



Minutes City of Tempe Transportation Commission September 14, 2010

Minutes of the City of Tempe Transportation Commission held on Tuesday, September 14, 2010, 7:30 a.m., at the Transportation Center Don Cassano Community Room, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Ben Goren, William Haas, Charles Huellmantel, Marcellus Lisotta, Jayson Matthews, Catherine Mayorga, Gary Roberts, Steven Saiz, Peter Schelstraete, David Strang, Marco Valenzuela, Bryan Young

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Augustus Shaw IV, Joan Westlake

City Staff Present:

Don Bessler, Joe Clements, Dawn Coomer, Carlos de Leon, Shana Ellis, Dana Janofsky, Greg Jordan, Jyme Sue McLaren, Bonnie Richardson, Robert Yabes

Guests Present:

Marc Soronson (HDR, Inc.), Matt Tsork (Strand Assoc.), Howard Steere (Metro)

David Strang called the meeting to order at 7:34 a.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Consideration of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Matthews made a motion to approve all minutes. Commissioner Saiz seconded the motion. All Commissioners approved the minutes except for the Transportation Commission Minutes. Commissioner Huellmantel abstained from the Transportation Commission Minutes approval because he was not in attendance. The following minutes were approved:

- Multi-modal Planning and Project Review Minutes – May 12,2010
- Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes – June 8, 2010
- Public Involvement and Marketing Committee Minutes – August 2,2010
- Multi-modal Planning and Project Review Minutes – August 11,2010

Agenda Item 2 – Public Appearances

There were no public appearances.

Agenda Item 3 – Introduction of Public Works Director – Don Bessler

Carlos de Leon introduced Don Bessler.

Most recently he was the Manager of Natural Resources in the City of Longmont, Colorado. He has worked in Colorado for 17 years, and has held various municipal positions in Vermont and Wyoming

Don Bessler is meeting with Public Works employee groups asking 3 questions: (1) What is currently happening either in your service area, the department or the city that you believe works well? (2) What is currently happening either in your service area, the department or the city that you believe works poorly? (3) What advice would you give me as your new Director?

Agenda Item 4 – Transit and Transportation Fund Update

Carlos de Leon reviewed the following information:

Transit Fund

For the current fiscal year, the following actions were approved to achieve a structural deficit reduction of \$4.5 million and to set the framework for future fiscal years:

Items discussed included:

- *Transit Service Contract.* The current contract with Veolia Transportation was renegotiated to reduce costs and restructure the fixed/variable cost structure.
- *Staffing and Other Reduction: Staffing.* Transit Store Hours – 8am -5pm Monday thru Friday with no Saturdays. Public Involvement/Marketing Budget was reduced by \$264,000.
- *Bonds.* The City's financial advisor, at this time, is recommending maintaining variable rate bonds.
- *Additional Revenue.*
 - A proposal for a one year test of light rail station platform kiosks from CBS Outdoors, METRO's advertising vendor, was received and is being reviewed by staff. A presentation on this proposal at Council IRS is expected in October 2010.
 - Orbit Fares. Staff will present options and seek City Council direction during the FY11-12 budget process.
 - Community Room Rental Fee. A nominal fee for use of the Don Cassano Community Room by outside groups was approved in August 2010.
- *Planning.*
 - Tempe South Corridor Study Financial Concepts. A process has been initiated to identify and evaluate potential funding and revenue concepts to support Tempe South Corridor operating costs, which are anticipated to start in FY 17-18.

Commissioner Bryan Young asked what the current rate is for our bonds. Joe Clements said 3/10 of 1%.

Transportation Fund

Carlos de Leon presented the following information and noted that the Transportation Fund receives its funding from state shared revenues of the Vehicle License Tax and Gas Tax.

For the current fiscal year, the following actions were approved to achieve a structural deficit reduction of \$1.7 million and to set the framework for future fiscal years:

- *Organizational Consolidation.* As of July 2010, consolidation of positions and programs funded by the Transportation Fund is underway within Public Works under the Transportation Division, which now consists of Administration & Customer Service, Transit Service, Traffic Engineering, and Traffic Operations and Street Maintenance sections.
- *Staffing Reductions and Other Non- personnel Reductions*
 - *Staffing.* Reductions in personnel totaling approximately \$1.5 million for FY10-11 are underway.
 - *Other Reductions.* Budget reductions in non-personnel items were competed in July 2010.
- *Additional Reduction Strategies.* Staff is the process of researching these additional strategies and will provide information on these strategies in the upcoming months:
 - Curbside pick-up
 - Evaluation of Transportation Fee
 - Electric Savings – Streetlights
 - Special Event Overtime

It is expected that a schedule for the upcoming budget process will be provided to the Commission at the October meeting.

Commissioner Strang inquired if the gas tax and vehicle license tax are locked in. Carlos de Leon explained that they are constitutionally restricted to be used for street purposes and distribution is up to the state. In the past they have redirected some funds to public safety.

Commission members asked questions about curbside pick-up costs. Carlos de Leon explained that the cost for alley maintenance is high and moving to curbside pick-up could reduce costs. There would be less vehicles traveling in the alley way which is less wear and tear on the alley. This includes dust control as well as weed management. Many scenarios will be looked at regarding both contained and uncontained pick-up options. This concept is in the early phases.

