



Minutes City Council's Transportation Committee April 28, 2009

Minutes of the meeting of the City Council's Transportation Committee held on Tuesday, April 28, 2009, 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
Carlos de Leon, Dep Public Wrks Mgr
Kathy Gasperich, Comm Relations
Greg Jordan, Transit Administrator
Glenn Kephart, Public Wrks Mgr
Jyme Sue McLaren, Dep Pub Wrks Mgr
Chris Salomone, Comm Dev Mgr
Sue Taaffe, Community Outreach/Mktg Coord
Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Pgm Spec
Oddvar Tveit, Environmental Qual Spec

Guests Present:

Paul Berumen, ASU
Jayson Matthews, Tempe Transportation Commission

Vice Mayor Shana Ellis called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m. and everyone introduced themselves.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None.

Agenda Item 2 – Fixed Route and Orbit Bus Service Changes

Greg Jordan summarized proposed changes for July 2009 and for January 2010. This is the outcome of a public involvement process over the past few months and is also in response to Council's request last September to evaluate the performance of Route 40.

- Potential changes for July 2009:
 - Route 62 – shorten downtown Tempe loop
 - Route 44 (serving the 44th Street corridor in Phoenix) - removal of the Tempe segment
 - Route 40 (Apache/University and Main Street in Mesa) - Tempe is funding the portion that serves the Airport. Staff recommends that the service to the Airport be maintained.
- Potential changes for January 2010
 - Route 40 – combine with Route 13 (Buckeye) to create regional multi-jurisdictional route

- Estimated savings:
 - \$548K – FY 2010
 - \$842K – FY 2011
- Route 40 Evaluation - Route 40 comes through Tempe on Apache, then goes west on University Drive to the Tempe border and serves the Airport via State Route #153. It terminates at the Airport.
 - Ridership - Tempe segment is carrying about 637 passengers per day, and the productivity measured as passengers per mile is 1.3. The Tempe bus system average is 1.7. The Airport segment currently carries about 242 passengers per day, or about 8 passengers per mile. That is fairly low when you look at segments of routes, but for a single destination like the Airport, it is fairly high.
 - Ridership characteristics – Highest usage by Tempe residents (47%), about half transfer at least once, most ride 3 or more times per week, most on/off activity in west Tempe and the Airport (60%), and about 25% of the boardings at the Airport are transferring to other bus routes.
 - Public comments - 41 out of 40 residents opposed making any change. When the same question was asked last year, about 50 of the 80 comments clearly indicated that the Airport connection should be maintained.
- Route 40 Recommendation - Combine Route 40 with the Phoenix Route 13 (Buckeye) in January 2010.
 - Opportunity to create a significant regional route that would serve east Mesa, through Tempe, and into west Phoenix. It maintains bus access to the Airport,
 - Eliminates the need to transfer between the Route 40 and Route 13.
 - Ridership should increase by virtue of that transfer being eliminated.
 - Potential for additional regional funding when Prop. 400 sales tax begins to go back up.
 - This scenario would end the City's funding of Route 40 in Phoenix. Phoenix is operating, however, from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. If we want to go later or earlier as currently being done, that would become an extra cost and about \$75K would be added back into the savings.
- Route 44 Evaluation
 - Ridership - 591 per weekday (3.2 passengers/mile); Tempe bus system average – 1.7 passengers/mile
 - Characteristics - high productivity potentially due to shorter hours and route duplication; relatively low usage by Tempe residents (25%), most ride at least 3 or more times per week, more than half transfer at least once, 20% to 30% of on/off activity occurs at Tempe Transportation Center
 - Public Comments – most comments came from Phoenix residents and 41 of 43 residents opposed removing the Tempe segment.
- Route 44 Conclusion – Remove Tempe segment of Route 44 in July 2009
 - Cost prohibitive due to Phoenix's higher rates.
 - Availability of light rail at Washington and 44th Street.
 - Availability of multiple travel modes. Most Tempe passengers could use another mode including another bus (35%), light rail (10%), walking (16%) or biking (12%).
 - Connections are maintained to Routes 30 and 40 on University.
 - This also positions Route 44 to continue in the future along its 44th Street/48th Street corridor down to Ahwatukee. There is service in Ahwatukee that we would like to realign and if that were done, we could make that change to benefit some areas in Tempe that are not currently served.

Carlos de Leon added that some of the changes are recommended to be deferred to January so we could continue more intensive dialogue with the school district. Staff has met with the Tempe Union High School District to discuss potential impacts and working with them to analyze that further.

Glenn Kephart added that staff recommends maintaining the existing Orbit Earth route on Sunset and Cavalier while working with residents to address negative impacts.

Vice Mayor Ellis asked about potential changes to the Mars route.

Mr. de Leon clarified that the public involvement process will still happen on the Mars route and any changes would not happen in July.

