

MINUTES

**CITIZENS TRANSPORTATION
OVERSIGHT COMMISSION**

Fellowship Hall
First United Methodist Church of Glendale
7102 N. 58th Drive
Glendale, AZ 85301

February 18, 2016
6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: James Grose, Chair
Tom Schmitt, Vice Chair
Gus Woodman
Frank Johnson
Roberta Podzius
John Geurs
Jeff McAfee

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jack Nylund (excused)
Karen Griego (excused)

OTHERS PRESENT: Debbie Albert, Glendale Transportation Engineer
Purab Adabala, Glendale Senior Transportation Analyst
Patrick Sage, Glendale Transportation Planner
Matt Dudley, Glendale Transit Planning Manager
Trevor Ebersole, Glendale Deputy Public Works Director - Transportation
Kevin Link, Glendale Transit Operations Manager
Jon Froke, Glendale Director of Planning
Jean Moreno, Glendale Economic Development Officer
Jennifer Pyne, Valley Metro Project Manager
Abhi Dayal, Valley Metro Planning Manager
Megan Casey, Valley Metro Community Outreach Organizer

I. **Call to Order**

Chair Grose called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. **Approval of Minutes from January 7, 2016 Meeting**

Chair Grose called for approval of the minutes.

ACTION BY CTOC: Approval of the minutes from the January 7, 2016 meeting of the Citizens Transportation Oversight Commission as written. It was noted that the February meeting date as originally scheduled and included in the minutes, was later changed to tonight's date.

(Motion: Vice Chair Schmitt; Second: Commissioner Johnson; motion carried unanimously)

III. Call to the Audience

Howard May, City of Glendale resident, provided comments regarding areas in the City that currently do not meet ADA specifications, and streets/sidewalks that need repair and repaving. The citizen commented that these issues cause challenges and limitations for him when getting around the city. Mr. May requested that City staff and/or budget should be increased to address these items.

IV. Approval of the Agenda

Chair Grose called for approval of the agenda for the February 18, 2016 CTOC meeting.

ACTION BY CTOC: Approval of the agenda for the February 18, 2016 Citizens Transportation Oversight Commission as presented.

(Motion: Vice Chair Schmitt; Second: Commissioner Wood; motion carried unanimously)

V. Public Input – Commissioners and Staff

Commissioner Podzius thanked that other Commissioners for rescheduling the CTOC meeting originally scheduled for February 4 to allow for her and others to attend the Glendale Planning Commission meeting that night. The Planning Commission meeting included a Public Hearing on the creation of a scenic corridor along the Loop 101, which was approved at the that meeting and will now go before City Council.

Commissioner Woodman attended the recent Bicycle Advisory Committee meeting and announced the following upcoming events:

- February 26th: American Bicycle Association Seminar
- April 1st: Arizona Bicycling Summit
- April 10th: Glendale Family Bike Ride

Commissioner Podzius announced that this Saturday is Glendale Serve Day and encouraged attendees to sign up for remaining volunteer opportunities.

VI. Manager's Report

Ms. Albert provided a status update/information on the following topics:

- High Capacity Transit
 - Council Workshop: March 1st at 1:30 p.m.
- Streets - 59th Avenue and Olive Intersection Improvements
 - Safety Project – Federal HSIP Funding
 - Public meeting on March 1st at Glendale Community College – flyers available
 - Capacity Improvements
 - Design scope of work complete – being reviewed for Council action
- Bicycle/Pedestrian
 - Grand Canal Multi-Use Path
 - ADOT contract bid results: February 5th with a low bid of \$557,941
 - Myrtle Avenue Safe Routes to School
 - ADOT contract award action Friday, February 19th
 - Glendale Family Bike Ride: April 10th

Chair Grose thanked Ms. Albert for the updates.

VII. West Phoenix/Central Glendale High Capacity Transit Study Updates

Chair Grose stated that Valley Metro staff will provide an update on the status of the study to extend high capacity transit from Phoenix into the downtown Glendale area. The update will include a presentation and discussion of the recommended transit type and alignment that has been identified by the Downtown Glendale Community Working Group (CWG). The CWG was charged by the Glendale City Council and Valley Metro to develop an advisory recommendation for a downtown area transit type and alignment to advance to the next phase of evaluation as part of the larger West Phoenix/Central Glendale Transit Corridor Study.

Jennifer Pyne gave an update on the West Phoenix/Central Glendale Transit Corridor Study to extend high capacity transit into the downtown Glendale area. A map displaying the anticipated future transit system through 2034 was displayed. The presentation included the following information:

- Goal of planning study (identification of transit type and preferred route alignment/location)
- Study Recommendations (recommended transit type - light rail; recommended route - Camelback/43Rd Avenue/Glendale Avenue/Glenn Drive)
- Input from public meetings
- Anticipated project capital funding
- Anticipated next steps, including continued analysis and public outreach
- Potential CTOC Action

The floor was opened for questions and comments.

