

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 16, 2003

The Transportation Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on October 16, 2003 at 10:00 a.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Mike Whalen, Chairman
Rex Griswold
Janie Thom

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker

OFFICERS PRESENT

Paul Wenbert

1. Discuss and consider proposal for:

- a. Joint City/Valley Metro administration of bus program.
- b. Purchase of all Mesa bus service from Valley Metro, with exception of routes purchased from Phoenix.
- c. Lease of Mesa Transit Maintenance Facility to Valley Metro.

(The above-referenced items were discussed simultaneously.)

Assistant Development Services Manager Jeff Martin and Jim Dickey, Director of Operations for Valley Metro, addressed the members of the Committee relative to this agenda item.

Mr. Martin reported that the City of Mesa currently provides bus service through a variety of agreements including contracts with Phoenix for express bus service between Mesa and Phoenix; Valley Metro for several regional routes that cross multiple jurisdictions into Mesa, and ATC for six routes in the City. He explained that staff is proposing that the City purchase all of its bus service, with the exception of routes purchased from Phoenix, from Valley Metro or the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA). He stated that this would thereby eliminate the need to issue a separate Request for Proposals (RFP) for bus service in Mesa, achieve significant economies of scale, and consolidate the City's purchase of bus service.

Mr. Martin commented that staff is proposing that instead of the City issuing a separate RFP, Valley Metro would form a committee (composed of representatives from Mesa and other East Valley cities) to work on an RFP relative to the purchase of Mesa's service, as well as other service that Valley Metro is currently providing. He stated that over the last year, the City has urged the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and Valley Metro to consider providing fixed route service using the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) model. He noted that this model is reflected in the recently adopted Regional Transportation Plan developed by MAG and added

that staff's proposal is merely the first step towards the Super-Grid Regional Bus System proposed in the Regional Transportation Plan.

Mr. Dickey provided a brief overview of Valley Metro's operations and commented that staff's proposal is a natural progression for the City to consider a regional entity acting in Mesa's behalf to administer the service.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that this year, the City has budgeted approximately \$1.5 million for regional bus route service, \$2 million for Dial-A-Ride service and an estimated \$3 million for the current ATC contract; that staff's proposal would allow Mesa to retain its current level of bus service, although it would be administered by Valley Metro; that Valley Metro would work in concert with the various "city partners" relative to scheduling and routing and would respond to all crucial service-related inquiries, and that the RPTA is comprised of a Board of Directors, with Mayor Hawker serving as Chairman, as well as an elected leader from each of the member cities.

Committeemember Thom voiced a series of concerns relative to the potential for the City to relinquish its ability to select Mesa bus routes and the existing East Valley Dial-A-Ride (EVDAR) service. She also noted that if changes are made to the City's bus service and citizens are displeased with such changes, the City would be blamed when, in reality, another entity will have made the modifications.

In response to Committeemember Thom's concerns, Mr. Martin reiterated that the proposal would include the development of a management agreement between the City and Valley Metro, whereby a management team would be established comprised of staff from Valley Metro and the City of Mesa. He explained that the committee would meet on a regular basis and discuss a variety of topics such as service issues, fleet maintenance and EVDAR service.

Committeemember Thom expressed further concerns regarding the possibility that the City would lose control with regard to its ability to provide Dial-A-Ride and Enabling Transportation services. She stressed that it is imperative that the City have some type of guarantees in place which would permit it to make service changes and also to ensure that none of Mesa's resources are diverted to another community.

In response to Committeemember Thom's concerns, Deputy City Manager Paul Wenbert commented that during the Budget Review Sessions earlier this year, the Council dealt with all those issues and that staff was directed to lower the budget amount for Dial-A-Ride and increase the amount for Enabling Transportation. He stressed that these are contracts that would still be administered by City staff in accordance with Council direction regarding service/budget levels. Mr. Martin added that the City will always have the ability to change any service levels as part of the contract with the provider.