Mr. Jordan added that staff may have a proposal for January. The Orbit routes can change outside of the bus routes. There is no Mars change for July, however.

Mr. de Leon added that staff may propose a change to maintain peak period service, but a reduction in the off-peaks. A public dialogue would take place before a decision is made.

Sue Taaffe added that a public meeting has been set for May 23rd and May 27th.

Vice Mayor Ellis suggested that any flyers for those meetings should be left at Friendship Village. She asked how the surveys are performed.

Mr. Jordan that the public comments either came to staff at public meetings or through the mail or the online comment board.

Vice Mayor Ellis asked if they are asked if they currently ride the route.

Mr. Jordan responded that they are not asked that, but from their comments it is clear. West Group Research also performed a survey on board the bus of travel characteristics.

Vice Mayor Ellis stated that it was not necessary to bring this back to IRS and asked staff to provide information in the Friday packet.

Mr. Jordan asked for any direction on the hours of operation issue. We can continue to operate from 4 a.m. until 1 a.m. It involves about \$75K.

Vice Mayor Ellis responded that the passengers/mile is averaged by the hours of operation. She assumed most people are on the bus during the day. Is there any data on how many really ride the bus between 10 p.m. and 1 a.m.?

Mr. Jordan responded that staff could evaluate with the committee's direction. He would suggest returning to the committee in late summer or early fall with data.

Agenda Item 3 – Aircraft Noise Study

Oddvar Tveit summarized as follows:

- TAVCO asked for a noise assessment in October of 2006 because of a suspicion that the monitoring system (Sky Harbor's property) installed in Tempe was not accurate.
- The City did an unsuccessful RFQ for a noise analysis in 2007 and a follow-up request for both noise and air quality services resulted in a bid from Wyle Laboratories, which was deemed too expensive. The City then contracted with QED, a consultant that assisted the City for an obstruction assessment of the Cardinals Stadium site in 2001. QED was tasked to evaluate and correlate aircraft noise monitoring data and present recommendations on improvements to the system of fixed noise monitoring sites in Tempe. The final cost estimate includes an area assessment for approximately \$34K.
- Included in the task was to show how the noise impact had changed.

- They used a simplified method of AEM (Air Equivalent Method) comparison with 80.6 sq. miles based on the data the Airport used to calculate their plan. TAVCO accepted QED's recommendations and established a working group to discuss suggestions to QED.
- They supplemented some data from 1999 and with the 2007 data, the 65 DNL (day/night average over a year) as predicted by the Airport in 2004 was 11.8 sq. miles, and with the numbers staff provided to the consultant, about a two-thirds reduction of the area that was originally forecast has occurred. In the 1999 study, there were two basic areas identified: the 65 DNL with 8 monitors in Tempe, and the 70 DNL. The area is crowding toward that 70 DNL. The actual noise impact area is reduced by about 5 DNL.
- The sound criteria set for the sound detection at the airport monitors appears to overestimate community noise, and not appropriately single out the aircraft noise. It was suggested that we should look at the detection levels for aircraft noise.
- LDN (A), the aircraft noise separated out, has declined at all monitors in Tempe. The LDN (C), community noise which the monitors register besides aircraft noise, is relatively stable. By totaling both of these noise volumes, most of the monitors show stable levels. There is aircraft noise out there, but a lot of that noise might not be correctly filtered.
- Recommendations:
 - Monitors 13, 14 and 16 appear to be poorly positioned with respect to the location of most aircraft movements.
 - Monitors 10, 11 and 12 are located where there are relatively high ambient noise levels (fire station, yard activities and heavy road traffic).
 - QED emphasized the timing of this report could be beneficial to Tempe considering that the airport is about to upgrade the monitoring system with new equipment at existing sites this summer.
 - The Airport hasn't done any noise study since 2000 and they will probably be reluctant to do anything unless they do a full blown modeling which they have budgeted for FY 2010/2011. Then they would be able to tap into federal funding to do that part.

Vice Mayor Ellis noted that a letter would need to go out before summer.

Mr. Tveit clarified that a letter would need to come from the Chair of TAVCO.

Councilmember Arredondo clarified that there is about a 66% reduction in noise.

Mr. Tveit clarified that the 66% reduction is in the area of the 65 DNL. Generally, it is decreasing.

Councilmember Arredondo clarified that in Tempe's corridor most planes are following the take-off procedure correctly.

Mr. Tveit agreed. Tempe did not agree on the gate, but agreed that Phoenix would run the system and determine configuration. We didn't specifically agree on the measuring.

Councilmember Arredondo clarified that the noise is going down, and whatever configuration Phoenix chose, they are living up to it. He was told by the Aviation group that about 3,000 people in south Tempe are employed by Sky Harbor.

