



Minutes City Council's Transportation Committee October 28, 2008

Minutes of the meeting of the City Council's Transportation Committee held on Tuesday, October 28, 2008, 3:00 p.m., in the 3rd Floor Conference Room, Tempe City Hall, 31 E. 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

Committee Members Present:

Vice Mayor Shana Ellis, Chair
Councilmember Ben Arredondo

City Staff Present:

Dawn Coomer, Transportation Planner
Carlos de Leon, Dep Public Wrks Mgr
Shelley Hearn, Comm Relations Mgr
Greg Jordan, Transit Administrator
Gregg Kent, LRT Proj Engineer
Glenn Kephart, Public Wrks Mgr
Jayson Matthews, Tempe Transportation Commission
Jyme Sue McLaren, Dep Public Wrks Mgr
Amanda Nelson, Comm Outreach Mktg Supervisor
Bonnie Richardson, Trans. Principal Planner
Chris Salomone, Comm Dev Manager
Shelly Seyler, Traffic Engineer
Oddvar Tveit, Environmental Qual Spec
Teresa Voss, Asst City Attorney
Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Svcs Dir

Guests Present:

Paul Berumen, Dir. Of Local Government Relations, ASU
Joseph Cho, ASU student
Jake Hinman, AZ Multi-housing Association
Catherine Mayorga, Tempe Chamber of Commerce
Duane Washkowiak, Aviation Commission Chair

Vice Mayor Shana Ellis called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None.

Agenda Item 2 –Draft Committee Work Plan

Carlos de Leon presented the draft Committee Work Plan. He explained that since a prior committee handled transportation issues, staff used that work plan as a guide and incorporated the aviation items. This initial draft will be used as a starting point to develop a scope of work.

Vice Mayor Ellis read the work plan items:

- a. Work to uphold measures that mitigate the noise impact on neighborhoods under the flight paths for Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.
- b. Promote aviation system planning to enable the region to diversify growth in aviation and commercial operations to airports throughout the valley.
- c. Encourage the implementation of noise reduction measures for new developments in redevelopment areas around the Town Lake.
- d. Review measures to ensure safety of aircraft operations over Town Lake area.
- e. Ensure that light rail transit (LRT) design, construction and operational activities meet community needs.
- f. Increase transit ridership.
- g. Coordinate local and regional transportation decisions.
- h. Assure the safe and efficient movement of people and vehicles along the street system.
- i. Recognize and encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel as an important part of the transportation system.
- j. Expand community partnerships.

Glenn Kephart referred to Item #g, the second bullet, which states "Support federal funding requests for regional and local transit projects." He stated that it is possible that the federal government may be considering an economic stimulus package which may happen either at the end of November or when the new administration begins. If it is in the longer timeframe, it may be useful to have that as a work item on the work plan. If it is on the shorter timeframe, it would happen so quickly that staff will just have to make some recommendations and ask for assistance in prioritization. It might be wise to leave it as a placeholder if, in fact, it moves on the longer timeframe.

Councilmember Arredondo added that these committees have about a two year assignment, and these kinds of issues are flowing items. They can move on and off.

Oddvar Tveit suggested removing the first bullet point under Item #b, "Monitor City participation and input to airport planning updates, conducted by ADOT, MAG or by the City of Phoenix." The MAG part may not be a relevant issue today. He suggested leaving the item on but removing MAG.

Vice Mayor Ellis suggested checking off item #f. Ridership has been increasing.

CONSENSUS: The work plan will be reviewed by the Transportation Commission on November 18th. If there are no substantial changes, the work plan will be sent to Council before the end of the year.

Agenda Item 3 – Residential Parking Program (RPP)

Shelly Seyler summarized information on the residential parking program. The program was established in 1986 to help control out-of-area parking, primarily in the area surrounding ASU and some of the areas near parks and Marcos de Niza High School.