In response to a question from Committeemember Griswold regarding whether the City would have a separate administration of local routes, Mr. Martin explained that Mesa is moving to a regional model and that the distinction between local and regional is becoming somewhat blurred. He stated that if the voters approve the extension of the transportation half-cent sales tax, the Regional Transportation Plan would fund ten routes in Mesa (the same number of routes that are being provided at the present time). He noted that Mesa currently provides service on Mesa Drive and Stapley Road which is not funded in the Plan, but the Plan would

fund two additional routes on Greenfield Road and Power Road. Mr. Martin stated that in his opinion, Valley cities would have the opportunity to fund routes over and above what is funded by the region, and that Mesa could continue to fund those two routes as well as additional routes as the region picks up routes if the half-cent sales tax is extended. He added that what staff is suggesting with this proposal is that it makes more sense to fund what used to be local routes on a regional basis, and added that the first step would be by contracting with Valley Metro to have more of those routes contracted with RPTA in one package.

Further discussion ensued relative to the fact that Valley Metro staff is also proposing to issue a single RFP for both bus and Dial-A-Ride service; that the Dial-A-Ride portion of the procurement would be effective when the EVDAR contract expires June 30th, 2004, unless extended, and that these services would be operated and maintained at Mesa's Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility.

Mayor Hawker commented that if voters do not extend the half-cent sales tax, which ends on December 31st, 2005, RPTA's funding sources will change dramatically and Mesa will have to rely on City contributions. He noted that it is difficult at this time for him to consider staff's proposal and empower the RPTA to do all of that not knowing what level the RPTA will play long term. He said that he is struggling with the idea of an entity that wants to administer Mesa's bus program, but may have no regional funding source if the half-cent sales tax expires. He also questioned when would be the most appropriate time for the City of Mesa to sell its Transit Maintenance Facility.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the ridership on Mesa's local and regional routes, and the renewal of an upcoming bus maintenance contract.

Chairman Whalen noted that although Mayor Hawker made some valid points, even if the half-cent sales tax is not extended, Mesa would still be required to provide public transportation for its citizens. He stated the opinion that combining all of Mesa's bus service under one entity may be the most cost effective arrangement, and that it would only be the first step in the Phoenix metropolitan area moving closer toward the DART model. Chairman Whalen commented that it is imperative that all three agenda items be considered simultaneously. He stated that with regard to the Transit Maintenance Facility, the decision to sell the building should not be made until after a determination has been made as to whether the voters have approved the extension of the half-cent sales tax. He also questioned staff whether it would be feasible to negotiate a short-term lease with Valley Metro that would extend only until the expiration of the half-cent sales tax.

In response to Chairman Whalen's comments, Mr. Martin clarified that staff and Valley Metro are considering the possibility of a short-term lease of the Transit Maintenance Facility, such as a two-year lease with a one-year option, to provide a certain degree of flexibility if the half-cent sales tax election does not occur when anticipated. He added that the City would also include in the lease a provision whereby Valley Metro would purchase the facility from the City over a three-year period at a cost of approximately \$7.3 million. Mr. Martin noted that the reason for this is if Valley Metro is providing all the bus service, it would make sense for them to lease the facility, pay for the utilities and maintenance and, in turn, Valley Metro would assess those costs back to all of the "city partners."

In response to Mayor Hawker's comments, Mr. Dickey explained that the RPTA acts as an administrator for many things in the region without actually providing financial input. He advised that out of the current regional area road fund, the RPTA receives \$7.2 million, of which \$5 million actually goes into service. He further commented that his operating budget this year is \$20 million, so only about a fourth of the money spent is actually regional money which is used for some of Mesa's local service and express service. He stated that if the half-cent sales tax is not extended, a decision will have to be made regarding the funds that we invest on behalf of the cities in the region for service and that decision will have to come from the cities. He added that they would need to determine whether they wish to continue that investment with their own resources or if they wish to eliminate it and therefore eliminate the service in the cities where we provide service funded by those dollars.

Mr. Martin noted that to follow up on Mr. Dickey's comments, two regionally funded routes which are provided by Valley Metro include the Red Line on Main Street and also a portion of Route 112, Country Club Drive. He stated that if the half-cent sales tax were not extended, the City would have to determine whether to continue to provide that service or cut bus service somewhere else in the community.

In response to a series of questions from Chairman Whalen, Transit Administrator Jim Wright clarified that the verbiage in item b, "with the exception of routes purchased from Phoenix," refers to the express bus service between Mesa and Phoenix.

