

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBLE
May 21, 2008
9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
BLDG 2, MEZZANINE RM 5, WORLD TRADE CENTER
25 SW SALMON, PORTLAND, OR**

CAT minutes may be obtained in alternate formats by calling TriMet's Accessible Transportation Program Administrative Offices: (503) 802-8200/TTY 802-8058, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm weekdays

Attendees: Jan Campbell, Chair; Lina Bensel, John Betts, Bill Brown, Tom Ciesielski, Michael Levine, Stan Lewis, Jay Dionne Markey, Zoe Presson, Albert Rouse, Robert Williams

Staff: Steve Banta, Josh Collins, Peggy Hanson, Peggy LaPoint, Kathy Miller, Allen Morgan, Ted Newton, Carolyn Young

Guests: John Francis, Judy Mattingly, Christina Turner (Ride Connection)

Michael Levine, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order. He said that Jan Campbell, Chair, would be joining the meeting at approximately 10:30 a.m.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND 04-16-08 MINUTES

Michael asked for approval of the agenda.

Albert Rouse made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded and passed.

Michael asked for approval of the April 16th meeting minutes.

Bill Brown made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded and passed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

None

CAT Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2008

Page 2

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None

STAFF COMMENTS

Kathy Miller reminded CAT members that the annual CAT luncheon will take place following the June 18 Business Meeting. The July 16 CAT Business Meeting will take place at the Portland Building in Room C.

Allen Morgan said that he brought diagrams of the speaker placements on all buses as requested by the CAT. He stated that the external speaker retrofit program was underway on the first bus for the 1700 series. CAT will have an opportunity to have a speaker demo at a future Work Session as soon as the retrofit is completed.

Michael and Bill asked to have the drawings sent electronically. Allen will send the drawings.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Stan Lewis stated concern regarding the letter to Patricia Kepler from LIFT regarding two recent LIFT rides where she was stranded two times in one day. He said that while the letter did apologize for any communication that led her to believe that her safety was not important to TriMet, it did not offer any apology for the failure to provide safe and responsible travel service. Stan stressed the importance of providing good service and that operators need to be familiar with common destinations such as Independent Living Resources.

Bill Brown reported that he has not seen much improvement with ASA's because the equipment doesn't always work. The operators are still not calling stops and he asked if the operators are reporting when the ASA is not working properly. Allen responded that the operators are reporting when the ASA is not working, but that they should also be calling stops when the equipment is not working properly.

CAT Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2008

Page 3

Michael stated that he believes that more monitoring is needed. He has noticed supervisors monitoring too far away from the bus to hear an announcement. Until monitoring increases, there will not be any improvement.

Albert commented that some fixed route operators are adamant about people being seated before they will move the bus. He requested a notice be written to notify operators that it is not mandatory for disabled persons to be seated before moving the bus. Michael suggested Albert to make a motion.

Albert made a motion that the CAT recommend to TriMet staff to post a notice to fixed route operators stating that mobility devices are not required to be secured at this time, and people with disabilities are not required to be seated, although it may be encouraged. The motion did not receive a second.

John Francis commended TriMet for the difference transit has made in his life.

CAT REPORTS

Fixed Route – Michael Levine, Facilitator

Michael urged CAT members to attend the Work Session meetings. He said that there wasn't a quorum at the last May Work Session.

Michael reported that staff had presented a new concept for a brochure for *RideWise* outreach and that all CAT members were impressed.

Michael stated that the bus stop and shelter at Broadway & Hoyt has been moved up the street 20-25 feet due to the installation of a bike box at the intersection. Allen will follow-up and report back at the next Work Session.

Michael encouraged CAT members to participate in field evaluations for stop announcements and asked interested members to contact him.

CAT Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2008

Page 4

Michael said that Fred had also spoken to the CAT about the September 2008 Fare Proposal and more time would be spent on the topic later on the agenda.

