



City of Maricopa

Legislation Text

File #: MISC 15-29, **Version:** 1

The Mayor and City Council shall discuss and possibly take action in approving a proposal for the City Of Maricopa Express Transit (COMET) to operate the Special Summer Shuttle between residential neighborhoods and Copper Sky facility during the summer 2015, and ratify a change from \$1 to \$.50 fare per boarding for the new fixed route service. Discussion and Action.

This agenda item is a request for approval to operate the Special Summer Shuttle on a free-bus-fare promotional basis for the period June 17 through July 31, 2015, and to ratify a change to \$.50 per boarding on the new fixed route service.

The Special Summer Shuttle, while open to the general public, will operate solely between residential neighborhood pickup points and Copper Sky facility. The target ridership is children who wish to visit Copper Sky, but can't bicycle or walk to the facility because of the long distance involved. This shuttle provided 831 trips during the six week introductory period last year, approximately one quarter of our annual ridership. Offering free bus fare is commonly used in the industry to attract new ridership and gain exposure for new transit services and is at the sole discretion of the council. Bus fares offset our operating expenses by just 3 percent last year. Operation of this shuttle dramatically reduces exposure to unaccompanied children crossing the Union Pacific railroad tracks in route from residential neighborhoods north of the tracks. Furthermore, it makes the Copper Sky facility accessible to many children who are otherwise unable to enjoy the aquatic center and amenities because their parents are at work. The Special Summer Shuttle will operate within the existing FY14/15 5311 budget and no additional funds are requested.

Staff proposes to continue the minimum age policy of 9 years old unaccompanied, as we did last year. The normal age requirement to ride unaccompanied is 14 years old on other COMET services. However, the Special Summer Shuttle operates only between residential neighborhoods and the Copper Sky Facility, so there is little opportunity for misadventure by children disembarking at undesirable locations. We propose using Maricopa Unified Schools as the pickup points as we did last year.

Last year we developed procedures for the Copper Sky staff to call the bus driver or Total Transit dispatcher in the event that any children missed the last bus of the day. We had one incident last year where this occurred. The procedure worked smoothly, and all children were safely picked up and transported to their destinations.

The requested ratification action for the \$.50 fare for the fixed route is necessary because we are advised by our contract provider not to proceed with the \$1 per trip we originally proposed. Total Transit advises to create a simple fare policy of \$.50 for each boarding. This eliminates the challenge created by passengers who choose to board, disembark and then re-board the bus on a later cycle and claim they have already paid the fare on the earlier cycle.

This item will be presented by David R. Maestas, Transportation/Transit Planner.

Staff recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve a proposal for the City Of Maricopa Express Transit (COMET) to operate the Special Summer Shuttle between residential neighborhoods and Copper Sky facility during the summer 2015, and ratify a change from \$1 to \$.50 fare per boarding for the new fixed route service.