Further discussion ensued relative to the fact that no bonds were issued for the construction of the Mesa Transit Maintenance Facility; that the City subsidizes three routes to the City of Phoenix for approximately \$377,000 this fiscal year, and that staff is proposing that Valley Metro administer Mesa's bus services that are multi-jurisdictional.

Committeemember Thom stated that she was in possession of a series of newspaper articles and Council meeting minutes which reflected Mayor Hawker's position as a staunch opponent to the Transit Maintenance Facility. She questioned whether he wished to provide any comments to the members of the Committee regarding this issue.

Mayor Hawker stated that it was his recollection that the facility was one of several that would be placed throughout the region as the Phoenix metropolitan area became more multi-modal and achieved greater interconnectivity. He commented that it was also his recollection that the facility would be adjacent to the freeway with a Park and Ride lot, and that it would free up Mesa's capacity at another facility where bus maintenance is currently performed. He added that Mesa has received regional support from, among others, the City of Phoenix and US Representative Ed Pastor, recognizing that the City of Mesa is supportive of the establishment of regional facilities in the West Valley as well.

Mayor Hawker further noted that at the present time, he questions the timing of the half-cent sales tax issue and stated that the City could be making decisions now that it may regret if the tax is not extended. He commented that if the tax were not extended, it would be prudent for the City to have a "backup plan."

Committeemember Thom stated that it might be appropriate to postpone any decisions regarding this item until the half-cent sales tax issue has been resolved.

Chairman Whalen stated that he would prefer that this issue be forwarded on to the full Council for approval with the recommendation to proceed with staff's proposal for an interim period of time and to reevaluate in two years, if that is agreeable to Valley Metro.

In response to Chairman Whalen's suggestion, Mr. Dickey commented that Valley Metro is trying to combine several contracts for bus service into one. He explained that if it entered into this scenario with the understanding that the agreement could be dissolved after an interim period of time, it would make it much more complicated in order to go through the procurement process and to put it together in some type of offering. Mr. Dickey reiterated Mr. Martin's previous comments relative to the advantages of the City of Mesa entering into an agreement with Valley Metro and other "city partners." He also assured the members of the Committee that all contracts that Valley Metro enters into with the City contain provisions allowing for their termination at a moment's notice.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the proposed implementation schedule of existing service contracts including Mesa fixed route bus service (July 1, 2004); EVDAR (January 1, 2005), and the remainder of Valley Metro operations (July 1, 2005), and the proposed length of the contracts (one year transition period, a base of 5-7 years, with one-year extensions for a total of 10 years).

It was moved by Committeemember Griswold, seconded by Chairman Whalen, to recommend to the Council that a proposal for: a. Joint City/Valley Metro administration of bus program; b. the purchase of all Mesa bus service from Valley Metro (with the exception of routes purchased from Phoenix), and c. the lease of Mesa Transit Maintenance Facility to Valley Metro, be forwarded on to the Council for further discussion and consideration.

Committeemember Griswold clarified that basically staff is proposing to consider hiring Valley Metro as a City agent from whom to lease City bus service. He added that because of the economies of scale and their expertise, that it may be more economical per mile and from a financial point of view may be better than the City could obtain as a result of negotiations. He emphasized the importance of obtaining the most "bang for the buck."

Mayor Hawker reiterated his previous concerns regarding potential repercussions that could occur if the half-cent sales tax is not extended including cuts in Mesa's bus service levels and a dramatic change in RPTA's funding sources. He also voiced concerns regarding the City entering into a five to seven year contract, being locked into the purchase of a specific number of miles of bus service and the defeat of the half-cent sales tax.

In response to Mayor Hawker's concerns, Mr. Martin assured the Committee that if, due to funding conditions, the City wished to increase or decrease the amount of service miles it purchased from Valley Metro, the contract contains a provision which indicates that such items must be renegotiated.

Mr. Martin clarified that although a motion has been made, staff is seeking approval to continue to negotiate with Valley Metro relative to the proposal's three elements.

Chairman Whalen noted, however, that the City is under severe time constraints because of the expiration of the Mesa fixed route bus service contract with ATC and stated that he would anticipate at least a month in contract negotiations due to the complexity of this issue.