Discussion

Albert asked what about the *RideWise* program. Kathy stated that there are two aspects to the *RideWise* program. TriMet has responsibility for outreach aimed primarily at seniors and for transit orientation. Ride Connection has responsibility for outreach, primarily to people with disabilities including working with students transitioning to using the fixed route system. Ride Connection also has responsibility for both group and one-on-one travel training. She added that TriMet made a presentation on their work in April and Ride Connection would be presenting an overview at the July meeting.

Bob Williams questioned if a quorum was necessary for the Work Session since most of the items come to the full CAT for further consideration. He asked about motions made at the Business meeting that had already been approved at the Work Session.

Michael responded that a quorum is necessary to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. When there is a quorum at the Work Session, motions may also be made at the Work Session level. Stan added that under state public meeting laws, a quorum is required for the gathering to be considered a meeting. A motion cannot be made without a quorum present.

Michael added that it has been the CAT's usual practice to forward recommendations to the Business meeting for approval.

LIFT – Michael Levine, Facilitator

Michael referred CAT members to the meeting minutes for a report on the LIFT portion of the meeting.

Lina commented on a statement that Michael had at the meeting that LIFT should strive for 100 percent on-time performance. Michael reiterated that

CAT Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2008

Page 5

TriMet LIFT should be striving towards 100 percent on-time performance, instead of the goal of over 90 percent. He said that staff had agreed at the meeting.

Lina said that she would like to add that LIFT should also strive for 100 percent on arrivals at the beginning of the 30-minute window.

Bill said that LIFT operators have commented that add-ons and traffic conditions impact schedules. There is also time lost when an individual's caregiver is not helping them to the vehicle when the vehicle is unable to come to the driveway. Late ride cancellations can also impact the schedule.

Albert stated that he had spoken to a LIFT operator that was waiting for a customer about allowing an individual already on the bus to go inside the store while the vehicle is waiting. The operator said that the individual could go inside, but the vehicle would not be able to wait for them. Albert questioned this practice because he felt it would save fuel to wait for the customer.

FARELESS SQUARE – Carolyn Young, Executive Director, Communications and Technology

Carolyn Young, Executive Director, Communications and Technology, provided an overview on Fareless Square. Highlights included:

- Fareless Square has existed for over 30 years. It was implemented in 1974, and its goal was to promote the use of transit to improve air quality downtown by reducing carbon monoxide emissions from cars.
- TriMet is reviewing whether or not any changes should be made to Fareless Square. Feedback has been invited from many downtown stakeholders in regards to the purpose and goals of Fareless Square.
- There is considerable emotion surrounding Fareless Square. Many people are in favor, and others wish to have it eliminated. TriMet does not want to eliminate Fareless Square but would like to take a

CAT Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2008

Page 6

fresh look to evaluate if it is meeting the policy objectives that TriMet wants for this kind of investment in free transit downtown.

- Initially Fareless Square was much smaller than today. It has been extended three times, most recently to the Lloyd district in 2001. The Lloyd district wanted a connection to downtown and to increase transit ridership between the Lloyd district and downtown with Fareless Square.
- The total cost of the 2001 expansion was about one million dollars and was partially paid for by the City of Portland, Multnomah County, the Lloyd Business District Association with TriMet absorbing about one third of the cost.
- Seattle and Pittsburgh are the only other two properties that have similar arrangements. Seattle's Fareless Square has limited hours, from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., primarily for security reasons.
- Low-income riders and businesses that are not served by Fareless Square have issues with transit equity. TriMet reviewing how to best maintain balance when serving the public and businesses.
- It can be difficult for operators to keep track of passengers that board in Fareless Square but deboard past the boundary and need to pay a fare.
- Adjusting the hours of Fareless Square could lessen the amount of undesirable behavior that is facilitated by free transit.

Carolyn said that current research shows that almost all who ride in Fareless Square either ride MAX or board buses on 5th and 6th Avenues. Given what the mall will look like in 2009, almost all of the rides in Fareless Square will be accommodated on MAX. She said that raises an operational issue as to whether or not TriMet can accommodate all the rides to downtown on MAX if fareless service is not provided on bus service.

