

## ATTACHMENT A

### MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION October 16, 2013 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: Jan Campbell, Chair; Trish Baker, Dr. T. Allen Bethel, Leon Chavarria, Jim Jackson, Patricia Kepler, Beth Nagy-Cochran, Arnold Panitch, Zoe Presson, Claudia Robertson, Terry Watson, Chris Walker

Staff: Susan Florentino, Corrinna Griffis, Kathy Miller, Allen Morgan, Bob Nelson, David Trimble

Guests: Michael Bedlion (First Transit), Michael Bozarth (First Transit), John Joseph (First Transit), Adam Kriss, Charles O'Neill, Lt. Eric Schober (Transit Police), Kathryn Woods

#### **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND MEETING**

Jan Campbell, Chair, asked for approval of the September 18 meeting minutes.

**Trish Baker made a motion to approve the September 18 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded and passed with one abstention (John Betts).**

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR**

Jan announced the Connecting Communities Coalition was sponsoring an event at the Doubletree Hotel this evening from 5:00-7:30 a.m. The Coalition has completed its first year of training through its Leadership Academy and she said that Adam Kriss was one of the graduates who would be recognized. She invited CAT members to attend.

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Jan reminded attendees that the general public comment period is for three minutes. There will also be an opportunity for the public to comment following each agenda item.

### **WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

Kathy Miller said an email from Chris Walker regarding LIFT service and a response from Customer Service had been distributed to members at the meeting. Kathy said the rides were provided for LIFT by Broadway Cab and LIFT Operations staff would be available to address the service issues further in their report on today's agenda.

### **STAFF COMMENTS**

Bob Nelson, Deputy General Manager, introduced himself and said that he had returned to TriMet in an interim position which began July 8, 2013. He is assisting Neil McFarlane, General Manager, on a number of projects.

Allen Morgan reported on discussion from the September CAT meeting regarding the process for public notification when elevators are inoperable on transit station platforms. Field Operations will modify their procedures to send notification when an elevator is inoperable and it affects the ability of a customer to get to the platform. The information will be distributed through email alerts, on the website, and announcements by the operators.

At some locations, there are two elevators at a station so one would still be available to access the platform even if the other was undergoing repair. Staff will continue to post notice at the location in advance of any planned elevator maintenance.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Adam Kriss thanked Allen for the update on the elevator. He also commented on the requirement to show the Honored Citizen (HC) card to use the reduced fare on fixed route. He said he has only been asked once to show his card and he thinks that the requirement to present the card should be enforced.

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Allen said that some operators always check for the HC card and others may not when it is clear the customer has a disability in an attempt to expedite the boarding process. He would expect that the customer would be asked to show their card if there was any question about the use of the HC fare.

Adam commented on the bus stop at SW 4<sup>th</sup> and Hall served by Line 12. The stop is located in front of a building with parking in front which prevents the bus from being able to pull to the curb. He suggested that the stop become a “no parking” or “bus only zone.”

Arnold Panitch added that he uses the stop regularly and it often includes multiple buses because it is also used for a crew change. The stop location is also used for trucks servicing PSU and housing locations nearby. He has witnessed customers having challenges at the stop and asked that TriMet review the stop location.

Allen will follow-up and report back.

Charles O'Neill commented about the need for fixed route operators to kneel the bus as needed and to allow time for customers to be seated before departing from the stop. Allen responded that both of these issues would be addressed in the fixed route operator training. He reminded customers to report any concerns to Customer Service and include specifics about the bus number, date and time.

Charles also suggested increasing the number of priority seating area spaces on the 2000 series buses. Allen said that those buses were scheduled for replacement over the next couple of years as new buses arrive.

Charles commented on the routing on the LIFT service to the VA hospital and that there may be other stops involved during his trip. Because of his disability, it is difficult for him to ride for any length of time. Jan said that the LIFT service is a public transit service instead of a private service so there will be other customers served. She mentioned that VA hospital also provides a shuttle service that may also be an option.

Kathryn Woods reported that a truck had been parked in the LIFT bus stop near the Portland Building on this morning's trip. She said it is a dedicated LIFT stop and she's concerned about other vehicles using the stop.

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Jan asked if there was a process available to the operator to report issues with vehicles parked in the stop. David Trimble, Director, Business Programs responded that the operator can contact Dispatch and they may be able to contact the authorities to request to have the vehicle moved.

Kathryn also commented on the 9800 series buses used in the LIFT program. She said that the buses do not have good shocks and the rides are difficult for people with back problems. She suggested that staff consider how the bus design will impact customers when they are identifying buses for future purchase. Other CAT members comment that they had experienced the same issues. David said that staff would review the issue.

### **TRANSIT POLICE REPORT – Lt. Eric Schober**

Lt. Eric Schober provided an update on Transit Police activities and highlighted the following:

- New training about the features of buses and MAX vehicles is now being included with refresher training for officers. The training will include how to operate the vehicles to assist the operators should they have to be moved in the event of an emergency.
- Officers are asked to complete a routine check of the transit station elevators to ensure they are functioning correctly.
- Patrols and enforcement including the use of plainclothes officers will increase during the holidays to respond to increased ridership in the downtown area.
- Officers check for the Honored Citizen identification card on a regular basis as part of the fare enforcement work.

### **Discussion**

Claudia Robertson said she had read an article about people who were buying fake vests and identification for their pets to identify them as service animals. This makes it difficult for customers traveling with legitimate service animals. She asked if this was a problem in this area.

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Lt. Schober said that there are issues with people implying that their pets are their service animals. Since there is no identification system for service animals, it is difficult to determine which animals truly serve in that capacity.

Patricia Kepler commented that she has concerns about people with disabilities having to carry an HC card when senior citizens do not have to but have access to the same reduced fare. Jan responded that the CAT Executive Committee would discuss to determine if any further follow-up was required.

### **LIFT PROGRAM UPDATE**

#### **LIFT Operations Quarterly Performance Report – FY14 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter – Susan Florentino, Manager, LIFT Service Delivery**

Susan Florentino, Manager, LIFT Service Delivery, provided an update on some staff changes for key positions with the LIFT program. Aaron Borton who has served as the LIFT Central Dispatch Manager for First Transit has been transferred to another position in Michigan. Marla Jensen is serving as the Interim Manager.

Pam Elmore, Administrator, ATP Operations, will be retiring at the end of November. The process is underway to fill her position.

Susan also introduced the three regional managers for First Transit including: Michael Bedlion, Region 1; Michael Bozarth, Region 2; and John Joseph, Region 3.

Susan reviewed the LIFT performance for the first quarter for FY14. Highlights of the report included:

#### **Ridership and On-Time Performance**

- Average weekday ridership increased 1.3 percent from the same quarter last year.
- Saturday and Sunday average ridership decreased by 2.9 percent and 1.9 percent respectively from the same quarter last year.
- Total average weekly ridership for the quarter increased 0.8 percent over the prior year.
- The percentage of no shows increased 0.2% and cancellations decreased 0.6 percent from the prior year.

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- A total of 17.7 percent of trips scheduled resulted in a no show or cancellation which is a 0.4 percent decrease from the prior fiscal year.
- On-time performance for pickups and appointments increased 0.4 percent and 1.5 percent respectively from the prior first quarter.
- On-time performance for LIFT cabs was 92.1 percent, an increase of 2.6 percent over the prior year. (Note: Not all cab data was available in time for this report so the data reflects the July 1-September 15 on-time performance.)
- Average trip durations decreased 1.7 percent to 35.6 minutes from the prior year.

### Customer Service and Reservations

- Total complaints and issues rates increased from last year by 24.9 percent and 15.7 percent respectively although the issue rate was the lowest of the last four quarters.
- Total commendations decreased in number by 26.8 percent and in rate by 26.9 percent compared to the prior year.
- Service delivery issues make up the largest percentage of total issues. Customer interaction issues experienced the largest increase in number and rate compared to the prior year. Issues related to procedure declined in both number and rate compared to the prior year.
- A total of 151,138 calls were answered which is an increase of 1.2 percent from FY13. Reservations and Dispatch calls increased and Customer Service calls decreased in call volume.
- Average wait time during the first quarter was 40 seconds for Reservations, 31 seconds for Dispatch and one minute 18 seconds for Customer Service.
- 99.3 percent of all calls were answered within five minutes, an increase of 0.9 percent.

