

## KICK-OFF MEETING SUMMARY

**Date:** February 9, 2017  
**Time:** 12:30 PM - 2:30 PM  
**Location:** Globe City Council Chambers  
150 N. Pine St, Globe, AZ

### Introductions

- Travis Ashbaugh, CAG Transportation Planning Manager, welcomed study participants and asked them to introduce themselves (Sign-in sheet attached).

### Purpose of the Study

Eddie Caine, CAG Mobility Manager, provided a brief overview of the purpose of the study. He emphasized that this is a very important study that could help the region and encouraged the participants to get actively involved in the study. Eddie mentioned that the study area has limited transit services. The study would:

- Identify transit needs and travel alternatives.
- Develop estimates of trips to medical, education, wellness, and shopping destinations.
- Identify ways to better coordinate existing transit resources.

### Work Plan

- Vamshi Yellisetty provided a brief overview of the draft Work Plan. Following are some of the key points from the Work Plan:
  - Study has two phases – Phase 1: Feasibility Study; Phase 2: Implementation Plan.
  - Phase 1: Feasibility Study
    - Technical Work Group (TWG) members have two weeks to provide any comments on the Work Plan. Work Plan will be revised to include any comments received and sent to the TWG for final approval.
    - For the *Current and Future Conditions* task, the Consultant will:
      - Utilize Census 2010 data for demographic analysis.
      - Augment Census data with data from stakeholders, especially in Tribal areas where data is often under-reported.
      - Share demographic information with TWG when compiled.
      - Ask stakeholders to notify consultant of apparent anomalies in data.
      - At regular intervals interact with stakeholders.
      - Compile inventory of existing transit services.
      - Schedule day-long stakeholder meetings within next few months. Will include four focus groups: e.g. current service providers., decision makers, etc. Input from stakeholders is integral to conduct of study.
    - Next step will be assessment of transit demand. The Consultant will:

- Make use of both traditional and non-traditional methods of demand and stakeholder input to identify unmet transit needs.
- Make use of existing conditions and demand estimates to conduct a transit feasibility review.
- Develop a profile for the entire region, then identify specific areas with unmet needs.
- Identify opportunities for enhancing operating efficiencies as well as potential funding that could be used for addressing unmet needs.
- Conduct one round of public involvement and finalize the Feasibility Report including input from public.
- Phase 2: Implementation Plan
  - If Feasibility Report concludes that there is a need for transit, consultant will proceed to the Implementation Phase of the Study. Rob Bohannon provided a brief overview of the Implementation Plan tasks.
    - Transit services evaluated in Phase II could consist of discrete services within communities and/or regional services that operate throughout the study area.
    - In order to estimate transit demand, it is necessary to create a pro-forma transit system or set of systems to identify the type of system(s) needed, types of vehicles, stop locations, schedules, fare structures, and other elements.
    - If a fixed route system is recommended, it will include a complementary paratransit element—which could utilize one of the new transit on demand techniques.
    - Pro-forma system will include proposed capital and operating budgets.
    - Support for applicable funding grants.
    - Implementation plan would include draft safety, maintenance, and marketing plans.
    - Team will present draft Implementation Plan to stakeholders for input before proceeding with another round of public involvement.

## Schedule and Timeline of Anticipated Milestones

- Rick Powers reviewed the schedule and key milestones. Study will be completed in 13 months.
- Feasibility phase will be completed by summer.
- In June, we will have another TWG meeting.
- Study will include two rounds of stakeholder meetings and two rounds of public meetings.

## Technical Working Group (TWG)

- Rick emphasized to the TWG that this is their plan and their participation and input is crucial to the success of the Study. It is important that the TWG members continue to participate throughout the course of the study and provide feedback regarding the findings and recommendations. The public are the potential users of the services and their support is critical also.
- Rick also mentioned that the TWG will:

- Assist with identifying appropriate stakeholders, issues and needs, reviewing documents, and developing recommendations.
- Attend TWG meetings.
- Serve as a liaison between this study and your agency.
- TWG concurred that email would be the best primary mode of communication. Meetings and conference calls would be used as needed.

## Discussion: Current Transit Environment / Conditions in the region

- Rick facilitated the current transit environment and conditions discussion. Following is a summary of the discussion:
  - *Globe-Miami*
    - People prefer rural lifestyle, however, as they age and can no longer drive, they are unable to access medical and other essential services.
    - Better service needed from Miami for students attending the Globe Girls' and Boys' Club.
    - Globe/Miami Chamber of Commerce receives between two and five calls per week from people seeking transportation to the Phoenix area. Users of local transit services complain about the length of the trip. Would several "express" trips to the major stops per day be feasible? Can Greyhound have more stops in the region?
    - Senior Center needs transportation for medical appointments in the Phoenix area.
  - *Cobre-Valley Transit*
    - Need to reexamine our operating approach - relationship between our fixed route and dial-a-ride services. "Competing with ourselves" – implying that people living along fixed routes call for dial-a-ride service.
    - Explore restructuring system as "main line" with "feeders".
    - Current route resembles "milk run" - takes over an hour to complete.
    - Improvements will require additional vehicles, capital, and operating funding. Need all communities working together to make it happen.
    - Passengers confused - expect dial-a-ride (DAR) amenities such as door-to-door service when riding a fixed-route schedule.
    - Passengers complain about "shared ride" - want individual service.
    - Wheel chairs and Scooters fit better on route buses than on dial-a-ride vehicles.
    - [Eddie] Valley Metro provides free passes for route buses to mobility-limited persons, charges for DAR service, to encourage use of scheduled routes that are cheaper to operate than DAR.
    - Persons who purchase monthly DAR passes expect to be able to use service whenever they wish - without regard to the limitations imposed by funding.
    - [Eddie] This study can help Cobre Valley look at these issues.
    - Destinations such as retailers and the hospital are showing renewed interest in the service and in having bus shelters at their stops.
    - Hope that this study will facilitate getting input from destinations along route to assist in modifying schedules and services. However, not easy to change schedules frequently.

- Public swimming pool in Miami is obsolescent and expected to close soon. Will need to design summer service to serve new regional pool.
- Need to revisit approach to deviated route system.
- Look at making every other bus an “express”.
- Roadway constraints (traffic congestion, limited turning radius, and narrow streets) affect operations.
- Dead-end streets where there is insufficient room to turn the bus around.
- Insufficient space between highway and rail crossing for bus to make mandatory stop at crossing without blocking traffic.
- Some local retailers would not participate as stakeholders in previous study.
- Some businesses asked CVT not to bring patrons to their establishments. They do not understand that, as public transit, we cannot refuse service.
- ***Greyhound Lines***
  - Greyhound has restored intercity bus service on the US 60/US 70 corridor with one trip per day in each direction.
  - Stops include Safford/Thatcher, Bylas, Peridot (San Carlos), Globe/Miami (AM/PM Station adjacent to Wal-Mart), Superior, Mesa, Apache Junction, Phoenix 44th Street Transit Center, and Phoenix.
- ***VA Shuttle Van***
  - Available on Mondays and Wednesdays as follows:
    - Depart Globe-Miami VA Health Care Clinic 7:30 a.m.
    - Depart Superior Circle K - 831 S. Western Avenue 8 a.m.
    - Arrive at Phoenix VA Health Care System at approximately 9 a.m.
    - The VA Shuttle Van will return to the Superior/Globe area as soon as patient appointments are completed, but not later than 1:30 p.m.
- ***San Carlos Apache Tribe (Nnee Bich’o Nii Transit)***
  - [Rick] - The San Carlos Apache Tribe has done a good job of building public support for their services. We assume the other agencies and municipalities will do so as well.
  - San Carlos community has a high unemployment rate, together with a lack of area employment opportunities or public services.
  - Many Tribal citizens need transit to attend school.
  - Tribe has 20-year vision to enhance existing comprehensive system. Envisions service one could use, for example, to travel to Show Low, Tucson, or Phoenix.
  - In December 2016, carried 3,447 persons and operated 39,780 miles.
  - Need bus shelters and call center. Want GGCTFIS to ascertain whether ads on shelters will pay for shelter acquisition and maintenance. Ascertain whether City of Phoenix or other municipalities have used shelters that could be donated to or purchased by Nnee Bich’o Nii Transit.
  - Were hoping that Graham County Transit Study would recommend additional transit service.

