



177 N. Church Avenue, Suite 405, Tucson AZ 85701
Phone: (520) 770-9410 Fax: (520) 620-6981
RTAmobility.com

TRANSIT WORKING GROUP

Meeting Summary of February 3, 2010 Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Andrew Singelakis, City of Tucson
Mary McLain, Sun Tran
T. Van Hook, Town of Marana
Tom Amparano, University of Arizona
Aimee Ramsey, Town of Oro Valley
Ben Goff, Pima County

Jurisdictional Representatives

Tom Fisher, City of Tucson
John Zukas, City of Tucson
Jonathan Crowe, Pima County
Shellie Ginn, City of Tucson
Michael Barton, HDR

Staff

Jim DeGrood
Jeremy Papuga
Gary Hayes
Teresa Ruiz
Ruth Reiman
Rob Samuelson
David Joseph
Jan Lonon
Sheila Storm

Public /Agencies

Michele Joseph, Sun Tran
Jenny Sirnio, Sun Tran
Rob Blizzard, CODI
Joan Beckin, Kaneen Advertising

1. Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order and introductions were conducted.

2. Approval of the Minutes of Jan. 11, 2010

Ms. McLain requested an addition to the minutes. She requested that Recommendation 3 under the paratransit plan indicate that the costs will receive further review by the Working Group. Mr. Goff moved approval of the minutes with the addition. Ms. Van Hook seconded; the motion was approved.

3. Call to the Audience

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

4. Announcements/Comments

Mr. Papuga announced an agenda change. Item 7 would be discussed at a later meeting. Also, ADOT is hosting a workshop for 5310, rural JARC and New Freedom applications at the Randolph Club House in Reid Park on Feb. 10 from 1 p.m. to 3:30 pm. For more information please contact Jennifer O'Connor at PAG.

On Feb. 18, PAG is holding a meeting for the Coordinated Transportation Plan. This is a meeting coordinated with the Human Services Coordinated Transit Plan. The meeting will be at the City of Tucson Department of Neighborhood Resources Sentinel Building from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Please contact Jennifer O'Connor, at PAG, for more information.

The applications for the rural 5311 applications were submitted for the grant process. Mr. Papuga will update the Working Group as the grant process continues.

Mr. Degrood announced that the RTA Technical Management Committee will meet on Feb. 18 at noon. The topic will be mostly on transit.

5. Modern Streetcar Status

Ms. Ginn presented an overview of the modern streetcar and reported on the status of the project. She reviewed the progress to date on the project, noting the project began in 2004 with an Alternatives Analysis, the January 2005 Notice of Intent published in the Federal Register, the May 2006 RTA Plan approval which included funding for the project and Final Design approval from FTA. Presently, the City is waiting for notification on the TIGER grant and FTA funding.

The public involvement process included a Technical Advisory Group of agency stakeholders, a Community Liaison Group of representatives from residents and businesses along the route, public meetings and a project Web site.

The details and features of the project are:

- The alignment length is 3.9 miles

- 18 stops

- A maintenance facility located south of 8th St.

- 7 modern streetcars, including 1 spare with 6 running

- Service is to run 20 hours a day

- Peak and off-peak headways of 10 to 20 minutes

- Initial ridership is estimated at 5,700 per weekday

- Capital cost of \$150 million

- The streetcar is a new vehicle based on European technology

- Vehicles are double ended

- Low floors and wide doors for ADA access

- Can share stops with buses

- Holds approximately 130 passengers per vehicle (35 seated with 95 standing)

- Tracks are laid in street lanes

The City has been working closely with the Commission on Disability Issues to ensure the vehicle is ADA accessible.

The design for the stop is a simple one incorporating a shade structure with an eye toward accessibility for ADA, riders with strollers and bicycles.

The alignment for the streetcar is similar to alignments in other cities such as Tacoma, Portland and Seattle.

The alignment, from the east end: starts from Helen St. and Martin Ave. Goes west on Helen turns south on Warren using the Warren bicycle pedestrian underpass to the university area travels west on 2nd Street through the university campus, turns south on Park Ave to 4th Ave. through the 4th Ave. underpass to Broadway and Congress into the downtown area along Congress to Granada, from Granada through Cushing St. underpass.

Across the Cushing St. bridge (to be built) over the Santa Cruz river The route on west end terminates at Avenida del Convento from there the alignment loops back into downtown.

Transit oriented development (TOD) is a large part of the project. Mr. Singelakis noted that other cities have seen higher development occur around TOD. The TOD study identified four stop areas:

- 4th Ave and 8th St
- 4th Ave between 6th St and 7th St
- University and Tyndall
- Helen and Campbell.

The study also included a station market analysis, workshop in the areas and a TOD handbook.

The benefits of TOD are:

- Additional property tax revenue
- Positive impact on real estate values
- Higher density development

The University opportunity site, near main gate, is a proposed location for a new hotel and theatre.

The Streetcar funding is \$150 million with \$83 million from the RTA and requested FTA New Starts funding. The City has requested \$75 million in ARRA funding in the form of a TIGER grant. The City partnered with the FTA from the start of the project.

