

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION
May 15, 2013
9:00 a.m. – 11:55 a.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: Claudia Robertson, Vice Chair; Trish Baker, John Betts, Harold Cheeks, Jim Jackson, Diana Keever, Patricia Kepler, Beth Nagy-Cochran, Zoe Presson, Chris Walker, Terry Watson

Staff: Corrinna Griffis, Susan Florentino, Kathy Miller, Allen Morgan

Guests: Mike Bedlion, Aaron Borton, Mike Bozarth (all First Transit), Adam Kris, Lina Bensel, Commander Mike Crebs (Transit Police)

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND MEETING

Claudia Robertson, Vice Chair, asked for approval of the February 20 meeting minutes.

Trish Baker made a motion to approve the February 20 minutes. The motion was seconded and passed with one abstention (Jim Jackson).

Claudia asked for approval of the March 20 meeting minutes.

Trish Baker made a motion to approve the March 20 minutes. The motion was seconded and passed with three abstentions (James Jackson, Beth Nagy-Cochran, and Claudia Robertson).

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

Claudia informed the committee that Jan Campbell, Chair, was unable to attend today's meeting and she would be conducting the meeting as Vice Chair.

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WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Kathy Miller said that there was one piece of written correspondence included in the packet regarding LIFT operator breaks that would be addressed later in the meeting.

STAFF COMMENTS

Kathy said that the June 19 CAT meeting would be held at the World Trade Center in Mezzanine Rooms 3 and 4, Building 2, 25 SW Salmon. The annual luncheon will be held in the Flags Room immediately following the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lina Bensel commented on a LIFT ride provided by Green Cab for today's meeting. The operator told her he didn't know her destination and had to contact Dispatch to verify her name, too. She said that he should have had this information available to him before the pickup.

Adam Kris commented on MAX trains that include a low-floor and a high-floor car. Everyone tries to get to the low-floor car which makes it difficult for people with disabilities to access the priority seating area. Adam also asked if small service animals are able to sit on a seat.

Allen Morgan stated that TriMet policy and code requires that service animals be on the floor or in the handler's lap. They may not use a seat.

Allen added that TriMet has 26 high-floor cars that are in the process of refurbishment and will be in service for another 15 to 20 years. They will always be paired with a low-floor car.

Adam asked how TriMet decides where to use the high-floor cars. Allen responded that it is difficult to assign the rail cars to certain line by location because they aren't as easy to move as the buses. The trains that operate during peak periods are returned to the yard for maintenance so they are sent out as they line up in the yard.

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CAT members commented that it is best to wait for the train in the middle of the platform. This allows more time to get the appropriate car based on the arrangement of the cars.

Zoe Presson asked about the number of Type II and Type III cars that can connect with the Type 1 or high-floor cars. Allen responded that there are a total of 120 cars so there is about a 26/120 chance that you will see a high-floor car.

TRANSIT POLICE REPORT – Commander Mike Crebs

Commander Crebs responded to the CAT's questions.

Trish Baker commented on a recent trip on MAX where a person with a stroller was blocking the doorway and wouldn't move to allow others to board. The operator delayed the train and a Transit Police officer arrived. He suggested to Trish that she board using another door. She said the officer may not have realized that she had a disability and she felt he handled the situation inappropriately.

Commander Crebs asked Trish to provide more detail for follow-up.

Harold Cheeks asked about increased patrols during Rose Festival. Commander Crebs responded that staff is preparing for coverage during the festival. Additional resources will be used including TSA staff and explosive-sniffing dogs.

Patricia Kepler asked for an update on the dog patrols and if any dogs have been removed off the system. Commander Crebs said that patrols have been used but they've primarily given warnings and advised on the need for animal vaccinations.

He feels the patrols are beneficial because they provide an additional presence on the system. He encouraged CAT members to report any behavior they see on the system that may require follow-up.

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CAT REPORTS

CAT Executive Committee

There were no questions or comments regarding the CAT Executive Committee meeting minutes.

CAT members commented on their recent tour of the TriMet administrative offices at Harrison Street. They liked the design of the offices and the common work spaces. There were some accessibility issues identified during the tour that staff will review.

PMLR Ad Hoc Committee

Claudia asked if any members had seen the news reports about citizen concerns about the slope at the PMLR Bybee Street Station. She had heard about the report and it had come to the attention of Elders in Action.