Mr. Dickey provided the Committee with a brief overview of the RFP bid process and commented that if he is unable to present this matter to the RPTA board by early November, it will be virtually impossible to complete the necessary steps in order to award a contract in a timely manner for Mesa's fixed route bus service.

Mr. Wenbert stated that in order to expedite this matter, he would recommend that it be placed on the October 27, 2003 Regular Council Meeting agenda for full Council discussion and consideration.

Chairman Whalen noted that Mr. Martin's comment that staff is seeking approval for ongoing discussions with Valley Metro is not necessarily accurate, but rather staff is seeking a decision from the Council regarding all three issues in a timely manner.

Further discussion ensued relative to the fact that the City's current contract with ATC for Mesa fixed route bus service expires July 1, 2004, and that staff would need to confer with the City Attorney's Office to determine the appropriateness of extending it for six months or a year.

Committeemember Thom stated the opinion that the extension of the half-cent sales tax is not a "sure thing." She commented that the City of Mesa has been a "cash cow" in the past with regards to paying for Valley freeways, and added that she would hate to see it become a "cash cow" to pay for everyone's transit as well. Committeemember Thom expressed opposition to staff's proposal, especially in light of the fact that if the half-cent sales tax is not extended, the RPTA's funding sources will change dramatically and Mesa will have to rely on City contributions.

Committeemember Griswold stated that he looks forward to a full Council debate on this issue.

Chairman Whalen commented that it is essential that staff conduct briefings with all the Councilmembers prior to the October 27th Regular Council Meeting in order to more clearly outline and explain all of the complexities of this issue.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES - Whalen-Griswold
NAYS - Thom

Chairman Whalen declared the motion carried by majority vote.

Chairman Whalen thanked everyone for the informative presentation.

(Mayor Hawker left the meeting at 11:05 a.m.)

2. Discuss and consider option of allowing residents to pay for speed humps.

Senior Transportation Engineer Renate Ehm and Traffic Engineer Alan Sanderson addressed the members of the Committee relative to this agenda item.

Ms. Ehm reported that during the Budget Review process earlier this year, Councilmembers asked staff to review the suggestion that Mesa residents be permitted to pay for speed humps in

their neighborhoods. She advised that no funds were allocated for the speed hump program for fiscal year 2003/2004. Ms. Ehm stated that it is the recommendation of staff that the speed hump program remain suspended until such time as funding becomes available and that the resident funded program not be instituted. She added, however, if the Council directs that a modified speed hump program be implemented, that the City fund staff costs and data collection on streets that do not qualify for speed humps and that the neighborhood residents pay all of the data collection and installation costs on streets that do qualify for speed humps.

Ms. Ehm provided the Committee with a brief historical overview of the speed hump program. She stated that the program has been in effect since 1997, and that for the first couple of years, the City had no funding constraints and was able to install speed humps for as many streets as qualified; that in FY 2001/02, as a result of budget limitations, available funding was significantly reduced, and that in the past two years, limited funding has resulted in the speed hump program being cut off once the allotted monies were spent.

Ms. Ehm briefly highlighted three alternatives to the speed hump program and noted that it is assumed that various criteria must be satisfied before a street is considered for speed humps including traffic speed, traffic volume and whether or not the street is designated as a fire route. She outlined the options as follows:

Alternative 1. The neighbors pay for data collection and speed hump construction if the street meets the above-referenced criteria. In this option, the vast majority of individuals who request speed humps are denied because they do not meet the necessary criteria. Most residents would pay between \$125 and \$250 to have a street segment evaluated for the program. Because the number of speed humps to be installed is small, the cost per hump may be significantly higher than the typical cost charged for past installations. When the City contracts for the installation of 9 or more speed humps, it is able to take advantage of a lower contracted amount than a neighborhood would pay to have a smaller job completed.

Alternative 2. The speed hump program remains City funded. The City pays to collect traffic speed data and pays for the installation of speed humps. Requests are processed on a "first come, first served" basis until the funds have been spent. For streets meeting the speed criteria but not the minimum traffic volume, neighborhood residents must pay \$500 per speed hump.

Alternative 3a. The City would fund the data collection portion of the program only and the neighborhood would pay for 100% of the installation costs; 3b. City and residents share equally in data collection costs. A neighborhood pays 100% of installation costs, and 3c. City funds data collection for streets that do not qualify. Residents who qualify for the program pay 100% of the data collection and installation costs.

