

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION
January 20, 2016
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

CAT minutes may be obtained in alternate formats by calling TriMet's Accessible Transportation Program Administrative Offices: (503) 962-8200/TTY 711, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm weekdays

Attendees: Lori Bauman, Jan Campbell, Eileen Collins-Mastel, Deidre Hall, Patricia Kepler, Adam Kriss, Paul Pappas, Zoe Presson, Claudia Robertson, Chris Walker

Staff: Susan Florentino, Kathy Miller, Lyle Pereira

Guests: Lt. Rachel Andrew (Transit Police), David Brouchard, Jan Hatcher

Jan Campbell, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. She asked Lyle Pereira to introduce himself. Lyle is the Transportation Manager for the Powell Garage. Lyle was attending the meeting on behalf of Dion Graham, ADA Compliance Administrator, who was attending a training session.

Jan welcomed Kathy Miller back from medical leave.

Jan said that she would need to leave the meeting for a short period of time at 10 am and Claudia Robertson, Vice Chair, would handle that portion of the meeting.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND MEETING MINUTES

Jan asked for approval of the November 18 meeting minutes.

Claudia Robertson noted two corrections: 1) Leon Chavarria should be added to the list of attendees; and 2) on Page 6, the comment regarding printed materials should indicate the preferred choice would be blue lettering on a white background instead of white lettering on a blue background.

Deidre Hall made a motion to approve the November 18 meeting minutes with the noted corrections. The motion was seconded and passed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

Claudia commented that the Special Transportation Fund Advisory Committee (STFAC) will begin a series of meetings on January 29 to discuss STF funding and also to update the Coordinated Transportation Plan for Elderly and People with Disabilities. Paul Pappas, Deidre Hall and Patricia Kepler are new CAT members serving on the STFAC.

STAFF COMMENTS

Kathy Miller announced that David Trimble, Director of Transportation Programs, has left TriMet to take a position with Cherriots Salem-Keizer Transit as the Chief Operations Officer. Susan Florentino is serving as the Acting Director for ATP.

Susan Florentino introduced Douglas Kelsey as the new Chief Operating Officer. Douglas gave a brief overview of his background and said that he looks forward to working with the committee.

Kathy said that the CAT membership recruitment process will begin in March. All members with expiring terms will be notified by letter and have the opportunity to reapply. Applications will be due by March 31.

Kathy reported that staff has not planned any field activity for the CAT for the month of February. Staff will discuss opportunities for activities moving forward at the February Executive Committee meeting. CAT members can let Kathy know if they have any suggestions on future activities.

Jan commented that the CAT would like to discuss further the replacement of the minivans for the LIFT service. Kathy said that staff had discussed that there may be opportunity to view another vehicle in the April timeframe.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

There were no written commendations received.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jan Hatcher commented on a recent LIFT trip. She questioned the routing of the trip from Sherwood to NE Portland and back to Hillsboro which was her destination. She also expressed concern about a customer on the same bus whose behavior made her feel unsafe. Jan felt that the operator did not respond to her concerns appropriately.

Patricia Kepler commented she had experienced a similar situation on a ride on New Year's Eve.

Chris Walker suggested that there might be an alert system installed on LIFT buses so that the customer could push a button to let the operator know if he or she is experiencing any difficulty.

Susan responded that she was pleased that Jan had reported the incident to Customer Service for review. It is also staff's expectation that the operator will contact Dispatch if a customer is being disruptive. Dispatch can then contact a supervisor and/or take the route out of service if necessary to address the situation.

Susan added that the law allows for the denial of service to those who are violent or seriously disruptive so the reports can help staff to evaluate the situation.

TRANSIT POLICE REPORT

Lt. Rachel Andrew provided an update on Transit Police activities. There are six Transit Police officers who serve the region on the day shift and these officers have a very good understanding of the transit system and its operational requirements.

