



**SUMMARIZED MINUTES
CITY OF SCOTTSDALE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2009
KIVA - CITY HALL
ONE CIVIC CENTER
3939 DRINKWATER BOULEVARD
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA 85251**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Howard called the regular meeting of the Scottsdale Transportation Commission to order at 6:07 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: William Howard, Chair
Josh Weiss, Vice Chair
Donald Maxwell, Commissioner
Paul Ward, Commissioner

ABSENT: Terry Gruver, Commissioner
Howard Sukenic, Commissioner

STAFF: Dave Meinhart, Transportation Planning and Transit Director
Teresa Huish, Principal Transportation Planner
Jennifer Bohac, Senior Traffic Engineer
Lorraine Protocollo, Admin Secretary
Madeline Clemann, Transit and Parking Program Manager

SPEAKERS DURING PUBLIC COMMENT (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER):

Debra Astin
Ace Bailey
Tammy Bosse
James Britt
Carleton Cole
Lara Cole
Jim Decker

Michelle Eyre
Nick Fleege
Paul Haerle
Cindy Ivy
William Lindley
Dave MacDonald
Greg Nethers

Charles Poston
Eli Singh
Linda Singh
John William Stumm
Laurel Upton
Eric Vinyl
Steve Warford

2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- Study Session of the Transportation Commission - April 22, 2009
- Regular Meeting of the Transportation Commission - April 22, 2009

COMMISSIONER MAXWELL MOVED TO APPROVE THE STUDY SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 22, 2009 AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER WARD SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY A VOTE OF FOUR (4) TO ZERO (0).

3. **Public Comment**

There were no public comments on non-agendized items.

4. **Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) Project Requests**

- Larkspur Drive from 94th to 96th Streets

Ms. Bohac presented the NTMP project request for Larkspur Drive. The residents of this neighborhood filed an interest with the City in June 2008. Speed and volume data was collected in October of 2008, and the project met all program criteria. Average daily traffic is 667 vehicles, with an 85th percentile speed of 37 m.p.h., 47% over 30 m.p.h., and 21% over 35 m.p.h. The existing speed limit on Larkspur Drive is 25 m.p.h. The residents chose to pursue the petition route to gather support for the project. Notification signs were posted informing citizens that a petition was circulating. The boundary area comprises 63 households, and 75% of them signed the petition in support. Staff held a neighborhood meeting in April 2009, which included residences from the surrounding area.

The proposed plan consists of a series of three raised median islands along Larkspur Drive. The islands include landscaping and rolled curbs. They slow traffic by reducing the width of the roadway and disrupting the view of a long straight stretch of road. Ms. Bohac said the island east of 95th Place would not be built until a proposed drainage project is finished. Until then, a speed feedback sign could be used to increase driver awareness. The total cost of the project is expected to be \$53,000.

Chair Howard invited public commentary.

Lara Cole said the speed issue has worsened over the past seven years, putting her family in greater danger and impacting the quality of life on the street. Larkspur was designed to be a quiet residential street, but it has become a speedway.

Paul Haerle said his wife and he support the project. The speeds on Larkspur have been steadily increasing. Many drivers are traveling in excess of 40 m.p.h. at all times of the day and night. It impacts quality of life and safety.

Carleton Cole said the data supports the project. The street no longer feels residential, and the quality of life has been diminished. It has become a thoroughfare and a shortcut for people who are trying to avoid Cactus Road, especially with the current construction project there. Residents need to feel comfortable that their children and pets can be safe outside.

Greg Nethers said he has often observed speeding cars on the street that cause safety concerns for everyone. He feels that the proposed islands would increase property values on the street.

Jim Decker supported the comments of the previous speakers. Larkspur has turned into a raceway. He described narrowly missing collisions with speeding drivers while exiting his driveway. The problem is especially noticeable when people are trying to access the church on the corner of Larkspur and 96th Street. Eventually there will be an accident if nothing is done.

Vice Chair Weiss said this project is a good example of how the Commission hoped the NTMP process would run. The length of the process was just right, and the petition clarified any questions of consensus. The medians are aesthetically pleasing and should enhance the residential character of the street.

Chair Howard inquired whether the ongoing construction on Cactus Road has impacted the data, and to what extent it is expected to be permanent. Ms. Bohac responded that the historic volume data from 2002 is similar to the data that was collected in 2008. The condition of the street has not changed relative to the period of construction. She explained that the City only has volume data, and collects speed data only when there is a specific need for it. Chair Howard inquired how planners decided on the median option. Ms. Bohac responded that residents chose the median option because it aesthetically fits the character of the area.