Committeemember Thom thanked staff for the presentation and also for providing the Committee with a series of options to consider. She noted that the speed hump program is near and dear to the hearts of many Mesa residents and stated that her constituents contact her on a regular basis regarding this issue. Committeemember Thom commented that many of the City's new subdivisions have homeowners associations and that those entities have sufficient funds to pay for the installation of speed humps. She added that residents who do not reside in areas governed by homeowners associations are oftentimes willing to pay for the service as well.

In response to a series of questions from Chairman Whalen, Mr. Sanderson advised that it would be possible for staff to establish a standby list whereby residents who wish to proceed with the installation of neighborhood speed humps could join other Mesa residents and receive a price break on the construction costs; that additional options could be pursued such as increasing the installation costs to offset staff's time and data collection costs; that if approved by the Council, any profits from the speed hump program could be directed toward impoverished Mesa neighbors to install speed humps in those areas; that because of Mesa's current budget constraints, staff has discouraged City data collection due to the fact that 88% of the streets would not qualify for the speed hump program, and that as a result of the number of streets in Mesa where speed humps have been installed, the City is now reaching a point of diminishing return with regard to the speed hump program.

It was moved by Committeemember Thom, seconded by Committeemember Griswold, to recommend to the Council that Alternative 1 (City funds staff time used. Neighborhood pays data collection and speed hump construction costs) be approved. Committeemember Thom added that she would like the Council to review the other options as well.

Committeemember Griswold advised that in touring DC Ranch and other new model home developments in Mesa, he has observed that the City generally builds wide streets somewhat akin to racetracks, as opposed to more meandering and winding roads. He requested that staff consider the development of more visually pleasing design standards in this regard.

In response to Committeemember Griswold's comment, Mr. Sanderson advised that staff has modified street width design standards.

Carried unanimously.

Chairman Whalen thanked staff for the presentation.

3. Discuss and consider the establishment of a future alignment for Ray Road between Sossaman and Ellsworth Roads.

City Engineer Keith Nath, Traffic Engineer Alan Sanderson and Executive Director of Williams Gateway Airport Lynn Kusy addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item.

Mr. Nath advised that Project Manager for Williams Gateway Regional Economic Activity Area Wayne Balmer, who has been actively involved with this issue, was unable to attend today's meeting, and that he will make the presentation to the Committee in his place. He reported that Mr. Balmer has met with the property owners located north of Williams Gateway Airport in an effort to solicit input and seek support relative to the establishment of a future alignment for Ray Road between Sossaman and Ellsworth Roads.

Mr. Nath displayed maps in the Council Chambers and provided a brief overview of two options identified by staff (Alternative A and Alternative B). He explained that the current alignment of Ray Road is taken up by a channel (the Powerline Floodway); that at a recent meeting of the property owners during which both alternatives were presented, it was the consensus of the attendees that Alternative B would be the more appropriate option due to its continuous route and the potential for an interchange that could serve a larger area and encourage future development. (See Attachment 1.)

Mr. Nath discussed several considerations with regards to Alternative B including the fact that Williams Gateway Airport has plans to extend its runway approximately half a mile. He noted that with this extension, if Ray Road were kept on its current alignment, the City would encounter problems with a vertical clearance off the end of the runway. Mr. Nath informed the Committeemembers that the runway is designed in such a manner that the approach slopes down onto the runway are set at a 50:1 slope, which means for every 50 feet horizontally, you go up one foot vertically. He stated that sufficient distance is needed in order to obtain enough height so that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) considers it a safe approach slope for an airplane. He advised that with the lack of vertical clearance, the length of the runway extension would be limited, and instead of the runway being extended half a mile, it might only be extended a quarter of a mile. Mr. Nath added that another consideration with regard to Alternative B is the fact that for the possible future development of properties in the area, it would be more advantageous to have the front doors and the visibility of those businesses facing the freeway, as opposed to being positioned in the opposite direction.

Mr. Nath concluded his remarks by stating that Alternative B is the preferred Ray Road alignment option. He added, however, that because there is currently no agreement among the property owners to dedicate the right-of-way for an actual alignment, staff is not recommending proceeding with a survey of the properties where future right-of-way will be needed at this time.

