

Minutes City Council's Transportation, Housing and Environment Committee November 27, 2007

Minutes of the meeting of the City Council's Transportation, Housing and Environment Committee held on Tuesday, November 27, 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:

Jennifer Adams, Deputy PW Mgr
Chris Anaradian, Dev Svcs Mgr
Neil Calfee, Dep Comm Dev Mgr
Angel Carbajal, Asst. Chief of Police
Dawn Coomer, Sr. LRT Planner
Carlos de Leon, Dep Public Wrks Mgr
Kathy Gasperich, Council Aide
Mary Helen Giustizia, Sanitation Superintendent
Don Hawkes, Water Utilities Mgr
Craig Hittie, Affordable Hsg Coord
Gregg Kent, Light Rail Engineer
Glenn Kephart, Public Wrks Mgr
Jayson Matthews, TCC Asst Director
Jyme Sue McLaren, LRT Proj Mgr
Amanda Nelson, Comm Outreach Mktg Supervisor
Bonnie Richardson, Trans. Principal Planner
Shelly Seyler, Traffic Engineer
Julie Stennerson, Executive Asst
Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Serv Spec

Guests Present:

Paul Berman, ASU
Allen Carlson, NewTown
Carolina Chong, ASU
Ron McCoy, ASU
John Farry, Metro Light Rail
Beth Fiorenza, TCAA
Emily Ryan, AZ Multihousing Association
Nadia Sadegh, ASU
Emily Stevenson, ASU

Councilmember Shana Ellis called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None.

Agenda Item 2 – Approval of Affordable Housing Summit Minutes

Craig Hittie recommended three changes to the Affordable Housing Summit Minutes from October 20, 2007:

- page 3 – last paragraph, change “tent” to “rent”
- page 4 – second paragraph (Missy D’Aunoy’s statement), change third bullet from “...was in innovated way...” to “...was an innovated way...”
- page 6 – sixth bullet, change “resources are scare...” to “resources are scarce...”

Motion to approve minutes as amended was unanimously passed.

Agenda Item 3 – Battery Collection and Disposal

Don Hawkes summarized that this issue is being worked through both this committee and the Education, Technology and Economic Development (ETED) Committee. Staff met with the ETED Committee on November 6 to discuss a partnership with the Tempe schools for battery collection and disposal since one of the focal points is to work with the schools to collect batteries. With the assistance of Community Relations for outreach, implementation of the program is set for February.

Mr. Hawkes added that a non-profit company, Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation (RBRC), already has school plans in place. Staff is contacting the company to develop a partnership between the City, RBRC, and the school districts to roll out the program. This would dramatically reduce the cost to the City because RBRC would provide the containers and handle all the recycling and disposal. The schools would simply bring the containers to the Household Products Collection Center and the batteries can be sent by UPS to RBRC. The Household Products Collection Center website has also been modified to state that the City is actively pursuing focused collection with church and service groups and a phone number is provided. Staff will provide an update at the next Committee meeting.

Agenda Item 4 – Mobile Home Relocation

Neil Calfee summarized that this issue cuts across many different areas and staff is hoping to develop a formal policy to deal with this situation. Some issues are dealt with at the state level and there are federal guidelines, but there is nothing that targets the local level and this creates a gap. Staff would like to receive direction from the Committee for generation of policies and direction on whether to work with Councilmember Arredondo’s Neighborhood, Public Safety and Quality of Life Committee as well.

Craig Hittie added that the next Neighborhood, Public Safety and Quality of Life committee meeting will be on December 11th.

Councilmember Ellis asked if staff could work with the social service organizations and have a draft policy in place by the end of January.

Mr. Calfee responded that staff will develop best practices as well as a range of options.

Mr. Hittie suggested that as soon as a draft is prepared and staff has worked with the community on identifying a workable practice, it could go to Council.

Councilmember Ellis added that in the past when there has been a common issue, joint meetings have been held and that could be a possibility for January. She will talk with Councilmember Arredondo about this issue. She agreed that it is important to include the social services organizations in the development of a policy.

Agenda Item 5 – Housing Forum Topics

Craig Hittie summarized that the topic for the next Affordable Housing Forum will be “Affordable Housing and its Relationship to Economic Development.” The target audience will be profit and non-profit developers. The date has yet to be set, but staff is planning for February, 2008.

