**Meeting Summary**

**VMAAG (Valley Metro Accessibility Advisory Group) Meeting**

Thursday, May 28, 2020

WebEx / 2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

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| **VMAAG Members**  ***Present***  John Federico  Howard May  Jean Moriki  ***Not Present***  David Andreen  Kathryn Chandler  Paula Considine  Katie Griffith-Conflict  Darrell Hilliker  Lynn Houston-Conflict  Andraéa LaVant  Paige Reatz-Conflict  Toni Young-Conflict | ***Valley Metro Staff***  ***Present***  Sarah Brown  Nate Chadwick  Guillermo Gonzalez  Brittany Hoffman  Lee Ann Jones  Carol Ketcherside  Brenda Kreitinger  Madeline Phippps  James Rosa  Lisa Scott  Wyatt Skar  Tom Young  Aaron Xaevier | ***Valley Metro Contractors***  ***Present***  Trish Tezer  Jhashe Holloway  **Public Participants**  ***Present***  Emanuel Caddy  Debi Chatfield  Mary Hartle  Polly Queen  Hezequias Rocha, MAG  Marcus Schmitdt, APS |

1. Welcome and Introductions – Tom Young, Manager, Accessible Transit Services, Agency Business and Technical Services, Valley Metro
2. Roll Call – Lisa Scott, Administrative Assistant II, Accessible Transit Services, Agency Business and Technical Services, Valley Metro
3. Invitation for Comments from the Public – Members of the public are invited to provide comments on any item not on the agenda. Each speaker is limited to two minutes, and comments must be relevant to the accessibility of Valley Metro programs and services.

No comments.

1. Review of April 23, 2020, VMAAG Meeting Summary – All

John Federico had revisions to two of his comments he made at the prior meeting. These were noted and the summary will be revised.

1. COVID-19 Post Plan – Tom Young, Manager, Accessible Transit Services, Agency Business and Technical Services, Valley Metro

I wanted to give everyone a brief update on some post pandemic steps that we are getting ready to undertake primarily on the PT and RC programs. Beginning next Monday, June 1, 2020 we are going to go back performing in-person eligibility assessments and will be opening up the front window for Platinum Pass and Reduced Fare sales.

Going backwards, in the middle of March we stopped doing the one-on-one assessments and for individuals needing eligibility to use paratransit. We had a brief questionnaire and we assigned them a presumptive eligibility based off the presence of their disability. In addition, anybody is whose eligibility was getting ready to expire we went ahead and extended their ADA eligibility for a few months. This allowed us to get through this period and get back to the one-on-one assessments.

To give you an idea of what has happened since the middle of March when we stopped doing in-person assessments for eligibility. Between the new people coming in of about 500 people and people that had eligibility expiring, we have about 1,200 to 1,500 people right now that we have to get through the eligibility process in the next few months. On June 1, we are starting to do the one-on-one assessments. We have already scheduled appointments starting next Monday; our goal is to get 36 people scheduled for each day and we know there will be cancellations and reasons people need to reschedule. We are hoping that we will get at least 32 people to go through each day. If we can do that and with new people coming on board (to include the 1,200 to 1,500 people to whom we extended presumptive eligibility), we anticipate that we will be fully caught up by the middle of September.

There are many activities taking place to prepare for the opening of the Mobility Center. Our concentrated effort is how we can start the in-person assessments while we maintain social distancing. We will be encouraging, when we make appointments, that everybody coming into the Mobility Center wear a face covering. We are putting a high focus on on-time delivery service, trying to prevent people from showing up early or being there a substantial amount of time after their appointment, so we can maintain proper social distancing throughout the facility. We think we have a good plan as we move forward to maintain the safety of both our staff and the customers who are coming into the office. We are taking all the measures at the window at suite101 in the facility as we open up for sales.