The construction details call for:

- Construction of four separate tracks
 - From the Mercado area in the west – Granada to Avenida del Convento
 - 4th Ave to Granada
 - The University of Arizona (UA) Main Gate to 4th Ave
 - Campbell/Helen to the UA Main Gate

The vehicle manufacturer, the first American manufacturer in 65 years, is United Streetcar a division of Oregon Ironworks.

Ms. Ginn presented a rendition of the maintenance yard facility. Ms. Van Hook asked if the budget includes funding for the facility. Ms. Ginn replied yes the budget includes everything. Mr. Goff asked if construction of the facility is contingent on received the federal funding. Ms. Ginn replied yes. Also the City acknowledges it may not receive all the funding it has requested but should receive some funding and feel that it can go ahead with the purchase of vehicles. Mr. Hayes stated the RTA position is that they need to see the entire financial plan for the whole project and that there are still issues with the project.

6. Regionalized Transit Services Update and Finance Overview

Mr. Hayes, Mr. DeGrood, Mr. Samuelson and Ms. Lonon overviewed the maintenance of effort (MOE) calculation based on fiscal year 2004 and its relationship to the regionalization of transit. Mr. Samuelson explained that the creation of the RTA included the definition of the MOE. Mr. Hayes emphasized that the RTA relies on the RTA attorney for legal opinions and interpretation of MOE. However, the RTA wants to ultimately remove the MOE requirement in order to free up the jurisdictional funding.

Mr. Samuelson presented a spreadsheet on expenditures and revenues of the existing transit systems. He stated that Sun Tran and Sun Van, if moved from the City of Tucson to the RTA will operate in the "black" for the first five years. The RTA would be looking for a dedicated source of funding to support the regional transit system after the five-year period.

Mr. Hayes noted that other regions use a dedicated funding source for transit service. He expressed his concern that some of the jurisdictions do not acknowledge that there is a sense of urgency. There is urgency in dealing with the urban environment, the budget issues, in particular for the City of Tucson which may need to reduce the funding Sun Tran receives from the City's general fund and the upcoming labor negotiations for Sun Tran.

Ms. Van Hook noted she has heard concerns that if the RTA takes in transit it will bankrupt the roadway funding. Mr. Hayes stated funding the roadways is specifically listed in the RTA plan. Transit funding is a separate issue.

Ms. Ramsey noted there are questions about the management of transit. How will grants, construction, etc. be handled? Mr. Hayes replied that there will be staff but he does not envision the RTA micro-managing. He cited the Las Vegas turnkey system which contracts with a management company.

7. Funding: ARRA II and LTAF

This item was tabled and will be discussed at a later meeting.

8. Status Report on RTA Projects

Mr. DeGrood reported the RTA Board had crossed the half-billion funding threshold for programming. There is \$140 million in projects under construction.

Mr. Fisher reported the phase II of bus maintenance and storage facility is 100 percent completed. Phase III plans are at the City's development service department for review. There is some money from phase II available for roll-over into phase III. The question is whether there is sufficient money between the roll-over and ARRA funding to include construction of the administration building. The building is listed as an option if there is sufficient funding.

The temporary Old Vail and Houghton park-and-ride continues to function fine. The developers remain on hold about the permanent location. They are waiting for the economy to improve.

Mr. Fisher presented a schematic of the Houghton and Broadway park-and-ride. The lot dovetails with the intersection project. The next steps are to work with the businesses and neighborhoods.

The City just launched an ADA improvement project with matching funds from the RTA. The funding will help fix small but important access issues, such as, filling gaps in between sidewalks and bus pad, and improving the accessibility of bus shelters.

Mr. DeGrood reported the RTA is still working on an ADOT permit for the bus pullouts on Oracle.

9. Sun Shuttle Service Update

Mr. Papuga presented an update on the service. The objectives for this meeting are:

- Agreement of year one performance standards
- Review of routes below, above and meeting performance standards
- Discussion of potential upcoming route/service changes
- Presentation of the timeline for the May service changes

Year One performance standards:

The Ostrander study recommended four passengers per hour (PPH). Which is the standard for circulator service across the nation. However, RTD Denver maintains routes at three PPH and higher their median is 4.2 PPH. The ADOT 5311 program services median across the system last fiscal was 3.7 PPH. Perhaps for the first year we should not hold to three PPH. The RTA recommends altering or eliminating routes that are performing below one PPH for the last three months. One PPH may seem low. However, there are new routes

and service areas and there have been frequent changes to routes and schedules. Also, the RTA feels we have not seen the full impact of seasonal populations.

The performance standard will not remain at one PPH and the Working Group will discuss service standards for the future years. Mr. Papuga suggested a gradual increase in PPH. He reminded the members that service standards for shuttles are different than regular transit.

Routes Above the Suggested Standard:

Route 430 – ridership is good even through the fare increase. Passenger per house decreased slightly when service hours were added; however, PPH increased in January.