Councilmember Ellis added that the providers plan to meet on a regular basis and the Tempe Community Council (TCC) has been asked to put together a list of everyone who attended the last meeting and invite them to participate in an email discussion to get future topics on the table. If each forum ends up spinning off another monthly meeting, it will be time consuming.

Mr. Hittie added that the list serve became active a few hours ago, and an invitation will be sent out to everyone who attended or expressed interest. At this point, 30 people have signed up. It will be set up so others can be invited, as well.

Councilmember Ellis clarified that if a non-profit wanted to send it out to their board members, they could do that. The next committee meeting probably won't be until late January, so we will need to get the word out.

Agenda Item 6 – MAG Commuter Rail Study

Dawn Coomer summarized that the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) outlined requirements for implementation of commuter rail at the last meeting of their commuter rail stakeholders group. Although there is no money for commuter rail implementation in the Regional Transportation Plan, this study is looking at how commuter rail service could be implemented if at some point in the future there was funding to do so. The overall purpose of the project is to look at different models of how a commuter rail service could be implemented. The focus is the MAG region, which includes Maricopa and Pinal Counties.

- Key reasons for considering commuter rail service
 - Growth of population and employment
 - Impacts on increased congestion
 - Desire to create another travel option
 - Promote sustainability and reduce air pollutants
- Requirements for successful implementation
 - Be cost effective and serve peak regional travel demands
 - Develop working relationships with the railroad owners and operators.
 - Risk is an issue for railroads and a governance structure would have to be established.
 - Identify potential funding options.

- Stakeholder involvement process.
 - Held a series of workshops and pulled together people from cities, elected officials, throughout the State, railroads, to try to work through different elements of the planning process.
 - October meeting discussion about potential implementation strategies and from this point forward, MAG will work on creating a final report scheduled for adoption by the Regional Council early next year.
- Strategic Plan Development Process.
 - Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were identified and organized into six high priority factors:
 - Regional growth
 - Multimodal opportunities – commuter rail can be alternative to roadway improvements, especially in highly congested corridors.
 - Existing land and right-of-way
 - Cost and affordability
 - Sustainability
 - Public and Private Cooperation – the need to build political support for commuter rail, to develop funding, is a key issue facing the region.
- Goals for Commuter Rail Strategic Plan
 - Employ community rail to shape growth
 - Improve transportation mobility opportunities
 - Provide a seamless and cost effective option
 - Promote sustainability
 - Increase public/private cooperation
- Concept System Plan
 - Basic framework plan used by MAG to identify potential implementation strategies.
 - Based on 2003 High Capacity Transit Study
- Implementation Framework
 - Region divided into five areas to assure each area would be covered.
- Implementation Issues – Railroad Coordination
 - Existing Railroads in Maricopa County
 - Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway (BNSF)
 - Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR)
 - Extensive coverage throughout county and into Pinal County.
 - Railroad coordination would be a key issue
- Conceptual Corridor Descriptions
 - In implementing commuter rail on the UP corridor, a key issue would be joint operations with the UP mainline, at-grade crossings.
- Conceptual Corridor Travel Conditions
 - Shows how commuter rail could provide a multimodal opportunity to offset potential roadway improvements.
 - The potential impact to the main UP/Tempe branch, auto travel time is shown as 52 minutes, the approximate time for current travelers to make a 25-mile trip along the I-10 East. A commuter rail alternative could shave that travel time to approximately 40 minutes, which could replace 1.8 highway lanes.
- Possible Implementation Scenarios
 - Three basic scenarios have been identified:

- Get Started – get started, which would implement service in a single congested corridor. One benefit would be the simplicity, opportunity to test commuter rail.
- Starter System – multiple corridors implemented at the same time.
- Regional System – the largest system, where several corridors are implemented at the same time.
- Cost estimates are from \$8M per mile to \$20M per mile, depending whether we lease right-of-way or buy right-of-way
- Operating and Cost Characteristics for Implementation Scenarios
 - Identified how many riders could potentially use the service, based on operating characteristics.
 - Potential impact on air quality by implementing service.
 - Range of capital cost is wide, because the improvements to existing tracks in unknown, and ranges from \$50K to \$400M for a single corridor.
 - Operating cost subsidy would vary depending on number of riders.

