



Minutes City Council Issue Review Session April 9, 2009

Minutes of the Tempe City Council Issue Review Session held on Thursday, April 9, 2009, 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 Shana Ellis
Councilmember P. Ben Arredondo
Councilmember Mark W. Mitchell
Councilmember Joel Navarro
Councilmember Onnie Shekerjian
Councilmember Corey D. Woods

Mayor Hallman called the meeting to order at 6L15 p.m.

Call to the Audience

No one came forward to speak.

Downtown Employee Parking

INFORMATIONAL BACKGROUND available in City Clerk's Office.

DISCUSSION – Presenters: Community Development Manager Chris Salomone, Senior Planner Heidi Graham

City Manager Charlie Meyer summarized that staff will present an approach that is being evolved relative to downtown employee parking. Staff considered other approaches that might not have been well-timed relative to other cutbacks.

Chris Salomone summarized that in response to the budget constraints, staff is proposing a step toward a permanent solution for City employee parking. This proposal leads to a more fiscally stable position, but also provides an interim period of time for adjustment and evaluation. There are 650 to 700 employees who work downtown and have permission to park downtown.

- Currently, the City is renting 250 spaces in the Chase garage, and staff recommends cancelling that effective in May. This will save the City \$150K. Those employees would be relocated to two surface parking lots.
 - The lot at 7th and Myrtle with 68 spaces (shared by employees and the public). This lot is leased until August, 2011, at no charge. It is in the path of development, so the timeframe is uncertain.
 - The lot at 6th and College. That lot is leased from ASU with 108 spaces.

- The overflow lot at 5th and Farmer lot (300 spaces) can be used at the will of the employees. .
- Ultimately, the new park and ride lot at Apache and Price will be mostly covered parking and will be free for employees. This lot will be available within the next couple of months and will have 283 spaces.

Council has asked staff to investigate validations, and staff recommends that the City eliminate validations for the Brickyard as a budgetary constraint. The City will validate in the new City parking garage (438 public spaces), but the cost there will not be a direct cost but rather a lost opportunity cost and that can hopefully be regulated by a new process. This process would involve selling stickers to various departments and the departments can make a policy decision about customer service and who and when should be validated. This will allow the City to implement a system that can be monitored and be controlled.

Mr. Salomone added that staff will return within the year with an evaluation of usage, effectiveness, and employee concerns.

Vice Mayor Ellis clarified that validation would be part of Phase 1 and would be implemented May 15th.

Mr. Salomone agreed.

Mayor Hallman clarified that Phase 2 would look at all of the parking lots the City controls. He suggested that staff return in less than a year, maybe six months.

CONSENSUS

Phase 1 - Acceptable as presented.

Phase 2 - Staff to return in six months with evaluation.

Follow-up Responsibility: Chris Salomone

CDBG/HOME Programs: Selection of Activities for FY 2009/10

INFORMATIONAL BACKGROUND available in City Clerk's Office.

DISCUSSION – Community Development Manager Chris Salomone; Affordable Housing Coordinator Craig Hittie

Craig Hittie summarized that the City is required by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to submit an action plan annually describing the proposed use of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME funds that the City expects to receive for FY 2009/10. The action plan describes those activities the City has elected to fund. He noted that the numbers are based on level funding because staff has yet to receive the final numbers from HUD. A slight increase is anticipated in CDBG (1%) and possibly a larger increase for HOME (up to 11%).

Councilmember Arredondo asked whether this should have come through the Housing Committee.

Councilmember Woods verified that the committee did discuss the plan.

Councilmember Mitchell asked about grant money available in the stimulus package and clarified that it would be in addition to what is shown.

Mr. Hittie verified that it is being handled separately.

Councilmember Shekerjian added that Item #9 lists Historic Preservation and notes that the funds will be used to rehabilitate homes that have been designated as historic in Tempe's historic neighborhoods. She asked about the process used to award that money.

Mr. Hittie responded that the funds go through the Historic Preservation Commission.

Mayor Hallman asked about Item #3, Affordable Housing – Site Acquisition. He asked if it is staff's intention to run those funds through the Housing Trust Fund or separately through the staff process.

Mr. Hittie responded that they would be run separately through the staff process per federal regulations.

CONSENSUS

Move forward as presented.

Follow-up Responsibility: Chris Salomone

Photo Enforcement Update

INFORMATIONAL BACKGROUND available in City Clerk's Office.

DISCUSSION – Lieutenant Noah Johnson; Deputy Court Manager Nancy Rodriguez; Traffic Engineer Shelly Seyler

City Manager Charlie Meyer summarized that the Photo Enforcement Program is a cooperative effort between the Courts, the Police Department, and Traffic Engineering. Staff will be discussing how the programs came into effect, how the speed limits are set, and how the sites are selected.

Noah Johnson outlined accident statistics for fixed locations.

- The City is broken into three reporting districts and each district compares 2007 to 2008.
- The numbers are down 16%. Many things can affect that, including light rail and traffic volume.
- Photo enforcement is at 17 locations, plus two speed vans positioned anywhere in the City. Other than the locations at 200 S. Rural, 500 S. Rural and 600 S. Priest, all of the other fixed locations are at intersections and do red light and speed on green at the same time.
- The locations at 200 S. Rural, 500 S. Rural, and 600 S. Priest show the highest number of violations and efforts will be made to reduce speed at those locations.
- A significant amount of the fine of \$171 goes to different surcharges.

Shelly Seyler summarized the establishment of speed limits, as well as background information on the established speed limits on Rural Road and Priest Drive. The factors include:

- Prevailing vehicle speed. (This is based on the 85th percentile speed, at which 85 percent of the free-flowing vehicles are traveling at or below. Use of the 85th percentile is based on the theory that the large majority of drivers are traveling at a reasonable and prudent speed. This method is the most widely recognized method, however, in the urban environment use of this method alone may result in speeds that are unsafe for adjacent land use including bicycle and pedestrian activities.)
- Physical features of the roadway, such as horizontal and vertical alignment, sight and stopping distance, land

widths and raised medians.

- Traffic control characteristic including crosswalks, signals, stop signs and other traffic control.
- Crash experience, which considers severity, cause and type.
- Roadside development and culture, including driveways, bus stops or parking.
- Pedestrian and bicycle activity.
- Traffic calming features, including speed humps and traffic circles.
- Signal timing progression (the speed which would be most efficient for existing signal timing)

She summarized that after conducting a study using this criteria, an appropriate speed is recommended to the City Council who revises the Tempe City Code Chapter 19. She added that there have been concerns regarding the mid-block photo enforcement locations and the City has made efforts to make those visible. The City is proposing to install speed feedback signs. These signs have proven effective in reducing speeds and are currently used in other Valley cities, including Chandler, Gilbert and Mesa.

Councilmember Navarro asked about the change from 40 mph to 35 mph. In a school zone, the signs are different. Has that ever been considered on Rural Road?

Ms. Seyler responded that it has been considered. Staff has tried to emphasize the school locations knowing they are all adjacent to the high schools. Staff feels the speed feedback signs will provide similar results as the increased visibility signs in front of the high school zones.

Councilmember Navarro asked if there was a way to measure how people are interacting in those areas.

Ms. Seyler responded that staff does have the ability to measure speed at different times of the year through two counts throughout the City, so as we go along, we can certainly see how effective we are of increasing that visibility by using the counters at various times of the year.

Councilmember Shekerjian stated that this has been one of the top three things she has asked about on a regular basis and she appreciated staff's efforts. People assume these are speed traps for revenue. She had asked staff for the purpose of photo radar and their answer was to slow people down for safety. If the purpose is to slow people down, then she thought the speed feedback signs are a good suggestion. She also appreciated re-looking at Priest Drive with a study to see if the speed limits are appropriate because the road has changed since the last study.

