



City of Maricopa

Legislation Text

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The Mayor and City Council shall hear an update presentation on the City Of Maricopa Express Transit (COMET) System.

The City Of Maricopa Express Transit operates four types of transit service: (1) Local Demand Response; (2) Regional Demand Response; (3) Limited Local Demand Response; and (4) Limited Fixed Route Service. While all services are open to the general public, the Local and Regional Demand Response primarily serve the senior and disabled population in Maricopa, offering curbside pickup and dropoff. Fare is \$1 one way. The Regional Demand Response offers service to Chandler Regional Hospital on Tuesday and service to Casa Grande Banner Hospital on Thursday. We will also transport to any location within a 5 mile radius of either location. Fare is \$3 round trip. Both Local and Regional Demand Response require 24 hour advance reservations. The Limited Local Demand Response began operations this year offering service from 9:30 am - 1:30 pm. It is intended to augment the service which primarily serves the seniors and disabled. Fare is \$1 one way. The Limited Fixed Route service is a pilot project intended to serve the other segments of the Maricopa population with a circulating bus offering service to multiple bus stops in Maricopa. It will deviate up to 1/4 mile for individuals who call in and ask for this special service due to their inability to get to a bus stop. It operates from 7-9 am and 3-5 pm Monday - Friday. This service began operations in May 2015. We launched this service with a conservative approach primarily due to considerations of sustainability. Maricopa has experienced two failed transit services in its short history since incorporation. The Original Maricopa Express was discontinued due to high cost and low ridership. This created negative community sentiment toward transit. The fixed route which followed was also discontinued for low ridership in 2011. The combination of these two failed services in our community make sustainability a critical component in Maricopa.

While we believe the conservative start to the new Limited Fixed Route is the correct approach, seven months experience with it also suggests that today's limited hours do not provide enough opportunities for a potential rider to get to their destination, do their shopping, medical appointment, etc., and catch a bus for the return trip home. We continue to believe strongly that today's population is sufficient to support a fixed route service. It is considered by transit industry experts to be quite normal to take a year or two to gain appreciable ridership for any new service. Additionally, the Federal Transit Administration encourages Fixed Route over Demand Response, due to the higher efficiency of fixed route in moving large numbers of people. Staff will soon prepare the FY16/17 5311 transit budget, to include a request to fund a full time fixed route service 7:30 - 5:30 Monday through Friday. This proposal represents an additional five hours of service per day and more stops, and would provide a cycling bus hitting each bus stop once every hour. All types of Demand Response are proposed to continue at current levels through FY 16/17. On January 11, we delivered the first bus stop signs to Central Arizona College, Maricopa Campus and we look forward to partnership with them. All improvements are contingent upon Council budget approval.

This item is presented by Martin Scribner and David R. Maestas.

Staff recommends the Mayor and City Council hear and discuss the Update Presentation of COMET Services.