Commission members had the following curbside pick-up suggestions: (1) that residents might be willing to pay more to keep alley service and asked if this option will be presented to residents; (2) to look at switching uncontained pick-up to every 2 months or 6 months. Carlos de Leon stated that each year a cost analysis on the service is conducted and the ideas will be suggested to Field Operations Division.

Commissioner Haas stated that his residence changed from alley service to curbside and after a few months of getting used to it there were no complaints.

Commissioner Schelstraete asked where the street lights would be placed. Carlos replied that they will be placed in North Tempe/ASU/Downtown. Some of the lights on 6th St already have the newer bulbs.

Agenda Item 5 – Tempe South Corridor Update

Dawn Coomer and Marc Soronson from HDR presented the following information:

Tempe South Study Area includes the following: High Capacity Transit – 2 miles FUNDED and Rural Rd Bus Rapid Transit- 19 miles UNFUNDED.

The Comparative Capital Costs (\$2010) and Alignment Alternatives Capital Costs (\$M) are: Mill Avenue Double Track \$117 - \$130; Ash Avenue Double Track \$119 - \$132; Mill/Ash Loop \$114 - \$120

The Operating & Maintenance Costs are \$3.1M for 2.6 mile line (YOE\$) and is currently being refined. Funding would come from City of Tempe and other local funding sources.

Mr. Soronson also discussed travel characteristics of Tempe South Corridor, what is modern streetcar, why advance streetcar, evaluation criteria, goal of ridership analysis, streetcars as federally funded projects (Small Starts), how do we get to a federally funded project, traffic analysis – critical concerns, waterline relocation, and parking assessment.

Draft Staff Recommendations: Mill/Ash Avenue Loop

Helps define downtown; Opportunity to stimulate development/redevelopment on west side of downtown; Avoids utility impacts; Reduced parking impacts; Offers flexibility for special events; Minimizes construction impacts on Mill; Offers flexibility for expansion/future extensions; Lowest cost.

AA Study Recommendation

Modern Streetcar -Rio Salado to Mill/Southern
BRT on Rural – Unfunded
Commuter Rail -Further Study Needed

Carlos de Leon discussed future Transit Services concepts including: Fixed routes and neighborhood service reconfigured to interface with Modern Streetcar; Optimizes system; No increase in annual operation cost over projected future bus service; Provides more direct coverage to Tempe neighborhoods.

Mr. Soronson explained the next steps and approval process to include the following: Public Outreach; September 16, 2010 – City Council; October 12, 2010 – Transportation Commission - study recommendations and public input; October 21, 2010 – City Council; Regional actions METRO MAG, and

prepare federal funding application. There is a public meeting for Tempe South High Capacity Transit Study on Thursday, September 23, 2010 at MADCAP Theatre 730 S. Mill Avenue, Tempe.

Mr. Soronson added the following as a follow-up to Commissioner's questions:

- Just the platforms would be raised
- Frequency would be every 10 minutes
- Cost of running every 15 minutes would need to be looked into further
- Duration of service would be 5am – 12am

Commissioner Goren stated that the cost is high and asked what do you get with tracks that you can't get with buses. Carlos de Leon stated there is an economic development increase with fixed rail operations. Commissioner Goren asked how this will benefit everyone. JymeSue McLaren replied that for every \$1 invested there is a \$1.30 in return for the city.

Commissioner Strang stated that the streetcar is an economic development engine and there have been studies showing growth within 3 blocks of streetcar.

Commissioner Huellmantel stated that buses only have a 10 year life span and streetcars have 50. It is a culture shift in a positive way. Buses can't solve everything. South of University is not well situated for pedestrians. We have to think beyond buses.

Agenda Item 6 – Bus Service Changes

Greg Jordan presented the following information:

In response to City of Scottsdale's elimination of Route 66 (Kyrene-Mill-68th Street), city staff initiated a public involvement process with north Tempe residents to understand bus service needs in northwest Tempe and develop permanent routing.

Alternatives:

City staff discussed four alternatives with north Tempe residents:

1. Re-route 66 to terminate in downtown Tempe.
 - 1a. Re-route route 66 to terminate in downtown Tempe; modify Orbit Earth operating hours and frequency to compensate for loss of late evening service in northwest Tempe.
2. Re-route 66 to terminate in downtown; shift Orbit Earth from Scottsdale Road to College Avenue.
3. Develop alternative method to maintain route 66 in north Tempe.

Consensus:

City staff and residents reached consensus on *alternative 1a* which would re-route 66 to terminate in downtown Tempe and modify Orbit Earth operating hours and frequency. The changes will be implemented on October 25, 2010.

Agenda Item 7 – Future Agenda Items

No future agenda items noted.

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 a.m.

The Commission's next regular meeting will be held Tuesday, October 12, 2010 at 7:30 a.m. in the Don Cassano Community Room, 200 E. Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona.

Prepared by:
Dana Janofsky

Reviewed by:
Carlos de Leon