COMMISSIONER MAXWELL MOVED TO APPROVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PROJECT ON LARKSPUR DRIVE AS PRESENTED. VICE CHAIR WEISS SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY A VOTE OF FOUR (4) TO ZERO (0).

5. Proposed Transit Service Modifications

Mr. Meinhart said the City prefers not to reduce transit services, but must respond to the current financial challenges. Most of the transit funding comes from the local transportation sales tax, which is split between capital improvement projects and operations.

Ms. Clemann presented the Transportation Department's proposal for reducing transit costs. The privilege tax trends have been continuously declining from FY07/08. In the first quarter of calendar year 2009, they are down 20.2%. The goal of the service changes is to impact the least number of riders possible, eliminate overlapping and least productive services first, improve equity between the level of service for the two free trolley routes and balance the FY09/10 transit budget.

The City contributes funds to all but one of the regional routes in Scottsdale. The City's net cost per rider was calculated for each route. Routes 114 and 84 are the least productive routes in the system at this point. The proposed cost savings of \$1.5 million represents about 18% of the total transit budget. Staff proposes six changes:

- Eliminate the Route 66 segment to Fashion Square - realizing \$370,000 in annual savings.
- Eliminate the residual amount of Route 84 - \$245,000.
- Eliminate Route 114 - \$360,000.

- Decrease the downtown trolley service to 20 minutes, and reduce evening hours to Thursdays only - \$500,000.
- Change Saturday schedules on all the north/south routes to match Phoenix's changing of east/west routes to Saturday/Sunday schedules - \$45,000.
- Reduce Loloma Station hours - \$35,000.

Ms. Clemann reported that 83% of Route 66 peak hour riders depart along 68th Street to private residences upon reaching Loloma Station. Seventeen percent continue north to Fashion Square. Those riders have other options. Route 84 ridership has remained flat over the past two years. Route 84 riders would have the option of using trolley routes and other fixed bus routes instead. Route 114 ridership has remained flat for years. Those riders could choose to use Routes 512 or 106. Changing the north/south routes from a Saturday to a Sunday schedule would save miles and trips, yet only affect about 0.06% of Scottsdale's 2.2 million annual riders.

Ridership has continuously increased on both trolley routes. The proposed changes would bring both routes in line with each other. The downtown trolley would end at 6 p.m., except for Thursday Art Walk service, which would last until 9 p.m. Loloma Station hours would be reduced, saving the cost of staffing the facility by one full-time equivalent (FTE). The station would be staffed during the two busiest periods each day. The public outreach effort included notices along the affected bus and trolley routes, car cards on buses, rider alerts on Valley Metro and Scottsdale websites, a press release, and two newspaper articles. A total of 53 public comments were received.

Chair Howard invited public commentary.

Nick Fleege opposed the elimination of Route 114. The elimination would greatly impact students at Basis School and their families. The extra cost involved in using alternatives would be difficult for many families to handle. The route is used by 22 scholars and one teacher on a daily basis. Route 106 on Shea Boulevard does not stop between 90th Street and the Mayo Clinic, and would require students to have to cross Shea Boulevard to get to the school. There is no sidewalk on 136th Street to Via Linda.

John William Stumm said he moved to his present residence because the bus served it. Eliminating Route 114 would leave no service to the east of 90th Street, except in the mornings and evenings. Route 512 would cost him \$2 more per day to get to work. Route 114 is vital to people in the corridor. Once it is lost, it will be hard to get it back. The ridership has been stable. He suggested combining Routes 114 and 106.

Laurel Upton expressed admiration for the City's effort to communicate with citizens. She suggested that the trolley would reach more people by adjusting it to cover areas that Route 84 covered. It would also open up two neighborhoods, a retirement center, and SkySong.

Ace Bailey said the downtown trolley is a fabulous asset to the community. The ridership is up 15% from January to April, despite the lack of tourists, demonstrating that it has become vital to residents. She is putting together a trolley tour to demonstrate the cultural activity in downtown Scottsdale. Scottsdale is promoting an "Enjoy Life Locally" campaign to encourage area residents to rediscover Scottsdale's offerings. Cutting the trolley at 6 p.m. would hinder these efforts. She suggested defraying the costs of the trolley by employing advertising. The increase of headways to 20 minutes would diminish usage of the trolley, especially in the summertime.

