

APPROVED AT THE 06-15-23 TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING



APPROVED AS AMENDED

SUMMARIZED MINUTES

**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

**Thursday, May 18, 2023
Kiva-City Hall
3939 N. Drinkwater Boulevard
Scottsdale, Arizona 85251**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Iacovo called the regular meeting of the Scottsdale Transportation Commission to order at 5:17 p.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Pamela Iacovo, Chair
Don Anderson, Vice Chair
Karen Kowal
B. Kent Lall
Mary Ann Miller (Telephonic)
Kerry Wilcoxon
Emmie Cardella

STAFF: Ratna Korepella, Transit Manager
Daniel Alire, Transportation Representative
Joan Freeman, Senior Transportation Representative
Brandon Wagner, Transit Operations Coordinator
Susan Conklu, Senior Transportation Planner
Mark Melnychenko, Transportation & Streets Director
Nathan Domme, Senior Transportation Planner
Kyle Lofgren, Office Manager

PUBLIC COMMENT

A spoken comment was received from Lee Kauftheil, who discussed the need for additional crosswalks on Thomas Road, where there are large crossing gaps, which lead to excessive jaywalking. It would be helpful to have more efficient and dedicated bus lanes, as it takes an average of two hours to travel to a destination in the City by bus. It would be helpful to have signage for vehicle drivers to be aware of multiuse path users in areas where such paths intersect with roadways. At this time, the signage places the onus on the multipath users to yield right of way to vehicles.

There were no written comments.

1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair called for approval of the minutes.

COMMISSIONER LALL MOVED TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION OF APRIL 20, 2023 AS AMENDED. COMMISSIONER WILCOXON SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED 7-0 WITH CHAIR IACOVO, VICE CHAIR ANDERSON AND COMMISSIONERS CARDELLA, KOWAL LALL, MILLER AND WILCOXON VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE WITH NO DISSENTING VOTES.

2. **TRANSIT SYSTEM UPDATE**

Ratna Korepella, Transit Manager, gave a high level overview of the existing transit system. The existing transit system service characteristics include:

- Regional fixed route
 - 9 routes
 - Weekdays: Operates at a maximum of 30 minute frequency
 - Express: 1 route
- Scottsdale Trolley: 3 routes
 - 3 routes
 - Weekdays: Operates at a 20 minute frequency
- Paratransit: ADA paratransit, RideChoice and Cab Connection
 - Federally mandated
 - Route changes impact the paratransit service area
 - Three service options

Service changes for bus routes are completed every six months. Coordination is done with Valley Metro via a full public input process. Transit funding sources include Regional sales tax funds (Prop 400), City sales tax, lottery funds and grants. All trolley buses are owned and maintained by the City. For fixed route transit, the City does not have ownership and pays for service on a per-mile basis.

Commissioner noted that the City of Phoenix is looking at bus rapid transit on West Thomas and inquired whether Scottsdale is in communication with Phoenix on this plan. Ms. Korepella confirmed that Scottsdale worked closely with Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and Valley Metro when they were completing their studies. The route comes into Scottsdale on a limited basis.

In response to a Commissioner question regarding route frequency at peak hours, Ms. Korepella stated that frequencies vary. For example, for Thomas and McDowell Road, there are times when ten-minute frequency is provided. The City must work with Phoenix to find common ground regarding frequency and funding.

Joan Freeman, Senior Transportation Representative, provided an overview of ADA travel options for Scottsdale residents. Funding for these programs is received through grants, regional sales tax, and City sales tax.

Programs include:

- ADA Paratransit
 - Federally mandated
 - Minimum mandated service area is within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of fixed transit route, inclusive of small areas fully surrounded by ADA service area
- Valley Metro ADA Paratransit
 - East Valley Paratransit (AKA East Valley Dial a Ride)
 - Trips must travel within the paratransit boundaries
 - Travel can be between cities in the paratransit boundaries
 - \$4 each way - no mileage restrictions
 - Unlimited number of trips per month
 - Shared ride – must schedule one day in advance
 - RideChoice
 - Trips can be anywhere
 - \$3 for the first eight miles, \$2 per mile after that
 - 20 trips per month – no mileage restrictions
 - Not a shared ride – on demand
 - A resident cannot participate in RideChoice if using Cab Connection
- Scottsdale Cab connection
 - Subsidized taxi rides for City of Scottsdale residents, 65 and older and/or ADA certified
 - Five types of vouchers
 - Program began in 2009
 - Found to be more cost-effective for the City over any Valley Metro product

An overview of paratransit user demographics was provided.

In response to a question from Chair, Ms. Freeman stated that the taxi companies take cash or credit card for payment along with the voucher. RideChoice requires that the rider have a credit or debit card on file.

Commissioner inquired as to methods for advertising services. Ms. Freeman stated that staff does extensive outreach, including presence at the Senior Expo, physical handouts and via the City website.

Daniel Alire, Transportation Representative, provided an overview of transit technology, data trends, bus stop maintenance, special events and transit operation funding.

- Trolley operations:
 - Intelligent transportation systems

- Clever devices
 - Digital video recording
 - Automatic passenger counter
- Bus stop cleaning via contract with ServiceLink:
 - Day porter
 - Power washing
 - Graffiti removal
 - Extra cleanings for special events
- Transit operations funding sources
 - City sales tax
 - Grants
 - Limited PTF funding
 - Lottery funds

Commissioner inquired about automatic passenger counts and how boarding numbers relate to capacity. Mr. Alire stated that monitoring of boardings is possible via Clever Devices, however this analysis had not been performed. Ms. Korepella added that the buses have not returned to full ridership in comparison to pre-pandemic participation. Times of most activity occur when students are released from school at approximately 2:20 p.m. in the afternoon. There is some clarity regarding poor performing routes and this is being revisited.

Chair asked about the possibility of utilizing smaller vehicles. Ms. Korepella stated that this is one option. There is also contemplation regarding microtransit in terms of transportation trends. The fleet is reaching the end of its useful life, so all options are being explored.

In response to a question from Vice Chair, Mr. Alire confirmed that passenger counts include timestamps and location sites.

In response to a question from Chair, Ms. Korepella stated that on average, the City spends approximately \$100,000 for bus stop maintenance with ServiceLink. Quotes are requested during times of special events. ServiceLink does not maintain bus stops in other cities. They maintain several shopping complexes in Scottsdale, which was the connection to contract with them for City bus stop maintenance.

Brendan Wagner, Transit Operations Coordinator, gave an overview of transit operations, including:

- National Transit Database (NTD): Annual reporting
 - Reports all aspects of transit operations
 - Financial
 - Vehicle/facilities inventory
 - Expenditures
 - Funding
- Public Transit Agency Safety Plan (PTASP)
 - Moving Ahead for Programs in the 21 Century Act (MAP 21): Required safety plans in July 2019
 - Plans based on safety management systems
 - Arizona Department of Transportation developed the plan for smaller agencies
- PTASP: Additional requirements

- Bi-Partisan Infrastructure Law
 - Formation of Safety Committee
 - Minimize exposure to diseases
 - Reduce assaults on transit workers
 - Expansion of safety training
- City of Scottsdale Revised Plan
 - Safety and Risk Management Department: Provides input and support
 - Safety Committee convened January 2023: Approved plan for submission to City Council
 - City Council approved Plan February 14, 2023
- PTASP: Moving forward transit safety plan
 - Transit Safety Committee
 - Front line employees: Fleet
 - Safety and risk management
 - Streets and transportation
- Trolley Operations
 - Intelligent transportation systems
 - On-time performance
 - Safety practices
 - Fleet operations
- Transit Stop Improvements
 - General information
 - 461 active stops
 - 153 stops with shelters
 - 234 stops with benches
 - 205 stops with trash receptacles
 - Renovations
 - 16 renovations in Fiscal Year 2022
 - 23 renovations in Fiscal Year 2023
 - Improvement prioritization process
 - Transportation Action Plan
 - Ridership
 - ADA requirements

Trolley operational and logistical challenges were discussed, including route extensions, construction effects, fueling logistics, staffing and maintenance.

Commissioner commented on the alarming trend of fewer riders and declining on-time performance by Dunn. Mr. Wagner stated that when the Miller-Hayden detour first started, Dunn was not as proficient as desired with Clever Devices and did not enter the detour into the system. For some time, the Clever Response system was expecting the bus to be going up and down Miller Road, where it was instead going through the detour. Stopping at temporary bus stops was not recorded in the Clever system. Eventually this was addressed. In terms of the 68CM, this occurred in April, with delays occurring due the number of left turns on the route. This was also eventually addressed to modify the route for right turns. However, Phoenix did not enter the route change into the system, which continued to reflect the old time points.

Commissioner asked whether Dunn has been penalized for the errors. Mr. Wagner stated that for the prior year, there are liquidated damages. However, it is difficult to hold Dunn responsible for the scheduling issues. It was not until the City completed an in-depth study that they discovered that Indian School and Hayden did not show up on the route. Mark Melnychenko, Transportation & Streets Director, commented that Clever Devices is a new technology with several moving parts and variables. Some of the learning must be done on the fly and there are other municipalities in the region facing similar challenges.

In response to a Commissioner question regarding on-time performance, Mr. Wagner stated that if a trolley is running ahead of schedule, the driver will typically find a place to pause until the schedule catches up. Delays are typically caused by traffic situations, accidents, or passenger issues. In this case, the driver should report the issue to dispatch, who will enter a note into the Clever system.

Mr. Wagner reviewed the process involved in identifying and completing transit stop improvements and the challenges that may ensue. Basic steps include data collection, report progress and continued planning.

In response to a Commissioner question regarding the fact that there are only 153 shelters and 416 active stops, Mr. Wagner stated that the City utilizes the Transportation Action Plan and ridership statistics to evaluate the need for additional shelters. Four to five new shelters are currently being planned by developers. Builders are now required to incorporate shelters into their projects. Ms. Korepella added that since 2014, the Department has received approximately \$300,000 annually for shelter improvements. In addition, over the next couple of years, Proposition 400 funds have been set aside for bus stop improvements, including lighting and shade.

In response to a question from Vice Chair, Mr. Wagner stated that the average cost for shelter construction and replacement is approximately \$40,000 to \$60,000 for full shelter and amenities. Ms. Korepella said she was not aware of a specific time requirement, however, when making improvements to sidewalks and intersections, construction must include ADA compliant features. Most stops in the City are already compliant and the funds from Prop 400 will assist in additional funding for ADA accessibility. Mr. Melnychenko stated that Scottsdale also has a City ADA transition plan.

Ms. Korepella provided an overview the future of transit, including microtransit:

- On-demand transportation service
 - Within a specified area
 - Short trip length
- Provides first and last mile connectivity
- Vehicles may consist of:
 - Passenger cars
 - Minivans
 - Wheelchair-Accessible Vehicles (WAV)
- Similar to Uber or Lyft on-demand services
- Local microtransit services
 - Avondale/Goodyear: WeRide Program
 - Glendale: OnBoard Program
 - Chandler Flex Program

An overview of a potential microtransit service area for Scottsdale was provided. Ms. Korepella discussed available options for alternative fuel transit buses. Other agencies exploring alternative fuel transit buses include Sun Tran in Tucson; Mountain Line Transit in Flagstaff, City of Phoenix; Valley Metro. Challenges to EV include existence of adequate space; grid support for operations; budget implications; operational feasibility; driver and technician training.

Chair asked whether potential microtransit vehicles would be City-owned. Ms. Korepella said that cities are utilizing various models; more research is required before implementation in Scottsdale.

Ms. Korepella stated that the Department is considering expanding operating hours to 8:00 p.m. before eventually expanding to 9:00 p.m. There is also a desire to have weekend service, which does not exist currently. Challenges to the expansion include driver staff shortages, inadequate ridership volume and cost.

Ms. Korepella discussed potential modifications to the low ridership Mustang route. Public outreach in 2018 included requests for connection to the McDowell Mountain Aquatic Center, as well as a connection to Cavasson. There is also consideration for connections on Scottsdale Road. Challenges include driver staff shortages, lack of rider interest and costs. It may be helpful to have a survey to gauge interest. No major changes are planned to existing routes, given the uncertainty of the Prop 400 funds. Funding limitations may require a reprioritization of routes.

Chair asked for an estimated cost for total transportation operations and maintenance. Ms. Korepella stated that for the fixed route system, paid for with Prop 400 funds, the cost is \$11 million to \$12 million for east/west and north/south routes. There is approximately \$1.5 million for paratransit service and approximately \$4 million for trolley operations. Approximately \$100,000 to \$125,000 is spent for bus stop maintenance. The budget for Clever Devices to Phoenix is approximately \$120,000. Buses are typically funded with 80/20 federal grants. Each bus typically costs approximately \$600,000. Electric buses will cost approximately \$900,000 to \$1 million.

3. COMMISSION IDENTIFICATION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following agenda items were identified:

- Summer meeting schedule
- Follow up on microtransit pilot study
- Roundabout program and project update

4. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved by Vice Chair Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Wilcoxon, the meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

AYES: Chair Iacovo, Vice Chair Anderson, Commissioners Cardelle, Kowal, Miller Cardella and Wilcoxon

NAYS: None

SUBMITTED BY:

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