Ms. Coomer added that the next step will be for MAG to develop a final report. The report will be advertised and there will be an opportunity to make comments on the report. It will then proceed through the normal MAG approval process.

Councilmember Ellis clarified that since there is no funding for this, MAG will issue their report and make recommendations. She asked how other commuter rail examples were funded.

Ms. Coomer responded that it is usually a combination of federal and local funds. Some communities have funded it solely with local dollars because it was a high priority for their governor.

Jyme Sue McLaren added that there are projects available so that communities can implement a system fairly inexpensively without federal funds. The New Start Program is also available.

Ms. Coomer added that when she presented this to the Transportation Commission, she was asked if the sentiment toward commuter rail has changed. She felt there is more support regionally than there was in 2003 and the Governor is interested in some kind of statewide transportation solution. ADOT is talking to Union Pacific and there is interest in having some kind of commuter rail line between Tucson and Phoenix. Time will tell if that will happen. There have been rumors regarding a statewide sales tax to address transportation issues, and if that moves forward, commuter rail could be part of the package.

Vice Mayor Hutson asked what will happen next.

Ms. McLaren responded that staff had thought the study would roll out some prioritizations, corridors, and implementation strategy, but it did not. It is basically very politically motivated. If there is a desire by the leadership in this region to implement a commuter rail project, then it could be done in a simplistic manner with a Get Started program, and that's basically what the study says. MAG will put this on the table. There is a coalition considering a statewide initiative that will identify transportation improvements, one of which is commuter rail. This study will no doubt lay the groundwork for discussions on putting that in some sort of statewide initiative.

Vice Mayor Hutson asked whether a federal report would have to be written if it becomes a priority and if it is decided that it needs federal dollars.

Ms. McLaren responded that if we would seek federal money earmarked for a commuter rail program, we would have to go through the same program as for light rail. An environmental assessment would need to be done, design and engineering, and approval through the lengthy federal process. It would be possible to use a stand-alone, locally-funded program and implement it more quickly. The project could then be used for a future extension. She added that the City of Phoenix's north extension of three miles is Phase 1, which is half of what the system would require to go to the Metrocenter. It is paid 100% locally by the City of Phoenix and they will be seeking more match money on another corridor and using that as in-kind matching money.

Agenda Item 7 – Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee Recommendations

Carlos de Leon summarized that the 2006 Youth Town Hall focused on three major issues: preventing reckless driving, addressing academic pressures, and preventing underage smoking. Transportation-related recommendations dealing with prevention of reckless driving were referred to this Committee for evaluation.

- Increase environmental barriers that reduce reckless driving. Several items have been under development and implemented to help achieve this goal over the past year:
 - Revisions to Streetscape and Transportation Enhancement Program which provide tools to create calm and livable streets.
 - Installation of photo enforcement speed on green and red light running cameras at strategic locations.
 - Installation of enhanced signage adjacent to high schools on arterial street system.
 - Coordination with Police Department Selective Enforcement Motorcycle Squad (SEMS) to provide enforcement.
- Develop a drive safely awareness campaign.
 - Tempe in Motion's advertising and community outreach programs incorporate targeted messaging to teens, including ads in high school newspapers to encourage riding on buses, biking and walking and can also begin to incorporate safe driving messages.
- Install left turn lanes and left turn lights at intersections near high schools.
 - Staff has reviewed the recommendation to install left turn lanes and turn signal indications at intersections near high schools and is in the process of completing a study and will report findings to the Committee in January.

Councilmember Ellis asked staff to communicate this information back to the Youth Advisory Commission.

Mr. de Leon responded that staff would communicate through Kim Bauman.

Agenda Item 8 – FLASH Logo and Paint Scheme

Sue Taaffe summarized that as part of the annual Tempe in Motion (TIM) marketing evaluation process, staff identified a need to redesign the Flash logo and paint scheme. The FLASH logo is used on Tempe buses and promotional materials and no longer fits with the TIM and Orbit

brands. The proposed logo was designed with a visible and attractive paint scheme that coordinates with the Orbit paint scheme and distinguishes it from other Valley Metro buses.

