



City of Maricopa

Legislation Text

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The Mayor and Council shall hear and discuss a presentation of Community Engagement Survey results pertaining to the Maricopa Senior population and public transportation and proposed new transit service, by David R. Maestas, Transportation/Transit Planner and COMET Manager. Discussion and Action.

The City of Maricopa Express Transit (COMET) operates today as a Demand Response service. This is a reservation-based system that provides curbside service at points of pickup and delivery. We operate with a fleet of two 21-passenger buses and keep one in operation, with the other held in reserve as a backup in case the primary bus breaks down, so that we have no breaks in service.

The Demand Response type of transit service, while highly desired by travelers, is the least efficient type of transit. In a typical scenario, the bus travels to the point of pickup, often for one or two passengers, then transports them to the point of delivery, which may be across the city. The bus drops off the passenger(s), then drives to the next pickup point and picks up the next passenger(s). There are substantial miles of travel in which the bus travels with no passengers while on its way to the next pickup point. This results in operating costs, without the corresponding ridership count which forms the basis for Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 grant funding. Moreover, this type of service keeps the bus and driver busy throughout the operating day, while only serving a small segment of the overall population. This results in the service operating at or near scheduling capacity on most days. Because the service operates at or near scheduling capacity on most days, it is likely that individuals calling for a reservation cannot get a reservation for the time they desire to travel.

A recent Community Engagement Survey reflects that 39 percent of Seniors who responded (255 individuals, 60+ years old) in Maricopa are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with public transportation. The most recent demographic data available (2013) reflects that seniors comprise 13.1 percent of the Maricopa population. This translates to approximately 5.1 percent of the Maricopa population that is dissatisfied with public transportation. ($.39 \times .131 = 5.1$)

While 5311 funding is intended for the general population, there are three specific target populations with a high propensity to use public transportation: (1) Central Arizona College Students, (2) Pinal County Public Health Clinic Patients, and (3) Seniors.

We propose these new services: New Demand Response Service 9:30 am - 1:30 pm Tuesday and Thursday; New Fixed Route Service 7:00 - 9:00 am , and 3:00 - 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. The existing services are proposed to continue, which include local Demand Response Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:00 am - 5:00 pm, Regional Shuttle to Chandler Hospital on Tuesday and Regional Shuttle to Casa Grande Regional Medical Center (now Banner Hospital) on Thursday. The addition of these new services is anticipated to relieve the inability to either get a reservation for Demand Response or get a ride on the Fixed Route Service, which will cycle twice each morning and twice each evening between various popular points in Maricopa.

The addition of new transit services will be accompanied by a vigorous advertising and marketing campaign, to

include Facebook and twitter, a feature article on the city website, electronic message boards, flyers placed at bus stopping points, and flyers provided to existing riders. With the receipt of three new minivans in late April 2015, we will have the vehicles to support the transit demand created by the vigorous advertising campaign. The combination of additional transit services and easy access to service information by the public is anticipated to help seniors and the general public get the rides they need on the COMET.

This item is presented by Interim Director Dana Burkhardt and David R. Maestas.

Staff recommends that the Mayor and Council hear and discuss the presentation on Community Engagement Survey Results relating to Seniors and public transportation and proposed solutions, and approve the proposed new services.

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