



Minutes City Council Issue Review Session June 28, 2007

Minutes of the Tempe City Council Issue Review Session held on Thursday, June 28, 2007, 6:00 p.m., in the City Council Chambers, Tempe City Hall, 31 E. Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona.

COUNCIL PRESENT:

Mayor Hugh Hallman

Vice Mayor Hut Hutson

Councilmember P. Ben Arredondo

Councilmember Barbara J. Carter

Councilmember Shana Ellis

Councilmember Mark W. Mitchell

Councilmember Onnie Shekerjian

Mayor Hallman called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Call to the Audience

Twenty-three residents spoke regarding Item #4, Neighborhood Circulator Expansion. Of the 23 who spoke, 17 spoke in favor of the expansion, and 6 spoke in opposition of the expansion.

The primary points of those speaking in favor of the expansion were:

- The construction and expansion in the downtown area and at ASU generate more traffic, so the circulator bus expansion is very important.
- The circulator is an opportunity for a safer alternative to walking and biking, especially at night.
- A good way to avoid driving, especially into the downtown area.
- The circulator will hopefully reduce the amount of traffic on College Avenue.
- Tempe Elementary School District eliminated 12 bus stops. The circulator offers a good alternative for transportation to school, to the library, and to the downtown.
- The buses are not much larger than the large SUV's currently driven by non-professional drivers on College Avenue.
- The Tempe Bicycle Action Group supports the circulator for the reduction of overall traffic and the opportunity to address pollution and energy concerns.
- Bus drivers are not talking on their cell phones or eating while driving.
- Concerning the problems of students parking in the neighborhood, the circulator would provide an option to park farther away and ride the circulator.

- In the area of College and Broadway, the traffic increases greatly when school is dismissed and parents pick up their children. The circulator would help reduce that traffic.
- The buses could have a traffic-calming effect.
- Try the route on College and if there is a major problem, then move the route.
- Have the circulator run every 20 minutes rather than every 15 minutes and reduce the number of stops in the vicinity of the schools.
- The “Jupiter” route should be implemented until the traffic-calming is completed, with an analysis at that time.
- College Avenue is the major bike thoroughfare through the City, and the expansion will reduce traffic and benefit bicyclists.
- This route hits important points, such as the post office, library, senior center, and grocery store.
- The safest route for pedestrians and bicyclists is to have the circulator go straight down College Avenue. If it is detoured off to Mill, the potential of accidents between circulator and pedestrians increases.

The primary points of those speaking in opposition to the expansion were:

- Because College Avenue is so narrow, a circulator route on College would be a hazard, especially between Alameda and Apache.
- The buses have more potential for accidents with frequent stops.
- Traffic-calming on College should be completed first, and then consider a circulator route.
- Additional parking in the neighborhood might become a problem.
- Traffic is already dangerous and there are too many accidents on College Avenue.
- The buses will add more traffic.
- Circulators do not belong on neighborhood streets. They create noise and safety issues.

Jeff Sargent, President of Southwest Ambulance, spoke on Item #5. Southwest Ambulance has been in Tempe for 20 years and wants to help with any ambulance system desired.

Pat Cantelme, CEO of 911 Emergency Services for PMT Ambulance, spoke on Item #5. PMT is headquartered in Tempe and its president is a resident of Tempe. The City began an RFP process for an ambulance provider and that process was interrupted because of issues with the State Department of Health Services. That process was not terminated, and he asked Council to continue that process, or provide an opportunity for PMT to also compete. They have competed in Scottsdale and Chandler and the level of service has increased and there has been a reduction in response times with an overall satisfaction with the service level.

Dave Jecklo, Executive Vice President of the International Association of Firefighters, which have manned the emergency medical transport ambulance for the past twenty years. He was one of the first members of that crew when they took over the ambulance service. He is proud to be working in Tempe with the firefighters

Papago Park Executive Committee Appointment/Arizona Centennial

Mayor Hallman announced that the first meeting of the Executive Committee of the Papago Park Planning Group has been held. The goal of the group is to create a master plan for Papago Park. This group represents a three-way city partnership with Scottsdale, Phoenix and Tempe, and the Executive Committee, composed of members of the city councils and one member from the Parks Board. Mayor Hallman serves as one of the members from Tempe; he asked that Councilmember Mitchell serve as the second member.

Downtown Signage

INFORMATIONAL BACKGROUND available in City Clerk's Office.

DISCUSSION – Presenters: Development Services Manager Chris Anaradian; Downtown Tempe Community (DTC) Director of Operations, Chris Wilson

Chris Anaradian summarized that as previously directed by Council, a proposal has been developed that is complimentary to the proposal previously approved by Council regarding banners on future developments. This proposal concerns smaller signage for smaller businesses. This program provides needed flexibility within the sign code.

Councilmember Shekerjian appreciated the recommendation to evaluate the program after one year and report to the appropriate subcommittee.

Mayor Hallman added that the last time a program was proposed, the Chamber of Commerce opposed it on the grounds that they preferred it be City-wide rather than limited to the downtown pedestrian zone. The Chamber of Commerce supports this proposal, however.

CONSENSUS

Proposal was approved as presented.

Follow-up Responsibility: Chris Anaradian

Neighborhood Circulator Expansion

INFORMATIONAL BACKGROUND available in City Clerk's Office.

DISCUSSION – Presenters: Public Works Manager Glenn Kephart; Transit Operations Administrator Greg Jordan; Community Outreach Marketing Coordinator Sue Taaffe

Glenn Kephart summarized that there are five areas of expansion.

Greg Jordan summarized as follows:

- Proposed Route Orbit Mercury modifies and extends the current Neighborhood Flash and serves the Escalante Center, the downtown area, and all points in between. Changes are for the route to turn

around in downtown and to increase the hours of operation. Proposed implementation date is July 23rd.

- Proposed Route Orbit Venus modifies and extends the current Neighborhood Flash. Changes are for the route to turn around in downtown and to increase the hours of operation. The route will expand and serve neighborhoods south of University, north of Broadway, and the neighborhoods in between. The proposed implementation date is July 23rd
- Proposed Route Orbit Earth is a new route to provide service to North Tempe, the North Side Multigenerational Center, Tempe Marketplace, downtown and major bus and light rail system. Proposed implementation is in September.
- Proposed Route Orbit Mars is a new route to provide access to residents in the central/eastern part of Tempe, serving the commercial area at Southern and McClintock, the library complex and connection to the light rail at Apache Boulevard and Price in 2008. The proposal implementation is in November.
- The College Avenue Alternatives - Orbit Jupiter:
 - #1 – College/Dorsey – 100% on College Avenue
 - #2 - Service on College from Apache to Alameda & Southern to US 60 (75% on College Avenue, defers service on College between Alameda and Southern)
 - #3 – Service on College from Apache to Broadway (25% on College, defers service on College from Broadway to US 60 and shifts the route alignment to Alameda Drive)
 - #4 – No service on College Avenue (defers all circulator service west of Rural Road and south of Apache, while proceeding with the implementation of the Dorsey Lane portion of the route)

Councilmember Carter added that there was opposition in the past about circulator traffic on 5th Street west of Priest and she asked if the traffic-calming on 5th Street was installed prior to the circulator implementation.

Mr. Jordan responded that there was resistance to that route, but it was eventually implemented and there has been tremendous support. The traffic-calming east of Priest and west of Mill was installed prior to the circulator's implementation.

Councilmember Carter stated that she supported Alternative #1 for a trial period.

Councilmember Arredondo stated that he supported Alternative #1 with "no-stop" zones in front of McKemy and Broadmor schools. Staff will tweak the routes where necessary.

Councilmember Mitchell supported Alternative #1 for a trial period.

Councilmember Ellis supported the circulator concept, but she supported Alternative #3. When it is reassessed, she believed the residents will support putting it back on College after the traffic-calming has been installed.

Vice Mayor Hutson agreed that the circulators will ultimately help Tempe. He respected the views of the neighborhood, and would like to consider Alternative #2. If it doesn't work, it can be changed.

Councilmember Shekerjian commended staff for their hard work in hearing all of the opinions. Neighborhood circulators are part of Tempe's future. She supported Alternative #3 until College Avenue traffic-calming has

been installed, and then the alternatives can be revisited looking at data collected between Broadway and Apache, the community's concerns regarding College Avenue and the effect of the traffic-calming.

Mayor Hallman summarized that traffic-calming on a portion of the 5th Street route from Farmer to Priest was done both before and after the original circulator system was proposed. In 1996 when the transportation tax was passed, one-fifth of that tax was to be attributed to a neighborhood circulator program. It wasn't Council's foresight that the program would be the appropriate thing to do, but it was those who put the ballot proposition together and fought for it. It will be important to monitor what is going to happen with ASU students. He is concerned that the circulator may make the neighborhoods more attractive as rentals. The biggest problem with rentals is automobiles. If rentals now become occupied by people without cars, we will have taken a huge step forward in eliminating one of Tempe's major neighborhood problems. We want to make everyone happy, but whichever way we decide, a lot of people will be disappointed.

Mayor Hallman suggested that whichever Jupiter alternative is chosen, that alternative should have a sunset date. Whenever the program is started, there would be a six-month test period and within five months after the beginning of the program, staff would return to present data on accident rates, usage, traffic-calming effects, and concurrently, substantial progress would have been made on traffic-calming along College Avenue. The alternative must be reauthorized. That way, whoever is disappointed can know that Council is going to collect the data to address the issues on both sides.

Councilmember Mitchell asked staff if that amount of time is adequate.

Mr. Kephart recommended a full semester be utilized so if it begins in January of 2008, staff could collect data from January through May and return to Council.

Mayor Hallman proposed a sunset date of June 30, 2008.

Councilmember Arredondo felt the word "sunset" was not appropriate.

Mayor Hallman explained that "sunset" means it will terminate unless it is reauthorized. His intention would be to have a reauthorization hearing before the six-month period is over. Council will also need to make significant progress on traffic-calming. He would be willing to try Alternative #1 and it will terminate on June 30, 2008, unless data demonstrates that it should be reauthorized.

Councilmember Ellis added that one of staff's recommendations was to begin in January of 2008, and then have a public meeting to discuss route performance in May, and she felt that would work well.

CONSENSUS

Staff was directed to:

- **Implement Route Orbit Mercury on July 23, 2007.**
- **Implement Route Orbit Venus on July 23, 2007.**
- **Implement Route Orbit Earth in September, 2007.**
- **Implement Route Orbit Mars in November, 2007.**

- **Implement Route Orbit Jupiter, Alternative #1, in January, 2008, with a “sunset” date of June 30, 2008. Staff was directed to return to Council in May of 2008 with data to demonstrate support to reauthorize the route or to alter the route.**

Follow-up Responsibility: Glenn Kephart

Clarification of the Direction of the Ambulance Service Contract

Councilmember Mitchell declared a conflict of interest and left the table.

DISCUSSION – Presenter: Assistant Fire Chief Jim Gaintner

Jim Gaintner summarized that during the past year, an RFP process was conducted for ambulance service. During the evaluation portion of that process, the State Department of Health Services (DHS) handed down a number of decisions regarding ambulance contracts. Most of those decisions nullified the enhancements being sought in a new contract. Additionally, the DHS indicated that future contracts would not allow for advanced life support recovery fees at the level the City was currently receiving. Because of the impact of those decisions, it was determined that it was in the best interests of the City to reject the RFP responses. Staff feels there is no compelling operational or financial reason to seek a change, and as a result, the current contract was extended through May 8, 2008.

Vice Mayor Hutson recalled that it was a six-month extension.

City Attorney Andrew Ching responded that the actual extension of the contract runs until May 8, 2008. Staff will research it.

Councilmember Arredondo believed that the citizens of Tempe deserve to compare “apples to apples” and that was the intention of the RFP. The RFP result never came back to Council for direction. It is still Council’s decision whether to seek competition. He recalled that when there was no competition, things got rough and service was not being provided. We did not finish the RFP and we owe it to our citizens. He looked at Chandler and since splitting the city, they feel that competition has been good and, most important, patient care has improved. Council should mandate the City Manager to restructure the RFP and re-issue it, or maybe propose splitting the City.

Councilmember Shekerjian stated that she understood that the DHS felt what was being done in Chandler was not acceptable.

Mr. Gaintner responded that parts of the Chandler contracts were voided.

Councilmember Shekerjian asked if there was a way both could be utilized and still meet DHS standards.

Mr. Gaintner responded that probably the most significant thing is that some of the enhancements the City was looking for would have to be left out of another RFP.

Mayor Hallman asked if we have enhancements that we otherwise couldn't get.

Mr. Gaintner responded that the current enhancements are allowed to continue, but any new contracts would come under DHS rulings.

Councilmember Shekerjian stated that her understanding was that when everything broke down because of DHS's rulings, things were on hold and staff was working it out. She had no idea a contract had been issued.

Mr. Gaintner responded that no contract has been issued. Under the terms of the existing contract, it has been extended.

Mayor Hallman stated that he recalled a six-month extension but he didn't know what happened after that. He suggested scheduling this for the next Issue Review Session to get all the facts together.

Councilmember Shekerjian added that she has great respect for staff and the City's processes and that it is important to get back on track.

Councilmember Carter agreed that it should be brought back to see what options are available. It would also be important to explain to the public what the limitations are and how the ambulance companies are mandated through the State government.

Councilmember Arredondo proposed having the Fire staff return with a recommendation to either go to a 50/50 and evaluate in a year, or go to another RFP and justify why.

Mayor Hallman added that if there is a contract legally valid until May 8, 2008, that issue will need to be dealt with as well.

Vice Mayor Hutson agreed. He has had numerous meetings on this issue and recalled being counseled by the Fire Chief to split the City, but he did not agree. He was never told which one of the two proponents was scheduled to get the contract because of the DHS problems, and he strongly remembered that this was not another two-year contract. It was six months and it was supposed to come back to Council.

Mayor Hallman added that his recollection was a six-month discussion. Council asked for an RFP, and then the DHS issues came up. Somewhere in the chain the decision was made to extend to contract and the City Attorney needs to determine how that was done. He would suggest that staff come forward with recommendations on what to do, including an RFP process, and how that would work. He could imagine an RFP process that results in one provider, or splitting the City, if that's in the best interests of the citizens of Tempe. At this moment, we don't have a way to direct anything until we find the answer to the question of what happened to have the contract extended to May 8, 2008. Staff should come back to the July 19th IRS and report on the status of that contract and the Fire staff should be in a position to recommend how to proceed from there with the issues of a 50/50 RFP and other possible processes.

Mr. Gaintner added that there are provisions in the contract that would allow it to be terminated if an RFP went

out again. It was my understanding from the legal department that to do anything different now, whether we split the city or award it to a single vendor, will require a new RFP.

Councilmember Ellis emphasized that it is not as if Council is dragging its feet. Other communities tested the water and we were waiting to see what happened. If we had issued an RFP and quickly made a decision, we would have been back-pedaling at this point. It's to the Fire Department's credit and Council's credit to not rush into anything.

Mayor Hallman stated that the consensus is that staff will return to answer the questions and make a recommendation on how to proceed. He would also ask for the value of enhancements that we currently have that we can't get. It might be minor but it might be major.

Councilmember Shekerjian would like to better understand Fire staff's recommendations on how to proceed and to better understand the DHS rulings.

Vice Mayor Hutson added that he would like a cost/benefit analysis of all the issues, as well as the turnaround time.

CONSENSUS

- City Attorney was directed to determine the process used to extend the contract.
- Staff was directed to return to the July 19th IRS with the options to go forward, and a cost/benefit analysis that encompasses all of those issues.

Follow-up Responsibility: Jim Gaintner

Formal Council Agenda Items

No agenda items were discussed.

Future Agenda Items

Councilmember Ellis requested that Council discuss participation in a summit on affordable and workforce housing.

Mayor's Announcements/Manager's Announcements

None.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.