



Minutes City of Tempe Transportation Commission April 10, 2012

Minutes of the City of Tempe Transportation Commission held on Tuesday, April 10, 2012, 7:30 a.m., at the Valley Metro Mobility Center, Papago Conference Room, 4600 E. Washington, Suite 101, Phoenix, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Matthew Garcia, Ben Goren, Pam Goronkin, Charles Huellmantel, Susan Jones, Marcellus Lisotta, Sue Lofgren, Phillip Luna, Melody Moss, Gary Roberts, Steven Saiz, Peter Schelstraete, David Strang.

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Catherine Mayorga, German Piedrahita.

City Staff Present:

Eric Iwersen, Jason Hartong, Dana Janofsky, Greg Jordan, Mike Nevarez, Shelly Seyler, Sue Taaffe.

Guests Present:

Tom Jury (Veolia)

Charles Huellmantel called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Tour of the Valley Metro Mobility Center

The Commission toured the Valley Metro Mobility Center. The center provides several types of services for customers with specialized mobility needs. The tour was of the testing area for ADA Paratransit (“Dial-a-Ride”) Service Eligibility and the ADA Platinum Pass Program.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Appearances

None

Agenda Item 3 – Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Huellmantel called to approve.

Commissioner Peter Schelstraete asked to change the March 20, 2012 minutes, Agenda Item 3, paragraph 1, from “meets” to “met”. Commissioner Ben Goren made a motion to approve the Transportation Commission Minutes with amendments for the March 20, 2012 meeting; Commissioner Phillip Luna seconded the motion. All approved. The following minutes were approved:

- Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes – March 20, 2012

Agenda Item 4 – Orbit Paint Scheme

Presented by Greg Jordan and Sue Taaffe.

Greg Jordan provided background on the paint scheme. The Commission, in February, was advised that the current Orbit fleet is nearing or surpassing its useful life and were presented with short term and long term options for fleet.

Staff is extending the input process regarding this issue to ensure that everyone is on the same page and to engage Council in the process.

Greg handed out an Orbit Fleet Replacement Strategy memo and timeline. This strategy includes a public process, procurement, and bus purchases timeline with two options using the existing type of bus or procuring a new vehicle type.

Option 1 which extends the life of the current fleet through rehabilitation would cost about \$500k and provide an additional two years of service. This option may increase the number of breakdowns due to the age of the fleet. Option 2 replaces the current buses with a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) bus. CNG buses reduce the amount of rider capacity from current 23 to 20 which could cause overfill and pass-ups.

Commissioner Charles Huellmantel asked how many pass-ups happen. Greg responded that we do not have exact numbers. Jason Hartong stated that it varies. August is usually the highest month with people complaining that two or three buses pass them up. It tapers and by spring there are no issues.

Commissioner Ben Goren stated that we could increase frequency and add more buses to the routes to alleviate the pass-up problem. Greg Jordan responded that adding frequency increases costs and that CNG option might allow for staged increases in frequency.

Commissioner Pam Goronkin asked if capacity of 20 on the CNG bus includes standing room. Jason replied yes.

Greg stated that purchasing new type of vehicle would be phased in from fiscal year 15/16 to 18/19. A phased approach would improve the average age. Best practices and fleet management suggest that half the life of a vehicle should equal the average age of the fleet. This allows costs to be stabilized.

Commissioner Goren asked how long it will take to offset the cost of the CNG. Greg stated a year and half.

Commissioner Huellmantel asked which vehicle is more cost effective gas or CNG. Greg stated that data is supporting the CNG model.

Commissioner Sue Jones stated that CNG shows a larger fleet. Greg stated that this is because with CNG there would be a need of mid-day fueling so more vehicles will be needed.

Commissioner Goren asked about electronic fare collection equipment on the vehicles. Tom Jury stated that both gas and CNG has adequate power to support a fare collection equipment.

Commissioner Huellmantel asked if there was only one type of fare box. Greg stated that we must go with regional manufacturer Scheidt Bachmann as new fare boxes would be costly. There are fare boxes currently in store that can be used in order to save on capital expense.

Commissioner Melody Moss stated that it is important to keep the future fleet younger and although it's a bigger capital outlay, it will better in the end.

Agenda Item 5 – Tempe RPTA – Bus Unification Project (Update)

Presented by Greg Jordan.

Greg referred to the memo sent to Mayor and Council on January 12, 2012 named Transit Regionalization: Unification of Bus Operations. The reasons to combine operations include a step toward transit system regionalization, steps for RPTA-METRO consolidation, improve operational efficiency, reduce costs and program deficits, preserve productive bus service, and expand partnerships with RPTA. Results of selecting a vendor for bus service will be made by fall. If a new vendor is selected it will take three to six months for start-up.

Commissioner Goren asked if we will lose control over route locations and timing through unification. Greg said no. Tempe retains control of route planning and transit tax.

Commissioner Sue Jones asked if we going closer to transit regionalization in all metro Phoenix areas. Greg stated yes. The first step is growing consolidation of RPTA and METRO. They have selected a single CEO, Steve Banta.

Commissioner Marcellus Lisotta asked about the savings for Tempe. Greg stated about \$800k - \$1M is estimated with about half to Tempe. Commissioner Huellmantel asked when the saving start. Greg explained although there are start-up costs, there are savings the first year.

