



Minutes City of Tempe Transportation Commission June 11, 2013

Minutes of the Tempe Transportation Commission held on Tuesday, June 11, 2013, 7:30 a.m., at the Tempe Transportation Center, Don Cassano Community Room, 200 E 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Charles Huellmantel (Chair)
Aaron Golub
Pam Goronkin
Sue Lofgren
Kevin Olson
Charles Redman
Benjamin Sanchez

Don Cassano
Ben Goren
Nikki Gusz
Philip Luna
German Piedrahita
Gary Roberts
Peter Schelstraete

(MEMBERS) Absent:

None

City Staff Present:

Don Bessler, Public Works Director
Greg Jordan, Deputy Public Works Director-Transit
Eric Iwersen, Interim Transportation Planning Manager
Mike Nevarez, Transit Operations Coordinator
Nancy Ryan, Project Management Coordinator
Shelly Seyler, Deputy Public Works Director-Traffic
Sue Taaffe, Public Information Officer
Tanya Chavez, Neighborhood Services Specialist
Maja Aurora, Public Arts Coordinator
Yvette Mesquita, Sr Management Assistant
Kathy Wittenburg, Administrative Assistant

Guests Present:

Bonnie Gerepva
Ryan Guzy
Preston Swan

Commissioner Pam Goronkin called the meeting to order at 7:36 a.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None

Agenda Item 2 – Minutes

The minutes of the April 9, 2013 Transportation Commission meeting were approved.

Motion: Commissioner Cassano

Second: Commissioner Redman

Decision: Approved

Abstain: Commissioner Schelstraete

Commission Chair Charles Huellmantel arrived and took over the meeting

Agenda Item 3 – Proposed Changes to Non- ADA Dial-a-Ride Fares

Hillary Foose, Valley Metro Director, Communication and Marketing, presented information about proposed increases in the Non- ADA Dial-a-Ride Fares. Presentation and discussion highlights include:

Hillary explained that the Non-ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Dial-a-Ride typically serves seniors and disabled who do not qualify for ADA trips and referred to the handouts which described how the program works, what services are provided and what fees are charged. Valley Metro proposes to incrementally increase the Non-ADA fares to match current Dial-a-Ride fees. The Non-ADA services are less expensive than ADA rates. Non-ADA fares have not increased in nearly 10 years. Non-ADA fares have not kept up with growth and operating costs, so the fare needs to increase to cover expenses.

Non-ADA program only operates in Tempe, Chandler, Scottsdale and unincorporated areas of Maricopa County and is not a federally mandated program. The proposal would increase fares \$1.50 in July of 2013 and increase annually until it conforms to the ADA base fare of \$4.00 in 2014. The proposal will also include a distance-based fee and a change in the reservation policy.

Other Alternative mobility programs such as the ADA Platinum Pass and the RideChoice cab program were explained. Valley Metro sought input through public outreach, but did not get a large response. Valley Metro looks forward to implement the current proposal as early as September, after presenting to the various Councils. The proposal details are outlined in the flyer provided to help communicate the changes.

Commissioner Cassano asked if they were one way trips and to confirm when fares are paid. Hillary confirmed that payment is made to the driver at the end of the trip and that the mileage and fee is determined when the customer makes the reservation for the ride.

Commissioner Sanchez asked to clarify the same day or one day reservation policy. Hillary responded that Valley Metro is encouraging consumers to make decisions about their travel choices and move them to ADA Dial-a-Ride or take advantage of other programs.

Commissioner Redman asked if there was any thought to adjust the language to state the fee would be two times the base rate of public transit to avoid any confusion if those other rates change by 2015. Hillary responded that there is an asterisk directed to language stating that fees would be in line with ADA rates.

Commissioner Gusz asked how many people use this service now. Greg responded that there are 40,000-50,000 Dial-a-Ride boarding per year for the whole system with 30% of those representing Non-ADA for Tempe. Hillary confirmed that across the whole system, 20% of the passengers are Non-ADA.

Commissioner Cassano asked if the certification period to become an ADA qualified rider had been extended. Greg replied yes up to 5 years and that there is also a lifetime certification option.

Commissioner Piedrahita asked what is fee per mile for a regular taxi cab. Mike Nevarez responded the rates are approximately \$2.00 at flag drop and \$2.00 a mile. Hillary replied that Non-ADA is subsidized by the cities that offer it. Greg explained the fare recovery is about 4 to 6 percent.

