



SUMMARIZED MINUTES

**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING**

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2015

**KIVA – CITY HALL
3939 N. DRINKWATER BOULEVARD
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA 85251**

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Holley called the special meeting of the Transportation Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. He noted that the format of this special meeting will be different from regular meetings in that the minutes of the last regular meeting are agendaized for approval at the next regular meeting.

1. **ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Paul Holley, Vice Chair
Gary Bretz, Commissioner
Barry Graham, Commissioner (arrived at 6:07 p.m.)
Robert Stickles, Commissioner
Matthew Wright, Commissioner

ABSENT: Steven Olmsted, Chair
Steven Rosenberg, Commissioner

STAFF: Rose Arballo, Coordinator
Paul Basha, Transportation Director
Madeline Clemann, Transit Manager
Greg Davies, Senior Transportation Planner
John Kelley, Transportation Planner, Transit
Ratna Koropella, Principal Transit Planner
Mercedes McPherson, Mobility Coordinator (Cab Connection)

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment was received.

3. TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Transportation Director Mr. Paul Basha noted that every member of the Transit Group was in attendance. The concepts presented at tonight's discussion of the transit element of the Transportation Master Plan are intended to launch the conversation. It was noted that staff is not making recommendations at this point. Staff is seeking comments and suggestions from the Commission for consideration. Mr. Basha requested that members of the public be allowed to speak longer than the usual three minutes and suggested allowing members of the public to return to the podium to speak more than once if requested.

Highlights of the presentation and discussion included:

- The Transportation Master Plan adopted by City Council in 2008 is an excellent reference, but very voluminous document. The intent of the updated Transportation Master Plan is to be approximately 20 to 30 pages that will be accessible to the general public, developers, and staff. The 2008 Transportation Master Plan includes considerable historical information about how the transportation system developed and the rationale for the City's transportation policies. As such, it will continue to be a valuable reference. The new Master Plan will simply be a statement of City policies.
- Scottsdale is unique among Valley cities as the only net importer of jobs. There are almost twice as many jobs in the City as there are households. Consequently, large numbers of people enter the city each morning and leave in the afternoon. The employees at the hotels, restaurants, retailers and offices mostly live outside of the City and need transportation to get to work. The services available in Scottsdale contribute to the quality of life of citizens. The Transportation Department must provide transportation choices for these commuters. City Council has clearly recognized this and one of its six strategic objectives is to improve transportation.
- An analysis of ridership patterns by month, by type of vehicle (bus or trolley), and by route as presented at the Transportation Commission meeting in January was briefly reviewed.
- Bus service frequency on east-west routes is lower in Scottsdale than in Phoenix, making the service less reliable and less attractive to riders.
- A Commissioner noted that paratransit riders cannot travel between cities as each city has its own system. Some city systems will not even cross a boundary street to pick up a disabled paratransit user. The Commissioner indicated that a regional system is needed. Mr. Basha said Ms. McPherson and Ms. Clemann work hard to coordinate service for the paratransit riders with neighboring cities.
- There is no way to make meaningful predictions of how ridership will increase based on increased frequency. To raise ridership, bus service needs to be as reliable and almost as frequent as an automobile.
- A Commissioner asked if there is a way to analyze the optimal frequency to maximize ridership. Mr. Basha said the transportation industry is getting closer to this, but cautioned that many other factors determine ridership, the most significant of which is the price of gasoline.
- An overview of existing bus and trolley route frequencies, and routes to which the City has committed over the next year was reviewed.
- Mr. Basha commented that it is an axiom in the transit industry that if a schedule is needed to know when the next bus is coming, this is really not bus service.