- Service currently serves destinations in five Arizona counties.
- The highway is our “express route.” Have “feeders” from the highway. Deviate up to  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile - carry approximately three to four persons a week (for which deviation is needed). For us, adjusting schedules is not a problem.
- Seeks increased cooperation and coordination with Cobre Valley Transit to provide more seamless service Miami – Globe – Casino – San Carlos. Two agencies currently working to identify solutions.
- Participates in the SCAT/WMAT Transportation Partnership to explore additional transit services in connection with the White Mountain Apache Tribe.
- **Town of Payson**
  - The Town of Payson looked at transit previously (the 2004 Lima & Associates Study) and decided against implementing transit at that time. However, times have changed and the public sentiment is generally for transit now.
  - Existing Taxi Service is the only service available to the general public.
  - Senior Center provides demand-response service to persons aged 60 and over, as well as mobility limited persons.
  - Senior Center receives numerous requests for transportation from persons under the age of 60.
  - Community Presbyterian Church operates a bus for their church preschool similar to a school bus.
  - Several Payson area churches have their own transportation systems. At least two area churches take their members on shopping trips.
  - Horizon Health and Wellness provides demand-response services to developmentally disabled.
  - Renewed interest in findings and recommendations of 2004 Public Transit Study conducted by Lima & Associates.
  - Area service agencies were willing to fund recommended services out of their budgets, but were unable to obtain approval from the Town Council.
  - Payson VA Clinic offers shuttle service to Phoenix similar to that provided in Globe.
  - Planned university branch in Payson will increase demand for local transit as well as demand for regional services to/from Payson.
  - Citizens from Payson and other Gila County communities who have been called for Jury Duty need transportation to the Court House in Globe.
  - Mountain Valley Shuttle:
    - The company formerly known as “White Mountain Passenger Lines” has split into two separate operations.
    - White Mountain Lines provides freight service and Mountain Valley Shuttle provides passenger service to Phoenix.
    - Name change may be effort to avoid confusion with “White Mountain Connection”, the regional transit service operating in the Show Low-Pinetop area.

- *Hayden/Winkelman*
  - No transit services other than limited service to seniors provided by Senior Center.
  - Another agency in Pinal County provides transportation for their residents. Even though they sometimes operate through Gila County, our residents are unable to access the service.
  - Pinal County program reportedly takes bookings two to three months in advance for transportation to Phoenix.
  - Huge age range of persons would benefit from transit including students wishing to take classes at Central Arizona College near Coolidge.
  - Veterans would like additional shuttle services to VA Hospitals in Phoenix and Tucson.
  - New “Apache Sky” Casino in Dudleyville.
  - Nnee Bich’o Nii Transit working with Casino to provide transportation for employees and others - eventually as far as Tucson.
- *White Mountain Apache Tribe*
  - Implementing “Fort Apache Connection” fixed-route transit service on SR 73 and SR 260 between Whiteriver and McNary. Expect to be operating by summer.
  - Participates in the SCAT/WMAT Transportation Partnership to explore additional transit services in connection with the San Carlos Apache Tribe.
- *Other General Comments*
  - Bus patrons are a cross-section of the general public including seniors, working persons, and young people.
  - The success of the METRO light rail system in Phoenix supports the idea that public transit will be heavily used if sufficient service is provided.
  - Millennials in urban areas are more interested in transit service, less interested in owning cars.
  - Gila County communities received significant support - tax revenue, jobs, and other forms - from the mining companies in the past and took that support for granted over time. Now that mining activity, jobs, and tax revenue have declined, communities must work together to address common issues such as infrastructure.
  - Funds invested in transit return to the economy many times over - as much as seven-fold in urban areas.
  - The more “walkable” communities are, the more successful transit will be. Explore web sites such as [www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com) for more information. Also explore “transit oriented development” (TOD).

## Public Involvement and Stakeholder Outreach

- Rick suggested the following as elements of the public and stakeholder outreach plan. TWG agreed with the suggestions.
  - Conduct one full day of stakeholder interviews for each phase of the study.
  - Will be focus group format.
  - Will have maps and displays to aid discussion and input from groups.

- Will use WebEx for participation from those unable to attend in person.
- Will have a series of public meetings for each phase of the study. Meetings will be held in Globe/Miami, Payson/Star Valley, San Carlos, and Canyon Day/Whiteriver.
- Will contact stakeholders by email as we schedule study events.

## Data Collection

- Vamshi Yellisetty distributed a sheet that outlined the data needed for this study and asked the TWG members to review and send any readily available data to either Rick or Eddie.
- Vamshi also asked the TWG to provide information about any ongoing and completed studies that might be relevant to this study.

## Transit Trends

Rob briefly presented current transit trends.

- Percentage of the population living in rural areas has declined.
- Arizona is one of the most urbanized states in the Nation.
- Nationwide, rural transit providers must travel greater distances than previously.
- Rural Americans are older and a greater percentage live below the poverty level than was true in 1980.
- Younger adults are migrating from smaller towns to urban areas. Perhaps they wish to live where there is transit. Providing more rural transit may retain more younger people.
- Federal levels of transit funding are declining. Need to explore public-private partnerships and other creative financing techniques. New vehicle technologies will help. Area broadband service would aid efficient and convenient operation.

## Next Steps

- Rick summarized the next steps for the study which included data collection, preparing for the stakeholder meetings, and conducting existing and future conditions.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40PM.