Ms. Albert provided a presentation on the Glendale Transportation Department perspective, which included the following:

- Importance of an improved Glendale transit system.
- Light rail transit case study - Hillsboro, Oregon
- Project Cost Sharing

Commissioner Woodman inquired as to the width of the travel lanes and sidewalk with a 70-foot wide right-of-way. Ms. Pyne replied that conceptually, travel lanes would be 15 feet and the sidewalks would be approximately six feet wide. Other cross section configurations would also be considered that would fit into the 70 foot right of way width.

Mr. Froke also thanked the Commissioners for rescheduling the CTOC meeting to accommodate the Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Froke announced that the Scenic 101 Corridor designation was approved by the Planning Commission and will go before Council on Tuesday night, February 23.

Mr. Froke introduced the Planning and Economic Development perspective of the High Capacity Transit Study by discussing the Glendale Centerline District and other planning and redevelopment “tools” currently available to complement and leverage a high capacity transit project in the City of Glendale.

Ms. Moreno continued the Planning and Economic Development perspective, which included the following information:

- Current Centerline Conditions
- MAG Projection Data
- Downtown Revitalization Tenets
- Public Transportation Investment – National Impact Data, Regional Impact Data

- Planning/Economic Development Perspective

Commissioner Podzius asked if there has been expressed interest in redevelopment investment opportunities directly related to the potential light rail extension into downtown Glendale. Ms. Moreno stated that staff has received some inquiries, particularly in the large, vacant parcels along Glendale Avenue. Ms. Moreno noted that light rail related redevelopment can occur under a “chicken or egg” situation, where the light rail system is constructed first and encourages subsequent development that leverages the now in-place public infrastructure investment. Another strategy is for the City to foster transit compatible development first, in anticipation of the attracting interest and funding for the construction of light rail infrastructure. This approach can aid in project scoring for competitive federal capital funds for light rail design and construction. However, Ms. Moreno points out that in other cities that have invested in light rail infrastructure, most development that can be linked to the implementation of a light rail system occurred after system was constructed. Ms. Moreno points out that Glendale has an advantage in learning from the recent light rail project experiences of Phoenix and Mesa.

Commissioner Podzius inquired about the vacant parcels along Glendale Avenue where the car dealerships were previously. Ms. Moreno stated that the area is currently being marketed by the property owners as retail center sites with available out pads, primarily because there is not a higher quality type of development that has been targeted for that area at this time.

Vice Chair Schmitt inquired as to the City’s philosophy regarding denser developments along the light rail. Mr. Froke replied that varying scales of density could be encouraged/required along the light rail route depending on the City’s desire. For example, most apartment complexes in Glendale are 18-25 units per acre, but housing density in some areas along the exiting Phoenix light rail route include developments with 100 units per acre. Glendale would need to determine their desired level of density relative to transit oriented development. Vice Chair Schmitt stated that increased density along the corridor should be sought.

Commissioner Podzius expressed concern that parking in the area with light rail, and particularly at the “end of line” in downtown, will be an issue. Ms. Moreno commented that the potential to extend this project across Grand Avenue in Phase I would be beneficial because the end of line would then be located across Grand Avenue, where more parking opportunities would exist. Ms. Albert agreed and added that this concept would be studied more in depth once the mode transit type and general alignment location are agreed upon.

Ms. Moreno commented that without a significant catalyst like the proposed light rail system, redevelopment activities in downtown Glendale will continue to lag. Ms. Moreno added that Glendale is the transportation gateway to the West Valley and an important leader in economic development.

Ms. Moreno stated that the citizens of Glendale have paid regional taxes into Prop 400, and that program has budgeted regional funding specifically for a Glendale high capacity transit project. Ms. Albert agreed and explained that if the regional funding is not used by Glendale on this transit project, it is not at the City’s discretion to divert the funds into a different Glendale related regional project. Instead, the funds would be turned back into the overall regional “pot” of money for reallocation into other projects around the region, likely resulting in Glendale losing out on those regional dollars.

Vice Chair Schmitt noted that there are no new taxes being proposed for Glendale citizens by the City for this proposed project. Ms. Albert explained that the Glendale/local share of the project, both capital costs and operations/maintenance, is already allocated in the City's 25-year GO Program Transportation Program budget.

Commissioner Geurs asked if the population changes look more positive for the City with the inclusion of light rail. Mr. Dayal stated that Valley Metro did complete this analysis as part of the study and could get that information to the Commission.

Ms. Albert commented that there is still significant work to be done advancing this phase of the high capacity transit project. She noted that after CTOC weighs in, Council action needs to be taken on the transit type and route alignment. Also, after the transit type and alignment location is selected, continued analysis of the following issues is required:

- Crossing at Grand Avenue and the BNSF
- Crossing at I-17 and Camelback
- Glendale Avenue to Glenn Drive
- Traffic configurations
- Number and location of stations
- Public input

Ms. Albert noted that CTOC will have involvement with making continued recommendations to Council on the project as it continues to evolve. Ms. Albert opened the floor to additional comments and/or questions.

Commissioner Geurs stated that there have been many multiple meetings on the issue and he has ridden the current light rail. He expressed that support for the recommended route alignment.

Commissioner Podzius explained that she has taken the time to ride the existing light rail system throughout the Valley. Commissioner Podzius suggested that instead of a bi-directional route on Glenn Drive, a one direction split should be utilized to provide better exposure and access to the new system in downtown Glendale, and reduce the intensity of construction and new infrastructure impacts to particular areas. Commissioner Podzius wondered if that could be a point of discussion to Council. Vice Chair Schmitt noted that the vote should be on the recommendation proposed by the CWG as identified in the motion. Ms. Albert commented that the "couplet" concepts for downtown, as recommended by Commissioner Podzius and including Glenn Drive, were vetted by the CWG and did not receive majority support. Ms. Albert noted that while such couplets might result in a narrower linear footprint, this approach would disrupt more streets and property frontages.

Howard May, City of Glendale resident, commented that he was part of the CWG and the CWG discussed the possibility of an underground tunnel. The citizen was supportive of the 43rd Avenue/Camelback juncture as a high-capacity route. The citizen liked the idea of Glenn Drive becoming a pedestrian mall and stated that some ideas could be garnered from the City of Tempe.

Vice Chair Schmitt stated that a walking mall at the end of the line could also be an option, however, would not be included in the motion this evening. Ms. Albert agreed, noting that these details would be part of the design phase.

Ed Sharpe, City of Glendale business owner, commented that he is supportive of a route that would follow Glenn Drive route all to Grand Avenue, but not if the route would follow Glenn Drive to 58th Avenue to Palmaire Avenue to get to Grand Avenue. Concern was expressed regarding potential impacts to historic properties on Palmaire Avenue.

Commissioner McAfee stressed that the Commission has heard of the many positive comments and outcomes regarding the light rail, but would like to hear more about the negatives. Specifically, Commissioner McAfee asked for examples of any light rail failures. Ms. Albert noted that in Gresham, Oregon, the city elected to locate their light rail line some distance from their downtown to avoid construction impacts and other impacts, and as a result development occurred along the rail route and not as downtown redevelopment. Mr. Dudley stated that this is not necessarily a “failure,” just that the redevelopment did not happen in the downtown area.

Commissioner McAfee wondered if the objections made at the public meetings were more about the alignment and scale or general opposition to having light rail at all. Ms. Albert explained that the concerns expressed mainly focus on length of construction time and the most appropriate end destination. Ms. Pyne added that 50 written comments were received from a recent public meeting and over 550 comments during the total comment period. Ms. Pyne agreed that the majority were in regards to construction and if downtown Glendale was the right destination. Ms. Albert added that concerns for historic properties were also expressed.

Ms. Moreno noted that the City of Glendale Chamber of Commerce recently provided their support of the project.

Commissioner Woodman stated that the City has developed this project in the right manner: by including residents and business owners in the CWG, splitting the costs with Phoenix, and routing through downtown Glendale. Commissioner Woodman felt that the positives outweigh the negatives, and that once the entire line is extended it will bring a great amount of people through the City.

Commissioner Podzius noted that it is important to ensure that the project budget and financials are reported and presented very clearly to the citizens of Glendale.

Vice Chair Schmitt stated that if this project does not move forward now it will be difficult to restart a similar project in the future.

Chair Grose asked if there was a motion to recommend to Council a downtown area transit type and alignment to advance to the next phase of the evaluation as part of the larger West Phoenix/Central Glendale Transit Corridor Study.

ACTION BY CTOC: Approval to recommend the preferred alternative that includes:

- **Leading preferred alternative:**
 - **Light rail as the preferred transit mode type.**
 - **The alignment route of Camelback Road/43rd Avenue/Glendale Avenue/Glenn Drive.**
- **Conduct additional study effort to address station locations and design options**
- **Commit to the development of cost-sharing agreement with Phoenix for capital and operating costs**
- **Consideration of the feasibility of an additional station across Grand Avenue.**

- (Motion: Vice Chair Schmitt; Second: Commissioner Geurs; motion carried unanimously)

Ms. Albert thanked the Commissioners for all of their patience and efforts on this project and thanked Valley Metro for their efforts as well.

VIII. Future Agenda Items

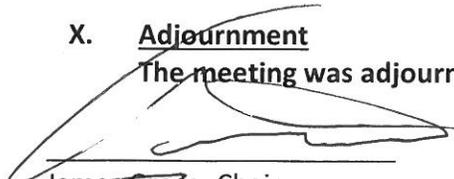
No additional future agenda items were suggested.

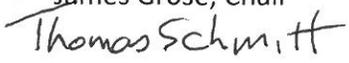
IX. Next Meeting Time

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 3, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in Room B-3 in City Hall.

X. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 7:49 p.m.


James Grose, Chair


Thomas Schmitt

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Please contact transportation staff at (623) 930-2940 at least three (3) days prior to the meeting for special accommodations. Hearing impaired persons please use the Arizona Relay Service at 1-800-367-8939.