

# MEETING SUMMARY



**Meeting:** VMAAG (Valley Metro Accessibility Advisory Group) Meeting  
**Date:** Thursday, March 28, 2019  
**Time:** 2:30 to 4:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Valley Metro, 101 N. 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, 10th Floor Board Room / Lake Powell 10A  
**Call-in:** 602.744.5840 / Conference ID: 7792# (*ID has changed*)

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1. Welcome and Introductions – Ron Brooks, Manager of Accessible Transit Services, Agency Business and Technical Services Division, Valley Metro
2. Review of January 31, 2018, VMAAG Meeting Summary – All  
No changes.
3. Summary of April 2019 Valley Metro Service Changes – Aaron Xavier, Planner II, Capital and Service Development

- **Please refer to the PowerPoint Presentation on the Valley Metro website:**  
<https://www.valleymetro.org/event/vmaag-valley-metro-accessibility-advisory-group-14>

**Questions:**

Howard May: Make sure we do outreach at the Sycamore station for those who take the Broadway route, they may or may not know about the change.

Aaron Xavier: We are currently doing outreach out there, because it's a confusing situation. We put the change out, but it is dependent upon the Gilbert Road Extension being complete.

4. Paratransit Presentation from March Valley Metro Board of Directors Study Session – Ron Brooks, Manager of Accessible Transit Services, Agency Business Technology and Services, Valley Metro
  - There was a workshop for member cities and staff on March 12, 2019 to review and discuss this presentation.
  - This was presented to our Board on March 21, 2019.
  - **Please refer to the PowerPoint Presentation on the Valley Metro website referenced in Item 3.**

**Questions:**

Ron Brooks (from presentation regarding the slide titled: Confusing, Complicated & Costly) It is complex to design, to manage, to explain, and it's costly. It costs extra to have a complicated service. It's more expensive to set up, to train staff because they have to understand it at the 95% level, and it is costly because we end up providing trips that we shouldn't, which creates cost for the region that the region shouldn't pay. We also end up not providing trips that we should and that impacts customers that need that trip to get to work, a medical appointment, or school. So, lots of costs for lots of people as a result of its complexities.

John Federico: On March 12 there was a workshop. What organizations or entities were involved in that workshop?



Ron Brooks: That was a workshop for staff that reports to our board and was intended to educate staff on what we planned to tell the Board.

John Federico: Because I was at the Board Meeting and heard the reaction of the Board Members and my first thing was did the city staff attend the workshop because it sounded like they didn't get any information from their staff? So, I am wondering what went wrong with the communication there and why were the Board Members so surprised about this? Was there not enough time between the meetings?

Ron Brooks: I think some cities communicate differently with their Board Representatives, but the workshop concept for us is relatively new and this was the second one we've ever done. A lot of the cities have study sessions and workshops and typically boards come into those without much prior information and the point of a workshop is not to make decisions, but to learn issues. One of the things our Board is still getting use to is the fact that when you come into a workshop you may not have a lot of advanced notice, because the whole point of the workshop is to educate.

John Federico: I know you mentioned in the meeting that we're not typical of the region in terms of the large cities that are sprawled out, so it seems to me that this should be a major concern. What can we do to help you?

Ron Brooks: You did elude to one thing we did share, this is not a typical system. Most transit systems around the country, in larger areas, are run by a transit authority that is vested by a region to make decisions as a board. For example, Denver, they elect a board and that makes decisions and cities within the region or transit district essentially cede some control to the region, to the RTD Board to basically set policy and make decisions. Other city's boards are appointed by cities, but once the board is created and the agency is essentially created, the agency makes decisions and if the agency doesn't like it, they use their representation on the board to make it known. But still there's this idea that the Transit Board makes decisions that affect Transit and they typically operate the same service throughout the region. We are different in that regard, we are not truly a regional system, we are a system that operates on behalf of our various cities.

Ron Brooks: [After the presentation to Board] I don't think I would say that it was well received, but they were impressed, I think they were dazed by the complexity, so it was a first conversation, a good conversation that opened eyes. We have a lot of work to do, but I think we have some momentum to do that work.

Back to John's question from above.

Ron Brooks: This group isn't set up to advocate, it's an advisory group. I would encourage all of you to do is think regionally. There are tradeoffs, some cities have certain things that are better than others and we can't do the most generous rule in every city. We need to talk about compromises and I don't know what those are, but we are going to be very open with you, as an advisory group, and tell you what we are thinking and planning and ask for your thoughts.

The first thing is to "think regionally" and not about the city that you live in, think about the region that you are here to represent and advise. The other thing is just being engaged and there may come a time when asked to your opinions. Talk to your stakeholders' group when we come out with proposals, go talk to them so we have people who can give input. As VMAAG members you can't advise, but as citizens you can. So being informed, informing others, and making sure others understand what the issues are, what the trade-offs are, and



what the decision points are, I think will help us and our Board will hear from the people who are affected by the service. So, it's not just people like me, who happens to use the service, but am just one person, they need to hear from people who use it and depend on it every day, not just from staff. I think that is how you can help us.

Lynn Houston: You were talking about the one rule and same day service. Are there cities that don't offer same day, but do have RideChoice?

Ron Brooks: Yes, there are cities that that do not offer same day and who do have RideChoice. Those would be Mesa, Gilbert, and the County.

Lynn Houston: With one rule would everyone have access to same day?

Carol Ketcherside: RideChoice is same day by nature.

Ron Brooks: No, I think your point is that some cities don't have RideChoice. So, those people in theory, would not have same day service. None of the cities who currently have same day would lose same day, if they switched to RideChoice. For example, Phoenix does not participate in RideChoice, but they have a different program, but Phoenix does not have same day Paratransit. We are not looking to take service away from people who don't have access to RideChoice.

Lynn Houston: But, you are also not looking to add same day, so it's not quite one rule.

Ron Brooks: No, I wouldn't say that's true. RideChoice is not mandated service, it's city by city and we are happy to provide the service wherever it's requested. Other cities also have other services that are same day. Phoenix has their ADA and senior cab program and those are same day service. Scottsdale has a same day program through Cab Connection, and Glendale has some limited things. There are other programs out there, but for the mandated service, we think the rules should be the same for everybody. Whether it's a city that provides an alternative that is same day, it is really up to that city and that's really not our call. I would say that we are expanding RideChoice year over year. We are talking with three cities and are not quite public yet, probably as early as July.

Arleen Schenck: Ron, yesterday, Lisa Johnson, City of Scottsdale announced at the AzTA conference that they are adding RideChoice.

Ron Brooks: Scottsdale is in as of July 1 and I knew that, but I wasn't sure if it was public. We have two other cities who are probably going to announce within the month of April that they will also be in RideChoice as of July 1. We are looking to expand, but those are city by city decisions.

Jean Moriki: Will Phoenix get RideChoice?

Ron Brooks: No, they are not talking to us about it right now, they have other programs for their residents.

Emanuel Caddy: Do you have the matrix books in electronic format? I have a lot of vets in the El Mirage area. It might be helpful to explain and answer questions that come up with the various groups that I associate with.

Ron Brooks: It's available in an electronic PDF or Excel, but not available in MS Word format,



but we can provide it to this group. We can make that available to this group.

Arleen Schenck: If we make it available to you, be aware that it changes all the time. It is not a static document.

Ron Brooks: Every time a city changes a rule, and we are trying to curb that process, the document gets modified.

Ron: I am committed to do in the future, as we make changes or propose changes to our Board, we will bring those to this group as they are working their way through the process and we will share those quarterly updates as well.

5. **Accessible Transit Services Updates** – Ron Brooks, Manager of Accessible Transit Services, Agency Business and Technical Services, Valley Metro

- ***Please refer to the PowerPoint Presentation on the Valley Metro website referenced in Item 3.***

6. **Other Items and Announcements – All**

- Carol Ketcherside had the following announcements:
  - Ability 360 Annual Health and Wellness Fair conference. Valley Metro participates and there are a wide range of exhibitors. The conference will be open Friday, April 26 from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m. and Saturday, April 27 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The 50<sup>th</sup> Street Station will be open in time.
  - 50<sup>th</sup> Street Station Grand Opening Event of the on April 25 from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. in the IDATION Parking Lot shopping center on south side of street.
    - This group had a lot to do with comments incorporated into the design of that station. It is designed to be very accessible, in terms of wheelchair access. We thought about things like the path of travel for those who have canes and has a good continuous edge to follow, shade for those waiting for the light rail and those who need to stop and rest, eliminating glare on the fare vending machine, etc. If you use this station, we want to get your feedback and comments regarding that design and accessibility.
  - On-Board Survey has taken place, as presented at our January VMAAG meeting where input from members were noted. This is the survey we do every two to six years and is a Federal requirement “Before and after Study”, dependent upon the Origins and Study. Massive survey asks questions very focused on demographics. This one is data driven where people are coming from and destinations. So, if you get approached by someone, please assist them.

Ron Brooks: We do ask questions about disabilities, and the reason for that is we are typically undercounted. Typically, the reason why is we don’t want to talk to people about our disability. It is helpful for us to get good counts on the number of people with disabilities who use our service.

7. **Invitation for Comments from the Public** – Members of the public are invited to provide comments on any non-agendized items. Each speaker is limited to two minutes, and comments must be relevant to the accessibility of Valley Metro programs and services.



**Questions:**

Emanuel Caddy: What is the progress on the South Central Light Rail Extension process?

Carol Ketcherside: There are a lot of moving parts. That project is in final stages of design and there is utility work being done, and they're getting ready to begin construction. There was a petition within the City of Phoenix limits. The project is funded in part by federal funding which is specifically for that light rail project and cannot be used for anything else. It is partially funded by Transit 2050, which is the Phoenix sales tax that has been passed, and that money is programmed for streets, bus transit, and a wide variety of things. But part of the funding is for and south central and part of the funding comes from the public transportation funds which is the regional Maricopa County tax that is shepherded here at Valley Metro. That funding is specifically for rail projects so it cannot be easily moved over to bus projects.

- There are three types of funding:
  - One cannot be use for anything else
  - One can be used for other rail projects here in the valley, but without a major policy shift of the Valley Metro Board, could not be used for bus.
  - One, with the Phoenix money, would be up to the Phoenix City Council and the Citizens Transportation Commission for any changes.
- There was a petition in the City of Phoenix, they collected enough signatures required to question of any future light rail and commuter rail with the one exception being the Sky Train at Phoenix Sky Harbor. The collection of the signatures requires it be on the ballot in August and puts the question to the voters as to any money should be used on the rail transit or extensions again in the City of Phoenix. It is only directed at the City of Phoenix, but most rail projects need to connect or travel through Phoenix, so it would be a blow to the entire region.

Emanuel Caddy: That answers my question.

Carol Ketcherside: There is a court case pending right now whether or not there were enough signatures and if they were legally collected and this will be heard in the month of April.

Ron Brooks: Carol, if funding is tied to rail, particularly the federal funds and the rail projects are disallowed by this referendum, those funds are lost?

Carol Ketcherside those are lost funds are not only lost to that project, lost to the City of Phoenix, State of Arizona, and they may go back to Washington, D.C., and probably end up in Chicago.

Ron Brooks: It's not a case where we can move the money?

Carol Ketcherside: Right.

Emanuel Caddy: I know there's a lot of noise, but I live in South Phoenix and my friends in the west valley and I support it 100%. Also, people in the east valley support it in order to move around the valley, it is necessary.

Carol Ketcherside: To that end, I just came from a meeting before this one and don't have all the details, but a marketing company recently completed a survey of the people who live in the zip codes along the alignment and 75% say they supported the project. Everyone has to



get out and vote.

Ron Brooks: It's a citywide vote, so you have a lot of neighborhoods who don't have the same allegiance to the rail system.

Carol Ketcherside: If you are affiliated with any organizations who would like to have a presentation with facts, we have people and we will make sure someone gets out there to speak.

Angela Sarhaddi: I have been using the RideChoice program a lot more lately and I just wanted to say it is excellent and the service provider is doing a really stellar job. In case you don't hear too much about it, but positive feedback there. I know there is a pilot with UZURV and was wondering if there are any plans to expand that?

Ron Brooks: We are looking to expand it but there are some limitations because they cannot accept cash legally, it's not them-its Arizona state law. TNC's (transportation network companies) are not legally permitted to accept cash so that creates some challenges for us and is something we need to work around. Remember when I was talking about having credit card-based system, this is partly why.

Tickets are a hardship for some providers and UZURV is one of them. I think they've agreed to take them, but it's hard for them and creates some challenges. Our goal is to increase UZURV's participation, but those are some of the challenges we have to work through in order to do it.

Arleen Schenck: We are increasing the number of people in the pilot so we can get other people served. As far a when we are going to complete the pilot, we haven't made those final decisions.

Angela Sarhaddi: Was there an app that was supposed to be developed for scheduling rides on paratransit? If so, is it in the works still?

Ron Brooks: Yes, and Yes. We are behind on the app. We really lost a lot of ground when we changed from Route Match to Trapeze software and we have just been reengaging the provider, Transdev, on that app and its development. We have made a conscience decision to do the app correctly, as opposed to do it quickly, but it is in the works.

Angela Sarhaddi: Any timeline, like generally?

Ron Brooks: We do not have a timeline, but I would be happy to ask Transdev to help put a presentation together on this particular topic and bring it back to VMAAG at a future meeting and it will include a timeline.

Lynn Houston: I would like to make a request, if a meeting is cancelled, even if it is announced at the previous meeting, if an email can go out to members as soon as it is known that it will be cancelled. I didn't know about February until that morning and it was announced at the January meeting, but I missed the meeting and wasn't informed.

Ron Brooks: That is a fair comment and we will follow-up with everyone if there are any meeting changes in the future.



Jean Moriki: Can we have a presentation on Phoenix's program so everyone knows how it works? I know there are a lot of people who have questions about that too.

Ron Brooks: We can talk to Phoenix and they don't have RideChoice, but I know they have ADA and Senior Cab and ask them to make a presentation. I am sure that Jennifer Lugo probably would and we will work on that.

8. Next Meeting – 2:30 PM, Thursday, May 23, 2019, Ability360, 5025 E. Washington Street, Suite 200 – Board Room and include *a tour of the new 50<sup>th</sup> Street Station*.
9. Adjournment  
Pursuant to ADA requirements, Valley Metro will provide reasonable accommodations for this meeting upon request. Reasonable accommodations may include materials in an alternate format, a sign language interpreter, or other accommodations which will enable people with disabilities to fully participate in the meeting. To request a reasonable accommodation, please contact Lisa Scott at least three business days prior to the meeting date by phone at 602.716.2117 or by email at [lscott@valleymetro.org](mailto:lscott@valleymetro.org).