



City of Prescott

City Council - Study Session

April 25, 2023 | 1:00 PM
201 N Montezuma Street
City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor
Prescott, AZ 86301

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Goode called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Phil Goode - Mayor
Brandon Montoya - Mayor Pro Tem
Connie Cantelme - Councilwoman
Eric Moore - Councilman
Cathey Rusing - Councilmember
Steve Sischka - Councilman
Clark Tenney - Councilman

3. DISCUSSION

- A. Presentation & Discussion Regarding an Update on Commercial Air Service at Prescott Regional Airport - Ernest A. Love Field.
Airport Director Robin Sobotta introduced Mike Mooney with Volaire Aviation Consulting for a presentation regarding essential air service (EAS) at Prescott Regional Airport.

Mr. Mooney addressed the Council with an overview of the airline industry in general.

Pilot Shortage:

- * Constraining service restoration and service expansion
- * Regional carriers hit hardest, even networks and ULCCs are struggling to fully staff
- * March 2023 domestic traffic +1% up versus March 2019 and +12% since March 2022 (TSA)
- * Leisure travel demand appears to be fully recovered from the pandemic
- * Fundamental shifts in business travel, demand remains below pre-pandemic
- * Q4 2022 domestic average fare up 27% versus Q4 2021
- * Pilot salaries are soaring, even regional carriers are offering six figure bonuses
- * Accelerating retirement of 50-seat regional jets by network carriers
- * Some 50-seat regional jets are being refitted
- * Since 2020 "big three" network airlines have terminated service at a combined 74 cities (American, Delta & United)

Prescott Catchment Area Traffic Demand (2022):

- * 40 zip codes near Prescott and north including Flagstaff

- * 12,171 ARC tickets plus DOT data extrapolated to approximately one million annual area passengers
- * Domestic travel is 96% of total, international travel is 4%
- * Phoenix captured 82% of domestic traffic, Mesa 5.5%, Flagstaff 5.5%, Prescott 4.6% and Las Vegas 2.3%

Prescott AirService:

- * Previous providers - Great Lakes and Alaska
- * Beginning in 2018 - Skywest/United

EAS Significant Shifts:

- * Now regional jets (RJs) or 9-seat part 135 (due to pilot shortage)
- * Prior to this year, SkyWest assumed 49 out of 111 EAS cities with RJs
- * Carrier filed to exit 31 of its 49 EAS cities in early 2022
- * Intention is to eliminate all at-risk 50-seat carriers
- * Now planning 30-seat Part 135/Part 380
- * Plan is to impose on all SkyWest EAS cities
- * March 2022 31 cities received term notices and 12 went to a new carrier

Future of EAS:

- * Department of Transportation (DOT) EAS Budget likely to reach \$500 million next year
- * Pilot shortage and fuel cost spike damaging EAS economics
- * 30-seat regional jets will replace most 50-seat EAS
- * Electric power will improve 9-seat economics
- * Recent EAS rebids subsidy levels have escalated
- * Cities subject to \$200 per passenger cap; new rates will cause violations of \$200 cap
- * EAS budget exploding, DOT may tighten EAS criteria to cut EAS city count
- * Prescott is one of the larger passenger volume EAS cities
- * As the Great Lakes service illustrated, if PRC regresses to 9-seat traffic will decline

Mayor Goode asked what would happen if the cap was busted.

Mr. Mooney commented that the Airport would receive a notice of violation, and he suspects there will be a lot of cities that will do that.

Pending EAS Bid:

- * DOT will issue RFP on April 28
- * Bids due late May
- * SkyWest has indicated they will propose their 30-seat product
- * Actively recruiting other carriers for proposals
- * Goal is to retain regional jet service
- * Current SkyWest contract expires August 31 and because DOT is back-logged they will likely be "held in" on the current contract until a new agreement can be reached by the end of the year

Mayor Goode asked about air service in Flagstaff.

Mr. Mooney responded that they still have air service, but their overall availability is down and this is happening all over the country.

Councilmember Rusing asked if 30-seat jets would necessitate an increase in the number of flights.

Mr. Mooney responded that the DOT is in a pickle with the 30-seat product. He is working with them to see if they will issue the RFP stating 30-seat should be a three-round trip package, but currently it is unknown.

Mayor Pro Tem Montoya commented that there seems to be a bridging phase of moving from 50-seat to 30-seat and asked if there would eventually be two separate markets for that.

Mr. Mooney responded that EAS industry has devolved into either 9-seat plane or RJ side where 50-seats are being decreased to 30-seat or retired altogether. There is no manufacturer building 50-seat aircraft because there are no pilots to fly them.

Mayor Goode asked about the pilot shortage and how that might be solved.