Kathy commented that staff would be contacting the CAT members in August about a tour of the PMLR alignment. While the CAT doesn't meet in August, tours will be scheduled and she will contact members later in the summer.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT – Terry Watson, Facilitator

Terry reported that this year's CAT Nominating Committee included Diana Keever, Zoe Presson and himself. There were a total of seven positions available including three representative positions and four consumer positions. All seven CAT members applied for reappointment.

One additional application was received from the recruitment process from Lina Bensel for a consumer position.

The CAT's responsibility is to forward a pool of candidates to the General Manager for consideration and appointment.

The Nominating Committee made the following recommendation for CAT appointments for two-year terms beginning July 1, 2013:

Representative Reappointments

Trish Baker
Harold Cheeks
Patricia Kepler

Consumer Applicants for Consideration for Four Positions

Lina Bensel (new applicant)
John Betts
Jan Campbell
Leon Chavarria-Aguilar
James Jackson

The motion was seconded and passed.

The CAT's recommendation will be forwarded to the General Manager and appointments should be made within the next 30 days.

FIXED ROUTE OPERATIONS – Allen Morgan, Manager, Operations Training

Automated Stop Announcements (ASA)

Allen provided an update on the installation of the ASA systems on fixed route buses. The entire fleet is now working with the INIT CAD/AVL radio system and bus dispatching system and all buses should be with equipped with automatic stop announcements.

CAT members' commented on their experiences with the ASA's. Allen asked that any issues should be reported to Customer Service with the appropriate details (light rail vehicle or bus no., route no., date and time, etc.). CAT members agreed that the announcements were clearer and easier to understand.

Allen reported that TriMet has received a grant from the FTA to purchase and test four different external announcement systems. A consultant will be hired to assist with the evaluation.

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TriMet has tested two of the systems about a year and a half ago but there were several issues of concern. The technology has improved since those initial tests so additional evaluation is warranted.

Discussion

Claudia asked if the CAT would again have the opportunity to participate in the evaluation. Allen noted the request and will forward to Harry Saporta, Executive Director, Safety and Security.

Bus Operator Recertification Training

Staff is developing the program for the next Bus Operator Recertification Training which will include classroom and on-the-road activities. This year's training program is approximately 86 percent completed and the next training program will begin approximately October 1.

The on-the-road portion will include coaching operators and also have every operator complete a modified, shortened CDL skills assessment.

The training also includes a module on the Americans with Disabilities Act and the requirements. Allen said that this module is partially based on feedback from the CAT and he asked for their suggestions.

Discussion

Leon Chavarria commented on the difficulties with entering/exiting the bus and asked if the operators could direct people to move from the aisle/doorway. He suggested that an announcement be included in the ASA information.

Allen responded that as ridership continues to grow, there are more customers who prefer to stand. The operator can request that people move and he'll consider the suggestion regarding the ASA. There have been campaigns directing customers to exit through the rear door and in this year's operator training. Information was included to remind the operators that people with disabilities may not be able to exit the rear door.

Beth Nagy-Cochran commented on the continuing problem of customers with strollers using the priority seating area and not moving for people with disabilities. Patricia added that a stroller had recently tipped over on her service

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animal. Allen agreed that it is an ongoing problem and staff will continue to work on the issue.

Trish commented that there are also more customers traveling with grocery carts. She added that some operators do not kneel the bus all the way. Others may not pull all the way to the curb making it difficult for someone to disembark when they have to step onto the street and then up on the curb. She tells the operators that it would be better for them to either pull closer to the curb or extend the ramp and that seems helpful to the operators.

Trish also suggested that it would be helpful if the operators would: 1) tell the customers at the stop to wait until the customers have disembarked before they get on; 2) increase their awareness of the needs of all their customers rather than just a few; and 3) allow customers, particularly the elderly, to get seated before they depart.

Terry said that he feels that many customers block out the announcement messages and he asked if there were some kind of tone or alert sound that could be used to get their attention prior to the announcements.

Allen responded that operators are taught to say "Your attention please" or something similar before making announcements. He believes there is an audible alert tone on the Type IV cars but may not be one of the other versions.

Harold said that customers seem to become desensitized once they board and it would be helpful if the operators would make customers more aware when they aren't following the rules. He asked if there was any type of bus etiquette flyer that could be used.

Allen said that staff had tried that with the "Respect the Ride" campaign and that the posters were still on many of the buses.