Committeemember Griswold stated the opinion that building a road near the end of a runway is not necessarily a negative occurrence and that it can provide a buffer zone between 90 to 120 feet. He also stated that most major airports have, in fact, constructed roads in that manner. Committeemember Griswold added that he would like to obtain input from the adjacent property owners relative to the placement of a road at the end of a runway and their preference relative to this matter.

Barry Zimmel, a property owner in the area, stated that a majority of the property owners prefer Alternative B and have expressed a desire to dedicate the right-of-way so the Ray Road alignment project can begin. He also noted that the property owners would like the City to proceed with a survey of the properties and determine where future right-of-way will be needed. Mr. Zimmel added that at the present time, the property owners have been informed that there are no funds available for the City to perform the survey, and consequently, the property owners are withholding the dedication of the right-of-way. He expressed support for the alignment project moving forward in an effort to spur growth and define the area.

Douglas Cook, a property owner to the west of Hawes Road on the Ray Road alignment, commented that City staff has presented a concept to the property owners to voluntarily dedicate right-of-way without any indication from the City of where or when there would be a road or the manner in which the right-of-way would be utilized. He explained that it is possible that the property owners will be able to reach unanimity relative to the dedication of the right-of-way if they are told what is going to be dedicated. He said that once consensus is reached, the deeds must be signed and recorded as soon as possible. Mr. Cook added that he would encourage the City to determine what it might be willing to commit to in terms of some future use of the right-of-way to motivate the property owners to dedicate it now and also to allocate the required funds to establish the legal descriptions necessary for the deeds. He cautioned that if the dedication of right-of-way is done in a piecemeal fashion, it might encourage some property owners to become "holdouts" in an effort to make hostages out of the City and the dedicating property owners.

Chairman Whalen expressed appreciation to the speakers for providing their input. He commented that he has engaged in discussions with staff relative to the possibility of forming a facilities district in the area that would enable the City to partner with the property owners to handle the massive infrastructure costs. He stated that Ray Road is intended to be a major six-lane road, with the development of many commercial properties. Chairman Whalen commented that if the City takes no action regarding the establishment of a future alignment for Ray Road for five years, or if a property owner dedicates a single-lane road just to achieve access, the City may be defeating its purpose relative to this matter. He requested clarification from staff with regards to what the Committee is being asked to consider at this time.

Mr. Nath referred to the September 29, 2003 City Council Report and commented that the purpose of this agenda item is to seek concurrence from the Committeemembers relative to the future alignment for Ray Road between Sossaman and Ellsworth Roads. He briefly outlined two alternatives for Council consideration regarding how to proceed with the designation of the alignment. (See Attachment 2.) Mr. Nath explained that the first alternative would establish an official alignment for Ray Road for planning purposes, but would not commit either the City or the private owners to any further action at this time. He stated that alternative two would establish the future alignment for Ray Road and authorize staff to proceed with a survey of the properties (at a cost of approximately \$30,000 to \$50,000) where the future right-of-way will be needed. He added that Mr. Balmer has had conversations with the property owners regarding this issue and that he received a mixed response relative to dedicating the right-of-way.

Chairman Whalen stated the opinion that it may be premature for the City to ask the property owners to dedicate the right-of-way before they know what they are dedicating.

Mr. Nath also noted that currently no timeframe exists for the development of the roadway within the City's CIP program for street improvements.

Chairman Whalen commented that although he does not feel like he has sufficient information to make a decision regarding Alternatives A or B at this time, he would like to move this issue forward for a full Council/staff discussion, to consider the authorization of funds relative to the establishment of the alignment and also various dedication options.

Mr. Nath advised that it is the recommendation of staff that the members of the Committee forward a recommendation to the Council regarding Alternative A or Alternative B and added that the Council would make the ultimate decision regarding this matter.

Chairman Whalen stated that he would prefer that both alternatives be presented to the Council for consideration and that the decision not be made by the members of the Transportation Committee.