Mr. Mooney responded that his firm does not specialize in that area but they do monitor it. There are proposals and energy in congress to make some changes. The demographics of pilot retirement will eventually arc the other way and things will eventually catch up but these trends are slow. There are a lot of challenges associated with this.

Councilman Sischka asked if it would be possible to get along without EAS, and why the 70-seat option is not a proposal.

Mr. Mooney responded that it is not likely, the airport could be self-sustaining with large aircraft in the future, but even with all positive metrics Voltaire has been unable to find a carrier to touch Prescott. He is trying to get people to look at the opportunity for the 70-seat option, but the 30-seat mechanism allows for more pilot staff options than the dual class.

Dr. Sobotta reminded Council that bids will begin coming in over the next 30 days and then a spreadsheet will be taken to the Airport Advisory Committee to review and they will make a recommendation to Council which they will ultimately have to approve.

This item was for discussion only. No formal action was taken.

- B. Discussion & Presentation Regarding Neighborhood Vehicular Access from Design, Planning, Code, and Emergency Ingress/Egress Perspectives. Interim Community Development Director Chelsea Walton provided an overview and introduction to the other speakers regarding vehicular neighborhood access. There are many challenges and design elements that come into play with regard to this and there are many internal city departments that review this information as well as individuals in the private sector.

Lyon Engineering Representative Scott Lyon provided information to Council regarding platting considerations from the private sector:

- * Location of private and public land
- * Limited access to existing right of way surrounding private land - there are limits to access within specific subdivisions
- * Existing terrain not suitable for emergency or secondary access (less than 12% grade)
- * Trying to infill the core areas surrounded by private property has been the biggest issue

Community Planner Tammy Dewitt addressed the Preliminary Plat Review Criteria:

- * LDC 9.10.9 (Section A, Paragraph 6)
- * City shall consider - purposes for subdivision regulations, requirements of standards for subdivision approval, physical arrangement of subdivision, adequacy of street and thoroughfare rights-of-way and alignment, compliance of the streets and thoroughfares with adopted plans and existing street patterns, adequacy of easements for proposed or future utility services and surface drainage and suitability of lot size and area with respect to the minimum requirements for the type of sanitary sewage disposal proposed
- * Preliminary plats are reviewed by the Planning & Zoning Commission before coming to Council for approval
- * Final Plat Criteria - substantial conformance/compliance before it goes to Council for final approval (this is an administrative function)

Councilman Moore commented there have been examples during his time on Council when a final plat was in substantial conformance with a preliminary plat but members of Council have voted against it and he asked for staff's insight on how to uphold the law. He also asked if members of Council would have any liability for not approving a final plat that is in substantial conformance with the preliminary plat.

Ms. Dewitt responded that the preliminary plat is the time to scrutinize the project and make any revisions. In most jurisdictions the final plat isn't even discussed and is placed on the Consent Agenda because it has already been reviewed/approved and the final must be substantially conforming before it even comes before Council.

City Attorney Joseph Young added that there wouldn't be personal liability, but there could be city liability because a court would look at the reasonability of your actions. From preliminary plat to final plat if it is in substantial conformance, in a lawsuit, if that isn't approved there could be limited damages.

Mayor Pro Tem Montoya commented that it sounds to him like the most effective way to achieve good ingress/egress is a community is a master-planned community in general. But often with infill that is difficult to achieve and the time to raise any issues would be during the preliminary plat review. That is the time to ask the questions of our staff regarding our standards. He appreciates the clarity that the staff provides.

Ms. Dewitt addressed secondary access points in areas where the terrain is difficult and commented that staff has to look deeper at how to address that.

Councilman Moore commented that for elected officials, they often see a final plat for a preliminary plat that was approved by a prior Council and even though they may not agree with it, it's in substantial conformance, so it still has to be approved.

Ms. Dewitt confirmed, she added that if the final plat is not in substantial conformance they would have to resubmit the preliminary plat and that would give everyone the opportunity to look more closely at everything.

Councilmember Rusing stated she is glad Council is having this conversation because it is all about public safety.

Councilwoman Cantelme asked about how drones have helped with the development of topo maps.

Ms. Dewitt responded that the city has wonderful topo maps, they update this information regularly and pass it to architects.

Mayor Goode commented that he has always been concerned regarding the Hidden Hills access points as well and he wants to make sure that gets looked into.

Ms. Dewitt responded that fire is looking into that as well.

City Traffic Engineer Ian Mattingly continued the presentation regarding access and roadway, during plat review the Public Works and Engineering Department looks at:

- * Compatibility with transportation planning, future roadway system, and Development Agreements (DA)
- * Appropriate roadway types used (right of way consideration)
- * Conformance with general engineering standards (GES)
- * Confirm adequate performance of roadway system

Transportation Planning & Future Roadway System:

- * General plan circulation element
- * Street classification map
- * Central Yavapai Metropolitan Planning Organization (CYMPO) Regional Transportation Plan
- * If future roadways impact a plat, city may require the following - right of way corridor dedication, alignment of internal roadways with planned routes or intersections, connection to adjacent properties

Councilman Moore commented that there was a discussion a few months ago regarding Peregrine Ridge off of Smoke Tree and access to that area, and he felt there was no decision regarding the access and roadways.

Mr. Mattingly responded that the roadway on Prescott Lakes Parkway was

designed to have a light at Smoke Tree, so whenever something comes through with access at that defined intersection point staff would focus on those items and would require a connection point and participation in the signal at the intersection.

Councilmember Rusing asked about the role of the HOA in these conversations.

Mr. Mattingly commented that by the time it comes to Public Works Staff it is a preliminary plat, he believes that when there is a sensitive issue there is a process that involves the HOA and the neighbors so they can come and participate, but staff doesn't meet with HOAs.

Councilwoman Cantelme commented that an HOA doesn't take over until after the ownership is at 75% capacity, so the engineering is up to the developer based on her knowledge.

Right of Way Considerations:

- * Width for traffic lanes, auxiliary lanes, parking and medians
- * Utilities, drainage, cut and fill slopes, fire hydrants, landscaping
- * Traffic control devices, signs, mail boxes, transit facilities
- * Sidewalk and bike lanes

GES Standards Conformance:

- * Geometric Review
- * Classification drives right of way requirements
- * Access points meet standards
- * Confirm adequate performance of system - traffic impact analysis (TIA) confirms performance and traffic mitigation needs, access points and traffic control recommendations, speed limits and parking
- * Emergency access and evacuation from public works is not considered because the Fire Department is a reviewer and will look at all of that

Mayor Pro Tem Montoya asked about a policy decision around evacuation points and where there are potential opportunities to amend the land development code and is that even necessary or practical? There is a balance that needs to be achieved and not every development in this community should have the same requirements.

Deputy Fire Chief Thomas Knapp continued the presentation regarding Fire's review of plats. Each Department takes their area of expertise in the review process and he echoed Mayor Pro Tem Montoya's comments that it is critical to consider what is reasonable and practical. No two lots are alike.

Key Elements of Plat Reviews:

- * Location of proposed plat
- * Address/cross streets/GPS
- * Is there a code requiring access to all lots
- * Main thoroughfares
- * Connecting streets and capacity
- * Main roads and connectors
- * Interior road networks/design (width, divided, dead ends, length)

- * Terrain
- * Is the proposed plat within the Wildland Urban Interface
- * Vegetation plan to be considered
- * What are the slopes
- * How will they affect access
- * Is there a Master Plan agreement for the area
- * Density of the lots
- * How many homes/units
- * Available water supply
- * Construction type(s)
- * Phasing, show phase lines

Mayor Goode commented that a preliminary plat is approved with the expectation that a signal will be added to the intersection, but the preliminary plat doesn't require that so that is where the issues can be so perhaps there should be an approval subject to which we don't currently have. Need to have some reasonable alternative requirements for situations like that.

Mr. Knapp responded that he isn't intimately aware of the development code so he would refer those types of questions to that staff. There are changes that come which would require an additional review if they are substantial. The design of the plat and density of that plat would drive the roadway construction, which would then trigger streets and fire.

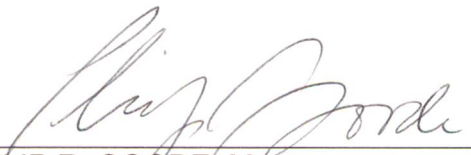
Fire Chief Holger Durre continued with a preview of information regarding Fire Adapted Communities that includes Firewise/Resident Responsibility, Evacuation Planning , Community Awareness, Landscape Treatments, Plans and Regulations which take into consideration all of the other components of Firewise communities.

Mayor Pro Tem Montoya commented that he would like for everyone involved in this process to address these vulnerabilities and offer some solutions to them as well.

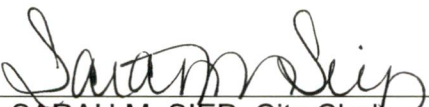
This item was for discussion only. No formal action was taken.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Goode adjourned the meeting at 2:55 p.m.

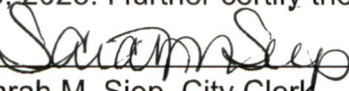

 PHILIP R. GOODE, Mayor

ATTEST:


 SARAH M. SLEP, City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Voting Meeting of the City Council Voting Meeting of the City of Prescott, Arizona held on April 25, 2023. I further certify the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.



Sarah M. Siep, City Clerk