Ms. Seyler presented the proposed residential permit parking policy and practice revisions. Because it has been in existence for quite awhile, comments have been received from residents regarding the policy. Staff has presented these revisions to the Neighborhood Advisory Commission based on concerns that have been received. She also noted a memo from Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Services Director, which provides recommendations from the Neighborhood Advisory Commission specifically regarding the policies on the number of permits issued to residents.

Based on those comments, as well as the recommendations from the Commission, staff met with other departments including Code Enforcement, City Attorney, and Neighborhood Services to discuss the policies and how to best administer them. Staff discussed the following concerns and questions regarding policies:

- Guest permits. Every dwelling unit within an approved residential parking permit area gets one guest permit per residential unit. There were concerns that if residences do not have driveways and are “grandfathered” in without driveways, they don’t have any offsite parking which makes it difficult when they have guests. Staff is recommending an additional visitor permit be given to those residents, showing they do not have a driveway. Under current policy, residents are allowed to email staff if they are having a gathering, and staff notifies the Police Department to not enforce the parking permit program during that time.
- Number of permits issued per unit. Currently, each resident of a household within the permit program is entitled to receive a vehicle permit for their vehicle. They must show proof of residence and show registration for their vehicle. There are concerns with the unlimited number of permits. Staff is recommending that a practice be implemented where any residence with more than three permits is passed along to Code Enforcement to determine the number of unrelated persons in the household. The information sheet regarding the policies has been updated. Residents are required to sign the information sheet annually upon permit renewal.
- Parking within frontage of residence. A question was raised whether residents could be restricted to park only within the frontage of their residence. This restriction would be difficult to administer. Staff recommends that the current policy remain unchanged.
- Requirement that the problem exists prior to implementation (reactive vs. proactive). The current policy states that if a resident calls, staff will determine whether to move forward with establishing a program. Because light rail is coming on board and there might be some out-of-area parking, staff is moving to a more proactive program where residents may call and, if they are interested in a program, staff will work with them to establish it.
- Lack of enforcement in the RPP areas. Staff is working with the Police Department to increase the amount of enforcement, specifically in the areas surrounding ASU.

Staff requested feedback regarding the updates to the policies and practices.

Shauna Warner added, on behalf of the Neighborhood Advisory Commission, that there was a concern with permits being issued to multi-family dwellings. The Commission felt it should be limited to single-family dwellings.

CONSENSUS: Include this item in the Friday Informational Packet. It does not need to be placed on the Council agenda.

Agenda Item 4 – Bus Service and Potential Fare Changes

Greg Jordan summarized that the City of Phoenix is facing a significant budget shortfall and they have initiated a series of bus service reductions within Phoenix. Those reductions have been approved and will be effective December 29th.

- Reduction of operating hours to 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- Saturday service levels reduced to match Sunday service levels.
- Affected routes for Tempe include Route #44 which will have fewer trips after 10 p.m.
- Bus schedule reductions on Route #30, #45, #56, #61 and #77. Tempe service won’t be affected directly, but with the Phoenix service being cut at 10 p.m., Tempe will continue to operate service past 10 p.m. on

weekdays. The night-time productivity of those routes might decrease with the service cut in Phoenix and Mesa.

Mr. Jordan added that staff will be working with Valley Metro to inform citizens of the service changes. Other extensive cuts will go forward in July of 2009. Those will go through a public hearing process, however. Short late night routes may also be eliminated.

Jayson Matthews added that the Transportation Commission is concerned that ASU currently runs a shuttle to the Phoenix campus that runs until 1 a.m. or 2 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. They are hoping that the combination of bus and light rail will alleviate some of that cost. Reducing the bus schedules at 10 p.m. will create further concerns. Another concern is tied to the light rail hours.

Ms. McLaren added that light rail will operate until midnight. The rail board has approved, in concept, the operating plans and the Phoenix City Council is considering having later light rail service. Staff is not sure how that will be resolved. The hours may change for special events.

Mr. Jordan continued with a PowerPoint presentation on Valley Metro Regional Fare Policy.

- Last fiscal year, fare recovery was at 23.3% and is expected to increase to 25% in 2009, which meets a policy target. It is anticipated that fare recovery will decrease in the next four to five years. As a result, Phoenix and Valley Metro launched an examination of the fare policy.
- Recommended increases over two years in the base cash fares for local bus and light rail service, phased increases in day passes over FY10 and FY11, and increases in 31-day passes in FY11.
- Consultants are proposing a differential price structure. Purchase of the day pass at a retail outlet would cost \$.75 less than it would cost to purchase on the bus. That is intended to enhance boarding capacity.
- ADA Paratransit Fares would increase from \$2 to \$2.50 in FY10 and by \$.25 in each subsequent year through FY13. There is discussion on the impact of a free bus pass for ADA certified individuals. A trip on the bus is more efficient and less costly than Dial-A-Ride.
- Other pass programs are being investigated: continuing the Platinum Pass Program, formalizing the University Pass Program with ASU, and exploring ticket/pass programs targeted at conventions and major sporting/cultural events.
- Regional Revenue & Ridership Impacts: Lead to a \$75M increase in revenue over four years, but would translate into reduction of 28M boardings.
- Tempe Revenue & Ridership Impacts: Lead to \$7M more revenue for Tempe, and a reduction of 4M boardings.
- Effect on Fare Recovery: After FY09, it dramatically exceeds 25% fare recovery target.
- Advantages: raises fare revenue, improves recovery to over 30% through 2013, improves boarding speed, and consistency with peer cities.
- Disadvantages: reduces ridership by 10%; excessive recovery ratio, negative economic impact, uncritical peer city analysis (analysis was done without attention to control variables); limited policy analysis, recommends fare prices, not multiples; aggressive approval process
- Valley Metro's Next Steps:
 - Transit Management Committee – November 5
 - Valley Metro Board of Directors – November 20th for input and authorization to conduct public meetings.
 - Public Hearings in January 2009
 - Valley Metro staff/management committees in January/February to consider approval.
 - Valley Metro Board of Directors – February 19th to consider approval
 - Implementation – July 2009 or earlier.

Vice Mayor Ellis asked if this is approved, does it automatically get approved for rail or whether it must go through the rail process as well.

Mr. Jordan responded that it would go through the rail board as well. The Phoenix City Council has to approve any fare changes, as well.

Ms. McLaren added that Tempe would be subjected to an audit on rail performance so the first three years of productivity for light rail is very important.

Councilmember Arredondo stated that timing is not good to increase rates while encouraging individuals to ride the bus and light rail. The approach needs to be longer and more gradual. He also assumed the pass program for Tempe students would continue. Concerning fare revenue, he asked if it was necessary to go that high to be cost neutral.

Mr. Jordan responded that staff has raised the question of whether the 30% recovery is too high.

Councilmember Arredondo agreed that it is. This may be pricing people out of public transit and the timeframe is too aggressive. Staff needs to look at this and come back with more details.

Mr. Jordan added that there are two ways to increase revenues. The fare policy can be increased, or ridership can be increased. Increasing ridership has not been part of the discussion and staff needs to raise that issue and ask that it be addressed.

Mr. Matthews added that the Transportation Commission was concerned that raising these fares during an economic downturn will have a greater impact on those vulnerable populations. There has also been a growing trend of seniors trying to become ADA qualified because of their fixed incomes trying. He also added, concerning the issue of multiples, that if people can be incentivized to get the 31-day passes for a cheaper rate, it not only increases the overall price point per customer, but also increases the ridership.

Vice Mayor Ellis clarified that if there was a "no" vote at that time, the process would be stopped.

Mr. de Leon responded that they would have a second opportunity to decide whether to implement the increase and that would be in February after the public hearing. They would then go out for a proposal and get comments.

Mr. Jordan added that prior to the Management Committee meeting, there was a joint committee meeting of the Valley Metro Operations Capital Committee and the Financial Oversight Committee, and the Valley Metro Operations Capital Committee voted this down, 7-5, based mainly on the fact that we had just gotten it. The Financial Committee approved it, 7-6. There is contention as to whether to support this.

