



City of Prescott

City Council - Study Session

May 28, 2024 | 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
Connie Cantelme - Mayor Pro Tem
Lois Fruhwirth - Councilwoman
Ted Gambogi - Councilman
Brandon Montoya - Councilman
Eric Moore - Councilman
Cathey Rusing - Councilmember

3. DISCUSSION

- A. Presentation & Discussion Regarding an Annual Update from Central Yavapai Metropolitan Planning Organization (CYMPO).

CYMPO Executive Director Vinny Gallegos provided a presentation to Council regarding the organization's annual update for the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services.

Mission:

- * Use regional leadership in planning and promoting of a comprehensive multi-modal transportation system - regional, leadership, planning, transportation

What is CYMPO:

- * 2000 census formed CYMPO
- * 2003 AZ Governor established CYMPO
- * 143,000 citizens served over 401 square miles

Transit Manager Pedro Rodriguez continued the discussion regarding public transportation updates. In the area there are a number of proposals and advancements happening in public transportation. Beginning in 2020 the phased transit plan was approved to include Prescott, Prescott Valley, Prescott North and overall connectivity.

Microtransit Zone Phase (2):

- * 3.5 square mile zone
- * Monday-Friday 6 am-8 pm
- * \$2 or \$1 fair/ride

- * Pre-book or on-demand rides
- * Call 866-YAV-TRAN or use the mobile app

Mayor Goode asked what determines the amount of the ride fee.

Mr. Rodriguez responded that \$2 is for general adult, and \$1 is for children over 5-years old, veterans and disabled. He continued the presentation with an overview of the transit system ridership since service began.

Trip Purposes Prescott:

- * Shopping 25%
- * Other 22%
- * Employment 20%
- * Education, Medical & Recreation 11%

Mr. Gallegos continued with an overview of regional transit partners, with \$3.6 million invested:

- * Yavapai County Health Department
- * Yavapai College
- * Prescott College
- * USVets
- * Dignity Health
- * Prescott Downtown Partnership
- * NoCo District
- * Prescott Chamber of Commerce
- * Prescott Valley Chamber
- * NACOG

Mayor Goode asked about a business plan that CYMPO may have in order to reach a nexus for sustainability and additional revenues on this public transit program, because while they have been able to cut the average cost per trip has decreased it is still higher than the cost of a ride.

Mr. Gallegos responded that given the purchases of vehicles that has helped to reduce the cost per ride. He added that the energy being put into stakeholders and partners in the community, it is creating a sustainable program for everyone.

Mr. Rodriguez added that funding comes to this region through a formula grant program that helps to cover operating costs at 50%, and CYMPO's local match is just 20% which is extremely helpful.

Councilmember Rusing asked how many vehicles a day this program is getting off the roads.

Mr. Rodriguez responded that this is still a demonstration program, to this point they haven't seen ridership stay at a consistent level so he wouldn't want to speak to that yet.

Councilman Moore asked how information is shared with the public that this service is available.

Mr. Rodriguez responded that there is a call center as well as a YavConnect mobile app, he added that there are social media posts done regularly as well.

Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme commented that this is an "on-demand" system at this time, but asked if there is a plan to have this be a bus service type of program in the future given its popularity.

Mr. Rodriguez responded that currently there would be a significant level of infrastructure that would be required to set up a bus service program, this service allows CYMPO the opportunity to really assess what the needs are and gather data to determine what this will look like in the long term. With public transportation you have to look at the full economic impact.

Councilmember Rusing asked if ADOT provides any funding for these types of projects.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that they work directly with the federal government regarding funding.

Mr. Gallegos added that CYMPO adopted a business plan in 2020 which analyzed the region and it's needs related to all types of transportation and it will continue to be updated. He reviewed the CYMPO Planning Area map which covers 401 square miles as well as the Executive Board members.

CYMPO Planner Brynne Stotler continued the presentation regarding the 2025-2050 Regional Transportation Plan. This plan reviews transportation performance and needs, transportation investments, funding opportunities, updated every five years and plans for the next 25 years.

What's Happening in Roadway Planning:

- * Sundog Connector Design Concept and environmental review - currently no political will to move forward with construction so it is currently shelved until further reviews are done

- * SR69 Studies - nine segments are being studied/17 miles from Dewey-Humboldt to Prescott, identification and prioritization of segment improvements and coordination across all jurisdictions and ADOT for optimization

Councilmember Rusing asked about connectivity in the northern part of Prescott for connections to Chino Valley and other areas, she also asked why the Sundog Connector is still included in the city's General Plan.

Ms. Stotler responded that is part of the overall planning documents within the 24 regionally important roadways. The 25-year forward plan looks at expansion and preservation, they look at ways to optimize the movement of people throughout the region.