Committeemember Thom commented that in a prior briefing with Mr. Kusy, she had questioned the proposed alignment options and had stated the opinion that it would be more appropriate and less expensive for the Ray Road alignment to follow the Williams Gateway Airport boundary line. She also commented that she would be curious to know if the individuals who own property near the proposed runway extension would prefer that the road be located on the north or the south side of their property.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that staff has been unsuccessful in soliciting feedback from the property owners located near the proposed runway extension; that if the future Ray Road alignment was located at the Williams Gateway property boundary line, it would be a feasible alternative, however, a potential drawback to consider is the fact that if the runway is extended as WGA has proposed, there would only be 10 to 11 feet of vertical clearance from the roadway surface to the approach slope.

In response to a question from Chairman Whalen, Mr. Cook stated that the property owners recognize the economic potential of Ray Road as a major thoroughfare and noted that there will be substantial benefit to both the private and public sectors. He emphasized that the property owners would not only like to be partners with the City, but would also like to receive some type of disclosure with regard to its participation in this matter.

Further discussion ensued among the Committeemembers relative to the manner in which to proceed with this agenda item.

It was moved by Committeemember Thom, seconded by Committeemember Griswold, to recommend to the Council that Alternative B be approved as the preferred future alignment for Ray Road, that the City proceed with a survey of the properties where future right-of-way will be needed (Alternative Two), and also that Alternative A be included in the backup material for Council consideration.

Carried unanimously.

Chairman Whalen thanked everyone for their presentations.

4. Hear an update on Light Rail Transit (LRT) end-of-the-line station at Tri-City Mall and LRT Public Outreach Program.

Assistant Development Services Manager Jeff Martin, Senior Economic Development Specialist Tammy Albright, Marc Soronson, Planning/Environmental Manager for Valley Metro, and Ruben Landa, Business Outreach Specialist for Valley Metro, addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item.

Mr. Martin provided a brief update on a variety of ongoing light rail activities including the October 8, 2003 "Meet and Greet" gathering at Webster Elementary School.

In response to a question from Chairman Whalen, Mr. Soronson clarified that any impacts to the northeast corner of Sycamore and Main Streets will not be the result of the Park and Ride lot and the transit center, but rather from the track alignment and the station. He explained that at the end of the line track, it is anticipated that there will be a tail track to serve as a location to store a train overnight. Mr. Martin added that it is anticipated that Sun Pontiac will not be impacted by the construction of the end-of-the line station at Tri-City Mall.

Discussion ensued relative to the Planning and Zoning process on the site plan amendment, and the fact that the costs for business outreach are included as part of the cash flow the City has identified for the light rail project.

Chairman Whalen commented that although he appreciates staff providing this update to the members of the Transportation Committee, it would be more effective if the information was disseminated to Mesa residents in a more public venue.

Mr. Landa provided a brief overview of the Valley Metro Rail Business Assistance Program. He reported that the program has been developed for Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa in an effort to assist businesses located along the light rail transit (LRT) corridor. Mr. Landa stated that the program is a proactive approach to aid the businesses prior to construction, prepare them for construction, and to offer suggestions regarding how to endure the construction process.

Ms. Albright stated that the City has asked the Small Business Development Center to take the lead with regard to aiding Mesa businesses during this process and noted that she and Valley Metro Rail staff will conduct surveys with the business owners to assess their needs. Ms. Albright commented that once the surveys have been completed, they will be forwarded to the Small Business Development Center, and it will be that entity's responsibility to contact the businesses on an individual basis and offer various recommendations or services (i.e. business plan assistance, funding, et cetera).

Mr. Banda explained that Valley Metro Rail has also met with various business assistance groups and Chambers of Commerce in the region regarding this program and invited them to participate in the process as well. He added that many of these organizations have provided donations and sponsorships to help fund the overall cost for the Business Assistance Program forums that Valley Metro will be conducting in Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa.

In response to a question from Committeemember Thom, Mr. Martin clarified that an estimated 47 Mesa businesses will be affected by the construction of the LRT project. He stated that Valley Metro has a list with the names of the businesses and will provide that information to the Councilmembers. Mr. Martin added that the City has formed an internal team that is also working closely with the Valley Metro Rail staff on the Business Assistance Program and public outreach.

Chairman Whalen thanked everyone for the presentation.

5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Transportation Committee Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Transportation Committee meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 16th day of October 2003. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK