

**Minutes**

**City of Tempe Transportation Commission**

**June 2**, **2015**

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**Minutes of the Tempe Transportation Commission held on Tuesday, June 2, 2015, 7:30 a.m., at Hatton Hall, 34 E. 7th Street, Tempe, Arizona.**

**(MEMBERS) Present:**

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| Pam Goronkin (Chair)  Jeremy Browning  Ryan Guzy  Bonnie Gerepka  Charles Huellmantel  Don Cassano | Philip Luna  Kevin Olson  Peter Schelstraete  Cyndi Streid  Jonathon Bates  Lloyd Thomas  Charles Redman |

**(MEMBERS) Absent:**

None

**City Staff Present:**

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| Shelly Seyler, Deputy Public Works Director  Mike Nevarez, Transit Manager  Eric Iwersen, Principal Planner  Joe Clements, Transit Financial Analyst  Sue Taaffe, Public Works Supervisor | Amanda Nelson, Public Information Officer  Jason Hartong, Senior Planner  Julian Dresang, Traffic Engineer  Laura Kajfez, Neighborhood Services Specialist  Christine Warren, Senior Civil Engineer |

**Guests Present:**

Marc Pearsall, MAG

Jorge Luna, Valley Metro

Jen Pine, AECOM

Sonya Pastor, Valley Metro

Commissioner Pam Goronkin called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

**Agenda Item 1** **– Public Appearances**

None

**Agenda Item 2 – Minutes**

Chair Goronkin introduced the minutes of the May 12, 2015 meeting and asked for a motion. A motion was made to approve the amended minutes.

**Motion:** Commissioner Don Cassano

**Second:** Commissioner Lloyd Thomas

**Decision:** Approved Amended

**Agenda Item 3 – Bicycle/Pedestrian Signal Activation Operations**

Christine Warren, Public Works, presented an overview of Bicycle/Pedestrian Signal Activation Operations. The goal of the program is to provide service in an equitable manner for all travel especially in peak directions while incorporating the north-south and east-west grid system. Christine mentioned a plan to develop standard operating procedures to accommodate bicyclist in a more speedy fashion around the city and specifically on the bike boulevard system.

Discussion included comments from several Commissioners on their own experiences with certain intersections, the programmable controls of the Transportation Management Center and traffic flow through construction zones. Christine mentioned the adaptive softwares that are used for detection as a future possibility, but this software is very costly and would take many years to implement throughout Tempe.

The count-down timer plan will be implemented city-wide as part of the new manual on uniform traffic control devices.

Commissioners requested an update at a future meeting.

**Agenda Item 4 – RPTA/Valley Metro Southeast Valley Transit Study**

The purpose of this presentation is to provide the Transportation Commission with information regarding the Southeast Valley Transit System Study including: identifying concepts for optimizing existing transit services, improving efficiencies and align investment with demand, developing recommended concepts for addressing mid‐term (within 10 years) and long-term (beyond 10 years) transit needs and developing the public involvement process.

Jason Hartong discussed Tempe’s involvement with the Southeast Valley Transit System Study which includes the southeast valley cities, Valley Metro and Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and their plans for the growth in the Transit network in a way to enhance existing service and bring new service to underserved areas. Study Consultant, Jen Pine with AECOM, Sonya Pastor with Valley Metro and Jorge Luna with Valley Metro provided an overview of the study area. Long range transportation planning includes member agencies that decided to join. None of the new cities other than Apache Junction are members of Valley Metro. Coolidge is a “partner” of this endeavor because they provide transit service for Florence and are paying for service outside of the county area. Casa Grande and Coolidge are part of the new Sun Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), because they reached a population tipping point that requires an MPO.

Purpose: To optimize services due to limited funding.

Items for consideration included:

* Be strategic.
* Think locally regarding reorganizing resources.
* Develop recommendations for addressing the midterm and long-term needs at the city and regional levels.
* Find the best ways to integrate systems and implement improvements.
* Identify options on how best to implement transit service in the future.

**Key Preliminary Recommendations (Relevant to Tempe)**

* Increase frequencies in top performance
* Strengthen grid network ‐ more east‐west connections across the SE Valley
* Create more direct connections between ASU Research Park and LRT
* Explore limited stop commuter services to North Tempe from South Tempe/North Chandler
* Increase frequency on Route 72

**Agenda Item 5 - Bus Unification**

Mike Nevarez, Public Works, reported on the “scout program” and will be providing this information to Council for a decision on future of transit service in Tempe.

He discussed the regionalized service with Tempe and the RPTA including the importance of ensuring Tempe has good service quality and maintains control of local services such as Orbit, local Tempe routes and performance evaluation. Combining the contracts provided Tempe some synergies, which enabled Tempe to reduce costs. The goals are a long-term joint contract, operating services from shared facilities, and streamlining operations and management through a centralized‐regional authority.

