



Minutes City Council's Transportation & Affordable Housing Committee January 23, 2007

Minutes of the City Council's Transportation & Affordable Housing Committee held on Tuesday, January 23, 2007, 3:00 p.m., in the 3rd Floor Conference Room, Tempe City Hall, 31 E. 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

Committee Members Present:

Councilmember Shana Ellis, Chair
Vice Mayor Hut Hutson

City Staff Present:

Tim Bulson, Police Dept. Traffic
Neil Calfee, Dep Comm Dev Mgr
Liz Chavez, Housing Services
Theresa James, Homeless Coor
Greg Jordan, Transit Admin
Gregg Kent, Light Rail
Glenn Kephart, Pub Wrks Mgr
Jyme Sue McLaren, Dep Pub Wrks Mgr
Amanda Nelson, Comm Outreach Marketing
Chris Salomone, Comm Dev Mgr
Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Svcs Spec

Guests Present:

Don Cassano, Transportation Comm
Cathleen Phelan, HOPE
Gregg Donnell, HOPE
Bryan Young, Transportation Comm
Carla Kahn, METRO
Paul Berumen, ASU
Daniel Friedman, Field Rep, Rep. Mitchell

Councilmember Shana Ellis called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None.

Agenda Item 2 – Affordable Housing Strategy 0403-01

Liz Chavez summarized that this is a final draft of the Affordable Housing Strategy Plan. This has been put on the IRS agenda for February 1st.

Councilmember Ellis asked about fair housing.

Ms. Chavez responded that there is a separate document regarding fair housing and it is not part of this specific plan.

Agenda Item 3 – Homeless Outreach Program Effort 0109-24

Theresa James provided an update on the Homeless Outreach Program Effort (HOPE). She introduced Gregg Donnell and Cathleen Phelan who were hired in October.

- Their job is to travel throughout Tempe in an effort to reach out to homeless individuals and engage them into services to end their homelessness.
- They provide mobile outreach, advocacy and limited transportation.
- Since October, they have served 97 unduplicated men and women.
- They have made connections with existing agencies, such as TCA, TCC, I-HELP, and the United Methodist Church Shower Program, Veteran's Administration, and Salvation Army.
- Unlike many service providers, HOPE goes to places where the homeless congregate. The goal is to search out the homeless and they respond to calls from those who are concerned.
- Positive outcomes so far include assisting homeless to obtain birth certificates and other forms of ID, assisting homeless veterans in getting services from the VA, and facilitating the process of obtaining substance abuse treatment.

Chris Salomone added that this will be coming to Council for an IRS presentation and staff will be making a budgetary request. This was funded for 45 days originally. It has proven to be a successful experiment.

Councilmember Ellis asked how success is measured.

Cathleen Phelan responded that measurement is a challenging question. Simply getting them into a shelter for a month and then having them return to the streets is probably not a success. Unfortunately, the people they find in the parks or on Mill Avenue have been experiencing homelessness on and off for a period of years, and their current service is not working for that. They are trying to walk them through the process. They are trying to break down the system barriers so the homeless don't get frustrated and relapse. Unfortunately, that takes awhile. They have been building a rapport and have been working to get people to access the services which gives them enough of an economic position where they can then afford stable housing, which is a better long term solution.

Gregg Donnell added that just the fact that someone with anti-social behavior or severe mental illness will actually trust them enough to talk about their issues is where there is success. To have built rapport with leaders in the homeless community is part of the success as well.

Councilmember Ellis asked if they follow up with the service providers.

Ms. Phelan responded that they do and they want ongoing services.

Councilmember Ellis asked about their working hours.

Ms. Phelan responded that they work all day Monday and Friday from 9 to 5 and 1 to 5 on Wednesday.

Ms. James added that people can leave a message with either of them directly. If they are not available, she will try to access other resources.

Vice Mayor Hutson reminded Mr. Salomone that when Council approved this, they wanted to know true cost.

Mr. Salomone responded that staff will bring that information to Council at the IRS presentation.

Councilmember Ellis asked about the initial \$50K budget.

Mr. Salomone responded that the \$50K was a start-up and then they would get into the budget cycle.

Ms. James added that one of the other components is information about gaps in services. Since there is no shelter or transitional living program, staff is interested in the Housing First model which gets people off the street and then provides the services to become and continue to be self-sufficient.

Agenda Item 4 – Mortgage Revenue Bond & Mortgage Credit Certificate Programs 0403-01

Liz Chavez summarized the Mortgage Revenue Bond and Mortgage Credit Certificate Programs. The Mortgage Revenue Bond program is offered by the State and provides low-interest loans to eligible families based on specific criteria. Staff could look at a program for Tempe, but would have to work along with the State. The Mortgage Credit Certificate Program is strictly for rural areas and is a County program. It is offered by the IRS, so it is a tax break for homeowners. Staff is exploring these and is looking at all options to bring affordable housing to Tempe.

Councilmember Ellis asked if the definition given in the price limits (Revenue Bonds) will capture quite a few people who need to find housing based on the City's median income.

Ms. Chavez responded that the City's ranges of household incomes from those seeking assistance go from extremely low to extremely high to over the 80% median income. She thought the City could meet some of their needs based on this program.

Councilmember Ellis asked if both of these were based on ownership.

Ms. Chavez responded that it is first-time ownership.

Vice Mayor Hutson asked if it would pay to go after this program.

Ms. Chavez responded that it could be possibly based on a partnership with the State. She didn't see that it could be administered in-house. It's an optional program, but she didn't know that it would be feasible to bring it in.

Councilmember Ellis asked if there a waiting list for the State program.

Ms. Chavez felt there was probably not a waiting list.

Councilmember Ellis asked if this would be another tool that could be given to people at the classes that NewTown offers.

Ms. Chavez responded that it could be and added that those are the options staff hopes to offer families when they come in to seek assistance.

Agenda Item 5 – Task Force on Disability Issues Recommendations 1101-01

Greg Jordan summarized that at the December 19th Committee meeting, a list of recommendations was presented by the Tempe Community Council Task Force on Disability. Staff was ready to present additional information related to questions concerning costs of joining the RPTA's Alternative Transportation Program, as well as the costs of Cab Connection and a night rescue program for passengers with disabilities.

Mr. Jordan provided information on what a Tempe program might look like in terms of cost. Using Mesa as a benchmark, staff recommends about \$50K to cover the cost of Cab Connection program through the RPTA Alternative Transportation Program. Contingent upon further analysis regarding the level of unmet demand that may be out there, as well as whether or not we can see trips from Dial-a-Ride shifting back to a cab type program, we can see increased cost from not meeting demand already out there. He would recommend in the next month or two is try to model all of these different criteria and refine that cost estimate down from \$50K to a more accurate number.

Councilmember Ellis noted that since Mesa has totally eliminated their senior trips on Dial-a-Ride, their demand is high. She asked if it might be less expensive to administer it through the taxi cab program as opposed to having the seniors use the Dial-a-Ride program.

Mr. Jordan responded that the unit cost would be much less. That's where the savings come in.

Councilmember Ellis clarified that the key is to shift them off the Dial-a-Ride and recruit new people to just use the taxi cab vouchers. In the long run additional Neighborhood Circulators may help people to get to a bus route

Mr. Jordan continued, with respect to the Night Rescue Program, that the task force was concerned that there might be individuals with disabilities stranded past the last bus route. We have no known occurrences of that happening. Based on that and the experience of other cities, he recommended making it a contractual requirement that our private contractor is responsible for picking up anybody who requests transport to their destination. The cost would be about \$500 to \$800 per year.

Vice Mayor Hutson expressed a concern with someone being stranded and not having a cell phone.

Mr. Jordan added that, due to an omission on the previous document, he had asked Sgt. Tim Bulson to respond to Disabled Parking Enforcement.

Sgt. Tim Bulson stated that staff is being increased to assist in that enforcement. The Motorist Assistance Unit will be assisting in calls. Another program being considered in the Crime Prevention Unit is bringing volunteers in to assist also with the disabled parking enforcement. The Police Department will be proactive in enforcement. There are numbers that could be provided to Council monthly to show what the volunteers are producing. This is handled by the City's Volunteer Coordinator.

Agenda Item 6 – 2008 Federal Transportation Appropriations Requests 1101-01

Carlos de Leon summarized that Congress approved \$154M in Federal grants in FY2006. He further outlined the Federal Transportation Appropriations Requests for FY2007 and FY2008.

There are some items on the FY2007 requests that are part of the SAFETEA-LU (the original authorization bill) that we should be getting. If we get those “guarantees” on this project, we should be on target with our appropriations requests. If there are instances where we don’t get some of those, then we would need to revise our discretionary requests on the FY2008 requests.

Mr. de Leon outlined the FY2008 requests:

- Tempe and Valley Metro Rail are requesting \$103M for Valley Metro Rail projects and \$32M for buses and bus facilities.
- Tempe is requesting \$1.76M for the East Valley Bus Maintenance Facility, and an additional \$2.6M discretionary request for Tempe/Scottsdale Regional Bus Maintenance Facility, \$90M for the Central Phoenix/East Valley LRT project per the federal transit full funding grant agreement, and \$1M from Alternatives Analysis funds for Valley Metro Rail Tempe Extension.

Vice Mayor Hutson asked for clarification on the Tempe extension.

Mr. de Leon responded that it is a 2-mile extension, the direction of which has not yet been determined. He added that Amber Wakeman will be presenting Tempe’s federal legislative program, which includes the FY2008 appropriations request, to Mayor and Council on February 15th.

Councilmember Ellis asked about the \$5M for Small Starts Project funds included in the FY2007 requests.

Mr. de Leon responded that the Small Starts Projects is designed to provide funding for smaller projects, such as a short light rail project, whereas the New Starts are intended for longer, more costly segments. The Small Starts Projects is intended to streamline the New Starts process because it is cumbersome for municipalities to go through that process and it assists in getting the smaller projects off the ground quickly.

Agenda Item 7 – LRT Update

1101-01 No material

Jyme Sue McLaren summarized that surveys are sent four different times to various areas to evaluate when the contractor meets the various milestones, including utility relocation, completion of sidewalk/curb, driveway modification, rail installation, and property restoration. To date, the following areas have been surveyed for utility completion, sidewalk, curb and gutter: Ash, down Third Street to Mill, Veterans Way, Terrace between Rural and Apache, and the north side of Apache Boulevard. It revealed the contractor is doing a good job.

- Out of 40 sent out, 14 have been returned.
- About 98% responded that they were notified of construction, and it was clear who to contact with questions or concerns.
- Access and Traffic Movement: Approximately 95% responded that the contractor maintained access to the neighborhood or businesses.
- Contractor Response: 98% responded that the contractor responded to the concerns timely and courteously and met their expectations.
- Clean-up and Property Restoration: 98% responded that the contractor responded to their concerns in a timely and courteous manner and met their expectations.

Amanda Nelson added that in a previous community outreach update, staff told the Committee about the light pole banners along the line. There are four different designs and she showed a sample banner. The banners will be installed by the end of February and will stay in place through April 2008. In order to draw people in to the businesses, the banners will start on the curve on Apache to promote more of a gateway.

Gregg Kent added that the contractor lowered the inner portion of the bridge over the weekend with the Loop 101 and Apache closure and all was successful. In addition, the contractor is working on the crossing at Center Parkway, scheduled to be completed by Friday, January 26th, at which time traffic control will be switched to begin on the crossing from Washington to the approach to the bridge, which will close the eastbound portion of Washington near Lakeview Drive for about two weeks. Traffic will be detoured with a soft closure at Priest and Washington and a hard closure at Center Parkway. There will be one last weekend Loop 101 closure scheduled in a couple of months, and a couple of overnight closures during the week.

Ms. McLaren added that they are coordinating with the waterline project on Curry Road and are hoping to squeeze in the McClintock closure right after school ends, before summer school starts, and before the waterline improvements occur.

Ms. Nelson added that the McClintock closure will be the most significant one, and the frontage roads on Apache will also be closed.

Mr. Kent added that one of the issues prior to doing the McClintock work will be that the Loop 101 must be all reopened. The University on-ramp should reopen in about a month.

Agenda Item 6 – Future Agenda Items

No Entry

- LRT Update – analysis for the north/south corridor study
- Youth Bus Pass Update
- High School Speed Zone Signage Issues, including photo radar
- Revised Neighborhood Traffic Management Program Update
- Motorized Play Vehicles

Councilmember Ellis summarized the agenda items for possible referral to Council:

- Affordable Housing Strategy - already on the agenda
- HOPE - will go to Council
- Mortgage Revenue Bonds and Credit Certificate Programs - do not need to go to Council
- Task Force on Disability Issues Recommendations – will be part of project requests, but staff should bring the report to Council prior to budget requests
- Appropriations requests – February 15th.
- Light Rail – ongoing.

Councilmember Ellis added that when staff brought the motorized play vehicle ordinance to Council, it passed without the component about the foot board, which was returned to the Committee. Council also wanted the public safety aspect of DUI's on bicycles or any other motorized play vehicle to be looked at.

Vice Mayor Hutson added that staff should check with the City Attorney for interpretation of the law.

Councilmember Ellis added that Council also wanted the Committee to gather information from other communities concerning DUI on bicycles and motorized play vehicles for recommendation.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Prepared by: Connie Krosschell



Connie Krosschell
Acting City Clerk