Mayor Hallman added that most people think a reasonable and prudent speed between University on the south side and the 202 Freeway is not 35 mph but 40 mph. Priest Road is an example of being signed at 40 mph, just as University used to be, and part of his concern is the way in which staff's memo suggests that maybe this was a City Council-driven matter when in 2004, Council requested that staff review speed signs. He didn't remember that, but by the time this conversation happened in March of 2005, staff was presenting a model of creating a big picture of how speeds should be reduced toward the City center. Council was looking at school zones as 35 mph speed zones. That is prudent and reasonable. Council also had the idea of some grand vision that as we toward the urban center, speed would have to be slowed down. The one place we made a mistake was between University and the 202 Freeway. Until the Council took action in March 2005, that roadway was signed at 40 mph from University north, yet staff's memo suggests that it was because of the way it was designed that the speed limit had to be reduced. We may have reduced it to 35 mph between Rio Salado and the 202 Freeway, but he believed from University to Rio Salado it was still signed at 40 mph. The memo goes on to show that the Council changed the speed limit on Rural/Scottsdale Road from the 202 Freeway to University Drive from 40 mph down to 35 mph in May of 2005. Council made a mistake in the impression Council gave to the public. He would like staff to at least go out and measure speeds when traffic is moving freely and figure out what that 85th percentile is.

He continued that in looking at a chart that shows 120,000 violations between December 2007 and January 2009, it doesn't look good that the next southbound location gets only about 35,000 citations. That is because traffic backs up at University, and the light at 6th Street is so badly timed that anyone coming across Rio Salado is almost sure to miss it so most people slow down anyway before they get to the photo radar location. Photo radar is an appropriate use of resources because we can't have officers at every one of these locations. It is appropriate that the City is using technology to help enforce the law and protect the community, but that one location sticks out. If we are worried about 35 mph, we would have that speed camera at the bridge and not on Rural south of Rio Salado. People accelerate northbound once they have passed that camera and get back up to 45 or 50 mph as they approach the 202. If we are serious that the really dangerous location is where Playa del Norte comes into Rural, we should move the speed camera. We either need to put up big signs to truly achieve reduction of speed there or recognize that the average person thinks a safe and prudent speed is 40 mph. Maybe we tweak the camera and make everyone understand that 46 mph gets a ticket. Are we giving a lot of tickets between 46 mph and 50 mph currently and if the speed were adjusted to 40 mph, would we eliminate a huge number of these violations? He didn't think safety should come at the expense of practicing good sense. If anyone is getting revenue, it's the state, with 84% of the fines going to the state. The City is collecting approximately \$35 and we are trying to pay for the cost of our criminal justice system appropriately. The State is using it to pad things like Medical Services Enhancement Fund, Fill the Gap Fund, DNA Testing, and the Probation Fee. Those come out of a fine someone is paying for inadvertently or intentionally speeding through Tempe.

Councilmember Shekerjian suggested performing another traffic study for the area between Rio Salado Parkway and University.

Mayor Hallman also suggested that staff figure out how better to collect data for the traffic studies because the reporting districts are the blocks between the streets. Staff is stuck trying to gather data and best interpret it when it is not collected to figure out what is going on between Rio Salado and University on Rural. It is structured to see what is going on the block west and the block east of that address. The 200 S. Rural camera location 0417 also appears on the 500 S. Rural Road camera. How did staff allocate between those reporting districts?

Lt. Johnson responded that it was done by the Crime Analysis Unit using a computer generated process. The difficulty with the accident reporting is that an officer reports an accident as to and from the intersection.

Mayor Hallman clarified that depending on which side of the street it is assigned to, the reporting district might run from College Avenue to Myrtle, for example, and there could be an accident northbound on the east side of the road on Myrtle and an accident southbound on the west side of the road on College reported to the same reporting district and the data would not tell the difference. We could be assigning changes in traffic pattern for one street when it may have occurred on the other. That is a difficulty we face in analyzing this data. It is for crime data collection not traffic accident data collection. He suggested for these locations gathering the specific data about real accidents over a time series to provide good information.

CONSENSUS

Move forward as things are.

Measure and analyze speeds between University and Rio Salado on Rural (northbound).

Follow-up Responsibility: Noah Johnson, Shelly Seyler

Tempe South Corridor Study

INFORMATIONAL BACKGROUND available in City Clerk's Office.

DISCUSSION – Presenters: Public Works Manager Glenn Kephart; Deputy Public Works Manager Jyme Sue McLaren

Glenn Kephart summarized that over the last eighteen months, staff has been, in cooperation with Valley Metro Rail, evaluating options for high capacity transit north and south through Tempe. Last September, Council agreed to take numerous alternatives into the study for further analysis and staff is now at the point of narrowing that down to a couple of alternatives. He acknowledged that through the City's partnership with Valley Metro Rail, Wulf Grote and Mark Sorenson have been leading efforts on the City's behalf.

Jyme Sue McLaren narrated a PowerPoint presentation:

- There are 57 miles of high capacity transit corridors planned for the region as a result of the passage of Proposition 400.
- The Tempe South Corridor is a two-mile extension.
- During the first phase of analysis, a variety of options were eliminated. This phase was more qualitative and paired technologies and alignments for analysis.
- During that phase, the following options were eliminated: Light Rail in a number of locations including the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way, Light Rail as an option on Mill and Kyrene, and Light Rail on Rural Road in the corridor for an exclusive lane scenario only. In addition, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) was eliminated on the Mill/Kyrene corridor as an exclusive lane scenario, and all technologies associated with McClintock alignment at that time.
- During Tier 2, BRT was investigated on the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way, Mill/Kyrene as a shared lane scenario, Modern Streetcar on Mill/Southern, and Light Rail on Rural Road as a shared lane. As a dedicated lane on Rural Road, there wasn't enough right-of-way to accomplish Light Rail. In the second phase, a compromised scenario was analyzed which would allow Light Rail on a dedicated lane in the middle of the street, except for locations at intersections where there would be shared left turn movements with vehicular traffic.
- At the conclusion of Tier 2 analysis, two options were viable: Mill Avenue Modern Streetcar and Bus Rapid Transit corridor on Rural Road.
- Mill Avenue Modern Streetcar uses an alignment from downtown at the Third and Mill Rail Station, south on Mill Avenue to Southern, and east to the community complex at Rural and Southern. This connects well to neighborhoods and helps to serve local trip generation. It also serves major regional destinations such as ASU and downtown Tempe. It demonstrates high ridership and connects also the jog onto Southern Avenue to connect to the transit ridership corridor on Rural Road. This alignment has minimal right-of-way requirements because the streetcar shares a lane of traffic with vehicular traffic. It also allows for an economic development opportunity.
- The Rural Road Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor starts in downtown Tempe, proceeds to Rural Road and continues south on Rural Road to Chandler Boulevard. From there it could go west or east into serving the City of Chandler. This corridor enhances the level of service in an already existing transit market. It also connects north and south Tempe and provides a great deal of mobility. It has the highest level of transit boardings of the technologies and alignments analyzed. It has low ridership and capital costs associated with it. It assumes that the outside lane of Rural Road is dedicated to BRT or transit vehicles and right turn movements. The dedicated lane only exists in the highest congested area of the corridor (Baseline to University). Additional analysis will be done to understand the impacts to traffic. In addition to the right turn lane, queue jumpers are also being added. Queue jumpers are right lanes that allow for a bus at a congested intersection to enter into its own dedicated lane,

bypass the queue at the intersection to get to the front of the line and allows the bus to proceed without being held up in traffic. These are proposed at Broadway, Southern and Guadalupe.

Ms. McLaren added that staff is seeking Council's direction to take two actions:

- Dismiss BRT along the Union Pacific Railroad right of way.
- Dismiss BRT on Mill/Kyrene alignment.
- Dismiss light rail on Rural Road alignment.

Mayor Hallman asked for the major impediments for the light rail on Rural Road.

Ms. McLaren responded that the primary reason is that it is difficult to have rail-to-rail crossings on Rural Road because the Union Pacific line can't be crossed at grade. It would require either going under or over the railroad and an overpass would be about 23 feet tall and about a quarter mile in length. In addition, that also restricts turn movements. The light rail corridor is only 2.1 miles long. To extend it further, it would be necessary to cross over the US 60 overpass. It also had the highest cost per mile, had considerable utility impacts, and didn't offer a great deal of travel time savings. Another challenge was the shared left turn lanes with vehicular traffic.

Councilmember Woods asked how much money would be saved by going to BRT rather than light rail.

Ms. McLaren responded that the light rail cost is about \$105M per mile, and the total project cost would be \$200M. The BRT corridor is \$7M to \$8M per mile, and that segment of the corridor could be about \$80M for the entire length. A smaller BRT corridor could also be implemented. There would also be an option to phase in just the corridor as a BRT project and build supporting infrastructure such as park-and-ride lots at a later time.

Vice Mayor Ellis asked Ms. McLaren to explain why we don't have to choose between the Modern Streetcar on Mill/Southern and BRT on Rural Road.

Ms. McLaren explained that in Proposition 400, there are two projects. The first project is the 2-mile light rail extension on Rural Road as part of the City's high capacity investment. There is approximately \$150M in Proposition 400 resources for that project. In addition to that, a BRT corridor is part of the bus element of Proposition 400, and that corridor extends from Chandler Boulevard on the south to Shea Boulevard on the north in the City of Scottsdale. Both of those projects are in the Proposition 400. For planning purposes, staff has identified terminus locations for the streetcar and levels of service for BRT on Rural Road that make good sense from a planning perspective. They exceed the resources available in Proposition 400 and staff understands that. It is also important to note that Proposition 400 is significantly underfunded at this point. It is \$1B for the transit piece alone and it will be necessary to address what happens with the implementation of Proposition 400. There have been a variety of things put on the table, but some suggestions are to have a program of projects over a span of twenty years. That could potentially be extended to 25 or 30 years and then everything in the program gets implemented on the schedule in which it was identified and the projects just get pushed out. Projects in the program could also be eliminated. There are suggestions that all the BRT corridors in the program be eliminated. Another option might be to reduce the scope of the project. It is important to understand all of those aspects. In addition, Proposition 400 does assume a big chunk of money from the federal government. The uncertainty of the federal availability of those funds for all the corridors is still a level of uncertainty. As we move forward, staff will look at refining cost effectiveness and will work with the regional agencies and federal partners to better understand how to match our investment with the availability of our funding resources in order to bring those two together. What staff is showing Council today is an example of what staff thinks is the right thing from a vision standpoint, but sufficient resources may not be available to implement both of these projects to the extent described today.

Councilmember Arredondo asked why are we doing something to help BRT go to the Chandler Regional Mall?

Ms. McLaren responded that the southern portion of that corridor links Chandler's major destinations. Tempe is not paying for that. Proposition 400 funds, all of the capital and all of the operations for BRT corridors would be funded 100% out of the Proposition 400 money, not the City of Tempe. For the streetcar project, however, the only money from Proposition 400 is the capital money. The additional operations money has to come from the City of Tempe's local tax, just like light rail, and we have that in our financial forecast today and operating money is being reserved for that corridor.

Councilmember Mitchell asked for the cost per mile of the Modern Streetcar.

Ms. McLaren responded that it is about \$52M to \$55M. The total cost for what staff has identified is just under \$189M to \$199M.

Councilmember Mitchell asked if the Modern Streetcar could be expanded further south.

Ms. McLaren responded it would be a matter of the availability of resources.

Mayor Hallman clarified that it would give the option to continue and it would be the technology to go further south if we are going to use rail on the right side lane. That could give the further piece. Chandler and Mesa are looking at the actual extension of light rail rather than Rural Route, more likely going south on Country Club/Arizona Avenue. That would then pick up Chandler's downtown and link it to Mesa's downtown if and when Mesa gets light rail down Main Street.

Councilmember Navarro asked if we are in alignment with connecting to something in Chandler.

Ms. McLaren responded that it does have that capability. It allows us to connect nodes of activity centers to our downtown similar to what Orbit does. The investment in capital really entices a lot of development around those areas.

CONSENSUS

- Dismiss Bus Rapid Transit along Union Pacific Railroad, and Mill/Kyrene (shared lane)
- Dismiss Light Rail on Rural Road (shared lane)
- Advance Modern Streetcar on Mill/Southern
- Advance Bus Rapid Transit on Rural Road

Follow-up Responsibility: Jyme Sue McLaren

Formal Council Agenda Items

None.

Future Agenda Items

None.

Mayor's Announcements/Manager's Announcements

None.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Jan Hort
City Clerk