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## “Moving Yavapai Regional Transit Forward”

### Minutes of YAVAPAI REGIONAL TRANSIT INC. Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting

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**WEDNESDAY, October 11, 2017**  
**10:00 A.M.-12:00P.M.**

**St Luke’s Episcopal Church**  
**Prescott, AZ**

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#### **INTRODUCTIONS**

Those present introduced themselves by name and organization: Cyndi Thomas, Chino Valley Town and Senior Center; John Jones, Transit Advocate; Daniel Mattson, YRT Board; Chris Bridges, CYMPO; Allison McCarthy, CYMPO; Gil Stritar, CYTF; Frankie Reynolds, County Health Department; Jeff Lambert, Chino Valley School Transportation; Cheri Romley, YRT Board, Ron Romley, YRT Board; Sandy Stutey, YRT staff.

#### **YRT HISTORY**

Ron Romley, Chairman of the YRT Board, and founder of Yavapai Regional Transit presented the history of the organization, beginning with two buses at the Chino Valley Senior Center, through expansion of public transit services as Chino Valley Transit when the Town of Chino Valley became the recipient of an FTA 5311 Rural Transportation Grant. Ron emphasized the role of volunteers in the beginning of the organization. In 2012, the Town elected not to reapply for a 5311 grant and offered the two vehicles it had, and some remaining ADOT funding, to Ron’s group if he was willing to form an organization to take over the services. A non-profit corporation was formed, which became the recipient of the 5311 grant.

The organization, now called Yavapai Regional Transit, has expanded services to include a “circulator route” in Chino Valley, five days a week, with connections to Prescott five days a week, and routes that travel to Prescott Valley one day a week. Ron described the commitment to the community that YRT has, to provide affordable, safe transportation to those who have difficulty driving, do not have cars, or do not have the financial means to travel independently. He shared stories of several riders and the impact that public transit has on their lives, to reach shopping, medical appointments, educational options, recreation, and to “get out”, instead of living an isolated existence.

The Vision, Mission and Goals of YRT are attached as Exhibit A.

Ron also described how public transit is financed by various federal programs. The 5311 program is designed to support rural transit systems, such as YRT. A second program, the FTA 5307 grant program, is designed to provide funds for urban services. Because of population numbers for Prescott and Prescott Valley, service in those two communities is eligible for the 5307 funding, but requires extensive reporting and a much higher match ratio. At this time, YRT is unable to access those funds. Ron also described how YRT uses volunteer labor and other donations to meet its local match obligations. However, without sustainable funding from other sources, YRT is constrained in its ability to add service.

### **CENTRAL YAVAPAI METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (CYMPO) RELATIONSHIP**

Chris Bridges, the CYMPO Administrator since 2010, walked those attending through the purpose of CYMPO. It is a federal program, established by the FTA, to aid those who plan and implement transportation resources in the quad city area. It has been primarily providing funding and support for the roads network in this area, but also addresses public transit issues. Chris described how CYMPO has been able to provide funds to YRT in the past to develop general and specific plans for transit implementation and growth. CYMPO is the recipient of over \$1.3 million in FTA funding, annually, which could be used to expand public transit, if the area were able to meet local match requirements. Formulas for this match do not include dollars for administration and fund only 50% of operating costs. Chris pointed to an attempt several years ago to bring a private operator into the area to create a larger regional bus system. Again, the effort failed for lack of local match. Each year this FTA allocation is returned to ADOT for distribution to other transits in the state.

### **REASON & PURPOSE OF THE TAC**

Cheri Romley, Board secretary and co-founder with Ron, described how a Transit Advisory Committee is formed to provide input to a transit organization, like YRT, to evaluate existing services and make recommendations for changes and/or additions to routes, levels of service, and operating policies. It is a requirement under YRT's grant. It is designed to be the interface between the general public and the YRT Board and operations. It will make recommendations to the Board of Directors for action.