### Productivity and Costs

- The number of rides provided per vehicle hour for weekdays and Saturdays declined from last year by 1.1 percent and 0.6 percent respectively. Sunday/holiday rides per hour increased by 0.6 percent from the same quarter last year.
- Average cost per ride for the current quarter is 2.6 percent higher than the first quarter of FY13.
- Excluding fixed costs (costs that do not vary, regardless of ridership changes) the cost per ride increased 2.8 percent from the prior year.

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### **Discussion**

Zoe Presson asked about the definition of customer interaction. Susan the term referred to communication between the customer and any staff person and/or operator.

Claudia asked about the definition of fixed costs vs. variable costs. Susan responded that fixed costs include administrative overhead costs that are built into the contracts. Variable costs include staff, fuel, maintenance, etc.

Claudia questioned if the cost per ride increases as ridership decreases. Susan responded that as ridership increases, service hours may increase causing costs to increase. The variable is the number of rides provided per hour.

Jan asked if drivers' hours are reduced as a result of ridership fluctuations. Susan said that some routes may be closed when demand is reduced.

Zoe inquired about the number of buses used and the ridership per day. Susan reported that the number of buses in daily service varies between 210 and 215. In the summer, average rides each weekday was between 3,300 and 3,400. Recently about 4,200 rides have been scheduled with rides provided around 3,800-3,900.

Arnold questioned the decreases in weekend ridership and asked if the reduction in LIFT service in correlation with the reduction of fixed route service was a violation of customers' civil rights and access to service. David responded that the realignment of the LIFT boundary was in accordance with the ADA and that some of the decrease in weekend ridership could be attributed to that change.

Kathy added that some of the reduction was also due to withdrawal of Boring from the TriMet service district which was effective January 2013.

Jan suggested that staff review any future fixed route changes and report to the committee on how those changes will impact the LIFT service. She asked about a recent route that was added in Northwest Portland. Allen said that some changes have no impact because they may be in an area where there are multiple routes.

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Jan asked that the CAT be involved in advance on any discussions regarding fixed route service changes for September 2014.

### **Broadway Cab (BC) LIFT Service – Raye Miles, President, Broadway Cab; Steve Hext, Director of Operations; Cheryl Minden, Dispatch Call Center Manager**

Raye Miles, President, Broadway Cab, reported on recent service improvement initiatives. Highlights of the report included:

- BC continues to expand the wheelchair ADA van fleet.
- Dispatch procedures have been developed to improve staff's ability to anticipate potential service issues in advance and to improve customer service skills.
- Dispatch equipment has been updated to improve efficiency.
- A recurring training program has been developed for BC operators who choose to participate in providing LIFT service. The training includes providing passenger assistance and defensive driving training.
- Requirements and standards for drivers are under review and policy changes will be implemented as appropriate.

Raye reported that BC has plans to upgrade their entire dispatch system in 2015. This is the largest project the company has ever undertaken. The goal of the upgrade will be to provide better tools to maximize the use of available resources.

BC now has a Smartphone application available for the general passenger portion of the service and customers may also book cabs on the website. Raye said that there may also be opportunities to improve communications for the LIFT program and customers in the future by using some of the same features.

### **Discussion**

Diana Keever expressed concern about traveling with a service dog when the LIFT ride is provided by BC. She said that many of the operators are afraid of the animals and don't treat them appropriately. She suggested the operators need further training on providing assistance to customers with service animals.

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Raye said that this is an issue in the cab industry nationwide. Operators are trained that it is intolerable for them to not be respectful of service animals. She encouraged customers to report any issues to Customer Service for review and follow-up.

Jan suggested that Broadway consider using customer panel in their operator training program. The customers should represent a variety of disabilities and include customers who use service animal and/or guide dogs. Raye agreed and said they would consider.

Patricia said she agreed it would be helpful for operators to become more familiar with customers' service animals and she offered to participate on the panel.