Jim Jackson suggested that operators be reminded to ask if people need help rather than assuming that they do. He doesn't want the operators to assume that because he can't see, he doesn't know where he's going or getting off. He added that if someone does request assistance, particularly with identifying a stop, it would be helpful if the operators would give audible affirmation that they heard the request.

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Public Comment

Lina Bensel commented that she agreed with all of the suggestions made. She uses a walker and agrees that it would be helpful if operators would help to kindly and politely rearrange the passengers to provide enough room for all.

Adam Kris said he also agreed with the comments made. He added that it is sometimes difficult to hear the stop announcements, particularly in the middle or the back of the bus. Allen agreed that it is difficult to adjust the volume for the announcements to be heard in all areas of the bus.

Adam also suggested it would be helpful to develop some kind of system to fill the regular seats first and leave the priority seating area open until for those who need it.

Leon suggested that an announcement might be added to the external announcements about the boarding/seating process.

LIFT OPERATIONS QUARTERLY REPORT – FY13 3rd Quarter – Susan Florentino, Manager, LIFT Service Delivery

Susan Florentino, Manager, LIFT Service Delivery, reviewed LIFT operations performance for the third quarter, January – March, 2013. Highlights of the report included:

- Average weekday ridership decreased 1.7% from the same quarter last year, but increased 1.4% from the previous quarter.
- Average Saturday ridership decreased 8.4% and Sunday/Holiday ridership decreased by 8.2% from the same quarter last year.
- During the third quarter of FY13, the percentage of no shows and cancellations experienced no change from the prior year.
- A total of 18.2% of trips scheduled resulted in a no show or cancellation. Both no shows and cancellations decreased from the prior quarter.
- On-time performance for pickups increased by 1.3% compared to the third quarter of FY12 and early arrivals increased by 3.7%.
- On-time performance for appointments increased 2.3% from the prior year.
- On-time performance for LIFT cabs was 91.8%, an increase of 0.3% over the prior year, and was 4.3% higher than the prior quarter.

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- Average trip durations decreased by 1.4 minutes to 34.9 minutes, a decrease of 3.9% from the same quarter last year.
- Complaints and issues increased in both number and rate compared to the prior year but decreased compared to the prior quarter.
- Commendations increased by 9.7% compared to the prior year in number and rate.
- There were 5.1% fewer calls from FY12 and 99.2% of calls were answered within five minutes. Customer Service calls accounted for the largest decrease in call volume.
- The number of rides provided per vehicle hour for weekdays was unchanged from last year. Both Saturday and Sunday/Holiday rides per hour increased by 0.6% from the same quarter last year.
- Third quarter productivity averaged 1.76 riders per hour, which was unchanged from the prior year and 2.9% higher from the prior quarter.
- The rate of fare non-compliance (non-payment of fare) increased by 2.6% compared to the third quarter last year.
- Average cost per ride at \$30.13 for the current quarter is 0.9% lower than the third quarter of FY12.
- Excluding fixed costs (that do not vary regardless of ridership changes) the cost per ride increased 0.3% from last year.

Discussion

There was discussion that the impacts of the LIFT service boundary change in September 2012 and the withdrawal of Boring from the service district in January 2013 are still impacting the performance numbers. It will be January 2014 before the month-to-month comparisons are representative of years without any changes.

Leon questioned why there were so many cancellations and no shows. Susan said that there can be a number of scenarios why customers fail to cancel their trips. Customers are encouraged to cancel in advance to prevent LIFT from sending an unneeded vehicle.

Trish asked about the maximum of time allowed for a LIFT trip. Susan responded that trip length is related to the distance travelled and the time of day. If a trip is scheduled around an appointment time, it does make the pickup time earlier. The reservation is entered in the system with a "no later than" time and the scheduling system calculates what the pickup time should be.

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There was further discussion about how a LIFT trip is scheduled. Trish and Patricia both commented that in the past, the reservationist would schedule each segment of the trip independently. Now it seems that they request all destinations and times before the trips is entered and then provide all of the pickup times when completed. This makes it difficult for some customers to note all the information.

Susan suggested that staff review the reservations process at a future meeting to address the CAT's questions.

Patricia commented that while she had observed an improvement in on-time performance, she had questions about late arrivals. She gave an example of a trip from NE Portland to Aloha that she had recently scheduled with an appointment time. She was given a pickup time that would make her late and reservationist told her that she would have been late. She made arrangements to leave work early that date to make her appointment.

Susan said that an error may have been made. She asked Patricia for additional information and reminded the committee that any issues should be reported to Customer Service so they can be investigated and resolved.