The TAC is guided by the following considerations:

- It is to be representative of the various stake holders in the area, as representatives of users, organizations and local governments;
- The TAC will provide recommendations for improving transit operations and services, including new service and customer outreach activities;
- It shall work with YRT to develop and distribute educational and informational material to promote the benefits of public transit;
- It will seek public input to determine community desires and priorities regarding public transit; and
- Develop programs to encourage the use of public transportation.

Cheri stressed the importance of having a representation of the people YRT serves, and the jurisdictions in which it operates. In response to a question about TAC members not being decision makers who could move a larger public transit agenda forward, Cheri pointed out the importance of TAC members

being well informed and able to listen to concerns, and to advocate within their own organizations, and among the general public.

The TAC will meet on a quarterly basis to learn about proposed YRT plans, to bring questions and concern to the Board and staff, and to represent THEIR stakeholders.

## **OVERVIEW OF YRT OPERATIONS**

Sandy Stutey, Transit Manager, provide several handouts. They are attached as Exhibit B and C.

- Exhibit B – The YRT organization chart, showing governance and operating structure.
- Exhibit C – Budget and operational statistics
- A three-year comparison of revenues, including grant funding, local donations, and inkind contributions.
- A three-year comparison of costs, showing such categories as labor, fuel and maintenance, capital expenses, insurance, and administration.
- A list of Operating measures, including number of passenger trips, deviations, fuel consumption, miles traveled, number of service hours provided, and fares collected. These allow year to year comparisons such as cost per trip, cost per rider, and cost per hour.
- Graphs comparing the growth in ridership, miles, and hours of operation over the past 3 years.

She also provided a snapshot of ten months of the first ten months of FY 17 of “trip purpose”, based on rider destinations. YRT uses the Safeway store in Chino Valley as hub, and all routes travel through that location. It has the highest number of riders boarding and leaving the bus.

## **BUS ROUTES & SCHEDULES**

Ron and Sandy reviewed the current route structure of YRT operations. YRT operates a “deviated fixed route” system based on having regular schedules, with specified times at various stops, but also allowing buses to deviate off the route, up to one mile in Chino Valley and roughly one-quarter of a mile in Prescott and Prescott Valley, to accommodate passengers who may not be able to get to a stop. Some request stops are designated in the schedule, but riders can also make individual requests. They must call the day before to schedule the deviation which will be provided whenever possible, within the constraints of capacity on the bus and distance.

**Gold Route** – This provides five days of service in Chino Valley, 8 A – 3 P, which cover major destinations on an hourly basis, and which serve the Safeway location an hour to allow riders to transfer to other routes. This is a two day a week expansion on October 2, 2017.

**Green Route** – Added two days of service on October 2, now operating four days a week, connecting Prescott with Chino Valley along Highway 89, Willow Creek, Whipple, Gurley, and Highway 69, as far east as the Gateway Mall. The route then continues to Chino Valley via Prescott Lake Parkway and an additional portion of Highway 89. With the October 2 service change, an additional trip between Chino Valley and Prescott was also added, extending the day to 8 A – 6 P.

**Red and Blue Routes** – These operate on Friday only at this time. The Red Route begins in Chino Valley, travels to the west side of Prescott, travels along Highway 69 to the center of Prescott Valley, then returns to Chino Valley via Highway 89A. The Blue Route starts an hour later in Chino Valley, first traveling to Prescott Valley, then Prescott, and returning to Chino Valley along Willow Creek Rd.

The TAC and staff will be looking at current schedules and evaluating options for changes to increase service in the future.

#### **FUTURE MEETING TOPICS AND DATES**

Cheri invited everyone present to submit at least one topic they would like to see on future agendas. They were submitted and will be reviewed for future inclusion.

There are several community conflicts with the second Wednesday of the month. The quarterly TAC meetings will be moved to the third Wednesday to allow others to attend. All those invited and in attendance are invited to continue participation in the YRT TAC meeting. These are public meetings and the general public may attend as well.

**NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2018, 10 AM – NOON,  
ST. LUKE’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 2000 Shepherds Lane, Prescott.**