Trish commented on issues with a recent LIFT ride provided by BC for a friend of hers. The operator arrived early and complained that he had to wait for the customer to the beginning of the window. He was rude, drove erratically and then tried to collect a fare from the customer. The issues were reported to both LIFT and BC Service. Raye said BC staff would follow-up.

Patricia reported on a recent LIFT ride provided by BC where the operator had provided excellent customer service. She had arrived early at a facility before it opened and operator insisted on waiting with her until someone arrived.

She asked about the process for sending LIFT ride requests to BC. Susan responded that rides scheduled a day in advance are sent by computer but reviewed by BC as well. When LIFT schedules a ride with BC on the same day of service, the request is sent by email and BC enters the ride into their system.

Patricia commented that riders are sometimes notified in advance of their rides by cell phone. She suggested that text message notification would also be helpful.

Chris Walker reported on issues with his recent LIFT rides provided BC service and said that he had sent a report by email. Raye said they had received the report and would investigate and report back. She added that the Forest Grove area can be challenging because there aren't cabs regularly circulating in the area.

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Arnold stressed the importance of BC monitoring and addressing the service needs in the outlying areas including Forest Grove. Raye agreed and said that there are cabs usually available in the Beaverton and Hillsboro areas that may be able to respond. BC staff's goal is to be more proactive in anticipating service needs in advance.

Jan asked about the response time for trips scheduled through BC. Susan responded that trips scheduled the day before are required to be provided within the scheduled window. Trips requested on the day of service are to be provided with one hour of the request.

Jan commented that some of the vans have grab bars installed on the inside and this feature limits the turning radius for a customer who uses a mobility device. BC staff will follow-up.

CAT members discussed the "Cover Oregon" program that will begin in January and increase the need for medical transportation rides. There was concern about how these needs will affect the availability of accessible cabs for use by the LIFT program and the general public.

Raye responded that there will be a transition period and BC continues to work with the City of Portland to ensure additional Specially Attended Transportation (SAT) permits will be available if needed. BC has not yet added more vehicles but has plans to do so as necessary.

### **Discussion**

Kathryn Woods commented that she looks forward to receiving additional information about her LIFT service provided by BC as improvements are made in the abilities to communicate advance information to customers.

She said that very few BC drivers provide the same level of service as LIFT operators. Raye responded that all drivers providing LIFT service should be providing the same level of door-to-door service. She emphasized the need for customers to report any issues to Customer Service so they can be addressed.

## **ADJUSTMENTS TO CAT AGENDA**

Jan reported that she had to leave early and Claudia would be conducting the rest of the meeting. Due to time restraints, the reports on the OTA Conference would be moved to the November meeting.

Claudia thanked TriMet for the opportunity to attend the OTA conference. She said it was very educational. She commented on the wealth of services and resources available to customers in the tri-county region compared to those in areas of the state where there are fewer options. She added that though there may always be service delivery issues, it is good to be reminded of how much service is actually provided in this community.

## **LIFT ELIGIBILITY QUARTERLY REPORT – 4<sup>TH</sup> QTR. FY13 and 1<sup>ST</sup> QTR. FY14**

Kathy presented the LIFT Eligibility Quarterly Reports. Highlights of the reports included:

### **FY13 – Year End Totals**

- Total of 2,896 new applicants.
- Results include 42.6 percent were unconditional; 18.5 percent were conditional; 12.5 percent were temporary; 3.2 percent were denied; 1.1 percent withdrew their applications; and 21.8 percent submitted an application but did not complete the process.
- Total of 2,108 customers were notified of the need to recertify.
- Results include 34.5 percent were unconditional; 16.2 percent conditional; 1.1 percent temporary; 1.0 percent were denied; .1 percent withdrew and .1 percent are to be determined. There were 47 percent who did not reapply and their eligibility expired.
- Total of 30 appeals received for FY13.

Kathy said that the first recertification is now taking place for customers who have ridden very little or may have never ridden. This accounts for the higher number of those choosing to not complete the recertification process.

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In May 2013, staff began the second recertification period. Kathy said that some customers may not be required to complete an in-person evaluation. Staff is making the determination on the interview on a case-by-case basis depending on the functional ability of the applicant.

### **FY14 – 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter**

#### **New Applicants**

- Total of 640 new applicants.
- Results include 36.7 percent were unconditional; 17.0 percent were conditional; 17.8 percent were temporary; 3.1 percent were denied; 1.6 percent withdrew and 23.8 percent submitted an application but did not complete the process.

#### **Recertifying Applicants**

- Total of 860 customers were notified of the need to recertify.
- Customers are given 90 days advance notice of the need to recertify so the majority of notifications for first quarter are in process at the time of this report.

#### **Discussion**

Trish commented that people may not complete the eligibility process because they feel overwhelmed by the requirement. Kathy agreed that may be the case in some instances. She added that TMC staff responds to many calls about the LIFT service and process and works diligently to educate applicants on the program in advance of their evaluation.

Arnold questioned the number of people who apply and never ride allowing their eligibility to expire through the recertification process. Kathy responded customers' circumstances may change. Some applied to have access to the service as an alternative if needed. Others may have moved out of the area, or their health conditions may have improved to where they can use other transportation options. Others health may have worsened to the point that they are unable to travel.

Terry asked if LIFT still receives applications in the one of the older formats. Kathy said that rarely happens. When the new process was implemented, staff distributed the new application to agencies and service organizations for their use. Many applicants also download the application from the website.

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### **Public Comment**

Kathryn Woods commented on the experience of an individual applying for recertification. Staff had not received the professional verification of disability from her health professional and the process had not been completed. Kathy said the individual could call the TMC to check on her application's status. Kathy will follow-up with Kathryn.

### **FY14 CAT WORK PLAN – Kathy Miller, Manager, LIFT Eligibility and Community Relations**

Kathy reviewed a draft of the FY14 CAT Work Plan. She asked the committee to review the plan to determine if any changes were required. The plan will be presented again at the November 20 meeting for any revisions and adoption.

### **Discussion**

Arnold questioned the CAT's role with the Portland Streetcar and asked if the Streetcar has its own advisory committee.

Kathy responded that the Streetcar has a citizen advisory committee and Zoe Presson serves on the committee. Last year, City of Portland staff requested to utilize the CAT for review of Streetcar accessibility issues. TriMet staff reviewed the request with the CAT and a proposed change to the CAT bylaws was taken to the Board of Directors for approval.

Since then, there been some changes in City of Portland staff who work with Streetcar and ADA issues and a presentation is scheduled for the November 20 meeting.

### **CAT MEMBER COMMENTS**

Diana Keever said she has had a service animal for the past three months. She reported that for the past two and half months, the LIFT operators have been taking the dog by the leash and boarding it through the door and up the stairs. On a recent ride, the operator refused to transport her because he said she needed to be in control of the dog and the dog should board on the vehicle lift with her. Diana was unable to do so and returned to her home on her own.

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She said some operators have also told her to put the dog in the back seat of the bus. She expressed concern about the inconsistency in how the service is provided and asked for confirmation on the policy. She contacted Customer Service and Dispatch on the day of the incident and they told her the operator was correct in how he handled the situation.

Susan said that the policy is that the animal must be under the customer's control and not barking or acting aggressively. She asked for the details of the day of the trip so that she could review the call recordings.

John Joseph, Program Manager, Region 3, asked if the dog could board on its own and Diana said it could not without additional training. She asked if you could sit at the vehicle entrance and instruct the dog to board and lay down. John said that would be acceptable. Staff will follow-up on the report.

Arnold reported that Teresa Christopherson, Administrative Services Manager, Clackamas County Social Services, and a former CAT member, was awarded the Public Transit Manager's Award at the OTA Conference earlier this month. Teresa had reported to the CAT in September on the expansion of the Mountain Express Service which provides service in the Mt. Hood area.

**Arnold Panitch made a motion that the CAT send a congratulatory letter to Teresa Christopherson in recognition of her efforts and the receipt of this award. The motion was seconded and passed.**

Kathy will work with the CAT Executive Committee to prepare a letter.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.