Debra Astin noted that she helped create the trolley route. The downtown trolley caters to a different clientele than the neighborhood circulator. Locals can plan their transportation needs around the schedule of the route, but mainly tourists use the downtown trolley, even though more locals are now using it. Tourists will not wait long for a ride. The linear regression model suggests that ridership could decrease dramatically by reducing service. Once the numbers fall beyond a certain threshold, the trolley would be a tempting target to eliminate. She suggested protecting the core of the route, while eliminating the four extra loops on the route as a way to maintain 10-minute headways. The Valley Ho loop is lightly used. The Marshall Way loop was created to make the Valley Ho loop possible. The Horse Fountain loop could be eliminated without eliminating the stop requested by the West 5th Avenue merchants. Shifting the route from Craftsman Court to Marshall Way could achieve this. The Galleria loop could also be eliminated, although this is a least attractive option. The survival of the entire route is more important than any one branch. When the economy rebounds, the loops can be restored. Elimination of these loops would reduce the round trip time from 50 minutes to 30 minutes, and allow 10-minute headways to continue while staying within the budget. She noted that many more supporters of the trolley would have attended the meeting, but there is a general feeling that the decision has already been made.

Steve Warford noted that the Mayo Clinic distributes over 250 active bus passes for its employees. Riders use Route 114 to access businesses, schools, jobs, libraries, senior centers, and recreation centers along Via Linda. Eliminating this route will pose a hardship to those without private transportation and force many others to return to cars, which the city is trying to move away from. Route 106 does not run east of 90th Street outside of peak times. He suggested alternative routing to combine the services of Route 114 with Route 106.

William Lindley noted that people use transit when it is convenient and reliable. Route 84 could be eliminated since it does not go downtown. He supports Ms. Astin's proposal to keep the downtown trolley at 10-minute intervals. The shorter round trip time might actually increase ridership because it gets people to their destinations faster. He suggested reformulating the Shea/Via Linda routes into a trolley route. He noted that Route 41 ties up a bus and driver all day long to travel a half-mile stretch that is already highly serviced. Route 512 runs empty from the storage yard to Fountain Hills. He suggested combining it with Route 106 and the Rapid service.

James Britt opposes any elimination of public transportation, specifically Route 114. Route 106 only runs four times a day. The City should consider transit an essential City service.

Charles Poston opposes the elimination of Route 84. He is too old to drive and relies on the bus to get around. For a metropolitan area this big, the bus system is marginal. Reductions in this area address the wrong part of the budget. Without this route, trips are going to require more transfers, which is extremely difficult to do in the summertime. Eliminating the McDonald Drive loop of Route 76 would also create a big inconvenience.

Linda Singh expressed concern about the elimination of Route 114. There are no good alternatives between 90th Street and 136th Street. Route 106 is not a good replacement, as it makes few stops. Crossing Shea is not an option. Her children love riding the bus, and Scottsdale has been building a generation of transit users by supporting transit. The City should find creative solutions to keep the route in service.

Eli Singh said he rides Route 114 to the Basis School, along with many of his friends. The bus is safe and fun to ride. It is important to the students.

Michelle Eyre said Route 84 spends more time laying over than actually running. She suggested interlining it with Route 76. The elimination of Route 114 cuts off an entire community. Route 106 is not a reasonable alternative. The provided ridership figures do not make a distinction between weekday and weekend riders. She suggested making Route 114 a weekday only route, or making it more attractive by rerouting it to shopping areas. The headway on Route 81 is terrible and causes significant delays.

Tammy Bosse opposes eliminating Route 114, as it would impact the Basis School. There would be more supporters from the school in attendance at the meeting if it were not for a concurrent school function. The route services important community assets. She proposed a compromise solution that would preserve the morning and evening weekday service. These cuts are going to impact many lives. The trolleys are essential for tourism, and should be protected.

Cindy Ivy expressed opposition to the elimination of Route 114. She uses the bus to get to her job at the Mayo Clinic, and her children use it to get to school. Riding the bus teaches kids life skills and responsibility for the environment. She encouraged parents to send their kids to school on the bus. She suggested eliminating weekend routes and preserving weekday morning and evening runs.

Eric Vinyl opposes eliminating the evening downtown trolley schedule, describing it as a shortsighted move. There are many other things going on in the evening in Scottsdale besides just the Art Walk. The trolley facilitates nightlife, especially during the weekends. As the economy gets tighter, more people are going to depend on public transit. The more transit that is available, the larger the ridership will be because reliability and frequency increases.

Dave MacDonald inquired whether the restrooms at Loloma Station would stay open during the middle of the day. He said 10-minute trolley headways means that users do not have to worry about schedules. He supports Debra Astin's proposal for maintaining 10-minute headways. He encouraged maintaining the link between Loloma Station and Drinkwater on Route 76 so that people do not have to walk a few blocks to transfer.

Chair Howard noted non-speaking comments from Dan McCauley, Leo Singh and Miller Singh, expressing opposition to the reductions. He said public speakers that come to express their views on transit issues do a better job of presenting their case than almost any other group.

Commissioner Maxwell requested that staff discuss the alternate suggestions, especially on Route 114. He expressed concern about the increase of the trolley headways, saying it could very well lessen the use of the trolleys, which have become integral to Scottsdale.

Mr. Meinhart responded that the proposal to combine Route 106 with 114 would take some study. He reminded the Commission that the budget must be cut by a specific amount. Staff will be reduced by almost 25% compared to one year ago. Three-quarters of the funding for Route 106 comes from regional sources, not Scottsdale, which makes the City cost for that route low. Routes 114 and 84 do not meet the recommended service standards in the Transportation Master Plan, which emphasizes quality of service, rather than geographic distribution. Ridership has not increased on those routes. The level of service is low, and the only way to increase it is to increase the budget. He noted that the last time the trolley route was modified, it took several months to go through the process, but the budget reductions have to be resolved by July 1. Ten-minute intervals are convenient, but he suggested trying the 20-minute headways to see whether they would have the negative impact that some predict it would.

In response to Vice Chair Weiss's inquiry on the Loloma restrooms, Mr. Meinhart said the City does not anticipate changing the hours of the restrooms. Mr. Meinhart further addressed the comments made by public speakers. Route 76 modifications are not part of the current proposal. Staff is looking to possibly squeeze more trips out of the Shea Boulevard route. It does turn around at Mayo Clinic, making it possible for people to get off on the north side of Shea without having to cross the road to get to school. He said staff considered running the neighborhood trolley route off of the Roosevelt alignment when it was being developed, but the Paiute extension was chosen instead. As SkySong continues to develop, the option exists to deviate to the McDowell corridor in the future. He noted that Route 512 is 100% funded by the regional sales tax. The cost per person to run Routes 84 and 114 is very high. The City does not want to create routes that essentially serve as shuttles. Routes should be available as much of the day as possible. Shuttles would work against the goal of providing quality service.

Vice Chair Weiss said the Commission's task is clear. The City has lost revenue and the budget has to be cut dramatically in all areas. Council directed that \$1.5 million be cut from the transit budget in some way. If the Commission rejects one reduction option, the money has to be taken from somewhere else within transit. He suggested there might be a way for the school to create a shuttle from Route 106 to the school. It is not a perfect solution, but it is something to consider. If another route were eliminated instead of Route 114, it would impact many more riders. He felt that reducing the frequency of the trolley could create a cycle where downtown businesses suffer from reduced revenue, which in turn puts more strain on funding the trolley service. He suggested that staff look at ways to preserve the 10-minute intervals. Perhaps the 20-minute intervals could just be temporary.

Mr. Meinhart suggested that if the downtown trolley is rerouted, that it contain as many businesses within a short walk of the alignment as possible. The primary goal should be to get people to walk in the downtown so that they can utilize local businesses. Vice Chair Weiss suggested that businesses might be willing to help offset the cost of the trolley in exchange for being near a stop. Mr. Meinhart added that staff is also considering advertising revenue for transit in the future. He cautioned that ads on the vehicles themselves would only be a small part of the solution. The much greater revenue source would be advertisements at stops. Another option would be to consider a fare on the trolley, which would likely impact ridership.

Commissioner Ward emphasized that some riders are more vulnerable than others. The public speakers came up with good ideas. He felt it would be acceptable to provide good weekday service, even if it meant sacrificing weekend service. He suggested staff consider the public comments and propose revisions for the next meeting. Mr. Meinhart responded that the goal of the proposal was to reduce the level of service on as few pieces of the system as possible, while remaining consistent with the TMP. He clarified that the budget is set to go in place on July 1, and savings are expected to start accruing then.

Chair Howard noted that the Commission has some flexibility to get the details straight. A number of serious questions have been raised by the public speakers and they need to be answered before the Commission can approve the proposal. He questioned the concern about equity between the neighborhood and downtown trolley routes, as both serve different purposes. Some serious alternatives have been presented for the trolley. He agreed that it takes time to make changes and merchants have legitimate concerns. Chair Howard suggested that a summer schedule could work while the City researches alternatives.

Chair Howard said the comments that have been made about Route 114 are serious and important. While the goal is to maintain uniform service, in this case the ridership demand falls into two peak periods. The City should consider an exception if it would save money. The

Commission is concerned with providing the best service within the budget, and he requested time for further thought. He suggested an agenda item to discuss the matter next month.

Mr. Meinhart requested guidance on the parameters to consider, and suggestions for alternative reductions. Chair Howard responded that he would like to know how much money the proposed alternatives would save and whether changes could be made to other routes without doing significant damage. Commissioner Ward said the City might have to acknowledge that it cannot provide seven-day a week service. He suggested Route 114 could be a commuter service, or the City could work with the school to provide an alternate service. He questioned why the process to eliminate an entire route would be less strenuous than the option to reroute the trolley. The City should also consider the viability of keeping the trolleys free. Perhaps a nominal fee is necessary in these extreme times.

Vice Chair Weiss said the public meeting notice should be posted in ample time to ensure that anyone who wants to speak is going to be able to be present. He agreed with the concept of introducing temporary summer hours and using the time to reach out to businesses in the community to begin reevaluating route changes. He also encouraged reaching out to the Basis School for a possible peak service alternative to Route 114.

Chair Howard noted a non-speaking comment suggesting that the Basis School could take steps to increase student ridership on Route 114.

6. Local Area Infrastructure Plans (LAIPS)

Ms. Huish said the policies and goals for LAIPS were approved with the Transportation Master Plan policy element and the streets element. Draft LAIPS maps were included in a streets element appendix with the recommendation that extensive public outreach take place before LAIPS are adopted by the City Council. LAIPS are plans drafted for areas of the City that are not master planned or included in subdivisions. The purpose of LAIPS is to improve the coordination between the various City entities that are dealing with neighborhood infrastructure in some way. The overall goals for LAIPS are to coordinate all infrastructure, balance accessibility and access control, coordinate utilities and public access improvements, provide more predictability for budgeting and maintenance, provide consistency in decision making, increase public awareness about neighborhood level infrastructure, and provide property owners with consistent information.

The specific goals for the transportation portion of LAIPS are to provide a safe and efficient transportation system, maintain and improve traffic flow on the major street network, protect neighborhoods from unwanted traffic, maintain the existing utilized street layout where possible, and to minimize the cost of improvements overall. Ms. Huish displayed maps of the LAIPS areas.

The public outreach efforts will involve informing the Transportation Commission, the Planning Commission, and City Council over the next few months. Letters and maps will be sent to affected property owners in July. The City will offer to meet with affected individuals and groups. A general public meeting will occur by October, and the Commission would be presented with the results of the outreach effort before the proposal goes to Council.

7. **Other Transportation Projects**

Mr. Meinhart reported that the City has been awarded a \$40,000 grant from the Governor's Office for Highway Safety to support educational campaigns to improve transportation safety in all aspects. He updated the Pima Road improvement project, which is on the shared corridor between the City of Scottsdale and the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community. The public outreach effort has begun. The project has Proposition 400 funding, and is planned to widen the corridor from two lanes to four. The conceptual design is nearly finished, and the project will move into final design in the summer or fall. The target for initial construction is phased, with the northern end possibly starting in 2010.

Mr. Meinhart reported that there was a public outreach meeting on the Hayden frontage road, south of Indian School Road. The City is looking for a more aesthetically pleasing vehicular barrier. He noted that declining revenue streams are causing changes in the schedules for projects in the Proposition 400-funded arterial roadway, transit and freeway programs.

8. **Public Comment**

Dave MacDonald drew attention to a report about the State which was prepared by the Arizona Town Hall and provided by Kelly McCall. He suggested the Commission agendaize a discussion on the report's implications for Scottsdale. [The referenced report was the AZ Town Hall report, 2009]

9. **Identification of Future Agenda Items**

No further items were identified.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to conduct, Chair Howard adjourned the regular meeting at 8:47 p.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

A/V Tronics, Inc.

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