



Minutes City of Tempe Transportation Commission November 12, 2015

Minutes of the Tempe Transportation Commission held on Thursday, Nov. 12, 2015, 7:30 a.m., at the Tempe Transportation Center, Don Cassano Community Room, 200 E. Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Pam Goronkin (Chair) – via phone
Ryan Guzy
Bonnie Gerepka
Don Cassano
Philip Luna
Jeremy Browning

Kevin Olson
Cyndi Streid
Lloyd Thomas
Susan Conklu
Charles Huellmantel

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Shereen Lerner
Peter Schelstraete

Charles Redman

City Staff Present:

Shelly Seyler, Deputy Public Works Director
Eric Iwersen, Principal Planner
Sue Taaffe, Public Works Supervisor
Laura Kajfez, Neighborhoods Services Specialist
Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Program Manager
Jason Hartong, Senior Planner

Mike Nevarez, Transit Manager
Julian Dresang, City Traffic Engineer
Joe Clements, Transportation Financial Analyst
Amanda Nelson, Public Information Officer
Ken Jones, Deputy City Manager - CFO

Guests Present:

Radu Nan, Kittelson and Associates
JC Porter, Arizona State University

Paul Hubbell, resident

Commissioner Don Cassano called the meeting to order at 7:32 a.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None

Agenda Item 2 – Minutes

Vice Chair Cassano introduced the minutes of the Oct. 13, 2015 meeting and asked for a motion. A motion was made to approve the minutes.

Motion: Commissioner Lloyd Thomas

Second: Commissioner Cyndi Streid

Decision: Approved

Agenda Item 3 – City Preliminary Long-Range Financial Forecast and Transit Fund Update

Ken Jones presented the City Preliminary Long-Range Financial Forecast and Transit Fund Update. The Municipal Budget Office prepares an initial Long-Range Financial Forecast in October each year to set the tone for the beginning of the budget process. An updated February forecast provides a long-term view of how current budget proposals will impact the City's future finances. Ken stated that the Transit and Transportation funds are both stable.

Shelly Seyler mentioned that staff is in the process of identifying projects to recommend for Capital Improvements Program (CIP) funding. Shelly Seyler also mentioned that four transportation projects are competing for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding. Staff intends, if funded, to stagger the construction of these projects in order to maintain a stable fund balance.

Ken Jones also discussed the plan for funding the \$23 million gap for Tempe Streetcar capital funds. A special property assessment district will likely be formed to cover the \$13 million shortfall for construction and another \$10 million was realized from regional funding.

Agenda Item 4 – Orbit Saturn

Jason Hartong provided the Commission with community feedback gathered during the three phases of the Orbit Saturn planning process and presented the final route recommendation. The public involvement process explored implementing Orbit neighborhood circulator service in the area between US 60 and Elliot Road from the east city border with Mesa to the west city border with Guadalupe and Phoenix. The planning process also included a three-phased effort to understand community preferences for service standards such as hours, frequency and days of service as well as desired destinations within the planning area. While there was initially some interest from Guadalupe, subsequent attempts to communicate were unsuccessful and the process continued without their involvement. Community feedback from Phase III was overwhelmingly positive, with 84% of survey respondents in favor of the proposed route.

The proposed route would operate every 30 minutes with service on weekdays from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sundays from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. During the final staff evaluation of the proposed program, a concern surfaced in regards to the proposed weekday start time of 8 a.m. This start time would not permit students to use Orbit Saturn for travel to school in the morning. While there was no specific community feedback requesting an earlier start time, it was determined that the recommended start time would be moved to 7 a.m.

The final recommended route will be presented to City Council on December 3. If approved by Council, staff will then begin the vehicle procurement process and other steps needed to properly implement service. Orbit Saturn would begin service in October 2017.

The Commission discussed hours and frequency and the possibility of procuring larger buses.

Jason Hartong stated that a larger Orbit bus will be procured allowing for more capacity on over crowded Orbit routes. Valley Metro would likely release an RFP in January and award the contract to a vehicle manufacturer in May/June 2016. Tempe would put the larger orbit buses on the existing routes north of US60, specifically Orbit Jupiter.

A motion was made to approve the proposed Orbit Saturn route.

Motion: Commissioner Phillip Luna

Second: Commissioner Kevin Olson

Decision: Approved.

Agenda Item 5 – Bike Boulevards

Eric Iwersen updated the Commission of the activities related to the implementation and efforts regarding the Seat Bike Boulevard Route. At the October City Council meeting, Council directed staff to conduct a third round of public involvement with three route alternatives. Eric discussed the purpose of bike boulevards, Seat route location, funding and potential improvements. Public comment continues through Nov. 16. The City Council will be presented with the findings from the third round of public involvement on Dec. 3, 2015.

There are three options for consideration:

1. Implement route between Highline Canal and McClintock Drive
2. Implement route between Highline Canal and Kenwood Lane
3. Implement route between Highline Canal and Price Road

The Commission discussed bicycle counts, schools serviced by this route and the intent of the Transportation Commission to encourage alternative modes on public streets.

A motion was made to approve Option 3, implement the route between Highline Canal and Price Road.

Motion: Commissioner Lloyd Thomas

Second: Commissioner Cyndi Streid

Decision: Approved.

The Transportation Commission expressed that it is their collective view that a vocal minority of residents are against the bike boulevard system who are not considering the long-term benefits which includes the use of public streets. The Commission also stated that it is their responsibility as appointees of the City Council to advise and make recommendations to the Council related to Transportation and Transit and not supporting this bike boulevard would be in direct conflict with their purpose.

Agenda Item 6 – Department and Regional Transportation Updates

Eric Iwersen stated that four projects will be considered next week for CMAQ funding, including Alameda Drive Streetscape, North/South Railroad Spur MUP, Western Canal MUP extension and Rio Salado at McClintock MUP underpass.

Eric Iwersen also mentioned that federal funding for the Tempe Streetcar is looking favorable. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has been in contact with Valley Metro gathering additional information about the project. The FTA will likely announce if the Streetcar received federal funding in early 2016.

Mike Nevarez informed the Commission of the exploration of a regional dial-a-ride system. A presentation will be made to the Commission in 2016.

Agenda Item 7 – Future Agenda Items

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

- Streetcar (December)
- Bike Share (December)
- McClintock @ Rio Salado MUP underpass (January)
- Commission Business (January)
- Fifth Street Streetscape (January)

- Highline Canal Multi-use Path (January)
- Bike Hero (January)
- FY 2016/17 Media Plan (February)
- Western Canal Multi-use Path Extension (February)
- North/South Railroad Spur Multi-Use Path (March)
- Long-Range Forecast Update (Operating) & CIP follow-up (March)
- CIP Discussion (April)
- Bus Unification Update (May)
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Signal Activate Operations Update (June)
- MAG Congestion and Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ, ITS) and Pedestrian Design Assistance Grants (June)

Shelly Seyler stated that the two agenda items for December have moved to January and that staff recommends cancelling the December meeting.

The Commission's next meeting is scheduled for January 12, 2016.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 a.m.

Prepared by: Sue Taaffe
Reviewed by: Eric Iwersen