Route 440 – ridership decreased after the fare increase. The RTA is in close contact with MV about monitoring this route. The drivers have noted a lot of Sun Tran passes on this service. Mr. Goff noted the fare on this route more than doubled. Ms. Ramsey speculated that maybe the riders are the same but they are riding less. Mr. Goff stated he feels the ridership will go back to the pre-increase level; however, ridership is tied to the economy.

Route 413- service was part of a long route which has been split. The service will be connecting with the 410 and the RTA looks forward to increased service efficiencies. Ridership continues to increase from the start of the service change.

Route 410 – route is performing above the target standard and staff hopes to see further increases in ridership. Ms. Van Hook noted it is difficult to do advertising for this route since it is mostly rural. Mr. DeGrood suggested advertising at the common destinations, such as, schools, the Food Bank and the Senior Center.

Route 401 – route started at the bottom but has continued to see increasing ridership. When the Oracle bus bays open, the RTA hopes to see a greater increase in ridership.

Route 421 – ridership is above the suggested target. The route has been running behind by the end of the day. Hopefully, there will be improvement from the schedule change.

Route 425- ridership dipped in January, perhaps due to the rain since most of the ridership is from choice riders. Mr. Goff noted he was concerned the ridership is essentially flat. Ms. Ramsey observed the Saturday service may be bringing down the ridership numbers. Mr. Papuga noted the Working Group needs to have an overall discussion on Saturday service.

Route 411 – route barely meets the target PPH. The RTA recommends some changes. If this route can be connected to the 104X and the 413 consistently ridership should increase.

Routes Below Suggested Performance Level:

Route 412 – the RTA has been waiting to see an increase in ridership from the resort at Dove Mountain. There is now an issue with the resort; it does not want the shuttle on the property during the golf tourney. Ms. Van Hook noted the resort can not prevent the

shuttle from using the main street since it a public ROW. Mr. Hayes suggested the shuttle go up as far as the roundabout. Mr. Papuga noted the shuttle would stop at the roundabout during the resort's construction. Perhaps staff should note the shuttle can be for employee use. Ms. Van Hook noted that in other areas hotel employees are subsidized by JARC. Mr. Papuga noted there are few pick-ups north of Linda Vista. The adjustment options for this route are:

- Abandon the northern portion of the route and extend the route south to Tohono Tadaí transit center.
- Provide a call-n-ride service north of Tangerine and enhance frequency south
- Provide a point-deviated type service.

Route 420 – route ridership remains below the suggested target ridership. Adjustment options under consideration are:

- Provide point-deviated service in Sahuarita
- Trim the route but provide deviations in current service area
- Coordinate point-deviated service with route 425
- Operate fixed-route during the a.m. and p.m. peak periods and coordinate with route 425 mid-day.

Staff will meet with Green Valley and Sahuarita to discuss this route.

Route 402 – ridership remain below the suggested target ridership. Adjustment options under consideration are:

- Provide point-deviated service
- Provide call-and-ride service in a limited area
- Abandon the route and redeploy resources to successful services.

Overall the system performance is consistent. Ms. Ramsey requested to see other performance measures such as cost per hour. Mr. Papuga stated he will do quarterly numbers.

The timeline for the May service changes is:

February – meet with jurisdictions about potential route and service changes

March – hold service area public meetings, finalize service changes and develop draft schedules for review by the public

April – Finalize schedules with the Working Group, conduct public outreach about the upcoming changes.

May – implement changes.

Mr. Papuga acknowledged the timeline is accelerated; however, the service has been running for a year and it is time to make some tough decisions. He suggested the changes are not put in the Rideguide until 2011 at the same time as the technology changes.

Ms Van Hook stated she feels there is a need for more marketing of the service, perhaps direct mail, meeting presentations or information where consumers will be. Mr. Papuga replied he is willing to make the effort to market the service more. Staff will need assistance identifying events for outreach and will work on direct mail.

Mr. Goff moved approval of the one PPH as the goal for the first year. Mr. Singelakis seconded; the motion was approved.

10. Update on Farebox Procurement

Ms. Sirnio presented the update on the farebox procurement process. She reported the meeting GFI, the selected consultant, was productive. At the meeting program management was discussed, There projects were identified to move up, there are:

- Special service – the reduced fare ID

- Web site – online sales with payment by credit card

- University of Arizona – incorporating a transit application on the CatCard ID

11. Regional Paratransit System Plan Update

Mr. Papuga presented a brief update on the plan. He noted a list of question and ideas from Working Group members was sent to the paratransit task force. The responses from the task force are scheduled for the next meeting.

12. Other Business

Mr. Papuga reported on a traffic accident involving a Sun Shuttle vehicle. Mr. Fisher requested an update on Sun Tran ridership particularly on crowded routes. Also, riders on the service from/to the Casino del Sol park-and-ride lot are concerned about the distance from the lot to the casino. Mr. DeGrood noted he is talking with the casino and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe about allowing a stop nearer the casino.

Mr. Papuga requested the members to review the meeting dates for the Working Group.

13. Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned.