

Transportation Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 6th, 2016
7:30 a.m. – 3rd Floor Training Room #302

1. Attendance & Receipt of Minutes:

Commissioners Present: Lee Barger, Mike Fowler, Sandy Lowell, Shelley Kaup

City Council Liaisons: Mike Gamba, Kathy Trauger

City Staff: Debora Figueroa, City Manager; Terri Partch, City Engineer; Tanya Allen, Transportation Manager

Guest: Mike McCallum, Community on the Move

2. Major discussion topics for the upcoming joint Council and Transportation Commission meeting (Discussion regarding A&I tax poll results, ballot questions and transportation projects proposed):

Terri introduced Mike McCallum, from Community on the Move. Mike M. Stated that the Community on the Move committee proposes to continue with the 1 cent sales tax, reminding everyone this is not a new tax but a renewal which is unanimously supported by City Council. 70% of the tax for Glenwood Springs comes from tourist and visitors, and residents pay less than 30%. In regards to borrowing and repayment, for the upcoming election, a ballot question needed to cover the 54 million of borrowing which could cost up to 100 million after the interest accrued, for 30 years. We need to identify the need, tell people how it is going to help, what it will accomplish, and what the cost will be. We estimate \$30K to promote/advertise/yard signs/post cards/newspaper; no TV or radio time. The ballot question should include information about construction, repairs and improving safety and traffic congestion by constructing bridges, roads, improvement to South Bridge, South Midland Ave, 27th St. (Sunlight Bridge), constructing a Riverwalk, and other improvements to the corridor.

Terri stated that CDOT does not have enough money to cover building South Bridge; not through this tax. We need to look for assistance from the County and State because we need money for 27th Street Bridge and South Midland.

Mike M stated that through the tax renewal the County, the Federal Government, and the City have the ability to put funds towards those projects. Or, we need more or less funds for projects due to new grants; this leaves it open but really ties to the projects and ties the City to some degree to those projects but also leaves a lot of leeway towards many projects now and in the future. The entire tax can be used for many other things. Bottom line, the tax question is do we want to renew the sales tax for 30 years? Regarding the debt, should the Glenwood Springs debt be increased up to \$54 million with a maximum repayment cost of \$100 million or the purpose of financing the acquisition in construction, repairs, and improvements that may include South Bridge, South Midland Avenue, and the 27th Street (Sunlight Bridge), constructing a Riverwalk, other infrastructure at the confluence of the

Roaring Fork and the Colorado Rivers, and constructing a gateway to Glenwood by Amtrak. The borrowing covers specific projects. We cannot do them in one year increments as those major projects need large capital all at once. As for the community center, arts center, and museum, we will fund those, not bond for them. Bonding is specific, and up to the Council to decide. Also, the deficit was actually budgeted at \$1.7 million this year, and it is going to come in at about \$1 million; a very good thing.

Commission discussion regarding the upkeep costs for the community center and possibility if it closes. The positives it brings to the community outweigh the negatives.

Commission discussion of recent poll in the Post Independent about what projects would be most important to the community within Glenwood Springs. Those were: South Bridge, Midland, Devereux Road Bridge, and adding bike lanes.

3. Transportation updates:

Tanya gave a north/south Shuttle Road update. In May there were adjustments to the routing which extended to move one of the stops from Centennial Park down to the end of the Amtrak Station, and move another stop slightly further west on the north side, across from the Brew Garden. There are weekly aggregated figures from RFTA, which are broken down by their day time and evening shifts, in two month averages for both. She emphasized these are weekly aggregated figure numbers. The good news is ridership did pick up slightly. This could be attributed to more volume, more awareness or the route change. The bad news is that ridership is still pretty low overall; our best weeks are about 500 and based on the most recent figures.

A couple of interesting facts:

1. Evening ridership is more popular, at roughly 2-1; possibly dinner crowded.
2. The highest peak days are Tuesday and Saturday.

For the month of June, the operating cost was about \$13K, based on around \$1K riders. It is about \$13 per rider, depending on how you crunch the figures. There are other costs associated; marketing is one. If you look only at operating costs, it is around \$13. Given what it costs to run, we should be looking at investing long-term, that are meeting the need in a more cost effective way. Operation costs are fixed, regardless of ridership. The driver's cost and mileage are expensive. Shuttles currently run every 20 minutes. We need to look over the numbers and how this impacts driver time and mileage. Areas to consider which may save money:

1. Reduce hours of operations.
2. Running fewer shuttles per hour.

The north/south commuter goes across the bridge. The new business brings many tourists and revenue (train, hot springs). Discussion regarding the convenience the routes bring to tourists; buses need to go where people want to go. Terri voiced a concern about people crossing the GAB with a suitcase, as the width is very tight. Additionally, winter could be a concern; there will be snow and ice. The cleanup of the walkway is CDOT's responsibility. As far as longer commutes, people are ok with longer headways, as long as they know where the buses are. For example, Vail buses use GPS tracking and machines at the stop to confirm when to expect bus arrival and departure. This makes people more patient; may increase ridership. The commission discussed how much this kind of system would cost

RFTA, adding the Council wanted to have a “train to tram” route. Tanya explained that RFTA could make 20 minute scheduled headways however, during traffic congestion they are not going to make that schedule. The buses are compatible for this kind of technology. The consensus is to redo the system. Terri added this would make the routes more viable. Route schedules need to be frequent, convenient, the commission suggested 15/20 minute routes. Tanya stated the current hours of operation for the buses are 9am to 11pm.

The Commission concludes:

1. What will be saved by cutting half the hours?
2. What would it cost to install GPS equipment?
3. Can we add a route to the tram? Tanya adds, in October, the tram goes to 3 days.
4. How do we get to the Iron Mountain Hot Springs and the tram? Mike Fowler stated that Sunday does typically have about 1600 people; it is also difficult to walk to the hot springs.

Tanya concluded she will contact RFTA to discuss these questions.

Next, Tanya reminded the Commission that prior to her employment, RFTA had three routes through Glenwood, one of which is effectively the substitute Ride Glenwood Service. This will run from the north side of the pedestrian bridge from the Amtrak station, down 6th, over towards the meadows; it’s a big loop. During the closure, RFTA is planning to go fare free; the assumption is that Ride Glenwood would go fare free as well. This makes sense for many reasons. One, simply looking at about \$10K a month which is about what Ride Glenwood normally accrues. The actual loss associated with this is worth absorbing because we will gain many riders. Another factor, is that the two bus systems are very confusing to people. People do not know what RFTA is and what is Ride Glenwood; how are they different?

Commission consensus is Ride Glenwood will be fare free during this time frame also. This will be taken to Council for approval.

3. Street Tax Discussion and projects based upon priority:

Terri stated she is trying to narrow down the street tax. The proposal for next year is a little over \$13 million. There are several high priority projects to discuss. South Midland ranks very well with Council. With South Midland, we will try to proceed with the design for 2017. We will not allocate construction dollars because the 2017 north side transportation will be completely messed up, creating a lot of stress. So, doing the same on the south side might cause a lot of anxiety. Another high priority is the downtown alley reconstruction with the group trash collection. We have been working with the DDA to incorporate their street reconstruction and transportation projects into the street tax. This coordinates with the finished Grand Ave. project in 2018. Without the project, people will walk along the wing streets, and look to the left or east and people will see the torn up alley. The Council’s second priority is the 7th Street Plaza. Terri and Leslie Bethel with the DDA are collaborating to lay out a new road through there. The street will serve both traffic and pedestrians, with the idea that it would be pedestrian friendly and could be blocked off easily for street events. Recent estimates have been higher than expected. The elevator tower should open in March 2017. There will be under bridge work; they will put in the footings of the bridge. The next highest priority is Devereux Rd. to Midland Ave. preliminary bridge design.

Terri stated she is still working on developing street tax. Street tax will only generate about \$2.5 million worth of revenue. We (also) have the ability to shift some projects out to an A&I tax or Capital tax.

4. Other:

Terri stated there are other projects in design mode, not in the transportation budget rankings. One important project is the 8th St. connection. The RFTA access control plan plays into permanent design for 8th St. The current plan is to design a permanent 8th St. connection so that it can accommodate the future bridge. RFTA can set a railroad bridge on top of the new abutments; will cost around \$500K. The Commission discussed the idea to instead of half a million for the bridge; we should put in \$5 million for future lowering of 8th St. and design any connecting streets to accommodate that. There was a Committee consensus to schedule a future meeting to further discuss with RFTA.

5. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 9:30am.