transportation options, it would also be an opportunity to be more efficient and effective in determining how the bus rapid transit system was expanded consistent with land uses and future development.

Ms. Luftig listed a number of public workshops scheduled during the month of May. She said details of meetings were available on the project website: [MovingAhead.org](http://MovingAhead.org). She asked for a volunteer from the ATC to be a member of the Sounding Board. She anticipated six to eight meetings over a 12-18 month period, with a majority of those meetings held in the evening. She said once the first meeting of the Sounding Board was held, a schedule for the rest of the meetings would be established. She said Sounding Board members were not expected to attend the corridor-specific meetings, although they would be welcome to do so.

Ms. Rees asked members to indicate if they were interested in serving on the Sounding Board and Mr. Barron would then make an appointment from that group to represent the ATC. She encouraged ATC members to attend any of the corridor-specific public workshops. She said the MovingAhead program could be a standing item on future ATC agendas.

Mr. Shearer and Mr. Kwiatkowski said they were interested in being on the Sounding Board. Mr. Barron indicated he was available as a backup.

#### **VI. Annual Route Review Update**

LTD Service Planner, Nathan Banks provided an overview of LTD's Annual Route Review (ARR), which resulted in a package of service recommendations. He said those recommendations were approved by the LTD Board of Directors at its April 15, 2015, meeting. The 2015-16 ARR recommendations covered service span, frequency, system maintenance and service extensions to the new Veterans Administration Clinic on Chad Drive and the Oregon State Hospital in Junction City. Details of the recommendations were on LTD's website: [www.ltd.org](http://www.ltd.org).

In response to a question from Mr. Blaylock, Mr. Banks said that passengers on route 95 Junction City were being surveyed regarding frequency of service.

Mr. Kwiatkowski asked if extending route 12 to serve the Veterans Administration clinic would cause transfers to be missed at the Eugene Station. Mr. Banks replied that some time had been built into the schedule that he hoped would prevent that from happening.

Ms. Rees commented that the ARR service package restored some of the service cuts that occurred in 2009 and provided better cross-town connections with routes 66 and 67.

Mr. Barron suggested publicizing LTD's restoration and expansion of services to demonstrate LTD's commitment to the community.

Mr. Kwiatkowski commented that good news about the ARR service package could help rebut some of the negative perceptions about the West Eugene EmX project.

#### **VII. New Operations Manager - RideSource**

Glen Adams, longtime Operations Manager at RideSource, announced that he was retiring after 25 years with the organization. He introduced Dave Sedgwick, who would be taking the position of Operations Manager position. Mr. Sedgwick had been with RideSource for the past seven years.

Mr. Adams spoke about the early days of RideSource operations and how much the program had grown over the years.

Ms. Rees commended Mr. Adams for his years of service and ability to make RideSource an outstanding service to the community. She looked forward to working with Mr. Sedgwick.

#### **VIII. Transit Day at the Capitol**

Mr. Barron reported that he, Ms. Mulder, and Kathy Jenness from Alternative Work Concepts, along with LTD staff and other transit advocates from across the state traveled to Salem and participated in Transit Day at the Capitol. He said members of the Eugene legislative delegation were very positive about LTD's MovingAhead program and the use of electric vehicles. He said they traveled to Salem via bus and transit had a very good presence at the Capitol.

Ms. Rees thanked those who represented the community's transportation issues during Transit Day. She said staff would know the date of the next Transit Day in January 2015.

#### **IX. Reasonable Accommodation**

Ms. Rees said the U.S. Department of Transportation had revised its rules under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to provide that transportation entities were required to make reasonable modification/accommodations to policies, practices and procedures to avoid discrimination and ensure program accessibility. She said the final rule would fill an unintended gap in ADA regulations. LTD would be reviewing its policies, practices and procedures to make sure it was compliant. She felt LTD was already compliant, but this would provide an opportunity to go a little farther. She said if any substantial changes were being proposed staff would present them to the ATC for recommendations.

Mr. Kwiatkowski asked if ramp access during snowy weather would be addressed. Ms. Rees replied that LTD was already compliant because if someone was unable to board due to snow, ice or construction, the bus operator would determine where the best and safest location to stop the bus was and if unable to find a safe location, RideSource would be used.

Ms. Saville spoke to LTD's current safety practices, which she felt were compliant, but she hoped to see the construction of sidewalks in some areas of the system.

Mr. Barron liked the use of RideSource as an accommodation during ice and snow. Mr. Shearer said there were sometimes problems with wheelchair bays being occupied.

Mr. Necker also appreciated the use of RideSource as an accommodation during ice and snow. He asked how RideSource was notified on snow and ice days when there was a single rider who needed to be picked up. Ms. Rees said during snow and ice conditions staff used a triage system to accommodate critical needs. She said a critical need would be defined as needing medication, groceries or going to an appointment that would result in serious health issues if missed. Staff addressed needs on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Adams explained that many people cancelled non-critical trips on snow and ice days, which added some capacity to RideSource on those days. Ms. Rees added that each storm was different and presented a variety of transportation issues. Many agencies in the community were available to respond and help meet critical needs during those periods. She said that the issue of people using wheelchair bays did present problems, although adding capacity to the system through the ARR service package would help to alleviate them. She said riders could always ask the bus operator for some resolution if the wheelchair bays were full, as several options were available.

Mr. Kwiatkowski commented that LTD did a good job of providing service to senior and disabled riders on the fixed route system. He knew of other transit agencies that did not do as well, which forced many to use the paratransit system.

Mr. Barron noted that LTD had recently been named the top mid-sized transit system in the country. He concurred that occupied wheelchair bays had been a problem, but in the past couple of years, drivers had stepped up to accommodate those who used mobility devices.

Ms. Hekimoglu said she would email ATC members a link to the new ruling.

## **X. Program Updates**

a. **Lane Transit District**—Ms. Rees explained that a new manual door, equipped with an ADA actuated automatic door button, had been installed at the front, center entrance to the Customer Service Center (CSC). The manual door replaced an unreliable automatic door at the CSC adjacent to one of the busiest loading bays, which had caused the automatic door to remain open often as people waited for the bus. She said customers were immediately pleased with the improvement and it was now less expensive to heat and cool the interior of the building. She said customer service representatives should be notified if there were any issues or concerns with the door.

Mr. Necker commented that the button on the east side was somewhat obscured by a cardboard figure. Ms. Rees promised to take a look at that.

Ms. Rees said LTD was testing a rear-facing bay on one of the new buses to simulate the vehicles being ordered for the EmX expansion. She said the purpose was to determine if rear-facing

mobility devices would remain secure with the changes to the bus configuration. She said the tests had been successful so far.

Mr. Necker said he had to back his wheelchair onto the bus to avoid hitting the farebox and would need to turn it around in order to use a rear-facing bay. Ms. Rees said the intent was to have one forward-facing bay on a bus and another bay that could be used as either forward- or rear-facing. She said lack of space would prevent making both bays convertible to either forward- or rear-facing. A forward-facing bay was necessary as many riders could not use a rear-facing one. Staff would bring the results of the tests back to the ATC. She asked members to share any concerns about the new EmX vehicles.

Mr. Barron commented that the lever used on EmX buses to flip up the seats in wheelchair bays was very difficult for those in wheelchairs to manipulate.

ATC members discussed several issues related to secure transport of users or mobility devices and changes that could improve safety. Ms. Rees said that American manufacturers had been resistant to design changes to date, but as demand for safe and accessible transit increased they were likely to become more compliant.

Mr. Necker said the EmX vehicle design was being reviewed by researchers Oregon State University, with consideration for safety and accessibility issues.

Mr. Barron said he had recently been on a bus involved in an accident and while his wheelchair did tip forward, the safety straps held and he was unhurt. He said no other passengers were injured.

**b. RideSource Call Center Steering Committee**—No report.

**c. RideSource Call Center**—Mr. Braunschweiger said he had observed an increase in the use of monthly bus passes to access LTD, which was a very cost-effective and flexible way to travel. He said a new phone system would be installed in June 2015; the new system had a number of features that would provide better access and customer service. Remodeling of the Call Center was also under way and once completed, new software would be installed. He said the remodeling was necessary because more capacity for Call Center staff was required.