Claudia asked why the complaints about timeliness had increased when the on time performance had improved. Susan said that sometimes there is no correlation and customers may report a timeliness issue though their ride was provided on time.

Terry requested that staff include the unique number of customers who have ridden the service on future reports to provide an indication of any changes in the number of customers served.

Chris asked if there could be a policy to stop for restroom breaks if customers are on the longer rides from outer areas. Susan responded that LIFT operates similar to fixed route and customers are encouraged to take care of their needs prior to the trip. She added that if there is an emergency situation, the operator can contact Dispatch and request assistance with the route. In that situation, though, all customers are then delayed and it is not something that can be provided on a regular basis.

There was discussion about the combined weight limits for the lifts and the recertification process. Kathy said that the combined weight limit for LIFT

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transportation is 800 lbs. She said that all the customers who had exceeded the initial 600 lbs. limit had been notified that they could receive transportation as long as the combined weight did not exceed 800 lbs.

Kathy said that the recertification period for LIFT eligibility is for three years. A customer may reapply prior to the end of the recertification if their health circumstances change. If the customer does not apply prior to the recertification date, he or she will be notified of the need to recertify ninety days in advance of the eligibility expiration. Customers are also informed of the future recertification date when they receive their initial eligibility determination.

Terry asked if the average cost of cab rides could be split from the cost of LIFT rides. Susan said she wasn't sure it was pertinent information because LIFT staff make the determination whether or not a cab is required, not the customer.

Claudia asked Patricia to introduce the correspondence she had received regarding breaks for LIFT operators. Patricia had received a copy of a memo from First Transit management to LIFT operators regarding breaks. She asked about the policy for operators taking breaks with customers onboard the buses.

Susan said that the memo was not accurate and had been rescinded. There has been no change in policy and the breaks and lunches are governed by the Oregon law. If an operator works more than six hours, he or she is required to take a 30-minute lunch break. There should be no passengers onboard and in that case, the operator is to secure the vehicle.

The law also requires that for every two hours worked, an operator may take a 10-minute break and these breaks may be taken with customers onboard. This is the same policy for fixed route.

Operators are required to take their breaks and First Transit, as the employer, is required to manage their employees to ensure they are taken.

Patricia asked about the reference in the memo to customers with D-codes on the bus. Susan said that over the years, there have been some incidences of customers leaving the vehicle but they have been addressed. The operator does need to take into account the passengers on the bus. If there is someone who may be at risk, the operator has the option of asking for a supervisor to meet the bus while the operator takes the break.

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There were questions about: 1) why operators can't escort customers at some locations because they must maintain sight of the vehicle when they are allowed to leave the bus unattended and enter a building to take a break; and 2) the process for evaluating stops at specific locations.

Susan said that the requirement to maintain sight of the vehicle refers to where the bus is parked in relation to the building. There is a process for evaluation the locations and customers may contact Customer Service to initiate a review request.

Leon asked if staff could make advance calls to customers to remind them of their pickups to help reduce cancellations and no shows. Susan said it would be possible to do so but LIFT does not currently have this capability.

Patricia asked about the retirement of the 9200 series buses. She said staff had reported earlier that they had been retired. Susan responded that the 2002 buses were retired and there are eight 2003 buses which are used infrequently that will be retired next year.

CAT MEMBER COMMENTS

Leon asked about the process for enforcing payment of fares. Susan said that notification regarding no-pays is similar to the no-show program. If a customer has a consistent, ongoing pattern of no-pays, there is a series of letters prior to any suspensions.

Chris suggested that the use of minivans for longer trips might help to reduce transportation costs for LIFT. Susan responded that one option would be that LIFT customers who are able to use the LIFT service to connect with fixed route. Another option would be to use fixed route for one portion of the trip and then schedule a LIFT ride for the return trip.

Claudia reported on the East Portland Transportation Town Hall that was held May 1-3 where there were discussions about transportation plans for improving north-south transit options. She asked that the CAT have a presentation on the plans. Kathy responded that Alan Lehto, Director, Policy and Planning would be making a presentation at the September meeting on regional planning.

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Terry said that Ride Connection is working with the City of Forest Grove on plans to add some general public service to connect Line 57 in the west end of Forest Grove with points north and south. The service might begin in late summer or early fall.

There is also discussion about adding more service in Lake Oswego between the transit center and Marylhurst campus by increasing hours on the existing van.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.