Mr. Tveit agreed that it was a reasonable assumption.

Vice Mayor Ellis clarified that the next step will be to wait for input from the Aviation Commission. She received an email that referred to the Residential Sound Mitigation Service (RSMS).

Mr. Tveit clarified that the RSMS is the outreach by the City of Phoenix regarding their access to federal funds for the larger contour. This is one of the reasons that TAVCO wrote to the Airport that any leftover stimulus funds should be channeled back into the residential program. When they produce a new Part 150, the 80% funding would apply to a smaller area.

Vice Mayor Ellis clarified that the federal guidelines still haven't been expanded to include multi-family dwellings.

Mr. Tveit agreed that it would have to be done in an update.

Vice Mayor Ellis clarified that if additional stimulus funds do come in, it can't cover those.

Mr. Tveit added that all residential projects are pre-approved for funding money.

Agenda Item 4 – Long Range Financial Update

Carlos de Leon summarized that staff is currently updating the Transit Fund long range forecast with new revenue and cost forecasts. The revenue relies primarily on sales tax. Regarding costs, there were changes in the contract with Veolia (5% reduction), as well as a reduction in fuel costs. The increase to fare revenue was approved. The new baseline model should be ready for the Transportation Commission and this committee next month.

An immediate issue that needs to be addressed is the regional Transit Lifecycle Program (TLCP) that Valley Metro is currently updating. They are relying on sales tax for transit improvements and they are forecasting a \$1B shortfall for the entire life of the program (which extends to 2026). This is comprised of \$568M shortfall in the bus program and \$413M in the rail program. By law, that program cannot be out of balance. Items in the program can be deferred, delayed, reduced or eliminated and that process is underway. There are a couple of alternatives. One alternative would be to defer the entire implementation of the plan for a period of time (push-back). Another option would be for each member to select which projects move forward. There is some overlap between the regional transit program and the local program, primarily that the regional transit program was scheduled to take over funding of routes in Tempe. Regional funding of these routes was built into our financial plan already. So if those routes are delayed, we will have to carry the cost of those routes.

Vice Mayor Ellis asked which years that would be.

Mr. de Leon responded that the alternatives are in various years within the next five years. On the initial option of push-back, it was showing delays of three years. The proposed changes have not been built into the City's financial plan and staff needs to show the effect of that. A decision on the regional program will be made in May or June. Following that, it will be important to talk about long term Transit Fund sustainability. Staff is currently updating the City's base model and then will overlay the alternatives and look at the outcome.

Agenda Item 5 – Marketing TV Spot

Sue Taaffe summarized that the advertising agency developed some concepts to promote the green aspects of the program and she showed the concept that was selected. This spot is currently running on several Valley cable stations. The spot focuses on a younger audience, 18-29, based on market research.

Agenda Item 6 – Commuter Rail Feasibility Study Grant Proposal

Jyme Sue McLaren summarized that in February 2007 staff asked Mayor and Council for concurrence to begin discussing a commuter rail option for the Kyrene Ranch Corridor, connecting the City of Maricopa and Gila River Indian Community. At that time, the Governor had an Executive Order looking at options for commuter rail. Council directed staff to pursue discussion of options with the stakeholders. Last fall, staff met with Gila River Indian Community and the City of Maricopa at a staff level and there was interest in pursuing some type of study to look at

options for commuter rail connecting Tempe, Kyrene branch, the City of Maricopa and the Gila River Indian Community. Last week, Government Relations staff set up a meeting with the elected officials of the City of Maricopa, Mayor Hallman, and the Lieutenant Governor for the Gila River Indian Community. The group discussed the opportunities that a commuter rail connection could mean. They were very receptive to the concept of partnering with Tempe to look at opportunities. Gila River Indian Community was open to submitting a grant proposal to the community for a potential study effort.

The deadline for that grant application is May 1 to Amber Wakeman who will package the grant application, take it to Council the middle of May and then submit it to the Gila River Indian Community by the end of May. She asked for direction to pursue partnering with the City of Maricopa to submit the application. She didn't have details on the size or scope of that application or whether we would use those resources should they become available to partner with ADOT on some commuter rail studies they are undertaking.

Vice Mayor Ellis clarified that it would come to Council the middle of May.

Ms. McLaren agreed if the committee feels it is an appropriate application.

Councilmember Arredondo believed that with the Vice Mayor serving as chairperson of this committee, it could be received very differently if two go instead of one. He suggested that in the future, that both the Mayor and Vice Mayor attend any meeting.

DIRECTION: Staff was directed to partner with the City of Maricopa to put together a grant application.

Agenda Item 7 – Future Agenda Items

Next scheduled meeting is May 26th.

- Long Range Financial Update

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Prepared by: Connie Krosschell

Reviewed by: Carlos de Leon

Jan Hort
City Clerk