**d. RideSource ADA Paratransit**—Mr. Braunschweiger said the big news was the retirement of Glen Adams as operations manager and Dave Sedgwick's move into that position. He said the demand for paratransit services had remained somewhat flat, possible because other providers had increased their capacity. The shopper bus service was well used, particularly by residents of retirement facilities in the community.

Ms. Mulder commented that many low-income residents also appreciated the shopper bus.

Mr. Braunschweiger explained features of the shopper bus vehicle and said he would provide feedback from users at the next ATC meeting.

**e. South Lane Wheels**—No report.

**f. Florence Rhody Express**—Mr. Haring said adjustments to the route were implemented on May 1 and riders were happy with the return of the 60-minute route, which made timepoints easier to remember. Ms. Hekimoglu said returning to an hourly schedule made it possible to restore an eighth trip to the route as well.

**g. Oakridge/Diamond Express**—Ms. Goddard said the 67th annual tree planting festival would be held May 1-4 and the bus and van would be in the parade. She said a driver and dispatcher were retiring and remaining staff were very busy. She shared a number of anecdotes about providing services in Oakridge, including problems with street construction, dust, disgruntled neighbors, stolen and spilled fuel.

**h. White Bird Clinic**—Ms. Georgi announced she would be moving into a new position at White Bird and would bring her replacement to the May 19 ATC meeting. She said a recertification process had begun and this year clients would be offered the opportunity to participate in a transportation assessment in order to access transportation option benefits. She said White Bird had provided crisis intervention de-escalation training to LTD staff to better equip them to deal with issues on buses and at stations. She said that LTD could also access White Bird Crisis Center response during those types of situation.

Mr. Barron commented that LTD provided free transportation on any bus to anyone wishing to go to an Egan Warming Center site during severe cold weather. Ms. Rees said that LTD also provided the sites with free bus passes that Egan Warming Center guests could use the following morning.

**i. Alternative Work Concepts**—Mr. Whetham said staff had been very busy as the weather had turned warmer.

Ms. Hekimoglu asked if there had been an increase in referrals after training had been provided to transportation coordinators who provided in-person transportation assessments. Mr. Whetham replied that there had been a significant increase.

Ms. Rees asked if changes in sheltered work programs had resulted in changes in the demand for transportation/travel training. Mr. Whetham said he expected an increase as sheltered work program changes were finalized and implemented. At this point meetings with riders were being held to discuss options, but the impact of program changes were not yet known. He said sheltered workshops were being eliminated in favor of community-based employment and it was uncertain how those employees would be affected.

Ms. Mulder commented that employees could become stuck at sheltered workshops because they were cheap labor.

**j. Lane Council of Governments**—Ms. Jacobsen highly recommended White Bird's crisis intervention de-escalation training as it was extremely effective. She said there was a home care worker shortage in Lane County and it was impacting clients. LCOG had opened its registry for training and certification in order to expand program capacity. She said the new ADRC Gatekeeper program would provide training to businesses, agencies and organization that had staff or volunteers who came in contact with older adults, adults with disabilities or caregivers. The training would help staff and volunteers to make respectful and appropriate referrals to

LCOG services. She said training was also available through LCOG on Gen Silent, which was a documentary and discussion of LGBTQ issues.

**j. LILA**—Mr. Shearer reported there was a large demand for services and LILA's new offices were working out well.

**k. Other**—Ms. Rees asked ATC members to send suggestions for future agenda topics to Ms. Hekimoglu.

Ms. Mulder asked if delays related to the Salt Creek Tunnel construction would affect transit service to Oakridge. Ms. Hekimoglu said travel updates were available through the Oregon Department of Transportation's [www.tripcheck.com](http://www.tripcheck.com) website. She noted that the Salt Creek Tunnel was east of Oakridge, so transit services to Oakridge should not be adversely impacted.

**XI. Adjourn**

The next regular meeting was scheduled for May 19, 2015, at 10 a.m. at the Next Stop Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:37 a.m.