



Minutes City of Tempe Transportation Commission May 8, 2012

Minutes of the City of Tempe Transportation Commission held on Tuesday, May 8, 2012, 7:30 a.m., at the Tempe Center for the Arts, 700 West Rio Salado Parkway, 201 Lounge, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Pam Goronkin, Charles Huellmantel, Marcellus Lisotta, Sue Lofgren, Phillip Luna, Catherine Mayorga, German Piedrahita, Gary Roberts, Steven Saiz, Peter Schelstraete, David Strang.

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Matthew Garcia, Ben Goren, Susan Jones, Melody Moss.

City Staff Present:

Tanya Chavez, Joe Clements, Eric Iwersen, Dana Janofsky, Greg Jordan, Yvette Mesquita, Mike Nevarez, Shelly Seyler, Sue Taaffe, Robert Yabes.

Guests Present:

Richard Clevis (citizen), Michele Gamez (citizen), Paul Hodgins (Valley Metro), Eric Latto (Clean Energy), Donna May (citizen), Michael Shelton (City of Phoenix), Dale Steele (citizen), Mrs. E. Strang (citizen).

Commission Chair Charles Huellmantel called the meeting to order at 7:31 a.m.

Agenda Item 1 – West Dam Bike-Pedestrian Bridge

Deferred.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Appearances

Eleanor Strang

- I ride the 520 bus.
- If you are going to make a change, there must be a perceived benefit for the people who will be affected.
- The only arguments supporting the changes proposed have contained no benefits to the riders of the affected Express Bus routes.
- Except for the first option (no change) the plans that are proposed contradict the Comprehensive Transit Plan by encouraging greater use of cars.
- If I have to get my car out and drive to a park-and-ride I may as well just drive to Phoenix. I am only 12.5 miles from my work site.
- Much has been said about the Express ride being shorter. However, the commute time for the riders will take longer including driving to the site, parking, or walking an extra ¼ to ½ mile. And then the reverse to return.

- Much has also been said about using the Orbit or local buses. The articulation of local buses with the Express times are not reliable and the starting times for Orbit are not early enough for early bus riders.
- We are willing to accept increases in fares and cutting of in and out trips. Cars will have greater wear and tear including being parked in the sun, gas for the trip to park-and-ride instead of walking, increased pollution and diminished air quality, the cost of increased time to the rider and flexibility of having the car with them.
- The proposals for the park-and-ride options shows no consideration for the difficulties faced by several riders with mobility issues and some without a vehicle to drive to a park-and-ride.
- Request to maintain routes as is.
- If a park-and-ride option seems necessary, try the combined long/short option 3 for a year and compare data.
- The soft data, combined with the statistical measure, does not provide a good argument that a park-and-ride will increase ridership or save money in the long run.
- No option will increase ridership without marketing. We understand that item was taken out of your budget. You must get it back and use it effectively if any success is to be had.

Donna May

- I've lived in Tempe 17 years and taken Express Route 521 for 14 years.
- The purpose of the Tempe Comprehensive Transportation Plan:
 - Reduce reliance on the automobile.
 - Preserve, enhance and/or create conditions amenable to pedestrians; encourage people to walk and shop in areas near their workplaces, transit stops
 - Enhanced Environmental Quality
 - Encourage a variety of travel modes and reduce reliance on the automobile in order to enhance environmental quality.
 - Sustained commitments to improve air quality must be made and significant progress must be achieved in order to meet state and federal mandates.
- The Tempe Comprehensive Transportation Plan will be a success when:
 - The rate of single occupant vehicle miles traveled per capita within Tempe is at least reduced 20 percent by 2030.
 - All Tempe residents have access to fast and frequent (10 to 15-minute) transit service within a 5-to 10-minute walk of their home.
 - Great walkable communities develop through the concerted efforts of land use and transportation planning, urban design, and community participation.
- I am extremely displeased at being asked to spend valuable time and effort into a process that most of us truly believed would be a partnership with City of Tempe to find a way to save residential routing on express routes while saving money.
- To push forward with initially the same plan they first announced, despite the obvious disagreement of virtually all express bus riders, is a travesty, showing no respect Tempe citizens.
- The notice to gather a working focus group mentioned that the process was "to help develop options to improve performance of Tempe Express Routes" which we did.
- It also mentioned the purpose of the focus group meeting was to "involve existing riders in the necessary effort to attract new riders to the system, and consider routing scenarios that balances the different ways to access express routes (walk, bike, bus-orbit-rail, automobile)".
 - How does the 3A option do this?

- 3A violates the purpose of your Committee per Tempe City Code Chapter 2, Article V, Div. 8
- Option 3A is not green, so how does it fit in with TIM's statement?
- 3A is not a community-based answer. It is staff and regionally based planning.
- South Tempe is being ignored when distributing transit monies for which we voted.
- Anything north of the US 60 does not benefit us.
- Light Rail, Orbit buses, the new Streetcar and even the BRT plan, long dead, was aimed at getting Chandler residents to Light Rail.
- Where is the process equitability?
- Where is South Tempe in this program? In our cars, polluting the air.
- This is about as bad as kicking up dust to pollute the air and add more cars and congestion to the mix.
- I recommend, since the City is obviously looking out for the interests of the "region" instead of Tempe citizens, that Valley Metro move up fare increases to July 2012, and charge more for express routes to save existing routes as they are now.
- For the \$25,000 to 3\$0,000 the proposed cuts will save for bus 521 annually, what if you charged a dollar per person more each year to make the current system cost neutral?
- Transit service ridership, at least the 521, is going up with gasoline prices soaring.
- Whom does this commission serve? City Staff or City residents who pay for this service? Who does Tempe Transit serve? It is we, taxpayers who voted for extra-special transit service back in 2000. You do not serve any regional body or any other city. It is we you report to through our Council.
- Think of the residents, your fellow Tempeans, not the "Region" as you make your recommendation here today.

Richard Clevis

- At the February 25^h public meeting. The majority of attendees were in favor of the current routing for the 520 and 521 routes and no one wanted any changes.
- Staff has a bias against the alternative. I know they are trying to do their job and I appreciate that, but I feel the sense that citizens who ride the bus are not being listened to.
- Those who attended the March 31 public meeting also expressed no changes to the 520 and 521 routes and these were both people who are paying taxes and using the system.
- I understand that we must work with the region, but Phoenix is a different than Tempe. My wife and I chose to live in Tempe because of the distance to the bus. Now you want us start our car and drive to a park-and-ride.
- The 521 was ranked 12th best out of 42 routes.
- What no one has pointed out is that right now there are park-and-rides. The 521 map shows one, but there are more. There are informal park-and-rides at several locations. They should be used and along with private development partnerships. It would be cost effective. I have often got off at a commercial development, which is an unofficial park-and-ride, to go shopping. It is good for business and I think Tempe would support that.
- I agree that total bus time will be reduced, but my total travel time will not. My travel time is the time I leave my house until I am in my seat at work. You must remember the clients you are serving.
- Removing the walkable option will result in more people driving not only to get to the bus but maybe to not use the bus completely. When I lived in Chandler we had to use the park-and-ride and many times just kept driving because I could beat the bus.
- Since I moved to Tempe, we drive to work once or twice a month because we have a doctor's appointment or a meeting.

- Changing the express system will also negatively impact those who ride the local buses route 72 and route 81 and transfer to the express routes.
- There has been no consideration to the increase in vehicular traffic in Tempe to get to the park-and-rides.
- Starting a car causes the most pollution and you don't want full starts to eliminate pollution.
- I take issue with Graph 2 of the report (pg 7) which refers to the survey. The question asked was "Does it decrease my transit options somewhat or a lot?" Somehow this morphed into "decreases my travel." That changes things 180 degrees.
- The study done by HDR in attachment C refers to 21 total trips for 3 routes and going to 30 trips which is the preferred option will cost more money.
- Suggestions:
 - Leave 520 and 521 alone. Perhaps eliminating 1 trip in the morning and 1 in the afternoon.
 - Work to promote informal park-and-ride that already exists.
 - Biggest cost savings to be gained would be to reduce frequency of the Orbit buses by 5 minutes, reduce local buses to 10 p.m., and add a fare to the Orbit system. Yet those decisions are delayed until December of this year or not being considered.
 - Advertise as much as you can.

Dale Steele

- Is the bus full or not? Seats don't accommodate people of my size. Having one to a bench is a full bench
- I've been a transit user since 1986.
- There is value with having an express route by having a distribution at the end and collector at the beginning. If you have a park-and-ride at one end then you might not have a single drop off node at the other end. The obvious reason is it is inconvenient and less functional to make a transfer to continue on your route.

