



# Staff Report

**Agenda Item:**           **PRESENTATION BY COTTONWOOD AREA TRANSIT ON FIVE YEAR PLAN** – Presentation by Shirley Scott, Cottonwood Area Transit (CAT) and Jeff Meilbeck, Northern Arizona Intergovernmental Public Transit Authority (NAIPTA), regarding the five year transit plan and the implementation of July 1, 2009 route change phase.

**Sponsored By:**       Curt Bohall, Councilmember

**Staff Contact:**       Steve Burroughs, Public Works Director

**Meeting Date:**       March 24, 2009

**Background:**       The Northern Arizona Intergovernmental Public Transportation Authority (NAIPTA) convened a Citizen Review Commission in Cottonwood as a step in creating a regional Five Year Transit Plan. The Town of Clarkdale was represented by Councilmember Pat Williams in some sessions. The CAT Citizen Review Commission (CAT CRC) was asked to evaluate the performance of the existing transit system.

The CAT CRC held five meetings of two hour durations between August and October. CRC members reviewed financial and ridership data and considered the strengths and limitations of the current CAT system. The CRC concluded that the existing system is highly effective in that it provides affordable mobility to all citizens, but has limited productivity due to its emphasis on customized door to door service. Specifically, CAT provided 33,662 Dial-A-Ride trips in FY 2008 at a cost of \$17.64 per trip. Although this service is highly convenient for riders, it is expensive to provide. The CRC considered other transit systems in the Southwest and the needs of Cottonwood and has come to preliminary consensus on the following major conclusions:

- 1) Improve the productivity of the CAT system without increasing program costs by ---
  - a. Limiting Dial-A-Ride service to citizens who are unable to ride a fixed route bus. CAT currently has no eligibility system for apportioning Dial-A-Ride trips. Trips are provided on a first-come first serviced basis. By creating an eligibility program for Dial-A-Ride we can ensure that people with disabilities are provided with the service they need while reducing the overall costs of providing Dial-A-Ride service.
  - b. Converting the deviated route “Catch-A-Ride” system into a fixed route system. By creating fixed routes that do not deviate for side trips, bus service will be more dependable and able to operate on schedule. The current deviated routes are often late and their ridership levels are comparatively low. By creating fixed routes that provide more direct service and operate on time, the system will be more convenient and attractive to riders.

- c. Add a third fixed route with 30 minute frequency to serve the core Cottonwood area. The third route will compliment the two existing routes. Combined, these three fixed routes will make transit mobility a more viable option for those choosing to take the bus.

By providing CAT service differently, Cottonwood can meet the mobility needs of our most vulnerable citizens and serve more people without increasing the overall expense of the program. Estimates are that annual ridership will double within the next three years without additional program expense.

- 2) Consider and expand regional transportation needs in collaboration with other communities, The CAT CRC recognizes the inter-connectedness of communities in the Verde Valley and wants to improve mobility between these communities. The CRC wants to start by building on the early success of the Cottonwood-Sedona Express and provide 6 to 8 trips per day between Sedona and Cottonwood. The CRC wants to establish equitable cost-sharing with the City of Sedona for this service.

On November 4, 2008 the Cottonwood City Council approved an Open House to get public input on the CRC recommendations. The open house was held on November 18<sup>th</sup> and attended by approximately 60 citizens. A survey was conducted which indicated strong support for the CRC recommendation by existing CAT riders. NAIPTA and CAT staff has continued to test the recommendations, fine tune the route structure, and develop the eligibility process. Staff still has a target of implementing the service changes by July 1, 2009.

Councilmember Curt Bohall has attended several meeting regarding route structure. The City of Cottonwood adopted these findings on March 3, 2009.

**Recommendation:** This is a presentation only and no action is required.

### CAT/Cottonwood Express Event Survey \* November 10, 2008

12 surveys completed. I numbered the surveyers 1-12 for reference only if commissioners wanted to know who said what. They are numbered accordingly under each survey question.

Surveyers indicated how important each of the following was to them on a scale of 1-5, 5 being most important. Each score is worth 5 points.

#### Public Bus Service for People with Disabilities & The Elderly

1	2	3	4	5
15	5	10	10	30

#### Comments

- 1. (David Hedrick) I am an amputee and understand, but, CAT system, in my opinion cannot afford to operate in the place of a taxi or xxx medical.
- 2. (Walt Good) Non Mobile
- 6. (Melody Beers) This is one of the few and most important services for the disabled that is affordable.
- 10. (Sarafina Raphael) I very much appreciate the service CATS supplies. I take many times a week.
- 11. (no name left) Demand bus is great! Drivers are friendly. I am low income & disabled.

#### Public Bus Service for Low Income

1	2	3	4	5
15	5	10	10	25

- 2. Fixed Income/non mobile yes

#### Public Bus Service for Fixed Income

1	2	3	4	5
45	5	5	10	10

- 2. Not Practical

#### Public Bus Service for All Ages

1	2	3	4	5
10	10	10	10	30

#### How is it run by Cottonwood Express Service

1	2	3	4	5
5	5	15	10	25

- 12. (DL Davis) If it would stop at Medical Center.

#### Other

1	2	3	4	5
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#### Comments

#### Do you currently use CAT?

Yes	No
45	15

#### What would make you more interested in riding?

- 2. Dependable hours of operation

9. (Cindy Thomas) Fixed Routes

How did you hear about today's Event?

- 1. Employer
- 2. Jeff
- 3. (Rebecca Talbert) Newspaper & Staff
- 4. (Suellen Church & Raymond Serba) Paper
- 5. (D. Kendrick's) poster on cats bus
- 6. Drivers
- 7. (Pat Jacobson) Media
- 8. (Ruby Van Lieu) Newspaper
- 9. Newspaper
- 11. Cook at Georgias told me.
- 12. Newspaper

How many of the members traveled from the Open House Event?

Yes	No
50	5

How many of the members traveled from the Open House Event?

- 1. More info on routes planned.
- 5. kind of
- 9. Requirements in detail

How many of the members traveled from the Open House Event?

Yes	No
10	35

- 8. Ruby Van Lieu, 521 Mingus Shadows Dr., Clarkdale, 86324
- 10. Sarafina Raphael, 859 S. 12th St., #310, Cottonwood, RAPHAELI\_775@msn.com, 634-9879

What are your suggestions for the system?

- 4. Suggestions - Kids fare - Free summer rides for children. Yellow middle route serve farther out early a.m. &
- 5. It seems like the people running the system (open house) weren't very informed. Is it a bus system for just
- 6. Extend service on "yellow line" to include 89A 6am-8am only then again from 4pm-6pm only.
- 7. Please keep above info private Thank you (name & address & phone #)
- 9. publish the details as soon as possible