



Gila County Transit Governance Study Technical Working Group Meeting #1

September 3, 2020 Meeting Minutes

DATE: September 3, 2020
TIME: 2:00PM
LOCATION: ZOOM Webinar

ATTENDEES:

Travis Ashbaugh
(CAG)

Robert Mawson
(CAG)

Jill Dusenberry
(ADOT Transit)

Michael O’Driscoll
(Gila County)

Trevor Fleetham
(City of Payson)

Marsha Ashcroft
(Horizon Health and Wellness)

Larry Halberstadt
(City of Payson)

Joanne Conlin
(Payson Senior Center)

Jennifer Love
(AECOM)

Daksha Masurkar
(AECOM)

Phyllis Davis
(Kittelson)

Vamshi Yellisetty
(Kittelson)

Rick Powers
(Richard Powers Consulting)

INVITEES ABSENT:

Chancy Nutt
(Star Valley)

Jerry Barnes
(Globe)

Michael Hernandez
(Payson Senior Center)

Bobby Smith
(Hayden)

Katie Dwonznik
(Miami Transit)

Joe Heatherly
(Miami)

Bernadette Kniffin
(San Carlos Apache Tribe)

Sylvia Kerlock
(Winkelman)

Cassie Kenton-Garcia
(White Mountain Apache Tribe)

Tara Chief
(White Mountain Apache Tribe)

1. Safety Moment

Jennifer started the presentation with a safety moment regarding practicing heat safety.

2. CAG Title VI Notice

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

3. Introductions

Jennifer briefly talked about the study overview and opened the floor to the CAG Project Manager (Travis Ashbaugh) and other client representatives to share their local knowledge and expectations from the study.

Travis mentioned that CAG is completing a transit governance study for Pinal County and felt a need to conduct a similar study for Gila County. This transit governance study is an outcome of the CAG Greater Gila County Transit Feasibility Study completed in 2018. Funding for this study is from FTA, allocated by ADOT.

The Bee Line bus service in Payson is funded by the 5311 Rural Public Transportation Program and was started by the Payson Senior Center. Payson Senior Center are not interested in providing transit service in the long term but are willing to step up and



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fill the gap for a short term. They are anticipating a transit governing body to be able to transition the transit service in the future.

Other transit services in Gila County funded by the 5311 Rural Public Transportation Program can be found in Cobre Valley, Globe-Miami area, and San Carlos.

4. TWG Overview

Jennifer provided an overview of the TWG participation in the study, and briefly talked about the role and responsibilities of the TWG members.

- TWG members to provide input and data for draft deliverables

Jill mentioned that the study is funded by ADOT and will be guiding the regional transit governance options.

5. Project Overview

Jennifer walked through the scope of work for the study and explained the efforts and goal of each study task.

The project schedule was presented to show the timeline for each task, TWG meetings, stakeholder interviews and workshops, and key milestones.

CAG will be developing a webpage for this study and the scope of work and any other relevant material will be published on the webpage. Travis will notify the TWG members once the webpage is active.

6. Open Discussion

Jennifer walked through a set of questions (see below) and opened the floor for the TWG members to respond.

- A. What do you think transit services in Gila County should look like in 10 years?
- B. Do you think transit will increase in usage and importance over time? If yes, why?
- C. Do you have ideas on how transit services could be organized or governed?
- D. What do you think are the biggest challenges with organizing regional transit services?
- E. In your opinion, what would make this project a success?

Joanne – It is important to connect the Globe-Miami area to Payson and Strawberry-Pine, all the way to Youngtown. Additionally, a connection to Phoenix, and other major locations like Gila or Flagstaff, from northern Gila County is equally important for regional transit connectivity.

Jennifer – Why is regional connectivity important and what places do they want to visit?

Joanne - The area has a higher number of senior populations that mainly wants to travel to urban areas for medical reasons, but also a day trip for shopping or entertainment. Senior citizens are not comfortable driving down the mountain and would prefer a direct transit service. Joanne receives such feedback mainly through phone calls, and no on-board survey was conducted.

Travis - CAG conducted several surveys during the Greater Gila County Transit Feasibility Study, and the documentation supports the public feedback regarding regional connectivity.



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Trevor – The way the county is set up, major towns are far apart, so there is need to connect these via transit. General Plans, Transportation Plans and Transit studies, all recommend better connectivity within Gila County.

Travis – Miami-Globe are rebranding their transit service so that it is not associated with the medical services in the area.

Marsha – Biggest issue is the access to medical services in the local communities. Seniors do travel to metropolitan areas for medical service. Improvement in on-demand services would be good.

Travis – We are not looking for recommendation on regional routes but would encourage inputs on regional governing body that could provide on-demand responses for transit.

Travis – There will be some political challenges in setting up a regional governing body for transit.

Larry – Vast distances between major towns and political buy in from each town asking them to participate in the regional governing body will be a challenge. All participating towns and agencies would like a fair share of the funding.

Joanne – Gila County, Star Valley, Payson, and Senior Center participate and contribute funds for transit. Star Valley provided \$25,000 local match last year, but this year they provided \$2500 local match. Gila County also participates with Globe and Miami.

Rick – If we go for a regional approach, is there an opportunity to set up a taxing structure? 0.35% sales tax for transportation if a Regional Transportation Authority is set up?

Jill – In Arizona there are 4 different 4 "transit" entities that could be created by state statute.

- Regional Transportation Authority - counties with population greater than 400,000 but less than 1 million
- Regional Public Transportation Authority - counties with population greater than 1.2 million.
- Intergovernmental Public Transportation Authority - counties with population less than 200,000.
- Small taxing district (not sure this has been used in AZ before)

7. Data Needs

The project team is currently in the process of collecting data for the existing conditions review and will be reaching out to the TWG members.

Jill – The current COVID-19 situation had impacted FY 2020 transit ridership numbers; therefore, the data will not depict general trends. Additionally, the transit ridership data is delayed and will be published FTA National Transit Database later this year. She suggested the project team to use FY 2019 data.

8. 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.