She discussed what customers can do when they observe an issue of concern on the fixed route system. She suggested customers can call 9-1-1 and the dispatcher will know if the activity is taking place on a transit property. The closest officer will be sent to respond though the officer may or may not be a member of the Transit Police.

Adam Kriss asked if there were any differences in training programs between the Transit Police and uniformed officers. Lt. Andrew responded that the

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training is the same but the primary responsibility of the Transit Police is to work with the transit system.

There was discussion about what type of activity warrants calling 9-1-1 versus contacting the operator of the vehicle. It was agreed that it was best to either alert the operator or call 9-1-1 to report any suspicious activity so that the police can respond and evaluate the situation.

Lt. Andrew reported that the International Indoor Track & Field World Championships will be held in Portland in March. The U.S. Indoor Track & Field competition will take place March 11-12 and the World Indoor Championships will follow on March 16-20, both at the Oregon Convention Center. There will be approximately 2,000 athletes competing and many more in attendance which will definitely increase ridership.

Doug added that TriMet is expecting about 8,000 spectators for the events and that these competitions are in preparation for the Olympics which will be held in Rio de Janeiro this summer. There will a large number of media staff present and it's a great opportunity to showcase Portland to the world.

CAT REPORTS

Claudia asked if there had been a response to the EC about mid-year schedule changes and the provision of new schedules. Kathy said she had received a response on the schedule changes and would forward the information to EC members.

There was discussion about a report included in the packet from Portland Streetcar on the upcoming stop closures. Kathy said that she would be contacting staff to attend the March meeting to report on the outcome of the trial period for the closures for the month of February.

RIDE CONNECTION OVERVIEW – Julie Wilcke, Chief Operating Officer

Julie Wilcke provided an overview of Ride Connection (RC) and its services. Highlights of the presentation included:

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- RC is a non-profit organization that has been supporting transportation and independent mobility of older adults and people with disabilities since the 1980's.
- RC partners with a variety of community organizations through the tri-county area by providing:
 - lift-equipped vehicles
 - technical assistance
 - grant writing support
 - training on gaining operational efficiencies
 - volunteer recruitment
 - customer referral
- In the last fiscal year, RC provided over 500,000 rides using a variety of services including demand response, deviated fixed routes, and those provided by family and friends. Volunteers provided about 49,000 hours of service.
- There are over 100 vehicles in the fleet.
- Since 2004, about 2000 individuals have been trained to be independent travelers through the RideWise travel training program.
- In addition, 296 teachers for youth-transition programs receive support to train their students on independent travel.

RC also provides deviated route transportation to enable customers to get to and from connections to fixed route service, particularly in outlying areas where there is limited fixed route service.

Julie reviewed the progress on the pilot project at Hollywood Dialysis Clinic for providing transportation for dialysis patients. Since February 2015, there have been 6,500 rides provided with five partners through the use of both volunteer and paid-drivers.

The purpose of this project is to identify methods of transportation that will offer more flexibility to better meet the needs of dialysis patients and their varying health conditions, particularly following treatments. Julie commented on the work completed to educate both dialysis and transportation staff on the issues that surround providing this type of transportation and what it takes to better understand the needs of the patient.

There was also discussion about the operator training provided by Ride Connection. There are about 700 operators in the Ride Connection program

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and about two-thirds of them are volunteer drivers. Volunteer and paid drivers both complete the same programs for training which include:

- Vehicle Orientation
- Defensive Driving
- Road Test
- Blood borne Pathogen Training
- The Best Ride: A Passenger Care and Assistance training which addresses the topics of sensitivity, safety, and passenger assistance.

Ride Connection also contracts to provide the driver training for the West portion of the state which includes about 1,000 drivers per year.

Julie added that Ride Connection is recognized nationally for their training programs and Lesa Pinker, Training Manager, was named the National Transit Institute's Training Professional of the Year for 2015.

Discussion

Adam Kriss asked about Ride Connection's hours of operation. Julie responded that the standard hours of operation are 8:00 am to 5 pm on Monday-Friday but the providers have the flexibility to operate outside that schedule if desired.

CAT FY17 BUDGET PRIORITIES – Kathy Miller, Manager, LIFT Eligibility and Community Relations

Kathy Miller reviewed a draft of the CAT's budget priorities for FY17. Dee Brookshire, Executive Director, Finance and Administration, will make a presentation on the FY17 budget process at the March 16 meeting.

Kathy suggested that the CAT members review the list of priorities so that a recommendation can be finalized at the March meeting. She added that the majority of the items are already included in the budget but the CAT has an opportunity to emphasize the items the committee feels are most important for seniors and/or people with disabilities.

Claudia asked members to review the list in advance of the March meeting and to come prepared to make a recommendation.

CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE – Jennifer Koozer, Manager, Community Affairs

Jennifer Koozer provided an update on the Orange Line alignment and the proposed development along the Powell-Division corridor.

Orange Line Alignment Discussion

Eileen Collins-Mastel asked if there had been any changes at the SW Moody stop based on the review conducted with staff from the Commission for the Blind. Jennifer responded that there were suggestions made about the volume of the crossing signals and a desire for more tactile treatments in the crossings of the track way on the west side of Moody and on Bond Street. Staff is reviewing all suggestions with plans to possibly implement any changes in the spring and summer.

Claudia Robertson asked if there have been reports of any customers having difficulty distinguishing between elevators for use at the Bybee Station. She added that it is very difficult to see the traffic on Bybee and hard to determine which elevator to take. Jennifer said that the signage is still being fabricated to indicate which side to use for the Line 19 stop.

Patricia Kepler asked about the Milwaukie stop where a customer was having issues with crossing safely with the trains. Jennifer stated that staff is working with Union-Pacific Railroad and ODOT on fine-tuning the signal timings to ensure they operate properly.

Jennifer provided an update on the crossing improvements installing a series of switchbacks at the SE 8th Avenue crossing and manual pedestrian swing gates at SE 11th Avenue. She reviewed photos of the gates and said the CAT's suggestions regarding the handle, kick plate and signage were incorporated into designs.

Adam asked about the decision to use the switchback at SE 8th and not at SE 11th. Jennifer said that there wasn't enough space at the SE 11th location.

Proposed Development for Powell-Division Corridor

Jennifer reviewed the proposed plans and possible route options and station locations under consideration for the development of the Powell-Division Corridor. This is a Metro-led process and there is a steering committee comprised of elected officials and some community members that has been reviewing the route, mode of travel and station locations.

The route under consideration would begin downtown on the transit mall on 5th and 6th Avenues, go across Tilikum Crossing, and follow Powell to 50th, 52nd, or 82nd Avenues and then take Division to Gresham Transit Center. There is also discussion on how the route would proceed to Stark to continue on to Mt. Hood Community College.

Focus groups have been conducted to provide input on the community's preferences on design and particularly station locations. Proposed station locations are based on the ridership, ramp deployments and key destinations such as universities, grocery stores, social service organizations, etc.

Discussion

Claudia asked if the proposed route on the transit mall and Tilikum Crossing would require any redesign of the mall or bridge. Jennifer replied that the route would use the existing stops and lanes.

Claudia also asked if the project would include the use of articulated buses and the distance between stops. Jennifer said that the vehicles are under consideration and the CAT may be asked to create an ad hoc committee to participate in the vehicle design process.

Jennifer added that there is sufficient space for a 60 ft. bus to utilize the existing stops. The current stops on the Lines 9 and 4 are about every sixth of a mile and the new service would have stops spaced at a further distance.

CAT members expressed concern about any changes that might occur in existing service on Lines 4 and 9 once the new service is in place. There are many low-income residents, and seniors and/or people with disabilities that live east of 82nd Avenue and Powell and Division are not within walking distance for many.

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Jennifer clarified that all of Powell and Division would have some form of frequent service. If the line is on Division, service on Line 9 east of 82nd Avenue would be similar to what it is today. There might be some changes where the new BRT service would overlap with these two lines. In the areas where it doesn't overlap, one would expect to see similar service. Any potential changes to the existing routes would be made closer to opening and would involve a public process.

There was discussion about vehicle design and boarding options and times. Jennifer indicated that the goal would be to have the fastest boarding possible while making the service comfortable and safe for all users. Stations need to be located where people are traveling to and transferring the most. She added that the FTA also requires weather protection in the form of shelters at every location for this service.

There was agreement on the importance of involving seniors and/or people with disabilities in planning projects of this sort so that all needs can be represented and considered. Jennifer assured the committee that the CAT will be involved on the issues mentioned moving forward.

Eileen Collins-Mastel asked the time span for the project. Jennifer said that staff is hoping the project will move from the planning phase to the design phase this spring/summer. If so, construction might begin in late 2017 or 2018 with service beginning in the fall of 2020.

Public Comment

David Bouchard asked about the proposed service hours for BRT. Jennifer responded that it is too early to know but it would be frequent service at 15-minute intervals.

CAT MEMBER COMMENTS

Chris commented on the recent snow days and said that there had been no mention of the status of the LIFT service. Susan Florentino said the standard procedure is that the information is on the website as well as reported on the local news. Announcements should have been made and staff will follow-up for any future situations.

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Patricia commented on the new 9900 series LIFT buses. She has heard from other LIFT customers as well as some operators that there is a need for grab bars inside the buses. Also, the legs on the seats on the left side of the bus have bars that extend to the floor. She can no longer have her service dog lay down under the seat and instead the dog has to be in front of the seat.

Susan thanked Patricia for her comments and said staff was aware of the grab bar issue. She added that staff would review the concerns about the bars under the seats.

Eileen asked about LIFT's policy on service during snow/ice situations and the need to have parity with fixed route service. Susan said that all pre-scheduled life-sustaining trips are provided and other trips are not. Customers may have to have all other rides provided as same-day service if LIFT can do so safely and resources are available. The operator is asked to evaluate the situation to determine if service can be provided safely and notifies Dispatch accordingly.

Eileen asked if the LIFT operators are trained in driving on ice and in snow conditions. Susan said that they do receive training for inclement weather and also are trained in using chains.

Adam asked how LIFT schedules trips with regards to the public comment made earlier in the meeting. Susan said that the scheduling software considers a number of factors of the trip including the time of day, distance, the customer's pick-up, the appointment time, and the length of the trip. There are probably 20 or 30 aspects that are considered. There are four schedulers who review the schedules before the day of service.

The schedules are impacted when trips are cancelled. When staff receives a complaint about the routing of a trip, the schedule is reviewed for errors or to determine if there were any same-day service issues which impacted the trip. The trips are evaluated to determine if any improvements can be made.

Susan added that if a person is determined eligible, LIFT has a responsibility to offer transportation without regard to the person's disability. If a person develops a pattern of being seriously disruptive, his or her service may be threatened and it can result in a suspension of service.

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Susan said that a report should have been made through Dispatch and she would follow-up to determine if that process was followed.

Paul asked if a person must have a home address to qualify for LIFT. Kathy said that a person would not have to have a home address but he or she would have to have a pick-up address.

Eileen asked if operators get training in how to de-escalate inappropriate behavior or are they instructed to call Dispatch. Susan responded that operators do have basis skills in that regard. She added that the customer base is very diverse and oftentimes the solution is something very specific to that customer. Dispatch may look to facility staff or family to help address the situation as needed.

Zoe commented that given the number of customers that an operator may serve, it would be difficult to be prepared to address every situation.

Paul reported on a recent trip that he and Arnold Panitch took on fixed route from Beaverton Transit Center to Tualatin on Line 76.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 p.m.