CAT Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2008

Page 7

Discussion

Michael inquired if TriMet is still receiving funds for the Lloyd extension for Fareless Square. Carolyn stated that TriMet is receiving funds, and the funds been indexed for inflation over the years.

Bill stated that moving Fareless Square from the Lloyd district, or adjusting the hours, could have an adverse effect on seniors due to their financial situations. He suggested having some type of i.d. to identify people as seniors to allow them to use Fareless Square at any time of day.

Bill said that canceling Fareless Square would not eliminate the undesirable behavior on MAX and buses. Carolyn responded that it would not eliminate the behavior, but the police have indicated that it would help improve the situation.

Bob stated that people that might exhibit undesirable behavior would be less likely to ride if they had to pay a fare.

Bill restated his concern about the senior population with low incomes if Fareless Square was eliminated.

Stan stated that it is important that CAT initiates a dialogue at this point in time to voice concerns and ideas regarding Fareless Square and the TriMet Board would have to hear from the public before making a decision. He said that Fareless Square is synonymous with Portland and viewed as owned by the citizens or as part of the public realm. He suggested that the CAT should not automatically think that the decision would be the committee's.

Michael commented that fare evasion should be stopped. He stated that he has not been checked for fare for a few months and he feels there are more important system issues beyond Fareless Square.

Michael questioned that if eliminating Fareless Square would result in more people driving downtown. Carolyn responded that there are multiple options for the future of Fareless Square. MAX could be fareless while on the mall, but not the buses. TriMet has intercepted buses as they cross the river to inspect fares to determine the fare evasion rate. It was found that

CAT Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2008

Page 8

TriMet could save a half million dollars a year due to those who evade fares. She added that one option might be to have a flat fare of \$1.00 within Fareless Square.

Albert asked how Fareless Square affects CAT. Bill responded that it might be considered an accessibility issue because many seniors are on fixed incomes, and changing Fareless Square could become a serious issue for some seniors.

Lina asked how Honored Citizen fares would be impacted if the fare were changed to a dollar in Fareless Square. Carolyn responded that she did not believe that option would affect Honored Citizen fares.

Bob stated that under most circumstances, it is difficult to change or take something back. When Fareless Square was extended the rest of the district felt slighted. Security and fare evasion issues are being reviewed. He urged CAT to look at the big picture that includes the general public and impacts of changes to Fareless Square for all.

Jay Dionne Markey commented that when she volunteers at the convention center and that many visitors appreciate the fact that it is fareless to go downtown from that location. Carolyn agreed and said that convention centers like fareless areas or including a transit pass with the admission for the convention. She added that since there is not a convention center hotel in Portland, many visitors stay downtown when attending a function at the convention center.

Carolyn said that staff is currently visiting various stakeholder groups. The Portland Business Association is going to define the policy objectives that they see for business downtown. A consultant has also been hired to outline the policy objectives including considering issues for the homeless and low income in the downtown area.

Carolyn emphasized that the issue is if the multi-million dollars invested in Fareless Square is a wise investment or if other options should be considered. She said that staff expects to have the objectives and options outlined by the end of the calendar year. Public hearings would take place early next year and if consensus on changes is reached, the proposals would be taken to the Board of Directors around April or May 2009.

CAT Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2008

Page 9

Michael commented that the CAT would have time to have more input in the process and asked that staff continue to provide the CAT updates.

SEPTEMBER 2008 FARE PROPOSAL – Jan Campbell, CAT Chair

Jan reviewed the two ordinances for the September 2008 Fare Proposal that will be read at the Board of Directors' meeting on Wednesday, May 28.

The first option would be to increase the fixed route cash fare by 15 cents, five cents as part of the standard increase and ten cents to address the rising fuel costs. The second ordinance would be to increase the fixed route cash fare by 20 cents, five cents as part of the standard increase with 15 cents towards the fuel costs.