Community Development Director Chelsea Walton addressed the Council and added the General Plan is currently going through an update process. The Sundog Connector is not currently included specifically as they are outside what

has been entitled and approved to date. CYMPO is part of the general plan and referenced within it.

ACT-UP (Active Transportation Plan):

- * Inventory bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- * School campuses and one-mile walking/biking radii around schools
- * Multi-modal communities are healthy communities
- * Funding for transportation choices

Councilman Montoya expressed his excitement and support for this program and asked what the results of the surveys have been so far.

Ms. Stotler responded that responses have been minimal and she would like to see more involvement in this area.

Councilman Moore commented that one of his priorities is the connection between Willow Creek to Ruth Street which is adjacent to the High School and there are no sidewalks, he asked if there is funding available for those types of projects through CYMPO.

Ms. Stotler stated that these types of programs create opportunities for those funding mechanisms.

Mayor Goode commented that there are many people who don't participate in these surveys which ultimately lead to policy, it is important to participate in these so that when decisions are made it reflects the interests of many.

Councilmember Rusing echoed the need for sidewalks in the community.

Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme asked how projects are rated.

Ms. Stotler commented that the long range plan helps to determine priority levels for various projects.

Regional Transportation Safety Plan:

- * Five years of public safety crash reporting (2017-2021)
- * Crash data analysis and prioritized projects
- * Safety grants being developed based on this plan
- * Addendum includes 2022 and 2023 within the analysis

Mr. Gallegos continued with an overview of regional environmental initiatives including regional trails plan and regional wildlife corridor study.

Arizona Rural Transportation Summit:

- * CYMPO will host this year's annual conference
- * October 16-18 at the Prescott Resort
- * Rural AZ Legislative Transportation Agenda
- * State and local legislators, staff

Mayor Goode opened the floor to public comment.

Member of the public Dan Pryic addressed the Council regarding the Sundog Connector project and his hopes for more viable public engagement of public engagement. He feels it should not be mentioned in the 25-year plan. Also he suggested that all regional partners should have a link for the public transit.

Member of the public Robert Forte addressed the Council in opposition to the Sundog Connector project, there is a lack of political will for it.

Member of the public Gary Anderson addressed the Council regarding the elimination of the Sundog Connector from the 2025 General Plan and his hopes that it is removed from the CYMPO plan as well. There is overwhelmingly negative feedback regarding the project. He also commented on necessary emergency escape routes throughout the community.

Member of the public Michael Parrish addressed the Council regarding the Sundog Connector and the fact that no citizens want it, he is happy to hear that they realize there is no political will for it and hopes it doesn't come up again.

Member of the public Joanne Oellers addressed the Council as a representative of Save the Dells, they are happy to hear about CYPMO's plans around wildlife corridors and the importance of looking at the corridors in the area to prevent wildlife and vehicle collisions.

This item was for discussion only, no formal action will be taken.

B. Presentation & Discussion Regarding Watson Woods Preserve Conservation Easement.

Water Resource & Environmental Services Manager Brian Ruiz provided a presentation to Council regarding the Watson Woods Riparian Preserve Conservation Easement. He also introduced Michael Byrd with Prescott Creeks, who would be assisting with the presentation.

Description & History:

- * Currently 126 acres
- * Proposed Preserve 160 acres
- * Created in 1995 through a lease with the city, in 2020 it was renewed for another 25 year term and is managed through Prescott Creeks
- * 100 year flood rate - 20,600 cfs and subject to substantial flooding
- * Public utilities are in the area, including two gas lines, two water lines, sewer lines and power lines

Councilman Moore asked when the centralization of the wastewater facility occurs, if it would impact anything within the preserve.

Mr. Ruiz responded that it would not.

Prescott Creeks:

- * Prescott Creeks is a not-for-profit organization - established in 1990 with a mission to achieve healthy watersheds and clean waters in central Arizona for the benefit of people and wildlife
- * Projects of partnership with the city - Granit Creek Trail (Greenway), Granite Creek Cleanup (since 2007), and Watson Woods Riparian Preserve

Riparian Preserve Ecological Restoration:

- * Goals - enhance and restore creek function and riparian habitat, create additional riparian habitat and educate and involve community members
- * Project Details - five year project (2009-2013), \$1.5 million in funding through the AZ Water Protection Fund Grant, AZ Department of Environmental Quality Grants and City of Prescott

In-Lieu Fee Mitigation:

- * Preserve is part on an in-lieu fee project that provides mitigation credits to permittees that cause unavoidable impacts to jurisdictional waters under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, as part of this the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has directed Prescott Creeks to develop plans for the preserve site and establishment of a site protection instrument in the form of a conservation easement is a required element of the plans
- * 5 programs in Arizona - Prescott Creeks Preservation Association, Arizona Game & Fish Department, Pima County Regional Flood Control, Tucson Audubon Society and La Paz County Endangered Species Fund
- * Administered by USACE and EPA
- * 2013 Establishing Instrument