- Mr. Basha displayed a map of Scottsdale showing that transit service is concentrated on the densely populated areas and some employment centers.
- Trolleys are more effective when routed along collector streets rather than arterials.
- The new Priest route starts in Chandler, runs through Tempe, connects to the light rail station at Priest Drive and Washington Street, follows Galvin Parkway, passing the zoo and the Desert Botanical Gardens and will serve SkySong and three new apartment complexes.
- SkySong stays in close contact with staff and is very supportive of the connection to the light rail station. A Commissioner suggested targeted marketing as people move into the new apartment complexes.
- Discussion of potential new trolley route concepts ensued. Mr. Basha explained that routes which serve different purposes and types of riders tend to be more successful.
- A Commissioner suggested a trolley route on Via Linda extending to the library, schools, and Mayo Clinic.
- A Commissioner commented that the Via Linda route looks familiar to a previous route that had operated in the area. He asked how it differs and why it would be successful when the previous route was not. Mr. Basha stated that this is the area where most requests for trolley service are received because of the Via Linda Senior Center and medical offices. It was noted that transit service is increasingly important to the aging population. Ms. Clemann agreed that the old Route 114 had a similar route and had the lowest ridership of all routes. Due to downsizing during the recession, that route was cancelled. Ms. Clemann pointed out that at this time, this is preliminary discussion.
- Mr. Basha clarified that staff will investigate concepts the Commission deems worthy of further analysis.
- A Commissioner commented that the proposed 94th Street trolley route does not have a good anchor destination such as the hospital.
- The largest expense in transit operation is labor cost. Running lower capacity buses does not necessarily decrease costs. Staff envisions using trolleys identical to those currently in use.
- A Commissioner asked whether it would be more effective to match frequency on the east/west routes so that all buses originating in Phoenix would continue into Scottsdale, or whether adding these trolley routes would add more ridership. Mr. Basha said it is hard to say and that this will be part of the analysis going forward.
- Mr. Basha indicated that there would be a transfer opportunity at 94th Street and Cactus between the 94th Street trolley and the Via Linda trolley. It was noted that long transfer times discourage ridership and that higher frequency routes avoid long wait times between transfer.
- A Commissioner suggested that transfers be scheduled at time points to facilitate transfers.
- The proposed perimeter trolley route is designed to serve the north Airpark area.
- The long Airpark trolley route would serve the Airpark west and east of the Airport, and would substitute for the existing Hayden route.
- It was commented that the Airpark exclusive trolley route could have one route on each of the east and west sides of the Airpark, and could connect to the Scottsdale Thunderbird Park-and-Ride constructed last year. This could allow Airpark employees to use the Park and Ride and transfer to the trolley.
- The current concept for the Scottsdale Road Express Bus would connect the Scottsdale Thunderbird Park and Ride to Fashion Square, with non-stop service. This

- would be a supplement to the Route 72. Staff currently feels that the community is not yet ready for bus rapid transit on Scottsdale Road. A Commissioner asked if the route could extend south to SkySong and the light rail station in Tempe. Mr. Basha agreed that would be an excellent idea for expansion.
- A Commissioner commented that perhaps the Scottsdale Road Express Bus could follow the same route as the Day Tripper. Mr. Basha agreed the similarity is that the route runs along Scottsdale Road. In all other respects, the service would be radically different. The Day Tripper was seasonal and operated from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. with repeated stops. The Express Bus would operate throughout the day and would only stop at the Park-and-Ride and at Fashion Square.
 - A Commissioner suggested combining the Airpark and Via Linda trolley routes. This would enable people to travel to employment and shopping centers from high density residential areas. He believes this is a higher priority than the Scottsdale Road Express Bus, and realizes some tweaks are needed to combine these routes.
 - Commissioners discussed why the idea of bus rapid transit has been abandoned for the time being. Mr. Basha commented that the one bus rapid transit route in the Valley runs in Chandler and that ridership has been disappointing because there are too few local bus connections. Ms. Madeline Clemann mentioned that forecasts of ridership for the Scottsdale Road route were very low. Ms. Ratna Koropella added that City staff is working with MAG (Maricopa Association of Governments) to improve the sub-regional bus ridership prediction model for Scottsdale.
 - A Commissioner inquired about ridership on other East Valley routes. Mr. Basha said staff has that information in the office. He elaborated that they do not want to make the mistake of forcing a solution onto Scottsdale. Transit staff is working on analyzing land uses and travel patterns to develop a bus and trolley solution that corresponds.
 - A Commissioner commented that express bus routes can be tested with minimal upfront investment. Mr. Basha explained there are many possibilities with bus rapid transit. The Express Bus concept would run on the existing configuration of Scottsdale Road. A true bus rapid transit system has dedicated lanes and stations. Examples are found in Seattle and Eugene, Oregon. Doing this in Scottsdale would involve reducing Scottsdale Road to four lanes because two lanes would be needed for infrastructure.
 - Possibilities for Hayden Road were discussed. Comments included:
 - Continue the existing route to serve Honor Health, Shea Boulevard and, travel west back to Hayden Road to end at its current terminus.
 - Continue the route along Hayden to serve McCormick Ranch. Passengers for Honor Health would need to transfer to the Shea Boulevard route. That would require a substantial increase in frequency on the Shea route.
 - Staff priorities were presented for discussion purposes only. Some discussion highlights included:
 - Increase frequency over the next years.
 - A Commissioner inquired about the hours of operation for the Scottsdale Road Express Bus. Mr. Basha noted although there are exceptions, it is a general rule to maintain frequency throughout the day. The Commissioner noted that existing Express Bus services in the Valley are charging premium fares and recommended using a different name unless the plan is to charge extra.
 - Over the next three years, match frequency of the Phoenix service along Indian School Road and McDowell Road; introduce the Airpark and Via Linda trolley routes; and increase frequency on the Hayden Road route to 15-minute service.

- Over the next four years, focus on changing frequency of the Scottsdale Road route to 10 minutes for its entire length; Camelback Road bus to 15-minute frequency; consider improving the frequency on other routes, and introduce the 94th Street trolley.
- Lower transit priorities (five years into the future) include focus on increased frequency on Hayden Road to 10 minutes; Union Hills Road bus into Scottsdale once the streets have been constructed; introduce the perimeter trolley; and extend Route 72 north of Honor Health.
- Mr. Basha noted implementing these priorities would be in excess of \$20 million per year and that this amount is far less than the City's annual spending on streets.
- A Commissioner inquired about performance standards for bus routes. Mr. Basha said the 2008 Transportation Master Plan does contain standards and criteria for performance. At this point none of these are being met. It is preferable to provide the best service possible given the budget and circumstances and move forward from there.
- A Commissioner inquired about comparisons with the Orbit system in Tempe and other circulators in the Valley. The Orbit is extremely successful with very high ridership. This information will be presented in later meetings.
- A Commissioner asked how the bus and trolley routes in Scottsdale ensure ADA compliance. Ms. Clemann said the trolleys are equipped with wheelchair ramps or lifts within the vehicles. Paratransit service is provided for the entire trolley system. Paratransit service provision actually exceeds federal standards. The Cab Connection Program provides extra service. The Commissioner asked how staff knows that the contractor is ADA compliant. Ms. Clemann stated that staff relies on Phoenix and Valley Metro to administer their own contracts. Anyone who has experienced a disappointing trip or who has an issue with the fixed routes and trolleys can contact Valley Metro via phone, email or by letter. Mr. John Kelley follows up on all complaints and compliments.
- A Commissioner noted that some systems have "secret shoppers" who test that drivers are paying attention to ADA compliant details. Ms. Clemann concurred that the trolley contractor does use secret shoppers to monitor ADA compliance.
- Staff mentioned that 13 of the Scottsdale vehicles are currently equipped with automatic voice annunciation (AVA) to announce stops. This is set to debut within the next few months. Going forward, new vehicles will be AVA equipped.
- A Commissioner asked whether modern streetcar and light rail are included in the new Transportation Master Plan. Mr. Basha said it currently is not included. The Commissioner noted it is not even ranked as a low priority and stated that there is continuous conversation about this topic. The Commissioner pointed out that it is important to have discussion on this topic.
- The Commissioner asked whether ESPN's recent decision not to broadcast from Scottsdale for the College Football Championship is connected to Scottsdale's failure to invest in mass transit. Mr. Basha agreed that it is. The Commissioner expressed a wish to agendize this for future discussion.

Vice Chair Holley opened the floor for public comment. Mr. Basha noted that they can review any of tonight's slides as well as the presentations from previous meetings.

Julie Reynolds, resident in the vicinity of Thomas Road and Granite Reef Road, spoke in support of mass transit. It was noted that efficient, environmentally friendly transit is the hallmark of every great city.

Thomas Williams, resident in the vicinity of Thomas Road and Pima Road, commended the Commission on their recommendation to staff to consider light rail. Mr. Thomas noted that mass transit is very important for Scottsdale, especially in serving the Old Town and Airpark areas. He agreed an overlay showing all of the proposed trolley routes would be helpful. A real-time app letting riders see when the next trolley is expected would encourage ridership. He urged bike share for Scottsdale. Marketing is necessary to increase ridership. Evening bus service could provide safe rides from Old Town. He works at Scottsdale Community College and students complain of being unable to board full buses. He recommended making it easier for the public to contact the department with feedback.

Douglas Reed is adamantly opposed to light rail because it is fixed. It drives development and high density, and does not fit the character of Scottsdale. Light rail is very expensive. The money could be better spent on buses. The disruption of constructing infrastructure demolishes businesses. Express Bus routes would be extremely flexible and far less costly.

Vice Chair Holley closed public commentary.

Mr. Basha noted that staff would like direction from the Commission on the various alternatives for Hayden Road, the Scottsdale Road Express bus, and the various proposed bus and trolley routes. The Commission's input on various proposals for service frequency was also requested.

VICE CHAIR HOLLEY RECOMMENDED TO DIRECT STAFF TO CONSIDER, IN ADDITION TO FIXED ROUTE TRANSIT AND TROLLEYS, ALL MANNER OF LIGHT RAIL AND HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT INCLUDING STREETCARS FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF A LONG-TERM CONNECTION WITH THE REST OF THE REGION. COMMISSIONER GRAHAM AGREED.

Commissioners discussed Vice Chair Holley's recommendation that included:

- Commissioners feel that although the budget does not provide for construction of the necessary infrastructure for some type of mass transit, it is important to continue discussion.
- Commissioners believe that since the 2008 Transportation Master Plan devoted 48 pages to a discussion of high capacity mass transit, this is a valid topic for discussion. It is felt that without discussion, there will never be mass transit.
- Securing federal funding, acquiring right-of-way, and conducting the required studies means that mass transit is at least 20 years away. It is felt that a discussion of options and how to connect to other mass transit in the Valley is timely.
- A Commissioner suggested overlaying the proposed trolley routes to determine transfer points and connections to a future mass transit system.
- A Commissioner said he is not fully convinced of the value of light rail but has observed development in Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa. It appears the system has achieved its ridership goals. He acknowledged disruption, but said much has been learned since construction first began. Many people will not ride a bus but enjoy riding trains. He commended City staff and transit operators for doing an excellent job.

- Vice Chair Holley asked the Commissioners to share their thoughts on the proposed Hayden Road route.
- A Commissioner commented that he feels the Hayden Road route is one of the busiest routes and believes that limited stop service might be beneficial. The route should extend to SkySong or Tempe to make transfer to the light rail more practical. As long as the limited stop buses are clearly identified to avoid confusion, this has a lot of potential.
- A Commissioner thanked Mr. Basha and staff for their work on the Transportation Master Plan. It is a keystone to the budget and how to think of Scottsdale going forward.
- A Commissioner pointed out that since Scottsdale is a net importer of jobs, if transit is not available, the City will become increasingly congested. It was expressed that transit is an important element in the Transportation Master Plan.

AFTER A DISCUSSION OF VICE CHAIR HOLLEY’S RECOMMENDATION, COMMISSIONERS CONCURRED BY A VOTE OF FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR OLMSTED AND COMMISSIONER ROSENBERG WERE ABSENT.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was received.

5. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, Vice Chair Holley adjourned the Special meeting at 7:59 p.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

A/V Tronics, Inc. DBA AVTranz.

***Note: These are summary action meeting minutes only. A complete copy of the audio/video recording is available at <http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/boards/transp.asp>**