

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION
March 20, 2013
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 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: Jan Campbell, Chair; Trish Baker, Dr. T. Allen Bethel, John Betts, Harold Cheeks, Jim Jackson, Diana Keever, Patricia Kepler, Zoe Presson, Chris Walker, Terry Watson

Staff: Corrinna Griffis, Bob Hastings, Michael Kiser, Kathy Miller, Allen Morgan, David Trimble, Steve Witter

Guests: Lina Bensel, Chris Thomas, Lt. Matt Engen (Transit Police)

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND MEETING

The February 20 meeting minutes were not approved due to a lack of a quorum at the beginning of the meeting. They will be presented for approval at the next meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

Jan informed the committee that Michael Levine had passed away on February 27, 2013. Michael will be remembered for his advocacy work and a memorial fund has been established in his name with Disability Rights of Oregon to be used for transportation issues.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None were received.

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STAFF COMMENTS

Kathy Miller reported that staff was arranging for an opportunity for the CAT to tour the TriMet administrative offices at Harrison Square. She will contact CAT members as the plans progress.

Kathy reminded the CAT members about Transit Day at the Oregon Legislature on April 10th.

Allen Morgan announced that initial testing for the fare printer began on buses on Monday. Jan said that there would be further presentation on the topic later in the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

TRANSIT POLICE REPORT – Lt. Matt Engen

Lt. Matt Engen provided an update on the use of plainclothes officers to check fares. Officers are deployed in this capacity on a weekly basis. The effort has been effective thus far and well received by the general public.

Discussion

Jan commented that more people with disabilities and mobility devices using MAX. Frequently, she is unable to access the priority seating area. She asked how the Transit Police address those instances.

Lt. Engen responded that while the officers are limited on their ability to ask customers to move from the area, he tries to assess the circumstances and engage in a conversation with the customer using a mobility device to determine the length of their trip and if they would prefer to be in the priority seating area as opposed to near the door.

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CAT REPORTS

CAT Executive Committee

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

PMLR Ad Hoc Committee

Diana Keever reported that the committee had discussed the Clinton station which includes crossing the heavy rail tracks. She said that staff is working on the issue but there may not be a solution.

Jan suggested that if no improvements are made, it would be good to alert customers in advance about the differences in the track.

PMLR UPDATE – BYBEE STATION -- Bob Hastings, Project Architect; Michael Kiser, Coordinator, Public Art and Architecture; Steve Witter, Program Manager

Steve Witter, Program Manager, reviewed that the PMLR alignment is approximately seven and one-half miles in length and includes ten stations plus a location for one future station.

The discussion focused on the Bybee Station which is located about five to six miles south of OMSI. The station is located in between the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and Oregon Highway 99 known locally as McLoughlin Boulevard. Eastmoreland Golf Course is located to the northeast of the intersection of the Bybee Bridge and Highway 99.

The golf course continues to the southeast corner of the intersection and Westmoreland Park is located on the southwest intersection. The roadway interchange to allow traffic on and off Highway 99/McLoughlin is located on the northwest corner. The Eastmoreland, Reed and Woodstock neighborhoods are to the east and Westmoreland and Sellwood neighborhoods are on the west.

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A fire station and Union Manor, a senior housing facility, are located on the northwest corner.

The challenge with this station is the slope of the Bybee bridge. It is in the seven and a half to eight percent range and there are no landings. It is built this way partially due to the constraints for railroad and highway clearances and the adjacent landscape.

Steve and Michael Kiser, Coordinator, Public Art and Architecture, described the site plan. The station is at grade with the railroad and McLoughlin but separated from the level of the bridge. Improvements will include new bus pullouts and a location for LIFT connections at the station elevator areas on the very top in the plaza area.

Originally the pullout on the south side of the bridge serving eastbound traffic had been deferred as a cost-savings measure. After reviewing concerns from the neighborhood and safety issues concerns about the relationship to the fire station, it was decided to restore the pullout to improve safety and accessibility.

Steve said that the station would also be equipped for access control for when TriMet moves to an electronic fare, and for CCTV, Transit Tracker, and emergency telephone systems. In addition to the elevators on each side, the fare plaza will include stairs down to the platforms.

The Bybee Station is very transparent and the design allows for a clear line of vision for customers to view the station. The elevator enclosures are glass on three sides and the stairs are arranged to provide a clear view of the platform. This will provide advance visibility of oncoming trains.

The platform will also include an area for bike racks and customers are being encouraged to park their bikes rather than take them on MAX.

Michael provided an overview of the artwork to be included at the station. Glass mosaics will be incorporated into the columns to reflect the context of each of the stations. A Chicago artist is working with Bullseye Glass, a local art glass manufacturer, to complete all the mosaics along the alignment.

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The glass in the elevators and on the windscreens on the upper deck as well as the art will include etchings. The art also includes a motion lamp that is five feet by eight feet and internally lit. It rotates and picks up some of the local imagery. It creates somewhat of a beacon for the station and should be very visible.

Discussion

Jan asked about the number of bus pullouts near the elevator and the slope. Steve confirmed that there would be two, one in each direction. Staff is proposing that there would be a bus stop at the lower ends of each bridge and a bus stop at the top. This would allow someone to be able to ride the bus about 500 ft. to the top if hill as necessary.

Michael added that the LIFT service would also use the same pullouts.

Jan asked about the slope to the top and if there would be any benches for resting spots. Steve said that there would be a handrail and he could check with the designers to see if there would be opportunity to add a resting bench. He added it would be dependent on the width of the sidewalk.

Michael said that the slope was not continuous for the length of the hill and it changes the closer it gets to both the top and the bottom of the hill. The steeper portion is a much smaller section of the entire path.

Harold Cheeks asked if there would be any crossing signals for the street. Steve responded that this was discussed extensively and it was decided that there would not be any crossing signals. Though Bybee Street is marked at 25 miles per hour, it seems the traffic moves faster and there were concerns about pedestrians. Since there are elevators on both sides, customers can make the choice at the platform level as to which side of the street they want to access and use the appropriate elevator.

Jim Jackson commented that the CAT has discussed using some of the funds for public art to create tactile maps for the stations and stop ID numbers in Braille.

Michael responded that the station ID is in Braille on the columns related to the bus stop.

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Michael said that Zoe had commented at the PMLR ad hoc committee meetings that there was a desire to consider art aspects for those with low vision. He asked if the concerns were regarding the stop ID's only or the art features as well.

Jim suggested providing a way to access the route through a tactile map to provide assistance for the blind and those with low vision in way finding. He wrote a paper for TriMet and has researched several companies including one in Corvallis that produce disposable maps. He would like to discuss this topic further with staff.

Michael asked how he interfaces with and understands the current system. Jim said that it isn't very accessible and he has learned to use the system primarily through experience.

Patricia Kepler commented that she had recently been a part of a panel teaching architects the importance of universal design and accessibility. She added that the Commission for the Blind has examples of tactile maps that could be reviewed and commented on the value of having truly accessible way finding in buildings, courtyards, parks, and transit centers.

Jim and Patricia commented on other tactile maps at other locations that are disposable and others displayed in notebook form at different points to provide tactile instructions.

Bob Hastings suggested using an ad hoc committee to have a focus discussion on the topic. He said that tactile maps were used on Westside MAX but were eventually removed due to vandalism and other issues. There may be other designs available now.

Bob said the current ad hoc committee will complete its work in April and this topic might be considered beginning in May. Bob will coordinate with Kathy.

Jim also emphasized the importance of being consistent in identifying locations for tactile information so that customers become familiar with where to look at any point in the system. He suggested that as an example, the Braille info and audio buttons for Transit Tracker should be in the same location.

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Public Comment

Lina Bensel commented that she was very much in agreement with Jim's comments about the need for more accessibility features system wide and that maps also need to be accessible.

Steve thanked the committee for their comments and said that he hopes the committee finds the station features an improvement over the initial design. He encouraged members to route any additional questions through Kathy to him for follow-up.

LIFT ELIGIBILITY QUARTERLY REPORT – FY13 2nd Qtr.-- Kathy Miller, Manager, LIFT Eligibility and Community Relations

Kathy provided an update on the LIFT eligibility process and reviewed LIFT eligibility determination results for second quarter (October-December) of FY13. Highlights of the report included:

- There were 701 new applicants for LIFT service in second quarter FY13. (Results: 275 unconditional, 145 conditional, 92 temporary, 22 denied, 8 withdrew, and 159 did not complete the evaluation process.) New applications declined from 774 in the first quarter.
- There were 264 current LIFT customers notified for recertification. (Results: 82 unconditional, 46 conditional, two temporary, one denied, one withdrew, 21 determinations are yet to be determined and 111 did not apply for recertification.)
- Of the recertification decisions made, 78 of the customers had no change in their eligibility, 25 changed from unconditional to conditional, 24 changed from conditional to unconditional, and three changed to temporary.
- Of the 308 eligibility decisions made in first quarter, 14 were appealed with two initial decisions upheld, and four changed from denials to conditional. One changed from conditional to unconditional, two had conditions added, and one changed from temporary to conditional. Two were no-shows for their scheduled hearings and two hearings are pending yet to be scheduled.

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Kathy said the number of recertifications for second quarter was reduced but that the recertification of existing customers that would require an evaluation was almost complete. The second recertification process will begin with customers whose eligibility expires beginning in April.

Discussion

Trish asked if someone couldn't be unconditional if they used fixed route. Kathy said that a person may be found unconditional if they are unable to use fixed route independently.

Lina commented that she had been determined conditionally eligible about two years ago. Then she had some surgery about a year ago and required full eligibility. As she improves, she is able to use fixed route occasionally. She said that no one has questioned her LIFT trips.

Terry asked about the number of people not yet recertified who may have A codes for Alzheimer's or D codes indicating they can't be left alone. Kathy said there are 800-900 who are active riders having ridden in the last year. There are also approximately 800-900 who are over 85 years of age. She added that initially it was decided that these categories may not be required to complete an in-person evaluation.

CAT members questioned why customers would remain in the database but not be required to recertify. Kathy said that the recertification was being applied to customers who are considered active customers and have ridden within the last year. Staff had initially made the decision it wouldn't be economical to use the agency's resources to recertify customers who weren't using the service. If a person is inactive and begins to ride again, they will come up for recertification.

Trish asked if and when LIFT would be implementing trip by trip eligibility. Kathy responded that there is no timeline in place but staff is beginning to consider ways to evaluate whether or not customers are administering their conditions on their trips. The goal would be to further educate customers on determining how to do so and on services available to them to learn to use fixed route for the appropriate trips.

She gave the example of customer who may have only one condition which is for night blindness meaning they may only use the LIFT service for trips

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taken in the evening hours. If staff were to evaluate the trips they have taken and determined they are taking trips during other parts of the day, they would contact the customer to discuss the conditions and options for taking the trips on fixed route.

Patricia asked about customers that have not ridden but then decide to use the service again though they haven't been recertified. Kathy said that their trip would be scheduled and they would then show up in the recertification group for the following month.

BUS TICKET PRINTER AND MOBILE TICKETING -- Chris Tucker, Director, Revenue Operations; Tom Strader, Coordinator, Senior Fare Policy Program

Bus Ticket Printers

Chris Tucker, Director, Revenue Operations, provided an update and demonstration of the bus ticket printer. The printer itself is smaller than a toaster and mounts on the dashboard next to the fare box on the right.

The printer connects to the CAD/AVL system and prints the ticket once the fare is paid and the operator pushes the button. The ticket will be easier-to-read, more durable and is similar to the tickets produced from the ticket vending machines.

The use of the printer will reduce paper waste and the tickets will also have a foil security feature. The tickets will also be in alignment with MAX and WES tickets where two-hour transfers are issued.

The printers will be installed on approximately two dozen buses on Lines 17 and 70 as a pilot project for the next four weeks.

Discussion

Jim asked about the material for the tickets. Chris said that the material is a thermal top-coated paper similar to the paper used in the ticket vending machines.

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Terry asked if there would still be a backup paper option if the printer were to fail. Chris stated that the tissue transfers will still be available as a backup.

Jan asked if the printers would be in the path of travel area for mobility devices. Chris responded that the printers are installed on the dashboard to the right of the fare box.

Public Comment

Lina commented that she had observed an operator reject a transfer ticket on a recent ride and the customer ended up paying the cash fare. The customer said he had gotten the ticket on Line 17. Chris said that the new design has been communicated to all bus operators and any issues will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Mobile Ticket App

Tom Strader, Coordinator, Senior Fare Policy Program, demonstrated the use of the mobile ticketing app for fixed route tickets. This option allows customers who use smart phones to bypass purchasing tickets at retailers or ticket machines and is intended to be a convenient alternative option for purchasing fares.

The process includes downloading the app to a smart phone, entering account information and selecting the type of ticket. The use of the ticket requires a visual authentication process for the operator.

Digital animation allows the operator to verify the validity of the fare and as a security feature. The operator can also require that the customer activates the lights on the bus displayed on the screen. The ticket information includes expiration date, time and date and a day code.

The feature including the live bank transactions is being tested for functionality by TriMet staff including operators to ensure all of the appropriate elements are in place. Demos have been provided to operators at the garages to provide them an opportunity for feedback.

In the near future, there will be a public beta test with about 150 public volunteers to test the application and provide feedback.

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Discussion

Harold asked if the feature would be available for tablets as well. Tom said that was under consideration for future use and there would be some additional issues to address.

Patricia asked if the feature would be available for both iPhones and Androids. Tom confirmed that it would but that it would not be available for Blackberry or the Windows operating system at this point. It is anticipated it will eventually be available for Windows applications but Blackberry is still undetermined at this time.

Harold asked what happens if someone loses their cell phones and it contains all of their payments. Tom said that tickets can be retrieved from the established account and transferred to the new device.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.