Benefits of Conservation Easement:

- * Economic
- * Recreation
- * Conservation/Environmental - protects and improves surface water quality through absorption and filtration prior to reaching Watson Lake

Why a Conservation Easement:

- * Compensatory mitigation must be permanent
- * Conservation easement ensures permanent protection
- * Part of required plan components for in-lieu
- * Goals - enhance and restore function of Granite Creek to improve water quality and increase biological diversity, protect and foster riparian habitats through invasive species removal

Mr. Ruiz continued the presentation regarding the long and ongoing relationship between the city and Prescott Creeks. Establishing a conservation easement will limit what the city can do in the area.

Challenges & Solutions:

- * Preserve does not include entire riparian area - expanded boundary
- * 125.81 acres - 160 acres
- * Bringing the easement closer to Watson Lake
- * Existing and future infrastructure needs (city of Prescott and third parties) - overall project boundary segmented as a 127 acre conservation easement area

and 33 acre exclusion zones which will allow for a lease agreement and flexibility to address existing and future infrastructure needs

- * Governing Documents - conservation easement, new lease, and record of survey
- * Complicated Management & Wildland Urban Interface - joint management and fire management plans (manage day-to-day activities, establish management direction, identify roles and responsibilities and be updated on a five-year cycle)
- * Concern for negative impacts to water volumes - hydrologic evaluation completed in March 2024 and the proposed project has a generally benign impact with respect to average annual water volumes

Long Term In-Lieu Program Sponsor Planning & Program Account:

- * The site protection instrument (conservation easement) is perpetual
- * Prescott Creeks responsible for perpetual management
- * Prescott Creeks is a not-for-profit corporation
- * Board of Directors fiduciary duty
- * Professional Staff - supporting contractors, Great Expectations Business Services, Slater & Rutherford, Natural Channel Design Engineering
- * Bylaws direct governance
- * ILF program may be closed only after Prescott Creeks completes all project mitigation, maintenance and reporting obligations are complete
- * Conservation easement may be transferred to another qualified party after program closure
- * Receives permittee credit sale deposits, including advance credits
- * All deposits and interest to be used only for ILF project and Prescott Creeks administrative costs
- * Provides financial assurances required by 40 C.F.R. 332.4(c)(13)
- * Only Prescott Creeks and the US Army Corps of Engineers may direct funds
- * Detailed annual report and credit ledger report by Sept. 30
- * Program account opened with FDIC insured institution

Project Cost Summary (Completed):

- * Phase I Environmental Site Assessment- \$3,300
- * Mineral Deed Report - \$1,000
- * Hydrologic Evaluation Report - \$32,340
- * Legal Opinion on Water Rights - \$6,240

Project Cost Summary (Future):

- * Updated ESA - \$4,000
- * Conservation Easement Escrow - \$2,000
- * Title Insurance - \$5,000
- * Miscellaneous Filing Fees - \$4,000

Councilmember Rusing asked who would be covering the ongoing costs.

Mr. Ruiz responded that incoming cost recovery through mitigation cost coverage will help with any ongoing costs, he added that the costs reviewed were for one-time fee amounts.

Mr. Byrd added that ongoing costs will be covered by credit sales.

Councilman Moore commented that Prescott Creeks will be managing this property for the city, it is a nationally designated bird area and there are only 3% of those areas remaining in Arizona.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth asked if there are any other risks or concerns that have not been addressed.

City Attorney Joseph Young responded that all of the areas of concern have been mitigated and it will ultimately be up to Council.

Councilman Montoya thanked staff and Prescott Creeks for the presentation, he added that making sure the access to utility lines moving forward is maintained so future needs are easy to address and staff has made sure to look at that closely. What this does environmentally is important.

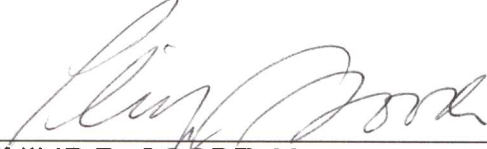
This item was for discussion only, no formal action was taken.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Goode adjourned the meeting at 3:03 p.m.

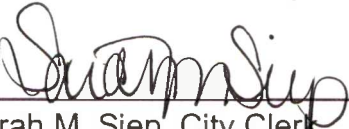
ATTEST:


SARAH M. SIEP, City Clerk


PHILIP R. GOODE, Mayor

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 May 28, 2024. I further certify the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.


Sarah M. Siep, City Clerk