



Gila County Transit Governance Study Technical Working Group Meeting #6

April 22, 2021 Meeting Minutes

DATE: April 22, 2021
TIME: 1:00 PM
LOCATION: ZOOM Webinar

ATTENDEES:

Travis Ashbaugh
(CAG)

Robert Mawson
(CAG)

Jill Dusenberry
(ADOT Transit)

Larry Halberstadt
(City of Payson)

Micah Gaudet
(Town of Miami)

Katie Dwoznik
(Miami Transit)

Joanne Conlin
(Payson Senior Center)

Bernadette Kniffin
(San Carlos Apache Tribe)

Rick Powers
(Richard Powers Consulting)

Viktor Zhong
(AECOM)

Daksha Masurkar
(AECOM)

Jennifer Love
(AECOM)

Scott Baker
(AECOM)

Phyllis Davis
(Kittelson)

INVITEES ABSENT:

Chancy Nutt
(Star Valley)

Jerry Barnes
(Globe)

Michael Hernandez
(Payson Senior Center)

Bobby Smith
(Hayden)

Joe Heatherly
(Miami)

Tara Chief
(White Mountain Apache Tribe)

Sylvia Kerlock
(Winkelman)

Michael O’Driscoll
(Gila County)

Mike Marryat
(Payson Senior Center)

Trevor Fleetham
(City of Payson)

Cassie Kenton-Garcia
(White Mountain Apache Tribe)

Marsha Ashcroft
(Horizon Health and Wellness)

David Francis
(San Carlos Apache Tribe)

Cathy Melvin
(Gila County)

1. Safety Moment

Jennifer started the presentation with a safety moment regarding National Work Zone Awareness Week and advised to be aware of ongoing roadway construction activities.

2. CAG Title VI Notice

Travis announced a Title VI Notice to all the Technical Working Group (TWG) members.

3. Introductions

Travis introduced all the participants of the TWG meeting and their associated agencies.

4. Recommended Governance Structure

Near Term Recommendations

Travis - For the Beeline Bus the total budget is approximately \$181K, but the detail budget looked more than \$181K.



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Viktor - The difference is because the insurance cost was adjusted based on the conversation with Joanne. The new insurance amount has doubled since the previous year.

Micah - Can we see the numbers for the potential cost impacts instead of just increase/decrease?

Viktor - We have a better sense of impact for the labor costs, as the fringe benefit ratio for Beeline Bus and Gila County is different and that has been considered in the assumptions for potential cost impacts.

Micah - Potential cost impacts show decreases for some functions, so is it possible to consolidate some functions with Gila County to decrease the overall cost without taking on the administrative costs?

Jill - The Payson Senior Center does not want to operate Rural Public Transit Service as a long term operator. Keeping that in mind, all the functions of Beeline Bus, including administrative functions, will be transferred to Gila County. Additionally, County gets better insurance rates and fuel purchase agreements, and has a well-managed vehicle maintenance facility, so in the mid and long term scenario the cost impacts decrease and could be a benefit to other entities that are operating the service themselves.

Micah - Can ADOT provide details of the funds that they receive for Rural Transit? If there is an increase in costs in the near term then how would ADOT absorb these costs if they have limited funds?

Jill - ADOT receives \$14 million per year for Rural Transit (based on a formula apportioned by the federal government) which is divided throughout the entire state for all the sub-recipients. It is a competitive application by program that happens every 2 years. If a transit agency continues to efficiently provide service, then they would mostly receive the funding with no percentage increase in most cases.

Micah - Has the \$14 million funds for Rural Transit been consistent for the last 5 years?

Jill - It has been pretty consistent, as the formula used by FTA is co-related to the adopted census numbers.

Micah - Is there a way to look at different scenarios from a cost impact perspective and have more data to support the assumptions?

Travis - So are you (Micah) looking for hard numbers in the increase/decrease column? The team needs to see if that estimation is possible at this stage.

Micah - Is there an opportunity to consolidate functions at the state level, where in ADOT performs some functions?

Jill - It is not an option. ADOT is the lean holder and the transit agencies own the vehicles, so ADOT is not allowed to participate in the vehicle.

Mid Term Recommendations

Micah - Same question will be applicable here, what does numbers look like for increase/decrease? Can we define and quantify the cost savings? How will the 1 dispatcher position affect the operations?

Jill - Typically in small transit programs, mostly have 1 dispatcher and other staff pitch in when the dispatcher is not available. Staff is usually trained in multiple areas so that staff can perform additional functions if necessary.



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Micah - What would be the cost of training the transit staff? Will that be additional costs for Gila County?

Viktor - If the County assumes the operations for both the agencies, one option could be to hire existing transit agency staff to get the operational and institutional expertise. County already has few existing functions, like vehicle maintenance, so that should be relatively easy for the County. They will mainly need to train the staff regarding FTA regulations.

Micah - Why is there a decrease in potential cost impacts for wages and benefits for Copper Mountain Transit(CMT) operations?

Viktor - The fringe benefit rate for Beeline Bus is lower than the County and in the near term the County will need to hire a Transit Manger. In the mid term, no hiring required for another Transit Manager and administrative functions after consolidation of CMT operations and would provide cost savings due to economies of scale. County has several existing administrative functions which would not require rehiring staff.

Jill - Miami is currently providing the administrative functions with a hefty ICAP charge, whereas the County will be willing to contribute that as an in-kind match.

Micah - Have we looked at what will be the cost from Gila County if they do the contribution for administrative functions versus an ICAP?

Viktor - We will look into Miami's ICAP and discuss the approach with the County for the transit service related administrative cost, and conduct a comparison to understand the cost saving potential.

Micah - CMT uses County's fuel services.

Jill - Cost savings is not the only benefit from a regional governance. It will also help with regional coordination, and compliance with FTA requirements (procurement, vehicle maintenance, etc.).

Long Term Recommendations

Travis - Need to reach out to Gila County and follow up with them regarding the recommendations.

Micah - Details for roles and responsibilities of the Transit Advisory Board (TAC), Transit Manager and Board of Supervisors.

Travis - Board will ultimately provide the approval, but County Board can delegate these powers to TAC.

Micah - Have we looked at developing a TAC for the CMT to take the decisions?

Katie - We already have a TAC but currently not many meetings are happening due to the pandemic situation. Committee meetings have moved to a virtual platform. In the past, few members of the community attended the TAC for good community representation, but the participation has decreased since last year.

Micah - Have you examined the feasibility/cost savings of bypassing directly to the IPTA instead of going through the County?

Jill - Process to establish an IPTA will take several years and the Payson Senior Center needed County to immediately assume the Beeline Bus service.



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Joanne – There is a need for better regional connection within Gila County, especially to Southern Gila County from Payson. Cost savings is not the only motivation for this consolidation.

Micah – Interested in looking at behind the scenes information, like the data inputs and meeting notes to understand how we reached to this recommendation.

5. Next Steps

Travis requested the TWG members to fill out the in-kind form, with name and hours spend on preparing for the TWG meeting. The completed in-kind form must be returned to Travis.

The next TWG meeting will be scheduled in May 2021, where the team will get into the details of the potential cost impacts for Recommended Governance Model.

Prior to the next TWG meeting, the team will reach out to Gila County for additional discussions regarding the Governance Model and administrative costs.