Ms. McLaren asked if the Board didn't pass the fare increase, would Phoenix be forced to cut additional service?

Mr. Jordan responded that he did not know what the effect would be if it didn't pass.

CONSENSUS: Staff was asked to look at these issues in more depth and return to the Committee at the next meeting.

Agenda Item 5 – LRT and Transportation Center Grand Opening
Shelley Hearn outlined the Light Rail Grand Opening events.

Friday, December 26 – the Media Preview Pass Event, 6 – 9 a.m.

- Goal will be to get the media on the train prior to the actual event day
- Will include elected officials, some community members, the Boards, and all the individuals who have been working on the light rail to make this project happen
- A number of passes will be available for distribution
- Event will be hosted by Mayor Hallman at the Tempe Transit Center; Rick Simonetta will comment about rail safety, and introductions of those present will be made
- Trains will leave from Tempe and return to Tempe.

December 26th - Appreciate Dinner at the Phoenix Sheraton, 5:30 – 9 p.m.

- Dinner and reception hosted by Rick Simonetta
- Speakers will include all mayors, and possible Congressman Ed Pastor, Congressman Harry Mitchell, and Secretary of Transportation Mary Peters
- Valley Metro is hoping to use the train to transport the guests to the dinner
- Might include local sponsors

December 27th, Grand Opening Ceremony, 8 – 9:45 a.m. (tentative schedule)

- Ceremony is limited to dignitaries and individuals who worked on the project. Each city will have a train designated to take officials to their public grand opening parties to kick off the opening ceremonies.
- Ceremony will include comments from officials and recognition of elected officials
- Photo ops – flipping of symbolic switch to power up METRO
- Ribbon-cutting of train with mayors and board members at OMC

December 27th, Tempe's Main Station Celebration

- For the public from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at College and Veterans Way
- Free rides on the light rail and tours of the Transportation Center
- Activities will include:
 - Transportation Zone – demonstrates how easy it is to use the available modes of transportation to navigate through Tempe
 - The Green Street – includes contractors who built the Transportation Center, vendors with green ideas and products, and a farmers market
 - Train to Tempe - sponsored by Fiesta Bowl and will feature Tempe as a destination for events
 - Dig Through Time – photographs and exhibits of the archeological dig at the Transportation Center and along the light rail line
 - The Urban Experience – developers will showcase projects downtown and along the rail line
 - Light Rail – How it was built – sponsored by Sundt/Stacey & Wilbeck and will include contractors and developers who worked on the project
 - Kids on the Go – sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield and includes transportation-related kids activities and a Wii station trailer
 - VIP Area and Beer Garden – sponsored by Studios 5 located on the deck of the building on College and Fifth
 - Other station parties include Priest and Washington, Mill and Third, Dorsey and Apache, and Price and Apache
- Roger Clyne & the Peacemakers will perform, and there will also be fireworks

Councilmember Arredondo suggested inviting non-profit organizations to the event, as well as past councilmembers.

Mr. Matthews added that inviting other organizations may help promote light rail.

Ms. Hearn added that the train and the concert are free on Saturday. Friday is the only day where there is a limited number of passes. It is also free to ride light rail from Saturday through the Block Party on New Year's Eve. She added that if she is able to get a sponsor for the Beer Garden, she would like to work with the Tempe Community Council on the liquor license. She added that sponsorships are also being sold for the Transportation Zone, the Green Street, and the Urban Experience. Everything else has a sponsor at this point. A public service announcement will be run on Cox. She added that the interdepartmental cooperation in planning the event has been outstanding.

Agenda Item 6 – Future Agenda Items

- Fare revenue
- Work Plan
- Light Rail and Transportation Center Grand Opening (if significant changes)
- December meeting date, if needed (regular meeting date would be December 23.)
- Citizen Satisfaction regarding Transportation Services - Analysis/Results
- Traffic Calming Update for Maple/Ash, College, Broadway Road

Meeting adjourned at 4:14 p.m.

Prepared by: Connie Krosschell
Reviewed by: Carlos de Leon

Jan Hort
City Clerk