Mike pointed out that there are (numerous) zone charges today with Non-ADA and a typical trip in Tempe could be \$1.00 or \$1.50 per zone and one trip could cross 4 or 5 zones and the average cost per trip to the city is \$27 per trip.

Commissioner Huellmantel asked how the rates will be changed if they are subsidized. Mike responded not significantly and explained the average trip is about 6 to 7 miles with the goal to attempt to cover \$4 on average paid by the passenger.

Greg will present more analytical information to the commission at the July meeting before presenting to Council in August.

Agenda Item 4 — General Plan 2040

Nancy Ryan, Project Management Coordinator, Community Development presented information updating the progress of the General Plan 2040. Presentation and discussion highlights include:

Nancy directed the members to review the presentation slides and informed the commission this information will be posted on the web. Tempe's vision for 2040 will focus on five guiding principles to provide opportunities to live and work and obtain services:

- Balanced Land Use
- Enhanced Quality of Life and Preservation of Neighborhood Character
- Increase Economic Vitality
- Sustained Mobility/Greater Accessibility
- Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship

Nancy explained how implementing these principles will enhance the ability to walk, bike and shop near their homes and include open spaces and art, equity in public investment are fairly distributed throughout the City of Tempe.

Commissioner Goronkin asked for an example of a character area in Tempe and Nancy replied that although none exist in Tempe now, such an area that could be defined by similarities in architectural areas designed or as an attendance area within the community. Eric added that Council will discuss this concept at the Strategy Session at 4:00 pm to establish a framework for preservation or future projections of architecture styles in certain areas giving bodies such as this commission or the Development Review Commission tools to look at private development to select appropriate character styles within an area.

Nancy continued to explain the One Mile walk or 4 mile bike ride concept, which enables a resident to reach comfortable passage with opportunities to stop along the way with facilities to meet community needs such as dentists, shopping, and services.

Nancy went on to highlight each chapter of the plan emphasizing and pointing out key transportation elements which included:

- Land Use and Development
 - Land Use and Community Design
 - Revitalization, Redevelopment, Housing and Historic Preservation
- Economic Development
- Circulation
 - Pedestrian/Bike Network
 - Transit, Travelways and Aviation
- Conservation
- Open Space, Recreation and Cultural Amenities
- Public and Private Open Space
- Public Services and Facilities
- Projections of Growth and Housing:
 - Employment growth projects 74,000 jobs over the 2010 Plan
 - Housing growth projects 17,000 housing units over the 2010 Plan

Nancy reported community meetings were held on May 29th and June 1st and that the GP 2040 document will be introduced to the Boards and Commissions throughout the month of June; public comments will be accepted through September; comments will be evaluated with a Final Plan being presented during formal hearings in October with the Development Review Commission; then will go before Council in November and if approved to the voters for ratification in May of 2014.

Agenda Item 5 – MAG Planning Grants

Eric Iwersen, Interim Transportation Planning Manager, presented information about potential projects in Tempe for possible action. Don Bessler, Public Works Director, also spoke on this issue.

Presentation and discussion highlights include:

Eric reviewed the packet information for the project selections for Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) grant applications and asked the commissioners to consider staff's recommendation to apply solely for the Highline Canal project and to postpone moving forward with pursuing funds for the Union Pacific Rail Road pathways proposal. Union Pacific pathway proposal was shared with the commission as well as some concerns from both MAG and City staff.

A memo authored by Public Works Director, Don Bessler was sent to the commission providing information relating to the issue and the need to postpone applying for a UPRR corridor grant at this time. Mr. Bessler explained that based on feedback from the UPRR, Assistant City Manager Jeff Kulaga who has been the UPRR liaison and from MAG staff that we may be better served to move forward on this complex project in a diplomatic and strategic manner including the consideration of a partnership approach with other jurisdictions in the Valley. Don added that the alternative project – Highline Canal meets the criteria, is a viable project, and has been sanctioned by the City Council. This is an important distinction since the City Council as recently as May, had indicated that they wanted grant submissions to come through them before staff pursues them.

Commission Chair Huellmantel offered information regarding past discussions referencing the inclusion of the Union Pacific (UPRR) projects within the General Plan and requested additional information. Eric reiterated that the Highline Project does meet the criteria and exemplifies the regional significance in a project and expects it to fare well in the grant application process.