Options:

1. Maintain unified operations by executing the seven-year IGA to continue having Valley Metro through First Transit provide the bus service with the focus on:

* Emphasizing performance and continuity
* Obtaining more info on performance reports
* Ensure Tempe’s options for finding an alternative to the 7 year agreement

**Or**

1. Discontinue unified operations and absorb the costs associated with Tempe managing the operations and negotiating with surrounding cities.

Discussion: The Transportation Commission discussed labor issues, contract length & costs and greater oversight concerns with regarded to bus unification.

A motion was made by Commissioner Charles Redman to continue with unified bus operations.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Philip Luna

Motion passed.

**Agenda Item 6 - MAG Congestion and Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ ITS) and Pedestrian Design Assistance Grants**

Staff provided the Commission with a review of the ITS funding requests for 2018 and 2019.

The City of Tempe signal systems group has proposed an “ITS Safety & Performance Upgrades” project in two phases, at a cost of $350,000 each. Each phase will include bi‐directional Dynamic Message Signs (DMS), 10 CCTV cameras, a high‐speed wireless link, 50 intersection wireless radios, bicycle detection in mixed‐use lanes at four locations and emergency vehicle preemption networking at 55 locations. These ITS upgrades will result in a communications network that is more reliable, resilient and capable of supporting additional functionality throughout the traffic system (provides ability to move more traffic, more efficiently).

**RECOMMENDATION**

Supports staff ITS efforts for regional funds.

**DESIGN ASSISTANCE GRANTS**

The Maricopa Association of Governments Pedestrian Design Assistance Program is an annual grant source specifically targeted at funding the first phase concept work of pedestrian projects in the region.

MAG states the intent of the program is to stimulate integration of bicycle and pedestrian facilities into the regional transportation infrastructure. Tempe has successfully received design grants for seven projects since the program inception and all but one of the projects has gone on to receive federal funding for construction as well. The deliverable work product from a successfully funded project is a concept detailed enough to use for pursuit of federal construction funds.

The Commission is asked to identify one preferred project that we can forward to MAG for consideration. These are due on June 29th. They have $400,000 available for the region this year. With this in mind, staff offers the following projects for consideration to apply for the 2016 grant funding:

1. Upstream Dam Pedestrian Bridge over Tempe Town Lake at the Dorsey Road Alignment

Discussion covered costs of projects and what the scope of the design concept would include. Costs will be in the range of $50-65,000 per project and design costs for a construction project is usually about 10% of the total construction and design concept is 1 to 5% of that. An example is the $75,000 received for the Alameda project last year that will take us through a design concept for 3 miles of a streetscape project including changes to a railroad crossing as well as integrating with the pedestrian crossing over the I-10. This gives us the concept, which is about a 10% level of the project. It identifies major problems, major cost issues with the project, any environmental issues and it prepares the project for a more formal submittal of construction dollars and for a formal construction document.

1. Underpass/Crossing at Western Canal and Baseline Road

This is one we’ve talked about for several years and is a crossing of Baseline Road where the Western Canal, north/south Rail Spur Path and Kyrene exist. If we got the money for this project, we would go through a process of determining what the best street crossing would be. It’s part of the Handlebars route.

1. Complete the 4-mile Brake Bike Boulevard (Kyrene Canal – Highline Canal Path Connection) This is an under ½ mile pathway linkage between our current and actively used Western Canal pathway and the under construction Highline path. This is a great connector through Ken McDonald Golf Course.
2. Reflector Bike Boulevard/ASU Research Park Path (Elliot Road to Warner Road) – 1 mile pathway north and south. Staff shared project location photos to assist in recommending a project. Continued use for the equestrian access. There’s a pretty wide easement space to work with; looking at formalizing that space that’s informally used today.

Eric stated that staff coalesced around the project number 3, which is the connection through Ken McDonald Golf Course and is the link between the Highline and Western Canals. We thought it was a project that would compete well with the region because it demonstrates completing a gap in the system as well as showing a railroad crossing.

Discussions amongst the Commissioners continued with a lively debate about which plan was more “regional”, the financial aspects and community support of items 1 and 3.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kevin Olson to support the Brake Bike Boulevard path connection (project #3); it was seconded by Commissioner Cassano and passed with 9 in favor and 3 opposed.

**Agenda Item 7 – Department and Regional Transportation Updates**

None

**Agenda Item 8– Future Agenda Items**

The following future agenda items have been previously identified by the Commission or staff:

* Street Closure Procedures and Notification Follow-up (August)
* Highline Canal Multi-use Path (August)
* Bike Share (August)
* Orbit Saturn (August)
* Bike Boulevards (September)
* North/South Railroad Spur Multi-Use Path (September)
* Orbit Saturn (November)
* Alameda Streetscape Project (November)
* Long-Range Forecast Presentation (November)
* Introduction of CIP Requests (December)
* Bike Hero (January)
* FY 2016/17 Media Plan (February)
* Long-Range Forecast Update (Operating) & CIP follow-up (March)

The Commission’s next meeting is scheduled for August 11, 2015.

**The meeting was adjourned at 10:04 a.m.**

Prepared by: Kristen Rodgers

Reviewed by: Sue Taaffe and Eric Iwersen