Jan reviewed how each of the proposals would impact LIFT and Honored Citizens fares. These increases would be consistent with the LIFT and Honored Citizen Fare Policy that states that LIFT cash fare increases shall be the same as the increase in the adult two-zone fare. The current LIFT fare is \$1.70 and would increase to either \$1.85 or \$1.90 respectively. The Honored Citizen fare would increase by ten cents under either proposal.

Discussion

Michael reminded CAT that when the LIFT and Honored Citizen Fare Policy was adopted in 2004, the policy was based on the fact that the usual fare increases were five cents every other year. Due to the recent increases in diesel prices, larger fare increases have occurred. He said that he agrees to the five cent increase and some increase to address the fuel costs. He feels that the suggested increase for fuel costs should be looked at separately.

He said that there are many elderly and disabled persons who face greater financial pressures than others due to the rising costs of groceries, etc. He stressed that all government bodies need to look at the total picture when considering increases.

Michael said one of the Board members had stated concern about raising fares for seniors during the last board meeting and that he feels some

CAT Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2008

Page 10

Board members understand the circumstances people face. He feels that the CAT should be looking at a compromise to the ordinances as stated.

Michael also commented on the need for TriMet to stop fare evasion and to consider additional methods to reduce costs.

Jan stated that the CAT Executive Committee had discussed recommending a 10-cent increase for Honored Citizens, and a 10-cent increase for LIFT.

Albert suggested providing free fares or highly reduced fares during certain times of the day for people with low incomes. He stated that TriMet used to have reduced Honored Citizen fares during off-peak hours. Lina said that it could be difficult for operators to monitor the varying fares throughout the day.

Jan stated concern regarding the fare increase because there are others in addition to people with disabilities and seniors who are also low-income. Jan added TriMet does go above and beyond what is required by the ADA in providing service and she is concerned that there may be changes to services if there isn't an increase.

Bill inquired if there would be another increase within the year. Jan responded that there could be other increases, but currently CAT is only reviewing the proposed increase for September 2008.

Bill suggested asking TriMet what their predictions are in order for them to come up with a figure to hold for the entire year.

Bob stated that the Board understands that fare increase impact many, in addition to the elderly and disabled communities. He said that the Board strives to be objective in viewing proposed fare increases and to reduce the possibility of more frequent increases. He said that it difficult to predict fuel costs and TriMet has been running at a deficit at times due to increased fuel costs. The Board is trying to balance the issue and that is why two proposals are under consideration.

Stan stated the economy is causing difficulty for many people, including working people. He said that he likes to take the attitude that CAT is solely

CAT Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2008

Page 11

to represent the interests of the elderly and disabled in making suggestions for the Board.

Stan added that he felt the CAT should take the position that they are not trying to be obstructionistic or object to what they decide, but that the moral position should be that the CAT feels it is deplorable to add any further additional cost for the elderly and disabled. He suggested that TriMet could institute a campaign to the public of asking for donations, but CAT would not give a recommendation regarding fare increases because they owe it to the people they represent to not vote for adding more burden to them.

Albert suggested increased fare inspection might offset some of need for a fare increase.

Jan reminded the CAT that to recommend no increase would be in conflict with the LIFT and Honored Citizen Fare Policy adopted by the CAT in 2004. Stan responded that the policy was developed before the situation developed of reach a point of peak oil production. He said the general trend would ways be for gas prices to continue to rise and he feels there may be a need to draw a limit to the policy based on the impacts of any future increases on the elderly and/or disabled populations.

Michael made a motion that the CAT makes a recommendation to the Board for a ten-cent increase (regular five cent increase and five cents towards fuel costs) in regards to Honored Citizen and LIFT fares. The motion was seconded and passed.

Jan stated that the Executive Committee should address whether or not to continue with the current fare policy and then discuss with the full CAT.

Kathy said that she would forward the recommendation to staff that afternoon.

Jan urged CAT members to attend the Board meeting to comment on the proposed fare increases. Michael stated that it would be necessary to sign up for public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:30 a.m.