Michele Gamez

- I've ridden the express bus 520 for approximately 12 years to downtown Phoenix.
- These proposed changes are not the best for Tempe residents. It doesn't seem like anyone is really hearing us.
- I went to one of the meetings on a Saturday morning and it started 40 minutes late and I wasn't able to stay to make my comments.
- I participated in the focus group in March, but the recommendations made today are different than what was discussed at the focus group.
- 3A is a different option that came out after all of the meetings were done. You haven't really had any comments on 3A because the first time I even saw 3A was on Friday just a few days ago.
- I don't think it's fair to try and persuade or tell us what is working for other parts of the community, parts that are more rural like Gilbert, Surprise, will work for Tempe. They are happy with park-and-rides because they are coming from a much farther distance.
- We will just keep driving. It doesn't take us that long to get there.
- It is a great benefit to us who work downtown because we work on the bus.
- City of Tempe has many unofficial park- and-rides. They are a benefit and one of the best kept secrets.
- Marketing is a problem. Express riders have done their own marketing.
- Ridership has increased because I believe the cost of fuel is on the rise and people will continue to ride. A few years ago when the fuel costs went up, we were standing room only,

- I am opposed to any of the changes especially because the recommendations coming forth were not even known to us until Friday.
- As Commission members, you have a right to vote and make recommendations to the City Council. I strongly hope and recommend that you turn this down because what fits for another community doesn't necessarily fit for Tempe and it shouldn't be cookie cutter or boiler plate.

Agenda Item 3 – Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Huellmantel called to approve.

Commissioner Huellmantel asked to change the April 10, 2012 minutes, Agenda Item 6, paragraph 9, by adding "day" between "half" and "strategy" and paragraph 11, change to "may". Commissioner Goronkin asked to change Agenda Item 5, paragraph 8, from Commissioner Sue Jones to Commissioner Pam Goronkin. Commissioner Charles Huellmantel made motion to approve the Transportation Commission Minutes with amendments for the April 10, 2012 meeting; Commissioner Peter Schelstraete approved. Commissioner Gary Roberts seconded the motion. All approved except Commissioner Catherine Mayorga who abstained and Commissioner Marcellus Lisotta who left early (8:37am). The following minutes were approved:

- Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes – April 10, 2012

Agenda Item 4 – Transit Fund/Service Changes

Presented by Greg Jordan and Paul Hodgins.

Greg presented the 4 major strategies that are in various stages of completion that affect the Transit Fund: The Regional Fare Increase, Additional Federal Funding (Fleet Maintenance), Tempe-RPTA Bus Operations Unification, and Orbit Fleet CNG Conversion.

The Regional fare increase was approved by Valley Metro/RPTA's Transit Management Committee for implementation in January 2013. The approval is contingent on Title VI analysis. The Valley Metro/RPTA Board of Directors will consider the increase at their September 2012 meeting.

Currently there is a surplus of 5307 funds (\$43 million) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding (\$25 million) for allocation to Preventative Maintenance. 5307 funding is at the beginning of the process and will be discussed by the Transit Committee and Transportation Review Committee in May. Allocation of both the CMAQ and 5307 funding will be require additional approvals by the Transportation Policy Committee, management Committee, and Regional Council.

The Tempe City Council and Valley Metro/RPTA have approved a "scout program." Staff won't know actual savings until December, but estimated savings is in the range of \$400k -\$500k for Tempe.

Orbit Fleet Conversion to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) with staff recommendation of the same vehicle type (24 foot Ford Cutaway) powered by CNG.

The goal of the bus service changes is to identify an acceptable package of service adjustments and reductions that combine with internal cost savings/additional revenue in order to balance the Transit Fund

goal, achieve long –term fiscal sustainability, and maintain an effective and high performing transit system in a state of good repair.

Public involvement included public meetings, public comments, and intercept surveys, meetings with stakeholder groups and neighborhood associations, and express rider focus group.

There was public communication through press releases, Facebook and twitter, ads of azcentral.com, website, Tempe 11, Tempe Today water bill newsletter, ASU and School District notification, Boards and Commission presentations, Neighborhood and Homeowner Association notifications, posters on local and express buses, Friendship Village presentation, Interpret surveys on buses and transit centers and available at multi-generational centers.

The approval process for service changes or fare policy includes recommendations for Citizen Advisory Transportation Commission on March 13 and May 8; Council Transportation Committee on May 8, and Tempe City Council on May 31.

A ranking of the alternatives was developed based on a synthesis of system and route level performance and public opinion. The ranking chart shows the least impact on 1-3, 5-9, and 11.

Orbit routes with proposed changes include Orbit Earth, Orbit Jupiter, and Orbit Mars. There is no recommendation on Orbit fare and will come back in the summer of 2013 to coincide with replacement fleet.

Paul Hodgins provided information regarding fixed route services.

The following principles guided the analysis of the current express system and the development of a proposed restricted system:

- Maximize the use of park-and-ride lots
- Improve speed and reduce trip times by maximizing the use of HOV lanes and eliminate local stops and local circulation
- Match capacity to demand
- Lower costs to help balance budget and TLCP.