Commissioner Huellmantel asked about the transfer of service in 2013. Greg explained that it is a three year plan starting in July 2013 with a two year transition probationary period. It is designed to protect the city from performance that does not meet out standards. At year three, there will be an evaluation based on performance benchmarks. The performance plan results and contract renewal will then go back to Council and Commission. If results are not acceptable then we will return to the way we are currently providing service. Commissioner Roberts asked if there is a long term contract, would there be a provision to terminate the contract.. Greg replied that if everything is meeting benchmark standards after three years then a six to -10 year contract would be initiated. Commissioner Susan Lofgren asked if there was a way to get out of a long term contract that is not performing. Commissioner Goren responded that at the end of the current three year contract we can move on, but once we sign a long term contract there is a more lengthy involved process for nonperformance.

Commission Roberts asked about the fate of the East Valley Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility (EVBOM). Greg stated that EVBOM is more centrally located and that Mesa facility and would still be operation with the focus on the East Valley. Commissioner Lisotta asked about possible infrastructure improvements and costs. Greg stated that under the stimulus plan, EVBOM had already received funds for improvements that are currently underway. There are improvements for break room, shade canopies, and fuel build out. It is estimated that there will be a need of about \$150k for fare collection.

Commissioner Pam Goronkin asked what the county spends their Transit money on. Greg explained that they used to operate paratransit service, but it no longer exists. Greg will follow-up on country transit funding.

Commissioner Roberts stated that the county has 15 passenger vans for the working poor and it went away about two years ago.

Commissioner Roberts asked who would oversee the contract. Greg replied Valley Metro. If there was a performance issue the discretion would remain with the cities.

Commissioner Roberts asked if Valley Metro was adding staff. Greg stated that Tempe would be sharing staff and the positions have been identified, but it is not final. Commissioner Goren stated that staff is more important than metrics for efficiency and safety. He stated that we need to make sure that operators and staff are healthy and happy.

Commissioner Moss asked if the contract is given to lowest bidder or based on qualifications. Greg stated that it is a combination and 30-40% is related to pricing. In addition, Tempe will be a part of the selection committee.

Commissioner Roberts stated that although the document at first read is confusing, he is duly impressed with the work.

Agenda Item 6 – University Drive Streetscape Project

Presented by Eric Iwersen.

Eric stated the objective is to improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities and enhance the streetscape on University Drive between the Union Pacific Railroad Line (east of Farmer) and Priest Drive. Re-characterize the street as a stronger multi-modal, sustainable corridor with access for all types of users and is a complement to the adjacent businesses and neighborhoods.

Commissioner Ben Goren stated that bike lanes aren't wide enough to comply with 3 foot rule and other regulations and it is important that we make this clear.

Eric identified opportunities in sidewalk/pavement improvements, north/south street crossings, shade, public art, medians (by taking out the center turn lane), enhanced bicycle lanes, ADA improvements, and transit shelter amenities where appropriate.

Some constraints identified include: retaining four vehicle lanes, retaining most existing curb and gutter, no right-of-way takes/purchases and limited funding totaling \$1.6 million.

Commissioner Goren stated that traffic doesn't need four lanes. Eric stated that there can still be changes to the function of the street and equity of the different modes with four vehicle lanes. He can convey to Council the request to change the number of lanes. Commissioner Goren asked how it could accommodate on street parking, four vehicle lanes, and bike lanes. Eric stated that there can be a lane shift with a change to the center turning lane.

Commissioner Goren asked about maintaining any paint colors used on the street. Eric stated that it would be part of the continued maintenance and that still must be discussed. Commissioner Roberts asked if green must be used. Eric stated it was recommended.

Commissioner Goren stated that speed limits must be decreased.

Commissioner Huellmantel stated that bike lanes would be a part of the half day strategy summit that the Transportation Commission will be having this Spring/Summer.

Eric stated he will come back next month with two concepts based on all of the acquired feedback.

Commissioner Susan Lofgren stated that by taking away a bike lane too quickly, people may be confused and it would cause harm.

Commissioner Roberts asked if the current design has a continuous concrete path for the sidewalks. Eric stated no that, there is not funding to redo the sidewalks, but that bad efficiencies or ADA issues will be addressed. Commissioner Huellmantel stated that when redevelopment or changes occur standards for the sidewalks will be included.

Commissioner Steven Saiz asked about the financial aspect to greenscape, maintenance costs and benefits and cost to adding visual interest through design. Eric stated that the benefits can be good for crosswalks, but can be costly or even cause ADA issues.

Commissioner Goronkin stated that in the past, paint was used on the pavers which reduces cost by using existing materials.

Agenda Item 7 –Deputy Director’s Report

Introduced by Greg Jordan and Shelly Seyler.

Sue Taaffe reminded the Commission that April 18th is Bike to Work Day. There will be seven locations. She also asked Commissioners to please join the listserv for all Transit related updates.

Agenda Item 8 – Future Agenda Items

- University Streetscape design
- Orbit Discussion

Meeting adjourned at 9:13am

The Commission’s next regular meeting will be held Tuesday, May 8, 2012 at 7:30 a.m. in the Don Cassano Community Room, 200 E. Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona.