



## Minutes of Ridgecrest's City Organization and Services Committee

May 10, 2007  
5:00 p.m.

**City Council Conference Room  
100 West California Avenue  
Ridgecrest, California 93555**

**CALL TO ORDER – 5:01p.m.**

**PRESENT:** Council Members: Vice Mayor Tom Wiknich and Council Member Dan Clark  
Planning Commissioners: Lois Beres, Nellavan Jeglum

**STAFF:** Dennis Speer, Public Works Director; Ron Strand, Deputy Chief of Police;  
Planning Commissioner; Ann Taylor, Administrative Analyst III; Starla Shaver,  
Administrative Analyst I; Eva Peterson, Executive Secretary

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** Nathaniel Lidle, Daily Independent; Steve Rowland, LSC Consultant

**ABSENT:** Chip Holloway, Mayor; Mike Biddlingmeier, Planning Commissioner

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Moved by Vice Mayor Wiknich, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lois Beres

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Moved by Lois Beres, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dan Clark

### **ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES:**

- T. Wiknich gave a very brief description of why LSC Transportation Consultants (LSC) were at the meeting today, i.e. Kern COG's deadline - City staff had volunteered to assist in past meeting - and T. Wiknich mentioned that LSC presented various transit alternatives to City Org at previous meeting for City staff review.
- LSC Transportation Consultant, S. Rowland provided the committee and attendees with a presentation on their revised transit alternative and their recommendations for the Ridgecrest Public Transit System. S. Rowland began by stating that the key issue is cost of the LSC recommended proposal. Therefore, he stated that they are now looking at a phased-in approach with a "Flexible-Fixed-Route" system that would contain 4 routes (Green, Brown, Yellow and Red lines). The 4 routes would be developed and would have the ability to deviate off of the fixed route system. A bus can pull off of its scheduled route in order accommodate for a "Demand-Response" pick up. This system will also include a "Time Transfer" portion where all the buses will meet at one location.

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- Phase I - 2008 thru 2010  
This would be a flexible service running the buses on a “Flexible-Fixed-Route” during the peak periods and a “Demand-Response” service during non-peak hours. The cost is projected at \$928,000 (\$884,000 cost now). Local cost \$464,000 at 10% fare rate.
- Phase II – 2011  
This would again be a flexible service increasing the “Flexible-Fixed-Route” during peak periods and cutting back on “Demand-Response”. The cost is projected at \$1.3M. Local cost \$650,000. FTA will pay ½ the cost and Section 5311 should provide additional funding source. S. Rowland stated he was looking at federal funding vs. state funding on these projections. This plan calls for 4 buses to operate within city limits and 2 vans that would handle ADA calls and out of “Flexible-Fixed-Route” area calls. When polled, 65% of RTS are able to walk to a bus stop that is ¼ mile away. City staff questioned S. Rowland’s comment regarding the fifty percent Section 5311 federal funding money stating that the City of Ridgecrest has never received that much money. S. Shaver asked if we need to purchase two (2) additional buses and S. Rowland stated that at this time, there is no need to have additional buses for 4 hours of peak time service.

D. Clark asked about the “Red Route” to the base. S. Rowland stated the bus would only go to the gate and after that base would have to provide arrangements for bus service inside the base.

D. Clark questioned what population base LSC was working with? S. Rowland stated they based their figures on current census data and on practical and planning services experience. D. Clark stated that growth figures could enhance ridership.

T. Wiknich questioned how we would serve outlying areas? S. Rowland stated that the “Demand-Response” system could be used for outlying areas and that the County could reimburse the City for the costs.

- Phase III – 2011  
This phase would be a full service “Flexible-Fixed-Route” running M-F from 6am-6pm. Weekends would remain on the “Demand-Response” service for all phases. S. Rowland stated that LSC has been retained to develop a Transit Plan for the City of Ridgecrest. The City is free to adopt this plan or not. S. Rowland presented the plan to the Sr. Center today and all the seniors present liked the plan and stated they were willing to walk to a bus stop. They stated they liked our transit drivers however, they did not like waiting with the “Demand-Response” system we have in place; they want a transit service with more regularity. S. Rowland stated the runs presented will take approximately one hour - time was built into the runs for flexing off. In case of emergencies, i.e. accident or traffic, the City could have a floater bus in place.

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T. Wiknich questioned if the study addressed declining ridership? S. Rowland stated, yes, and that COG will have the final document. S. Rowland also stated that in their study transfers are free however, cost of transfers would be a decision the City would have to make.

N. Jeglum questioned how the routes were determined? S. Rowland stated that they questioned riders, drivers, reps from social service agencies, seniors and people with disabilities to determine routes. D. Clark agreed that he has heard from seniors in the community and that they would like to have fixed routes.

D. Clark questioned the annual increase and S. Rowland clarified that the annual increase for this program would be 5%.

T. Wiknich questioned if the bus stops needed to be in place to implement the program? S. Rowland stated, no. He stated the bus stops could be covered by federal funds and the City could probably build six bus stop shelters per year; placement of bus stop shelters to be determined by the City. Uncovered bus stops can be placed by retail establishments and many stores allow customers to wait inside. D. Speer stated there are ADA regulations and compliance for bus stop shelters. S. Rowland agreed and stated it would be up to the City to determine where the need for the bus stops would be.

D. Clark questioned the \$1M cost of Phase II and the concerns associated with those costs and if they are incorporated in the final document? S. Rowland stated that ridership, operating costs, and inflation costs are all incorporated in the final document.

D. Clark questioned if the final document will look at some scenarios where we will be increasing or reducing ridership and how that affects the program? S. Rowland stated LSC took into account how it will increase ridership and how it will increase cost of services.

D. Clark questioned the lifespan of the 6 buses that we have? S. Shaver stated it is about 4 years. D. Speer stated the dial-a-ride system that we have is harder on our buses. Currently we have an 80% match on buses purchased. Buses cost the City 20%, making our share approximately \$20,000. S. Rowland stated the plan presented to the City focuses on the operating cost of the Transit system.

N. Jeglum likes the proposed plan and believes the plan would increase ridership. D. Speer stated demo routes could be made available to the public. S. Rowland stated that a marketing plan to civic organizations and seniors would have to take place.

S. Shaver asked if S. Rowland addresses our current 4% fare box issue? S. Rowland stated, yes, that it is due to the existing service – waiting too long for service.

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D. Clark asked what concerns do we need to have to be aware of? S. Rowland answered that the price of gasoline and inflation are always an issue. Barring nothing catastrophic were to happen, this program is conservative. Council can inform the public that this is what the people want and that it is a low cost conservative method. This system is in place at Lake Havasu where it has been a boom to the retail sector. Studies have shown that this type of routing helps foster economic development in a community.

T. Wiknich asked if 9 months into the program a problem arises, a transmission goes out, or a bus is in an accident, etc., what happens then? S. Rowland answered that the City could either lease a replacement vehicle or temporarily reduce their route runs and keep the public informed.

D. Clark asked about liability with this program? S. Rowland stated that insurance rates do not increase with this system. D. Speer agreed that there should be no increase, if so, the issue may lie within our insurance carrier. L Beres stated she has heard this program would increase insurance rates. D. Speer stated that based on his experience, from a risk perspective, a dial-a-ride system is a greater risk than a fixed route. S. Rowland agreed that the "Demand-Response" system is typically higher due to the fact that many times this system is dealing with people with disabilities. D. Clark asked S. Rowland to incorporate insurance information into the final document.

**Future Agenda Items -      Big Rig Parking  
   Election Issues**

**Next Meeting -                June 14th at 5:00pm.**

**Adjourned -                 6:10p.m.**