



Minutes City Council's Transportation Committee November 25, 2008

Minutes of the meeting of the City Council's Transportation Committee held on Tuesday, November 25, 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:

Angel Carbajal, Asst Police Chief
Dawn Coomer, Transportation Planner
Carlos de Leon, Dep Public Wrks Mgr
Kathy Gasperich, Comm Rel
Don Hawkes, Water Util Mgr
Greg Jordan, Transit Administrator
Gregg Kent, LRT Proj Engineer
Jyme Sue McLaren, Dep Public Wrks Mgr
Amanda Nelson, Comm Outreach Mktg Supvr
Shelly Seyler, Traffic Engineer
Oddvar Tveit, Environmental Qual Spec
Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Svcs Dir
Robert Yabes, Principal Plnr

Guests Present:

Jayson Matthews, Tempe Transportation Commission
Judi Nelson, ASU Transportation

Vice Mayor Shana Ellis called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. and everyone introduced themselves.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None.

Agenda Item 2 – Aviation Noise Study Update

Don Hawkes summarized the memo provided as back-up.

Vice Mayor Ellis asked about item (c): "Present recommendations on how to make improvements to the system, when the airport launches an expected update to the year 2000, FAA Part 150 Noise Compatibility Plan and Program." She asked when the launch of the update will take place.

Oddvar Tveit responded that the last update was prior to the opening of the third runway in 2000. The Aviation Commission (TAVCO) has asked for an update and it was scheduled for 2009, but due to the decline in passenger levels, it has been rescheduled for 2011. When the draft QED report is released, it will come before TAVCO for

review. He added that the Noise and Flight Track Monitoring System was established in 1996-1997, and the purpose of this update is to determine if it is still providing current and viable data. If the ambient noise levels from other sources have become more predominant, the system could make errors and it is possible that the monitors may not be in the right positions. The airport is currently changing the system and they had hoped to start that in December, but it will take place early next year instead. The QED study will also assess the total area of current noise contour lines; this is a controversial issue.

Vice Mayor Ellis clarified that those results and the City's recommendations will come to the Committee for forwarding to IRS, and then submitted to the City of Phoenix.

Agenda Item 3 – Regional Fare Policy Update

Greg Jordan provided an update on the regional fare policy.

- The recommendation from Valley Metro was partially modified at the Transit Managers' Meeting on November 5th. The last recommendation was for a two-year increase, and a compromise was drafted for a one-year increase only and to evaluate in FY 2010 to see if other adjustments need to be made.
 - Modified recommendation shows base (single ride) cash fares for Local bus from \$1.25 to \$1.50 in FY 2010, and Express from \$1.75 to \$2.50 in FY 2010.
 - All-Day Passes for Local bus from \$2.50 to \$4.50 in FY 2010, and Express from \$3.50 to \$6.50 in FY 2010. All-Day Passes prices discounted by \$.75 at retail outlets to speed up boardings.
 - 31-Day Passes in FY 2010 would increase Local pass from \$45 to \$50, and Express from \$68 to \$76.
- The City of Phoenix then worked with Valley Metro to indicate their objectives: generate revenue to restore bus service by January 2010 and raise the Board-approved fare recovery target from 25% to 30%. They would also suggest considering base fares of \$2.00 and \$2.25 in upcoming public participation process.

Mr. Jordan summarized that the core variable is the base fare and the other variables shift in accordance with the base fare.

- The current fare policy would provide \$219M over four years, with 295M riders.
- There is also a recommendation to consider:
 - \$1.50 in FY 2009 and \$1.75 in FY 2010
 - \$1.75 in FY 2009, a one-time increase
 - \$1.75 and \$2.25 in FY 2010 and FY 2011 respectively
 - a straight \$2.25 increase the next fiscal year
- Advantages include benefits from increased revenue and recovery, consistency with peer cities, increase to boarding speed, and a bit less aggressive.
- Disadvantages include reducing ridership, negative economic impact and proximity to light rail introduction, as well as threats to future funding based on lower ridership estimates.
- Additional considerations
 - Uncritical peer city analysis
 - Limited policy analysis – absent from the analysis is targeting alternative or supplementary tactics to increase revenue or improve operating efficiency.
 - Short-term approach – reactive to immediate regional/municipal financial challenges, long-term approach
 - Aggressive approval process
- Regional ADA fare policy

- Raise fare from \$2.00 to \$2.50 in FY 2010 and by \$.25 in each year through FY 2013.
 - Region would like to see standardization of ADA fares and maximize fare allowed by ADA regulations
 - Considerations include subject to individual city approval, impact evaluation needed, and future agenda item for Transportation Commission and Council's Transportation Committee
- Next Steps
 - Timeline has not changed
 - Public hearings scheduled for January
 - Implementation by July of 2009

There was a question about the day passes vs. trip passes and whether the original concept was to have a two-trip day pass.

Mr. Jordan responded that the pricing of the day pass as it exists today was to be equal to two trips. To take more than two trips per day would provide a greater value for the purchase. The increases to the day passes proposed are not tied to that historical analysis with respect to the Phoenix area. It is tied to the peer cities in terms of what is an appropriate day pass multiple between the base cash fare of \$1.25 - \$1.50 and what a day pass should be. They are comparing it to the other peer cities and recommending it should be two times the base fare.

Councilmember Arredondo asked how much the sales tax brings in per year.

Carlos de Leon responded that it brings in about \$35M and it has no sunset.

Councilmember Arredondo asked why some of that money wouldn't be used. The people who are going to use the system are those who typically are the most vulnerable. The City needs to take a strong position because it sends a completely wrong message to do this in the current economic downturn.

Vice Mayor Ellis clarified that the ADA can be continued in Tempe at those rates. The other rates would be tricky because the City couldn't charge its residents the lower rate.

Councilmember Arredondo suggested that if the City augments that by using the \$35M, the City could say that Tempeans could still ride for the current fare, even though the City has to supplement it.

Vice Mayor Ellis suggested that the chart show that the youth bus pass is being kept.

Councilmember Arredondo asked about the seniors.

Mr. de Leon responded that the seniors fall under the reduced bus pass fare. Staff could look at something to provide for the discount in Tempe.

Councilmember Arredondo clarified that if he were a Tempe resident and could prove that he is a Tempe resident, he could buy it for a certain amount because the City will supplement it. It is important that the City do that.

Vice Mayor Ellis clarified that would be true if they bought a 31-day pass or 1-day pass at the Transit Center with a photo ID.

Mr. Jordan clarified that the tax has actually been paid twice, because there is a regional tax.

Vice Mayor Ellis suggested that staff work on an alternative plan for Tempe resident fares and present it to the Council. Staff was directed to bring this to the Committee in February for discussion.

Jayson Matthews stated that the Transportation Commission felt this radical and immediate step up in fare would affect the most vulnerable. The TCC also feels this is a critical issue and it is imperative that the City fight for its residents.

Robert Yabes added that requiring riders to purchase the passes off the bus in order to get the \$.75 discounts would create a hardship.

Vice Mayor Ellis clarified that a rider would have to go to the Transit Center to get the discounts.

Mr. de Leon stated that staff would bring this to the Transportation Commission in January for a discussion concerning the effects, and to discuss the ADA program.

Vice Mayor Ellis added that when the public hearings are scheduled, groups should be encouraged to attend and speak up.

Agenda Item 4 – Streetscape Projects Update for Maple-Ash, College, Broadway Road

Shelly Seyler summarized the current streetscape projects:

- Maple-Ash & Mitchell Park East/West Streetscape Project
 - Test measures are in place.
 - Recently received data from the tests.
 - Neighborhood meetings scheduled in January to discuss next steps.
 - Received \$200K in an account from Centerpoint. Agreement called for \$400K in two phases.
- College Avenue Streetscape and Pedestrian Improvements Project
 - Test measures (traffic circles, medians) are in place between Apache Boulevard and US 60.
 - Some were pulled because of resident comments regarding bicycle safety and staff is looking at alternative measures in those locations.
 - Final data by first or second week in December.
 - Final concept plan will be taken to residents and will proceed to design drawings and construction in 2009.

Mr. de Leon added that not all traffic calming measures, which are part of the proposed designs, can be simulated.

Ms. Seyler added that when staff looked at traffic calming south of Alameda, it became obvious it would be difficult to simulate the narrowing.

Vice Mayor Ellis asked if weight is given to comments made by residents from the area.

Amanda Nelson added that on the website, it asks where the person lives.

Mr. de Leon responded that the comments will be differentiated between Tempe neighborhoods and others.

- Broadway Road Streetscape and Bike/Pedestrian Improvement Project
 - Will develop an action team to develop plan as a start-up to the project.

Councilmember Arredondo stated that he has been receiving citizen comments that the City is letting the trees die. He urged staff to make sure the trees are watered during the daytime and if there are three or four dead trees, come

up with a plan to remove or replace, etc. He added that he has also received College corridor complaints on traffic circles. He asked if speed humps and tables were options.

Mr. de Leon responded that speed humps were not preferred during the neighborhood outreach. A speed hump would not typically be installed on a collector street.

Councilmember Arredondo urged staff to articulate that speed humps and tables were options. When the report is released, make sure that the number of meetings is given and which neighborhoods met with staff.

Vice Mayor Ellis suggested distributing the report in a Friday Informational Packet.

Agenda Item 5 – Results of September 2008 Tempe Transit Telephone Survey

Carlos de Leon summarized a recent telephone survey conducted by WestGroup Research. This is the fifth time a survey has been conducted. Staff has attempted to get a clear idea of what is occurring concerning service, primarily transit service.

- Background
 - Confidence level is 95%.
 - Provide insight into transit service and usage.
 - Satisfaction with Tempe's system.
 - Potential usage in the future.
 - Awareness of the system and effectiveness of the marketing.
 - Trends over time.
 - Areas for improvement (new addition to this survey)
- Overall Results
 - Very positive, highest numbers in five surveys
 - Notable increases in transit usage
 - New riders have more than doubled, highest ever
 - Showing increase in interest to use system for convenience and saving money
 - Increased bicycle use

Amanda Nelson continued with details of the presentation.

- Transit Ridership
 - Increase in ridership from 29% to 39%
 - Riders are most likely to be single, under 35 years of age, high school education and annual income under \$40K.
 - Increase in new riders from 17% to 31%.
 - More discretionary riders (people with multiple transportation options)
 - Top destinations are for work and ASU from 14% to 29%.
 - Highest satisfaction with comfort, safety and ease of use.
 - 66% indicated likely to be riding the bus next year.
 - Low satisfaction reasons included a need for more routes and more frequent and extended hours.
 - Needed improvements included more shaded bus stops, increased Orbit routes, more bus pullouts.
 - 15% said to extend light rail.
- Non-Riders
 - 45% non-riders prefer their car
 - 50% cite convenience issues including bus stops too far away, frequency, length of time
- TIM Awareness and Ads – 57% indicated advertising had positive effect
- Orbit and Light Rail Awareness – 82% knew Orbit as system identify; 98% aware of light rail

- Bike & Walk
 - Increase in frequency of bike use from 66% to 71%
 - Heat is main reason for not riding
 - Most ride for exercise
 - 57% satisfied with walk and bike paths
 - Reasons for low satisfaction included need for more bike lanes and lack of safety of current paths
- Youth Transit Pass – increased awareness from 35% to 47%

Vice Mayor Ellis asked how often the survey is done.

Ms. Nelson responded that it is done every two years.

Agenda Item 6 – December meeting date

Cancel the December meeting. Next meeting will be scheduled for January 27th.

Agenda Item 7 – Future Agenda Items

- On-Board Survey – Orbit
- Fare Policy Discussion
- Annual Federal Discretionary List
- Bus Stop Improvements
- South Corridor
- Tempe South Corridor Analysis

Meeting adjourned at 4:09 p.m.

Prepared by: Connie Krosschell
Reviewed by: Carlos de Leon

Jan Hort
City Clerk