Additional things that we have been doing are the building owners have been enhancing the cleaning of our facilities. We are going to start Friday night fogging the entire area with a high-grade disinfectant; the fogging last about a month to a month and a half. In addition, we know the high-touch areas within the facility so we will be doing daily cleaning. In addition, and this has been going on since the beginning of the pandemic, Transdev will continue to do daily cleaning of the vehicles with the CDC approved product. We continue to encourage face coverings for those on the vehicles. We are minimizing the number of people on the vehicles at one time and the operators have been issued disinfectant pads so they can clean high-touch areas between passengers to ensure everybody’s safety. Once again, we are concerned with the safety of our customers, but also the safety of all of the employees. With the opening up of the Mobility Center coming up this Monday, we feel that we are well prepared and that we can protect the customers coming in and at the same time keeping all employees safe.

1. Capitol I-10 West – Nate Chadwick, Planner I, Capital and Service Development, Valley Metro and Madeline Phipps, Public Information Specialist, Communications, Valley Metro

Thanks for having us to speak with you today. Madeline Phipps, she’s a Public Information Specialist for this project has also joined this meeting. Verbally, I will just run through the background and timeline that got us to these virtual online meetings. This project has been going on since 2007 when the alternative analysis began. A big part of looking at this was what routes and transit types would make most sense to provide some high-capacity transit to ultimately the west Phoenix valley area. After looking at several different routes and alternatives, the City of Phoenix Council adopted the 2012 Locally Prepared Alternative (LPA). Basically, that route connects to the existing light rail line in downtown Phoenix on Washington at 1st Avenue and Jefferson on Central Avenue. From there, they go west and at 7th Avenue the LRT on Washington cuts diagonally west and connects on Jefferson where from 8th Avenue west it’s double tracked along Jefferson continuing west to 18-19th Avenues (exact route is not yet identified). From there it will turn north to Van Buren and west to I-17 and use that southbound frontage road to go north to I-10 and continue head west in the median until 47th Avenue. At that point, it goes over the canal at the north side of I-10 and runs along the north side to the 79th Avenue Park-n-Ride. This is the 2012 approved alignment.

Once that was approved, the team went through the environmental process for the next three years until 2015, and it was passed by City of Phoenix Council. That caused a few different things; South Central and Northwest Extension II was bumped-up in the timeline and Capitol I-10 got split into two phases. Phase I would run from the downtown extension to the state capitol and Phase II from the state capitol to the 79th Avenue Park-n-Ride. So, the Action 2015 caused change in focus and in 2018 the introduction of the downtown hub portion of that project allowed the project team to re-examine that connection to the existing system as now the downtown hub blended over to what was previously Capitol I-10 because now the downtown hub goes to 3rd Avenue, so the connection point is further west. It allowed us to look at the 2012 LPA and is that still the best option now? So, in 2018, we started looking at evaluating a new Phase I alignment for the project. In 2019, City Phoenix Council gave the project a directive to basically look at in order to accelerate that Phase II portion of the project from the state capitol to the 79th Avenue Park-n-Ride which led us to these online public meetings to:

* get more public input on both Phase I and Phase II;
* consider different transit types;
* examine funding for all the options;
* continue to engage West Valley city partners and getting their input; and
* look at a potential extension a mile north from the 79th Avenue Park-n-Ride to Desert Sky Mall at 79th Avenue and Thomas.

The past year we have had about 30 stakeholder meetings with groups along the corridor. We had our January public meetings where we met at Desert West Community Center. Issacs Middle School, and Neighborhood Ministries. We presented information on the project history and current status, our downtown route options and those Phase II transit type options, Desert Sky Mall extension, and options to accelerate or advance the completion of the Phase II portion. Since those meetings, we completed our analysis of the Phase I portion as well as the transit type analysis for Phase II; the current virtual public online meetings that are now active and presents all of the other information that we have done since January and what our next steps are moving through the end of the year.

Website: ValleyMetro.org What’s New Link or ValleyMetro.org/Capitol I-10 and click on the link and attend the public meeting now through June 30, 2020. Showed their website and it has everything in both English and Spanish. There is a drop-down menu on the top left that shows:

* Welcome – Scott Smith, CEO, has a nice introduction.
* Project Background – discussed earlier
* Project Overview – discussed earlier
* Phase I Option C (currently the leading alternative) – These were discussed at the January meeting, the three options were discussed and are available to view, including the LPA.
* Desert Sky Mall – Potential extension and what is in the area.
* Phase II Transit Type – On-going topic of analysis over the next few months and a good opportunity to give your input. We are looking at do we extend our current light rail system to 79th Avenue? Do we look at other transit options such as to use as an exclusive busway that would operate essentially the same as light rail except it has rubber tires and could be compared to a bus rapid transit system - like a true BRT System. This page also has transit types and shows all the evaluation factors or variables that are being evaluated, such as speed ridership capacity and potential and one seat ride versus transfer. Station concepts has some illustrative graphics showing how the stations would operate and look like comparing them to transit types. For all of the graphics you can view a larger version of them and zoom in or out. The transit types have different timeframes in completing the project. Light Rail typically takes longer. Timeframe show is about a one-year difference.
* Next Steps – shows are project timeline showing where we are at and where we are going. This summer we are aiming to confirm our Phase I routes and continue our transit type evaluation into the fall and winter of this year.
* Stay Connected – Thank you page where you can continue to provide input for us and how you heard about the meeting.
* Questions and Answers – We are staying connected to these comments and trying to provide answers in a timely fashion.

Every subject will have a comment box on the right-hand side for questions to be asked within each page or you can leave questions or comments or input on the question and answer page. Some of the pages will have input prompts or questions that we would love your feedback on with boxes to check yes or no.

We also have two call-in sessions that will be available on June 16 from 6-7 PM or June 20 from 10-11 AM. The links will be available on line as we get closer to those dates.

**Questions and Answers**

**Madeline Phipps:** It is just interesting that this is probably the first time we have done a virtual online meeting for an extension project in this format. So, it is a new format for us and we would certainly be interested in hearing your feedback on how the format works as well in presenting the information. We will be doing things to try and replicate what it’s like being at a public meeting, like the opportunity to speak directly with our project team members and trying to have an ongoing conversation in the form of the thank you page. We certainly would like your comment about the format and the project as well.

**Carol Ketcherside:** Thank you for presenting and I just wanted to say that we wanted to get this group in early on during this comment project because we always like to solicit comments from this group. We have always talked about paratransit, but this group is broad in providing us input on all things accessible which is everything that we do. I wanted to get you in and familiar with this early on, during the comment period, so you had plenty of time to make comments and go experience this website. The link for the website is on the slide so when you get your slide presentation from this meeting in PDF format, Lisa does that translate?

**Lisa Scott:** Yes.

**Carol Ketcherside:** You will have the link you need on the slide and it will take you straight to the website. Something else I wanted to specifically point out is that steps were particularly taken on this website to make it as accessible as possible. I would personally, and I know Tom, Nate and Madeline as well, will be interested to hear your comments about the accessibility of the platform itself, in addition to getting comments about the project.

**Howard May:** I was already on the website because I got about four emails in the past week about it and I am actually one of the original citizens that attended the University Park meetings and the original project meetings back in the day, including Maryvale Village. I know a member who is no longer with us, Marvin Rochelle, was a part of that same group. I am really looking forward to this project and I know people in Maryvale are looking forward to this. I do know, if my memory serves, Maryvale is pushing for the Desert Sky extension. The website and the form were different but was ok for me. I did use my Talkback because I had to and there was nobody narrating except for the video at the beginning. Talkback works really good, but I miss having somebody narrating the whole thing to me.

**Tom Young:** I do have a question; it still looks like it’s in process of types of service and where it is going. Is there also going to be a process to get involved in the station design along the way?

**Nate Chadwick:** I think so. Some of the stations along the way are to be determined. We are still ongoing with the State, ADOA, and the governor’s office since we are going so close to the Capitol and are working with them. So that may impact our locations as well as some of the design, in terms of the downtown hub. A comment I got a few times during the January public meeting was regarding station locations and design, especially along I-10. I think that will be a really big point of focus once we make the design on the type. Because the route in the Phase II portion most likely won’t change much, I think once the transit type is decided a lot of planning with the public and the city will go into what those stations are going to look at and where they are located. I see that being a big focus in the future.

1. Proposed October 2020 Public Transit Service Changes – Aaron Xaevier, Planner II, Capital and Service Development, Valley Metro

* Public Outreach
  + - May 4, 2020 through June 5, 2020
* Board action anticipated in August 2020
  + - All Valley Metro-funded or operated service requires Valley Metro Board of Director’s approval
    - All City of Phoenix-funded or operated service requires Phoenix City Council approval
  + Approved changes go into effect October 26, 2020

Broad overview of the October 2020 Propose Changes for Fixed Route and Circulator Service

Giving a broad overview looking at the overall service map these are the highlighted changes:

* Route 41 – Indian School Road – Service Increase
  + In Scottsdale, extend existing trips that turn around at 56th Street to match Phoenix service span expansion from 5 AM to midnight.
* Route 62 – Hardy Dr – Route Modification
  + Modify route for southbound trips to travel along Ash Avenue instead of Farmer Dr to maintain consistency with northbound trips.
  + Currently southbound trips travel on Farmer Avenue and northbound trips travel on Ash Avenue. This change would run both directions on Ash Avenue. This is being made possible by infrastructure improvements to some of the intersections in association with Tempe Streetcar.
* Route 108 – Elliot Road/48th St – Route Modification
  + Modify route to remove deviation along San Marcos Pl to Chilton Dr and Arizona Avenue. Route will continue along Elliot Road for more efficient service.
* Route 136 – Gilbert Road – Service Increase
  + In Chandler and Gilbert, extend evening service until 9 PM weekdays and Saturdays.
* Tempe FLASH – Route Modification
  + Modify route to directly serve Lot 59 and additional ASU activity centers. Modify runtime frequency to every 10 minutes until 6 PM, and then 15 minutes until end of service. They are still working on the exact time span, but they are changing their frequency.
  + The current map shows the route going north and south through the campus on McAllister Avenue and from loop nodes at Tempe Transit Center, Lot 59 and the southeast corner of Apache Boulevard and Rural Road intersection.
  + Please note that this change, if approved, will occur in August to better coincide with the ASU Fall term.
* Tempe Orbit Earth – Route Modification
  + This will be changing the route over Tempe Town Lake and will be modified to travel along Rio Salado Parkway and Rural Road to better serve activity areas at Rural Road and Playa del Norte Dr. Two bus stops at the Curry Road and Mill Avenue intersection will be eliminated for more efficient service. This route will better serve the new businesses and developments in the area.
* Peoria on the Go (POGO) – Service Replacement
  + Eliminate the existing Monday through Friday route and introduce five separate pilot routes to serve additional areas in Peoria on a Friday through Sunday schedule. Modify paratransit services in Peoria.

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|  | **Current POGO route** | **Proposed pilot route program** |
| Service | Circulator fixed route | Pilot circulator fixed routes |
| Frequency | Every 30 minutes | Every 60 – 120 minutes (routes differ) |
| Routes | One bidirectional route | Five bidirectional routes |
| Days Operational | Monday thru Friday | Friday thru Sunday |
| Hours of Operation | 6 AM – 6 PM | 10 AM – 10 PM |

* Two maps, one shows the current route and the other map shows the proposed route comparison.
  + - We currently have a route that is essential around Arrowhead Towne Center and goes north and west to Happy Valley Road to Lake Pleasant Boulevard
    - Now Peoria will have five different routes serving a variety of locations throughout the city. Most notable, there will be a lot of concurrent trips along 83rd Avenue. No service will be held at Arrowhead Towne Center, but there will be a lot of new destinations such as Sunnyslope and Pioneer Community Park, Yacht Club, and it will be a large reach for these routes. There is some overlap in the Happy Valley/Deer Valley Roads area, but the current route reduced the amount of service in that area as well.
* Let us know:
  + - Reach us online:
      * Email Valley Metro at [*input@valleymetro.org*](mailto:input@valleymetro.org)
      * Complete the online survey at *valleymetro.org/servicechanges*
    - Submit an official comment for this public hearing
      * Write your comment in the chat box of this webinar
      * Leave a verbal comment at our public hearing voicemail inbox at 602.322.4497
    - Contact us anytime through Customer Service at 602.253.5000

**Questions and Answers**

**Howard May** – I understand that this was probably the service on the Peoria route, buy why did they decide to only go three days a week with the pilot and not weekdays?

**Carol Ketcherside** – The City Council in Peoria was very involved with this proposal. They looked at the people who were currently riding the POGO service and it was running 6 AM to 6 PM, Monday through Friday. What they found was that it was really being used for recreational purposes and not people trying to get to typical 8 AM to 5:00 PM employment. People were using it to go to the theater and out to dinner. With limited resources they couldn’t increase the hours until 10 PM and increase it to weekends. They had to keep the amount of service pretty much the same, because that’s all the budget that they had. They are concentrating the resources they have to run the service in the time period and the days where they feel the people are going to be able to utilize it better for more recreational purposes.

**Howard May** – I just found out about it and have not lived in the area for very long and never used the north service, but it will be something I will be trying out on a Friday.

**Carol Ketcherside** – Since you now live in Peoria and if you have comments, by all means you should put them in.

**Howard May** – I did that already.

**Aaron Xaevier** – I think there is actually a stop right at the intersection at 67th Avenue and Peoria Avenue.

1. October 2020 Regional Paratransit Proposed Service Changes – Guillermo Gonzalez, Program Coordinator, Accessible Transit Services, Agency Business and Technical Services, Valley Metro

* Peoria On the Go (POGO) 10/26/2020 *(Proposed)*
  + Changes affect Paratransit and the changes are complimentary to the Peoria fixed route and circulator.
  + Changes include service area, hours of operation, and days of service.
  + ADA Paratransit service areas adjustments to coincide with route changes.
* Chandler 4/27/2020 *(Completed)*
  + No longer have Paratransit non-ADA and same day trips. These services have been moved to RideChoice.
* Tempe 10/26/2020 *(Proposed)*
  + Proposed to no longer have Paratransit non-ADA and same day trips. These services will be moved to RideChoice. These will coincide with the fixed-route bus service changes.

Peoria On the Go (POGO) 10/26/2020 *(Proposed)*

* As mentioned before, changes include service area, hours of operation, and days of service.
* Current POGO map illustrates the POGO area in grey. The current area is serviced from 6 AM to 6 PM, Monday through Friday, and is proposed to change from 10 AM to 10 PM, Friday through Sunday.
* Note: The City of Peoria Dial-a-Ride will not be changing. These changes are only for Valley Metro Paratransit Regional Service.
* The circulator pilot service area shows the proposed area in grey complimenting the five POGO circulator routes. This area is roughly just north of Deer Valley Road and a bit south of Northern Avenue. This map shows what will not be affected. This area is still within ¾ of a mile of fixed bus routes and no change to residents’ current paratransit usage.
* Circulator pilot service area affected map shows that customers residing in the gray area will have Valley Metro Regional Paratransit service available Friday through Sunday without transfers.
* Customers in the gray area will still have access to Valley Metro Regional Paratransit Monday through Thursday by transferring from their local transportation option to Valley Metro Regional Paratransit .
* There are no changes to Peoria Dial-a-Ride.
* All residents of Peoria will have local Dial-a-Ride available to them Monday through Friday.
* Proposed service area map illustrates:
  + Hash marked – Proposed POGO circulator pilot ¾ of a mile paratransit service area
  + Blue with hash marks – ¾ of a mile paratransit service area. Paratransit service doesn’t change.
  + Hash marks without blue –Proposed POGO circulator pilot ¾ of a mile paratransit service area. Regional service without transfers available Friday – Sunday
  + Peoria Dial-a-Ride will be still available Monday – Friday

City of Tempe 10/26/2020 *(Proposed)*

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| **Current Paratransit Service** | **Proposed Paratransit Service** |
| Same day trips are allowed | Same day trips will be eliminated   * RideChoice is available for same day trips * Customers that are ADA certified or 65 and older that reside in Tempe are eligible for RideChoice |
| Non-ADA certification is available to Tempe residents 65 and older | Non- ADA certification will discontinue   * Age will no longer be a qualifying factor * Customers must be ADA Certified in order to continue to use Valley Metro Paratransit |

Outreach

* City of Tempe mailed out letters to all active customers affected.
  + Letters were mailed out on May 7, 2020.
* Valley Metro staff attempted to call all customers that received a letter:
  + Questions or concerns were addressed.
  + Provided help to register for the webinar.
* May 20, 2020, we provided a webinar and presented these changes.

1. Paratransit and RideChoice Updates – Wyatt Skar, Paratransit and RideChoice Program Supervisor, Accessible Transit Services, Agency Business and Technical Services, Valley Metro

* Ridership
  + Paratransit
    - Ridership through April has decreased 70% overall, due to the corona virus. May to date, we have seen a steady month-to month increase and is at 60%. We are seeing an increase sooner than originally anticipated, which seem to be highest in medical appointments and day trip programs.
    - In anticipation of reopening paratransit eligibility assessments next week, Transdev has been bringing in their furlough drivers for refresher training to get them ready to start when trips begin to pick-up.
    - Any vehicles that were set aside when it slowed down are going through preventative maintenance and be fully functional.
    - We will continue to encourage passengers to wear face coverings while traveling and this is being communicated to the riders when they book their trips with the reservationist. There is also signage on the vehicles encouraging passengers to wear face masks. The drivers do have a small supply of face coverings that they offer to passengers who are not wearing them. We are seeing about 50% of the passengers wearing them.
  + RideChoice
    - They also saw a decrease in ridership for the month of April at 59%. They have also seen a steady rise through this month of 20% since April.
    - May average weekly trips are down 43%, but customers are also riding sooner that we had originally projected.
* Uber’s policy for all Uber drivers and customers are required to wear face covering during trips and this policy is nationwide. Valley Metro conducted robo calls, a week before this started, to get this message out to customers who had taken Uber trips. So far, we have not seen any issues with customers.
* Eligibility
  + As we get ready to open up on Monday, June 1, with in-person assessments, we have been working closely with MTM to makes sure all safety precautions and social distancing can be maintained during the assessment process.
  + Over 500 customers have been given eligibility and nearly 1,200 customer’s eligibility have been extended. We fully anticipate being caught up by mid-September.
* Paratransit and RideChoice Contract Benchmarking
  + We hired a consultant to look at these contracts.

Transdev (Paratransit) contract ends 6/30/2022 with the option to do two extensions.

ALC (RideChoice) contract ends 9/21/2021 and is a three-year contract.

* + On a recommendation from the City of Mesa, we brought in a consulting firm to first conduct a benchmarking analysis on these operations for Valley Metro and our peer agencies. In addition, we will be looking at contract structures and programs to identify ways we can work closer together and more efficiently.
  + One of the analysis is whether we should restructure the contracts, go out for bid, or extend the option to extend the contracts.
    - We started last week meeting with our partners and the consultants and we plan to have a report to our ATS Partners within the next month.

**Tom Young** – I just would like to add something. As we were watching our ridership through this pandemic, we really did not anticipate seeing an increase in ridership, until probably June. It was almost like May 1 hit and people started increasing their trips back to work and day programs started back-up. We are quickly preparing to make sure if the increase continues, we have the resources on the street to accommodate the customers.

1. Comments by Members – All

**John Federico** – I just have a general question about the membership status. I know some members are going to be expiring in June and are we going to be making any changes or use the current method?

**Tom Young** – Funny you should bring that up John. Lisa and I just talked about that yesterday and we have a meeting set the beginning of next week to go through all that and get a plan in place as we move forward. I know we have a few vacancies right now and a few expiring. So next month we want to be bringing this all to the group and let you know how we are moving forward.

1. Next Meeting – June 25, 2020 from 2:30 to 4:00 PM, Location to be determined.
2. Adjournment – 2:46 PM

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 participate in the meeting. To request a reasonable accommodation, please contact Lisa Scott at least three business days prior to the meeting date by email or phone: [lscott@valleymetro.org](mailto:lscott@valleymetro.org) or 602.716.2117.