

Transit Task Force
City of Tucson

May 15, 2014

Honorable Mayor Rothschild and City Council Members
Tucson, Arizona

Re: Bus Service Changes

Greetings,

At the May 12, 2014, meeting of the Mayor and Council appointed Transit Task Force (TTF), the proposed changes to bus service were considered. These changes, recommended in the Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) and the Bus/Rail Interface Report, would result in an estimated \$2.4 million annual operating budget savings in FY2015.

After discussion the following motion was made and passed by a vote of 5 to 2:

Motion: *A motion was made that the Transit Task Force recommend to the Mayor and Council that they do not approve the Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) recommended bus service cuts.*

Motion Seconded

Motion Passed – *Five (5) in favor - two (2) against.*

The majority voted to urge the Mayor and Council to reject the changes at this time. Members expressed concern about the impact of the proposed changes on users and on the system's functionality, given that

- The COA process was conducted over an unusually short time span (9 months as opposed to the typical 18 months, due to budgetary pressures (COA, p. 4);
- The data-gathering benefits of the SunGO smartcard system have not yet been realized and were not available for this analysis (COA, p. 3);
- The public outreach process may not have adequately reached system users, a concern prompted in part by the preponderance of responses by express route riders (22% to 61% of results depending on mode of input, but 1% of users)
- It isn't wise to make changes to the bus system until the impact of the Sun Link Tucson Streetcar on connectivity and costs is known.

In summary, the majority felt that budget pressure may have resulted in changes that are not justified and may not be beneficial. (It should be noted that the members voting no on

the motion did not want to accept the full set of recommendations at this time but rather to devise an alternative proposal to include some but not all of them.)

As the COA states (p. 3), “the recommendations ... are intended as a beginning point for Tucson’s and the region’s continued planning processes, which should include ample opportunity for review and comment by passengers and the public.”

The TTF does not suggest the proposed changes be discarded. Many of them likely have merit and will ultimately be recommended by the TTF for implementation. However, the task force would like to have enough time to analyze them thoroughly, and hopes that Mayor and Council will see fit to allow us to spend the next several months doing that.

Sincerely,

Gene Caywood

Chair, Transit Task Force