Commissioner Goronkin stated that she is concerned that UPRR does not have the same motivation to improve the corridor and encouraged organizing our resources to pursue these projects in the future. Commission Chair Huellmantel agreed that it will be a difficult process and acknowledged that the railroad won't decide anything until specific plans are proposed.

Don confirmed that this type of project is mentioned in the General Plan but it is not in the CIP and the project is presenting challenges. Don asked we be proactive very thoughtful before we proceed, maybe even partner with other communities and then move forward. Don suggested spending some time with the Council to help determine their priorities for this corridor.

Commissioner Olson suggested the commission accept the Highline Canal project and express to staff their position relating to the UPRR and that corridor. Don reiterated that staff would react to the commission's direction about the Highline Canal project, bring the UPRR proposal to Council for their direction and prepare to add to next year's CIP as a grant match opportunity.

Commission Chair Huellmantel stated that he was disappointed that no movement could be made towards the UP proposal at this time as a high priority, but asked staff to come back with a strategic plan the commission can work on in the future.

Mr. Bessler committed to two things: he would ensure the Union Pacific Railroad Corridor project was advanced to the City Council Economic, Lake, Downtown and Advanced Transportation Committee and that he would be developing a mechanism to assist with out of cycle grants in the form of a CIP dedicated to transportation grant matches.

Commissioner Olson commented that the Highline grant appears to have to greatest opportunity for success, and that the UPRR is an economic asset to the region.

Motion as stated by Commissioner Olson is to endorse move forward the Highline Grant Application and look into next year's budget process and policies to raise the priority of the UPRR proposal.

Motion: Commissioner Olson

Second: Commissioner Cassano

Decision: Approved

Agenda Item 6 – Public Art Concepts for University and Hardy Dr. Streetscape Projects REVISED

Eric Iwersen, Interim Transportation Planning Manager, introduced Maja Aurora, the Public Arts Coordinator for Community Services. Presentation and discussion highlights include:

Maja explained the program, funding, selection process and project concepts. Handouts including information from the two artists selected were distributed. Each artist met with the selection panel and city staff to review and discuss the project concepts:

- Melissa Martinez lives in the Mitchell Park West neighborhood and plans to focus on images from nature for transit shelters and the median based on imagery (sees Hardy in three sections – Palo Verde Tree and flowers, sparrows and sculpture on University – preliminary stages of design focusing on sculptural elements in the medians and shelters.

- Chris Trumble resides in Tucson, with a background in architecture and submitted his concept plans to create designs for the four pedestrian crosswalks on University Drive street crossings, focusing more at the pavers (stamped asphalt) and crosswalks.

Eric added that these concepts will be discussed at a public meeting on June 18th at Mitchell School with the business owners and homeowners in the neighborhoods. The artists are looking at the medians, transit shelters, and crosswalks with the intent to integrate those elements into the design and maximize what the public art experience can be – making it functional art.

Commissioner Redman asked if maintenance and cleaning will be considered in the project.

Maja replied that maintenance and colors are elements that will be considered in the process. Eric added that one of the preferred materials is stamped asphalt instead of pavers for improved wear and upkeep.

Maja will provide an update to the Commission in August.

Agenda Item 7 – Department and Regional Transportation Updates

- Greg reported the unification of bus operations will happen on July 1st with no visible change in service, updates to follow.
- Commissioner Roberts announced that Jim Wright of Valley Metro will retire tomorrow and asked how that will fit into the joint operations. Greg shared they are recruiting and expect to have it filled in the next 30 – 60 days.
- Public Art Concept Public Meeting is next Tuesday Mitchell's School's Child's Play Theater at 5:30 p.m.
- Broadway Road Public Meeting is tonight at the Community Christian Church at 6:00 p.m.

Agenda Item 8 – Future Agenda Items

- Union Pacific Railroad Strategies
- Proposed Changes to Non-ADA Dial-a-Ride Fares Update

Agenda Item 9 – Facility Tour

Commission members were provided a tour of the Traffic Management Center on the 3rd floor of the Tempe Transportation Center by Catherine Hollow.

The Commission's next meeting is scheduled for July 9, 2013.

Meeting adjourned at 9:44 a.m.

Prepared by: Kathy Wittenburg

Reviewed by: Yvette Mesquita