

Minutes City of Tempe Transportation Commission November 13, 2007

Minutes of the City of Tempe Transportation Commission held on Tuesday, November 13, 2007, 7:30 a.m., at the City of Tempe Public Works Conference Room, 31 E. Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Don Cassano, Marcellus Lisotta, Jayson Matthews, Catherine Mayorga, John Minett, Judi Nelson, David Strang, Corey Woods, Bryan Young

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Bill Haas, Kevin Olson, Amanda Ormond, Steven Saiz, Marco Valenzuela, Joan Westlake

City Staff Present:

Dawn Coomer, Carlos de Leon, Dana Janofsky, Greg Jordan, Gregg Kent, Amanda Nelson, Marc Pearsall, Bonnie Richardson, Sue Taaffe, Robert Yabes

Guests Present:

Roy Hoyt (Resident), Carla Kahn (Valley Metro Rail),

Don Cassano called the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Consideration of Meeting Minutes

Jayson Matthews noted the required correction of the name Jayson Matthews to Don Cassano to the call to order on the September 11, 2007 minutes.

Jayson Matthews made a motion to approve all minutes. Catherine Mayorga seconded the motion. The following minutes were approved as submitted:

- Public Involvement/Marketing Committee – August 6, 2007
- Transportation Commission – September 11, 2007
- Bicycle, Planning & Project Review Committee – October 10, 2007

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comments/Appearances

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item 3 – Rail Update

Gregg Kent presented the following Light Rail information:

- Paving Apache Boulevard from McClintock to the Canal Bridge.
- Most of the neighborhood and business impact is over.

- Stations and wires are going in.
- Testing will begin in February or March around the Mission Palms area.

Dawn Coomer introduced herself to the Transportation Commission and stated that she started with the City of Tempe's Light Rail Project in August of 2007, and was previously with the City of Scottsdale for 3 years. She also added that before that she worked with Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) for 7 years. Dawn Coomer presented the following Commuter Rail information:

- The purpose of the MAG study was to identify how the commuter rail would impact the city if it was implemented. However there is no funding at this time.
- The key reasons to consider the commuter rail service are:
 - Growth of population and employment in all parts of the metropolitan area.
 - Travel demand growth and increasing congestion in the primary travel corridors of the region.
 - Need to provide multimodal transportation opportunities in the primary travel corridors.
 - Desire to reinforce local and regional land use plans and development opportunities.
 - Potential availability of existing railroad alignments in the primary travel corridors.
 - Increase in the cost of fuel and travel.
 - Potential to promote sustainability.
- Four stakeholder meetings have been held and input has been received.
- Results from prior work done for the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) have been used with rail lines as the starting point.
- One major issue would be coordination with the railroads.
- Three scenarios have been identified as:
 - Getting started and identifying the corridor,
 - A starter system, and identifying two corridors, and
 - Multiple corridors
- The next steps are coming up with a strategic plan.

Amanda Nelson presented the following information:

- The Light Rail grand opening is tentatively scheduled for December 26, 2008.
- The grand opening will be a three day event, with the VIP dinner in Phoenix.
- Events will be at all stations of the alignment.
- Event planner to come on board in December.

Agenda Item 4 – High Capacity Transit Planning Oversight

Dawn Coomer presented the following information:

- As movement goes from a construction project to an actual project other issues may arise.
- The RTP adopted by MAG identifies 57 miles of light rail/ high capacity transit corridors for implementation by 2026. The Tempe South Link, from University and Rural to Rural and Southern, is scheduled for implementation in Phase II of the Plan (2011-2015 timeframe).

- The Station Area Planning Project is developing station area plans for four light rail stations at Apache and Dorsey, Apache and McClintock, Apache and Smith-Martin, and Apache and Price-101. The project is expected to be completed in January of 2008.
- Parking has been identified as a key issue.
- Asking for feedback and suggestions from the commission on two alternatives:
 - Option A: Add responsibility of High Capacity Transit to the Bicycle, Planning & Project Review Committee, however that may further dilute the original focus of the group.
 - Option B: Create a new committee to oversee high capacity transit.

Marcellus Lisotta suggests that we see how things work out being combined with the Bicycle, Planning & Project Review Committee, and separate them later if it doesn't work well.

Don Cassano notes that the name of the committee will need to change if high capacity transit is included. He also feels that option A along with renaming the committee may work out much better.

Agenda Item 5 – FLASH Logo and Paint Scheme

Sue Taaffe presented the following information:

- The marketing committee met in August and thought it was time to focus on the Flash buses.
- The marketing committee met in October to look at the logo and paint scheme options.
- Paint possibilities were silver, gold, and green, with metallic green being approved by the committee.
- The goals are:
 - Get approved by the Transportation Commission and go to Council, and
 - Have buses painted over ASU's winter break.

Regarding the new Flash logo, Jayson Matthews made a motion of approval and David Strang seconded the motion.

The Transportation Commission was temporarily released to look the sample bus painted metallic green.

There was a group consensus to paint the Flash buses green.

Agenda Item 6 – Paratransit Study Update

Greg Jordan presented the following information:

- The following issues were identified as problems stemming from the structure and performance of the present regional system:
 - Transfers between operators unreliable and long
 - Regional travel possibly stunted
 - Poor to satisfactory operator performance
 - Multiple agencies and points of contact for users
 - Inconsistent policies
 - Future regional ridership growth will be significant
 - Costs are rising

- The Recommendation proposed by Valley Metro (as described above) entails the following essential characteristics:
 - Regionalize call center, scheduling, dispatch
 - Operations provided by 3-4 sub-regional private operators
 - Transfers eliminated between sub-regions
 - ADA service policies may be standardized
 - Cities may request Non-ADA service provided by region
- **Tempe Analysis**
 - *Present Status*
 - East Valley DAR performance satisfactory - Complaints are low except on transfers
 - Current transfers in EVDAR) system is low (7%) especially compared to fixed route transit. Valley Metro estimates that latent demand for travel to Phoenix might contribute another 13%
 - Tempe dial-a-ride ridership is stable or declining
 - Overall population stable – Disabled population marginally declining
 - Alternative mobility options exist via transit and Orbit system
 - Higher density residential and commercial contributing to fewer, shorter trips
 - 60-70 percent (full costs of ADA trips) currently funded by regional Prop. 400 dollars.
 - *Financial Implications of Valley Metro Regionalization*
 - Tempe's gross annual operating cost in FY 2010 estimated to be \$1.75 million; 3% percent lower than the current system
 - 70-75 percent (full costs of ADA trips) will be funded by regional Prop. 400 dollars. Valley Metro annual administrative operating costs estimated to rise from \$177,770 to \$1,123,600.
 - Since funding is not projected to be available for this expense within the existing Transit Life Cycle Financial Model, it is not clear that Valley Metro proceed with the recommendation.
 - Call Center start-up costs: \$1,885,400 – Same funding problem.
 - *Service Quality*
 - Strengths:
 - One point of contact for users
 - Incremental improvement in quality of service (e.g., transfers eliminated between sub-regions, reduced travel times)
 - Standardization of ADA service policies
 - Coordinated management by Valley Metro (i.e., efficiency)
 - Service providers' performance comparatively evaluated
 - Potential for some savings through consolidation (not quantified)
 - Weaknesses:
 - Reduced accountability to users/citizens
 - City oversight marginalized
 - Service improvements at best incremental
 - Management by large organization may improve efficiency but may also degrade performance by virtue of distant accountability, management of multiple private providers, questionable competencies at contractor level, and minimum service standards.
 - Data and information controlled by Valley Metro
 - Transaction costs associated with redesign

- If Valley Metro approved the recommendations Tempe has room to comeback with updates in January.

Don Cassano presented the following information:

- Transportation Committee held two meetings for review.
- Transportation Committee concluded that Valley Metro support could not be provided.
 - Directing staff to evaluate the range of alternatives and develop higher quality standards.

Jayson Matthews agrees with staff and recommends to continue with a study until March of 2008.

Agenda Item 7 – Orbit Expansion Update

Greg Jordan presented the following information:

- City Council asked to explore the expansion of the Orbit south of the U.S. 60
- Survey results and community meetings suggest a significant amount of interest, as well as strong support for implementation and use of the service.
- Held a series of workshops south of the U.S. 60 and north of Elliot, and came up with a draft route
- Returning to the communities in February 2008 for a second round of workshops.
- The Saturn would travel west of Price, east of Mill, south of U.S. 60, and north of Elliot.
 - Current Orbit Ridership:
 - Mercury is so successful because the area is the most established.
 - Venus ridership picked up more than expected.
 - Earth exceed expectations, and is doing well for a new service.
- The next route to starting is Mars, and will begin November 26th, 2007.

Judi Nelson asked about marketing strategies, and Sue Taaffe stated that there were door hangers, no print ads, and water bill inserts to target people that live along the routes.

Corey Woods and John Minett expressed interest in expanding the ending times.

Greg Jordan proposed to come back with a study of all hour change scenarios at a future meeting.

Agenda Item 8 – Council Transportation, Housing, and Environment Committee Update

Carlos de Leon presented the following information:

- Mayor and Council looked at how committees are formed.
- Committee has been renamed to the Transportation, Housing, and Environment (THE) Committee.
- The environment element is a significant addition that got added this year.
- Council approved the proposed work plan.

Agenda Item 9 – Capital Projects Updates

Robert Yabes presented the following information:

- Trying to build a south Tempe Transit Center funded by Proposition 400 money.
- Building 9 shelters in partnership with ASU on city streets with bus stops and right of way.
- Mitchell Park meeting in December of 2007.
- Apache Boulevard restriped.
- Adding 6 pullouts and 45 shelters this year.
- University, Curry, and Tempe Canal will all be under construction next year.
- The Western Canal multi-use path construction timeline begins spring of 2008 for eight months.

Bonnie Richardson presented the following information:

- College Avenue meetings had a great turnout, and the project is moving forward.
- Transportation Center:
 - Construction continues ahead, and glass is going in.
 - The roof will be planted and grown this week.
 - Finishing out mobile walls in the office area.
 - Hoping to get leasing agent on board.
 - Given permission to focus on retail.
 - Moving in March 2008.
 - Grand opening tentatively scheduled for May 3, 2008.

Judi Nelson stated the need for ASU's transportation area to lease space, and has submitted a letter of interest. Carlos de Leon added that city management is suggesting we should be occupying the third floor with city space.

Agenda Item 10 – Future Agenda Items

Judi Nelson suggested the following items be brought to a future meeting:

- A presentation on the merging of Zip Car and Flex Car
- ASU bus pass update

John Minett suggested the following items be brought to a future meeting:

- Presentation on shared streets

The Commission's next regular meeting will be held Tuesday, December 11, 2007 at 7:30 a.m. in the City of Tempe Public Works Conference Room, 31 E. Fifth St., Garden Level West Wing.

Prepared by:
Amber Miller

Reviewed by:

Carlos de Leon
Deputy Public Works Manager