Agenda Item 9 – Paratransit System Study Update

Carlos de Leon summarized that in September the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA) completed a study on creating a more regional paratransit system with the Valley Metro service area. Within the Valley Metro service area, ten paratransit systems are operated:

- Phoenix Dial-a-Ride (DAR), Paradise Valley DAR and Southwest Area DAR are all provided by the same operator (Phoenix).
- Tempe participates in the East Valley Dial-a-Ride which is a sub-regional system covering Tempe, Scottsdale, Mesa, Gilbert and Chandler. The service is provided by Veolia Transportation, a private corporation under contract with the RPTA.
- Each city contracts with RPTA through an IGA for service in that city.

He added that the issues of long and unreliable transfers between systems, poor operator performance, multiple points of contact for users, inconsistent policies and rising costs were identified as problems stemming from structure and performance of the current regional system.

Staff presented the study to the Transportation Commission, and the Accountability/Governance Subcommittee performed an evaluation. The subcommittee could not support Valley Metro's recommendations for regionalization until questions regarding ridership projections and cost estimates were answered. Valley Metro is proposing one regional call center for scheduling and dispatch of the appropriate subcontractor operating out of their sub-region. The concept would eliminate transfers between sub-regions. The approximate difference in cost to operate the regional system would be approximately \$2M per year. The sub-committee had concerns about where that money would come from and concerns that any service improvement resulting from the regionalization would be minimal. Valley Metro's plan is to allow the community time to analyze the report with potential adoption of the plan in March.

Councilmember Ellis added that one of the issues, in regionalizing something that is so important to some of our most fragile citizens, is that it ends up looking at the lowest common denominator. If other cities have more limited hours than we do, then the regionalization wouldn't adopt our hours. There are many details that need to be examined. It may contribute to decreased service for Tempe residents.

Mr. de Leon added that decreased service was partly the basis for the recommendation by the Transportation Commission to do further analysis. The sub-committee has asked staff to develop higher quality service standards and examine in depth the costs and benefits associated with various service design strategies aimed at achieving those standards and then return to this committee with recommendations. It is important to allow service objectives to guide the development of service design but with due consideration to the principle of efficiency and the reality of limited funding. Valley Metro's main goal is how to regionalize, not necessarily how to improve the service.

Agenda Item 10 – University and Rural Bus Transfer Station

Bonnie Richardson presented a drawing of the initial concept plan for the University and Rural Bus Transfer Station developed in March 2004. Based on recent meetings with ASU and LRT

staff, a number of design issues have been discussed and design modifications include the following:

- ASU plans a building in place of the anticipated pedestrian plaza. A pedestrian passageway through the building would be provided to access the pedestrian street. This would be a welcoming way of bringing people into the campus.
- A new bus pullout would be placed on Rural Road to eliminate the need for southbound buses to enter the transfer station.
- A shift in the existing easement to align with the existing street curb to preserve mature trees and existing infrastructure for ASU. This easement is only on the west half, and the property on the east half is City-owned.

Ms. Richardson continued that pedestrian and bicycle safety remains the highest priority and as a result, the Tyler and Rural intersection will continue to be evaluated for signal timing and crosswalk design. Future operational considerations may include a potential request from ASU to provide limited access along the dedicated bus drive for future buildings. Staff expects to remain within the \$2M budget. ASU has agreed to work with staff to coordinate design and landscape issues in order to accommodate the December 2008 completion date.

Ron McCoy, ASU, added that ASU's concern is that they will be able to service any new buildings in the future and they will continue to work with the City on those concerns. The proposed triangular building is for the future home of Del E. Webb School of Construction so that is a concern. They are working under the assumption that whatever they do, it will need to be pedestrian-oriented.

Ms. Richardson added that ASU will provide a draft of an easement. A couple of options have been examined, and as soon as the easement is prepared, staff will place it on the agenda.

Councilmember Ellis clarified that it looks like it is an increase of 450 feet.

Ms. Richardson responded that staff has tried to keep it as equal as possible. With future development by ASU, it would be nice to have a little more area in the north corner to provide ease of movement for pedestrians.

Vice Mayor Hutson asked for clarification that staff is not considering larger buses than 45 feet.

Ms. Richardson responded that longer buses would be acceptable. Staff hopes this brings a lot of flexibility as there will be Flash, Orbit and regular buses.

Agenda Item 11 – Future Agenda Items

- Batteries
- Mobile Home Relocation Draft Policy

The next meeting will be held January 22, 2008.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Prepared by: Connie Krosschell
Reviewed by: Carlos de Leon

Jan Hort
City Clerk

UNAPPROVED