The changes proposed and final recommendations are:

Route 510: Eliminate

Route 511: Eliminate access to Apache/101 park-and-ride. Terminate south end at Tempe Transportation Center. If ridership does not improve, most likely will be eliminated in the future,

Route 512: Deviate route at Shea/101 south on 101. Stop at Scottsdale Community College. Exit Loop 101 at McDowell, east to 52nd St., enter 202 at 52nd St. Bus stops along McDowell at all transfer points with north/south local routes. Change route number to Route 514.

Route 520: Use Tempe Library as park-and-ride, eliminate local stops, maintain 4 round trips. Change route to number 523.

Route 521: Kiwanis Park park-n-ride and eliminate one inbound trip. Change route number to 524.

Route 531: Eliminate 2 inbound and 1 outbound trip

Route 532: Eliminate

Route 533: Eliminate local stops on Power Rd, begin route at Superstition Springs and add one trip

Route 535: Add one round trip

Route 540: Begin route from Tempe Sports Complex park-and-ride (Warner/Hardy), north to Elliot Rd. to access I-10. Maintain four roundtrips per day. Change route number to 525.

Route 541: Keep local circulation but to limit the stops to half-mile or mile intervals. Deviate the route at Baseline Rd. east to the West Mesa park-and-ride. Eliminate one inbound trip,

Route 542: No Changes

Route 560: Eliminate

Route 562: Add one round trip.

Route 563: No Changes

Route 571: Add stops in El Mirage along Thunderbird.

Route 573: No Changes

Route 575: No Changes

Route 581: Eliminate.

GAL: Eliminate stops in El Mirage, begin route in Peoria. Eliminate 2 round trips.

Commissioner Piedrahita asked if all routes are going to downtown Phoenix. Paul responded that it is commuter based to get people to downtown Phoenix. Commissioner Piedrahita asked if any hubs are looked at. Paul stated that some are in the regional plan but some have low ridership like Surprise to Scottsdale. There are also some routes in the plan they would like to implement.

Commissioner Huellmantel asked if there was a sense of where the people with Tempe jobs live. Greg stated that have general information from MAG. First is Tempe residents at 30-40% then Mesa then Downtown Phoenix at 15%.

Commissioner Lisotta asked if the buses are full. Greg stated that some are, but not all and there is capacity in Tempe. Paul stated that full is subjective. Data doesn't prove that they are running at capacity. Commissioner Roberts also stated that express routes are time sensitive.

Commissioner Saiz asked to what extent are park-and-rides being used. Paul stated that they are being used but they want more trips though each lot. Commissioner Huellmantel asked what percentage is full. Paul responded that some are 50-70% and some are 10-15%. It varies by day of the week and location. Commissioner Huellmantel asked what percentage use park-and-ride versus taking express bus. Paul stated that he didn't know, but can find out. Two thirds of riders use park-and-rides and Rapid routes have the highest users.

Commissioner Phillip Luna asked about the cost of the land for the park-and-ride. Paul stated that there are costs but the costs are not allocated to bus service. They are accounted for separately. Greg stated that in Tempe we would not have a full blown park-and-ride, but would ask for additional funding for facility updates.

Commissioner Marcellus asked about storage for bikes at the park-and-rides. Paul stated that there would be lockers and racks. All buses there are also bike rack equipped. Commissioner Huellmantel asked how many bikes fit on a bus. Most can hold three, but some older ones only hold two. Commissioner Huellmantel asked if there is trouble with getting bikes on the bus due to bike room. Paul stated sometimes, but only on the local service.

Greg asked the Commission for their recommendation and stated that staff recommends option 3A.

Commissioner Roberts asked if Orbit feeds the park-and-ride lots. Greg stated yes, at the Library and there is an opportunity at the Kiwanis Park.

Commissioner Strang asked for further explanation about the bus service charge rankings and the neutral restructuring costs. Greg replied that by improving performance the cost savings is neutral.

Commissioner Schelstraete asked if there was a difference in savings for option 1 and option 3A. Greg stated yes. The money is saved about \$100-150k and increases productivity. Option 1 can't grow system boardings. Option 3 or 3A can balance the needs to riders but grow ridership. Commissioner Huellmantel expressed that he doesn't understand the concept to drive to a bus and thinks that 5307 funds should be used capital not just maintenance. Greg replied that there is a tradeoff. More cars are on the street, but the goal is to have more people boarding to overall reduce the number of cars. Commissioner Huellmantel stated that it is a great goal, asked how does it happen. Greg stated that though Orbit and local connections using the larger system to load. Commissioner Huellmantel asked why more people would go to park-n-rides. Greg stated that this is evident through other park-and-ride data. HDR uses a regression model and some is based on theory. The cost benefit to go to a park-and-ride model is different for Tempe than Gilbert.

Commissioner Saiz stated that the speakers did a great job. There is a perception out there that the tax is benefitting North Tempe. It is important to know the park-and-ride use if using it as a benchmark. He stated that he is unsure about the park-and-rides without more information. Greg replied that we do have the data showing that park-and-rides have more boardings. Paul also stated that is has park-and-ride utilization data that he can provide. He also stated that there is an understanding that riders will not be the same and will now access new people who already drive. Commissioner Huellmantel stated that he is still unclear how increase in ridership works and we owe it to people to have more information before recommendations are made. He asked the timeline for action. Greg stated that implementation was set for July 23.

Commissioner Sue Lofgren stated route 520 does not increase cost, to get more ridership there needs to be more marketing to get more ridership. If they can get there without a park-and-ride if advertised more. We are Tempe and for Tempe this is not a positive change.

Commissioner Huellmantel stated that we can't ignore the region, but look at this from a Tempe perspective. He also stated that he doesn't buy that South Tempe is forgotten and that we need to focus on making things work.

Commissioner Strang stated that option 3 maintains the same arterial streets as the current route and option 3A does not. Option 3 makes more sense with a park-and-ride. Greg replied that 3A provides the most cost efficient approach by looking at overall cost and potential performance. David replied that option 3 addresses concerns of citizens today.

Commissioner Huellmantel asked about the statistics on the capacity of the existing service and it performance. Greg referred to the performance data slide which showed 520 to have 48 boardings and 521 to have 96 boardings. Commissioner Huellmantel asked how much capacity on the routes. Paul and Greg stated that four trips with 37 maximum passengers equal 148 seats; roughly 100 more than being used.

Commissioner Roberts stated that he had taken Route 520 for years. He also expressed his appreciation to the citizens who spoke. He stated that park-and-rides have more uses such as lots for carpools. It would put more cars on the street is true, but park-and-rides add more riders in the long run. Express riders now will be inconvenienced, but many people already use informal park-and-rides such as the LDS church or Grace Community Church. If you make changes then it is important that Valley Metro and Tempe market it. It is better to ride the HOV lane then sitting in traffic.

Commissioner Goronkin thanked the citizens and staff. She stated that one size does not fit all. The same for others will not necessarily be the same for Tempe. Tempe is the densest community. Our usage will be different. We should leave route and reduce service would improve performance without disrupting service.

Commissioner Huellmantel asked for numbers to compare if we change routes. Greg stated yes.

Commissioner Piedrahita would like to look at option 3A and option, but is not advocating either option. He asked what the benefit of option 3A is to current riders. Greg stated it is a negative benefit.

Commissioner Strang asked if we would test option 3 with park-and-ride locations and use the streets. Greg stated that a reduction in stops would have to be made it would keep the status quo, but add park-n-rides.

Commissioner Saiz asked about the annual maintenance costs to the park-and-rides. Greg stated that there is not much because they are shared use facilities unlike the current Light Rail park-and-rides.

Commissioner Roberts stated that he was on the edge as he can see benefits on both sides. He recommends holding off, but asked if there are schedule issues with the region.

Commissioner Huellmantel asked to schedule another meeting in two weeks. Commissioner Mayorga agreed another meeting was necessary. Greg stated that May 22^d would be before it would go to Council for recommendations, but the Valley Metro Board of Director would have already made their action on May 17. We would need to defer the changes to January 2013.

Paul stated that a regional park-n-ride model is what is best not just for Phoenix, but for our cities. He said it the right thing to do long term. Commissioner Huellmantel asked if there was a chance that Valley metro staff recommendations would change. Paul replied that he feels that staff will recommend park-and-rides.

Commissioner Sue Lofgren stated that she prefers option 3 with park-and-rides added to existing route.

Agenda Item 5 – Orbit Fleet

Presented by Greg Jordan as part of Agenda Item 4.

Agenda Item 6 – Commission Workshop: Transportation Master Plan

Deferred.

Agenda Item 7 - University and Broadway Rd Projects

Deferred.

Agenda Item 8 –Deputy Director’s Report

Deferred.

Agenda Item 9 – Future Agenda Items

- Meet May 22
 - Impacts/benefits for option 3
 - Updated table page 7
 - Percentage of park-and-ride users
 - Make sure focus group sees 3A

Meeting adjourned at 9:43am

The Commission's next meeting will be held Tuesday, May 22, 2012 at 7:30 a.m. Tempe Center for the Arts, 700 W Rio Salado Parkway, Lounge 201, Tempe, Arizona.