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TRANSIT WORKING GROUP

2:00 p.m. Monday, October 19, 2009

Legal Actions/Administrative Summary

Committee Members Present:

John Zukas, City of Tucson
Kat Heineking, Sun Tran
T. Van Hook, Town of Marana
Orlanthia Henderson, Town Sahuarita
Aimee Ramsey, Town of Oro Valley
Tom Amparano, University of Arizona
Jonathan Crowe, Pima County

Staff

Jim DeGrood
Jeremy Papuga
Sheila Storm
Gabe Thum
Teresa Ruiz
Ruth Reiman
Gary Hayes

Public /Agencies

Michele Joseph, Sun Tran
Bob McGee, Sun Tran
Mary Rosaline Anderson

1. Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order and introductions were conducted.

2. Approval of the Minutes of Sept. 21, 2009

Ms. Van Hook requested a change to the summary of the July meeting. **Ms. Van Hook moved approval of the minutes with the change. Mr. McGee seconded; the motion was approved.**

3. Call to the Audience

No member of the audience requested to address the Working Group.

4. Announcements/Comments

Ms. Van Hook announced the Town of Marana should be choosing a vendor for its transit vehicle purchase.

Mr. Papuga reminded the Working Group the opening of the Bus Storage and Maintenance Facility is this week. Also, the applications for the LTAFII funding have been forwarded to ADOT. The audits for the funding are due to Mr. Papuga Nov. 23 for review before they are due to ADOT on Dec. 1.

Ms. Ramsey asked if there is a way to project LTAF funding for five years. Mr. Papuga replied it is difficult to predict LTAF because the funding is based on Powerball revenues and fluctuates year-to-year.

5. Public Hearing on Sun Shuttle Fare Change

Mr. Papuga convened the public hearing on the fare change. Ms. Anderson stated she is a rider of Sun Tran and Sun Shuttle and has no issue with the fare change. Her only request is that advertising for the service be increased.

The public hearing closed with no further comments.

6. Working Group Discussion of Fare Change Public Hearing

Mr. Papuga presented a PowerPoint on the fare change for discussion. He reminded members that the objectives are:

- To provide seamless regional transit service
- Standardize fares across the region

Currently, on all the Sun Shuttle routes, the regular fare is \$1.25. For deviated service, the fare is \$2.50. Transfers are free to Sun Tran and most Sun Tran pass products are accepted. The Pima County rural transit routes fares are:

- Marana is \$.75 or \$1.00 depending on the length of the trip.
- The San Xavier and the Tucson Estates services are \$.50. These routes are moving to Sun Shuttle
- Ajo will remain, for now, a separate operation and is not included in the current fare structure.

The proposed fares for the all the Sun Shuttle routes are:

- Regular fare for fixed-route service \$1.25, for deviated service (origin to destination) \$2.50.
- For qualified low-income individuals the fare for fixed-route service will be \$.40 and \$.80 for (origin to destination) deviated service. The policy changes will match Sun Tran's low-income policies
- Persons 65 years or older, or with disabilities or Medicare cardholders, the fares will be \$.40 for fixed routes and \$2.50 for origin to destination service.
- On all Sun Shuttle routes transfers to Sun Tran will be free
- Most Sun Tran pass products will be accepted; however, stored value and 2-ride passes are not accepted.
- For deviated service only cash fares will be accepted.

Mr. Hayes asked if the City of Tucson Transit Committee had addressed the low income fare. Also, what percentage of Sun Tran riders are low income. Mr. Zukas replied that the low income fare can only be changed by Mayor and Council. Ms. Heineking noted that, presently, 50 percent of the riders are low income.

Ms. Ramsey asked why the qualified low income fare is different from the fare for persons 65 and older. Ms. Heineking replied the 65 and older service is deviated service handled by Sun Van and they wanted to match the paratransit fare.

Ms. Van Hook expressed concern that origin to destination riders to the senior center in Marana will see a big increase in their fares. If the rider goes to the center three times a week it will be an increase of \$6 per week which is a big difference for people on a fixed income. She stated she had not prepared the riders for a \$2.50 fare.

Mr. Hayes noted the proposed fares are starting with a concept with problems. He asked when the Tucson Mayor and Council adopted the fares was there a time limit. Ms. Heineking replied there is no time limit.

Mr. Papuga stated the purpose of the fare changes is to standardize fares across the region. He noted there are local groups that can help with fares. Ms. Heineking reminded the Working Group that there are 165 agencies that are eligible to receive low income passes for distribution.

Mr. Crowe noted that the Medicare cardholders and riders with disabilities could be placed in the same fare category and low income riders and have 65 or older riders separate.

Mr. Papuga reminded the members that part of the Marana route has flag stop service available.

Ms. Van Hook moved accepting the fare changes as proposed. Ms. Heineking seconded; the motion was approved.

7. Sun Shuttle Service Update and Open House Results

Mr. Papuga presented an update on the Sun Shuttle service and the results of the survey distributed at the open houses. He reminded the Working Group of the types of routes of concern. Type 1 routes are those with marginal ridership though consistent through the fare implementation with the potential to meet ridership goals. The Type 2 route has poor ridership, inconsistent through fare implementation and needs change to meet ridership goals.

Type 1 Routes:

Route 401 has benefitted from the route changes; ridership has been increasing since the schedule was adjusted.

Route 421 also benefitted from changes ridership has been increasing since the adjustments to the schedule though this remains a long trip.

Route 425 - this service has a lot of deviated service. With the return of the winter residents to Green Valley, the RTA is looking for an increase in ridership. At the Green Valley open house some newly returning residents were pleased to hear about the service.

Route 412 ridership is increasing. The Linda Vista stop has the highest ridership due to the school. Ridership is expected to increase, with the opening of the Ritz-Carlton.

Type 2 Routes

Route 411 ridership is below one person per hour; however, the ridership may increase due to the improved connectivity to the JARC route.

Route 420 - this route continues to underperform. The RTA hopes the return of the winter residents to Sahuarita also will help this route.

Route 402 - lately ridership is increasing. The schedule adjustment appears to be helping this route.

Overall the system performance is seeing steady growth. Boardings per hour last week were 1.1 for the system.

Open Houses

Four open houses were held with participation varied from a few people to a full table of participants in Green Valley. Only 23 surveys were collected. Comments on the surveys included:

- Some interest in flex-stop scenario
- Better connections to Sun Tran
- Shorter travel times
- Request to not change anything

Based on the feedback there will be no changes instituted in February 2010. There may be changes in May. Next steps include:

- Increased marketing especially since many part-time residents are returning
- Continue to monitor route performance
- Produce a time line for possible changes in May
- Non-performing routes must change at the one-year anniversary of the service.

In May, the service will have been operating for one year; therefore, changes to be implemented must be decided in March.

Ms. Ramsey noted the bus bays on Oracle will be open in December. She asked if the service presently on Northern will be moved to Oracle. Mr. DeGrood replied that schedule will need to be reviewed and discussed when the bay opens to determine the affect on the schedule.

Ms. Joseph noted that Sun Tran has developed a marketing plan for the shuttles which has been on hold until the feedback from the open houses was available. Sun Tran is looking at a print advertising buy in Green Valley, Oro Valley and Sun City to advertise the services.

8. Status Report on RTA Projects

Mr. DeGrood reported the RTA 40 pullouts are in process consultant firms are under contract and have received a notice to proceed. Letters to the affected property owners have been sent out and letter from the owners are starting to come in to the RTA.

Mr. Zukas reported the bus storage and maintenance facility (BSMF) is opening Oct. 22. Sun Tran will begin moving in November. The construction has started this week on the traffic light at Runway Drive. The light should be completed by February; however, the light may be completed as early as 60 days. The issue with the gas main near the location was resolved earlier than previously estimated. The light will be paid for by the contingency fund for the BSMF.

The Old Vail park-and-ride to be constructed by the developer of the property is on hold due to the economy. The City of Tucson is looking to acquire the existing temporary lot. The Broadway and Houghton park-and-ride consultant, Parson-Brinkerhoff, has received the notice to proceed. City staff will meet with the neighborhood and area business to incorporate their feedback.

Ms. Heineking updated the Working Group on the express transit service. She reminded the members that last year at this time, September 2008, gas prices were approaching \$4 a gallon. Ridership from September 2008 to September 2009 has declined 9 percent; however, from 2007 to 2008 ridership increased 37 percent.

Ms. Heineking informed the Working Group the City of Tucson has started negotiations with a new vendor for the farebox technology after ceasing talks with the first vendor. She also noted the initial schedule for the technology called for August 2010 completion. This date will probably change due to a change in vendor.

Ms. Van Hook requested a discussion on the shuttle monthly passes which are being purchased by riders who do not ride Sun Tran. Her concern is that revenue from the passes does not go to the jurisdiction but instead to Sun Tran. Mr. DeGrood acknowledged there is a need to address revenue sharing. He noted that staff can look the drivers' logs to see how often they are receiving a Sun Tran pass. Mr. Papuga noted there may be an issue for the 5311 routes, since the federal government will look at the revenue generated and want to limit the number of different media.

9. Review of Bus Pullout Project Requests

Ms. Henderson presented the application from the Town of Sahuarita for bus pullout funding for improvements at the Sahuarita Town Hall. She noted that bus riders are using the vegetation in the Town Hall parking lot to get out of the sun. Mr. DeGrood noted that the RTA

added funding for bus pullouts and the RTA plan did not call for a park-and-ride lot in Sahuarita. Also, park-and-ride amenities do not usually come out of the bus pullout funding. He suggested that the RTA look at the funding for the Green Valley park-and-ride, since riders having been using the Green Valley Village as a park-and-ride. Mr. DeGrood asked that the request for funding be delayed until discussions can be held between the RTA, the Town and Pima County.

10. 5311 Bus Purchase Announcement

Mr. Papuga announced that the RTA has received two 5311 capital grants to purchase vehicles for Sun Shuttle. The RTA is moving forward with the purchase of the vehicles, with the support of the Working Group.

11. Requests for Items to be Included on Upcoming Agenda

Update on Farebox Technology
Update on AdVision

12. Other Business

No other business was conducted

13. Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned.