

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

December 11, 1996

The Transportation Committee of the City of Mesa met at Robson Elementary School, 2122 East 8th Avenue, on December 11, 1996 at 7:03 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Pat Gilbert, Chairman
John Giles
Dennis Kavanaugh

COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

C.K. Luster
Cindy Barris
Glenn Gorke
Mike Hutchinson
Barbara Jones
Melissa Jones
Sharon Joyce

STAFF PRESENT (CONT.)

Harry Kent
Peter Knudson
Ron Krosting
Keith Nath
Denise Samuel
Clarence Walth

Chairman Gilbert welcomed the citizens to the meeting and thanked each for their attendance. Chairman Gilbert introduced members of the Committee and City staff present.

Senior Civil Engineer Peter Knudson referred to diagrams and described the proposed Gilbert Road improvement project. Mr. Knudson provided an update concerning the public hearing process and advised that comments from previous meetings, along with staff proposed actions, have been distributed to individuals throughout affected neighborhoods. Mr. Knudson briefly noted tentative time frames for the project.

Chairman Gilbert outlined the anticipated meeting structure and requested cooperation in adhering to speaking procedures. Chairman Gilbert encouraged individuals to submit written comments if unable to participate in the public hearing.

1. Conduct a public hearing on the proposed improvements to Gilbert Road between Southern Avenue and the Consolidated Canal.

Chairman Gilbert announced that now is the time and place for a public hearing on the proposed improvements to Gilbert Road between Southern Avenue and the Consolidated Canal.

Merle McKinnon, 1949 East Dana Avenue, expressed the opinion that development of Dana Avenue as a collector street will detrimentally impact the quality of life and safety within the neighborhood. Mr. McKinnon stated support for an 8' separation wall at Gilbert Road.

Ben Rodriguez, 1952 East Dana Avenue, noted incidents presently occurring near his home and commented that an entrance from Gilbert Road to Dana Avenue will further escalate traffic problems and jeopardize the safety of his family.

Tom Laborde, 2010 East Aspen Avenue, spoke in favor of closing Aspen Avenue and indicated a willingness to sell his property to construct a cul-de-sac.

Barbara Sutphin, 1910 East Marilyn Avenue, requested that Marilyn Avenue be closed and a cul-de-sac constructed. Ms. Sutphin advised that an individual may be willing to sell his property to construct the cul-de-sac.

Charles Lauer, 1936 East Dana Avenue, stated the opinion that the improvement project is unnecessary and suggested that consideration be given to an interchange on the Superstition Freeway at Lindsay Road to assist in reducing traffic along Gilbert Road. Mr. Lauer requested that Dana Avenue not be developed as a collector street.

Jeanne Schmidt, 1955 East 7th Avenue, representing homeowners within the 1900 block of East 7th Avenue, asked that her street be closed with a barrier wall and cul-de-sac should Gilbert Road be widened. Ms. Schmidt requested that a traffic signal be installed at 6th Avenue to facilitate access to Gilbert Road.

Rita Vest, 1931 East 7th Avenue, reiterated comments expressed by Ms. Schmidt and advised that an individual in the neighborhood is willing to sell his property to construct a cul-de-sac on 7th Avenue. Ms. Vest spoke in favor of installing a traffic light at 6th Avenue.

Patty Laborde, 2010 East Aspen Avenue, spouse of a previous speaker, expressed concern pertaining to safety and the development of Aspen Avenue as a collector street. Ms. Laborde stated the opinion that numerous openings onto Gilbert Road would not be feasible and that additional vehicles along Aspen Avenue would increase the number of traffic accidents. Ms. Laborde noted a need for traffic signals.

Mary Frey, 1933 East Dana Avenue, said that significant traffic noise presently exists within her neighborhood and development of Dana Avenue as a collector street would intensify the problem. Ms. Frey reported that residents within her block support construction of a wall and cul-de-sac to eliminate access to Gilbert Road.

Angel Hiley, 1904 East Dana Avenue, stated that vehicles often do not observe the existing stop sign near her home and commented that increased traffic resulting from access to/from Gilbert Road would pose a safety risk to children in the neighborhood. Ms. Hiley requested construction of a block wall and cul-de-sac on Dana Avenue, noting that a homeowner is willing to sell property to enable closure of the street.

Steve Silvestri, 2016 East Aspen Avenue, said that he supports his neighbors in requesting the construction of a cul-de-sac on Aspen Avenue. Mr. Silvestri expressed concern regarding access onto Gilbert Road from the McDonald's restaurant located at the intersection of Main Street and Gilbert Road.

Greg Johnson, 832 South Ashbrook, referred to written materials distributed by the City to neighborhood residents and spoke relative to the following comments cited from businesses and residents:

3. Santa Fe Square Shopping Center, Northeast Corner of Gilbert Road and Southern Avenue.

Requested a traffic signal at the left turn provided in the original median layout.

This entrance is too close to the Southern Avenue intersection to warrant a traffic signal. City staff proposed an additional left-turn bay and a traffic signal at the northern entrance to the shopping center if the center owners would align their driveway with Emerald Street on the west side of Gilbert Road.

Mr. Johnson reported that the driveway provides egress from the mall but does not provide ingress into the mall for traffic southbound on Gilbert Road.

9. Three additional streets were requested to be closed to Gilbert Road: Vine Avenue, west of Gilbert Road, and Aspen Avenue and Enid Avenue, east of Gilbert Road.

The residents on Vine Avenue were told of the criteria established from Comment No. 8. (close 7th Avenue, Diamond Avenue, and Delta Avenue, west of Gilbert Road). At this time, no additional response has been received from these residents. It should be noted that Aspen and Enid Avenues function as residential collectors and closure would significantly disrupt local traffic flows.

Mr. Johnson advised that residents along Enid Avenue are not requesting a cul-de-sac but favor construction that would prevent left turns from Enid Avenue onto Gilbert Road. Mr. Johnson expressed the opinion that additional traffic lanes would significantly increase the number of accidents.

11. A request was received to close the driveway entrance to the Santa Fe Shopping Center off of Enid Avenue, east of Gilbert Road.

Staff discussed this possibility with the shopping center owners. The center's owners were opposed to this because this driveway provided needed access to the rear of the center. Staff proposes to keep the driveway.

Mr. Johnson suggested that the driveway entrance to the Santa Fe Shopping Center from Enid Avenue be relocated to the rear of the stores.

12. Numerous comments were received concerning a proposed 8'-high wall separating Gilbert Road from residential properties. The requests were to: a) increase the wall to 10', b) leave existing walls along Gilbert Road in place, c) curve ends to the walls at side streets, and d) avoid specific properties with the opposed utility/landscape pockets which would encroach into backyards.

Staff proposes to maintain the wall at 8' tall, leave the existing walls in place where specifically requested by the property owners, design a curved-end treatment for the walls, and work closely with property owners on the placement of the utility/landscape pockets to minimize disruption to residential properties.

Mr. Johnson questioned why sound barrier walls are not feasible, noting the increase in noise levels as traffic continues to escalate.

Shirlene McNair, 2037 East Aspen Avenue, advised that she has submitted petitions on behalf of neighborhood residents opposing Aspen Avenue as a collector street and instead requesting the construction of a cul-de-sac. Ms. McNair cited concerns relative to safety and decreased property values. Ms. McNair noted the willingness of an individual to sell property to accommodate the cul-de-sac.

Mary Lou St. Cyr, 724 South Kachina Lane, expressed the opinion that a cul-de-sac on 7th, Diamond, Delta, and possibly Marilyn Avenues will further increase traffic on her street. Ms. St. Cyr spoke in favor of staff's original plan, including medians, which she believes will maintain the integrity of the neighborhood.

Sandy Bailey, 1928 East Dana Avenue, stated support for the construction of a cul-de-sac on Dana Avenue. Ms. Bailey commented that development as a collector street would increase crime and traffic (thereby jeopardizing the safety of children) and would decrease property values. Ms. Bailey suggested that consideration be given to alternative means to reduce traffic on Gilbert Road, such as an interchange along the Superstition Freeway at Lindsay Road.

Steven Vickers, 450 South Acacia, resident and service manager for apartments located near Broadway and Gilbert Roads, noted current difficulties relative to access to Gilbert Road and asked if plans exist to install a traffic signal in the vicinity.

Virginia Kern, representing East Mesa Animal Hospital, 430 South Gilbert Road, expressed the opinion that improvements to alternative streets such as Val Vista Drive would be more appropriate, given the limited number of businesses located in such areas. Ms. Kern commented concerning interference with business activity caused by current construction work at intersections.

Ed Littrell, 1918 East Diamond Avenue, advised that neighbors have submitted a petition in favor of a barrier wall and cul-de-sac on Diamond Avenue. Mr. Littrell reported that houses located at the intersection of Gilbert Road and Diamond Avenue are currently for sale.

Robin Bush, 1909 East Dana Avenue, said that vehicles often do not observe the existing stop sign in his neighborhood. Mr. Bush stated opposition to development of Dana Avenue as a through street and spoke in favor of constructing a cul-de-sac. Mr. Bush reiterated the willingness of an individual to sell his home to facilitate the cul-de-sac.

Mike Gadberry, 1917 East Dana Avenue, Mesa police officer, indicated support for the construction of a cul-de-sac on Dana Avenue. Mr. Gadberry noted the significant number of children in the neighborhood and commented that access onto Gilbert Road would increase problems relative to traffic safety/crime and would generate assessments. Mr. Gadberry

suggested utilizing Williams as a subdivision entrance and possibly installing a traffic signal in a manner similar to the arrangement west of Mesa High School.

Edward Garcia, 916 South Ashbrook, advised that he lives in close proximity to Enid Avenue and Gilbert Road. Mr. Garcia related questions specific to his property (to be reviewed with staff following the public hearing). Mr. Garcia commented that the proposed project represents an inconvenience to residents and will detrimentally impact neighborhoods through increased traffic and decreased property values.

Sue Kocherhans, representing Orange Grove Apartments, 111 North Gilbert Road, expressed the opinion that the bicycle lane adjacent to the apartment complex is unnecessary, the "No U-Turn" sign will confuse drivers and generate increased traffic through the apartment complex, and the tapered street near the canal will continue to cause traffic accidents.

Manuel Sandoval, 840 South Ashbrook, referred to enumerated items included in the written materials distributed by the City to neighborhood residents and commented as follows:

3. Santa Fe Square Shopping Center, Northeast Corner of Gilbert Road and Southern Avenue.

Requested a traffic signal at the left turn provided in the original median layout.

This entrance is too close to the Southern Avenue intersection to warrant a traffic signal. City staff proposed an additional left-turn bay and a traffic signal at the northern entrance to the shopping center if the center owners would align their driveway with Emerald Street on the west side of Gilbert Road.

Mr. Sandoval indicated agreement with the suggestion to align the shopping center driveway with Emerald Street on the west side of Gilbert Road.

9. Three additional streets were requested to be closed to Gilbert Road: Vine Avenue, west of Gilbert Road, and Aspen Avenue and Enid Avenue, east of Gilbert Road.

The residents on Vine Avenue were told of the criteria established from Comment No. 8. (close 7th Avenue, Diamond Avenue, and Delta Avenue, west of Gilbert Road). At this time, no additional response has been received from these residents. It should be noted that Aspen and Enid Avenue function as residential collectors and closure would significantly disrupt local traffic flows.

Citing safety concerns posed by an increase in the number of traffic lanes, Mr. Sandoval clarified that residents have not requested that Enid Avenue be closed but have asked that the median be constructed to allow only northbound traffic on Gilbert Road to turn east onto Enid Avenue and westbound traffic on Enid Avenue to turn north onto Gilbert Road.

11. A request was received to close the driveway entrance to the Santa Fe Shopping Center off of Enid Avenue, east of Gilbert Road.

Staff discussed this possibility with the shopping center owners. The center's owners were opposed to this because this driveway provided needed access to the rear of the center. Staff proposes to keep the driveway.

Mr. Sandoval stated that in addition to the request to close the driveway entrance to the Santa Fe Shopping Center from Enid Avenue, east of Gilbert Road, residents are asking that an entrance be constructed near Golden's Health & Racquet Club.

12. Numerous comments were received concerning a proposed 8'-high wall separating Gilbert Road from residential properties. The requests were to: a) increase the wall to 10', b) leave existing walls along Gilbert Road in place, c) curve ends to the walls at side streets, and d) avoid specific properties with the opposed utility/landscape pockets which would encroach into backyards.

Staff proposes to maintain the wall at 8' tall, leave the existing walls in place where specifically requested by the property owners, design a curved-end treatment for the walls, and work closely with property owners on the placement of the utility/landscape pockets to minimize disruption to residential properties.

Mr. Sandoval spoke regarding significant noise levels along Gilbert Road and requested that the City consider the installation of sound barrier walls.

17. Eliminate first entrance north of Southern Avenue into the Santa Fe Shopping Center.

This was discussed with the shopping center owners, who strongly opposed this. Staff is not proposing to eliminate this drive.

Mr. Sandoval suggested that vacant land near the intersection of Southern and Gilbert Roads be utilized to construct a turning lane.

Karis Webb, 1923 East Dana Avenue, a 12-year-old, spoke in opposition to the installation of a traffic signal on Dana Avenue and development as a collector street, given the number of children in the neighborhood and the potential for increased traffic and decreased property values.

Mike Mooney, 1923 East Dana Avenue, advised that he has a visually impaired son and that his wife's daughter was involved in a fatal traffic accident near a six-lane street in Tucson. Mr. Mooney stated that an existing stop sign in his neighborhood is ineffective and that designation of Dana Avenue as a through street will increase traffic incidents. Mr. Mooney expressed the opinion that widening Gilbert Road is not an appropriate method to alleviate traffic and suggested alternative means such as an interchange on the Superstition Freeway at Lindsay Road.

Bernadine Mooney, 1923 East Dana Avenue, spouse of the previous speaker, commented that development of Dana Avenue as a collector street will pose safety risks to the many children that reside in her neighborhood. Ms. Mooney spoke in favor of a barrier wall and construction of a cul-de-sac on Dana Avenue.

Jarvis Carter, 1628 East Jarvis Avenue, suggested that a solid median be maintained along Gilbert Road from Main Street to Broadway Road, commenting that numerous traffic lights at intersections will impede rather than improve traffic flow. Mr. Carter recommended that the City consider alternatives to the proposed project, such as additional exit ramps from the Superstition Freeway to other streets.

Pat Schmidhuber, 2012 East Birchwood Avenue, advised that he would be willing to sell his property for the construction of a cul-de-sac on Birchwood in an effort to improve neighborhood traffic safety.

Gabriel Contreras, 2011 East Balsam, stated support for the construction of a sound barrier wall and, preferably, a cul-de-sac on Balsam.

Marnita Hill, 1948 East 2nd Avenue, noted the number of businesses, churches, and schools (and associated activities) in her neighborhood. Ms. Hill spoke concerning the importance of access to the Beeline Highway but suggested that careful consideration be given to the impact of the Gilbert Road project in its entirety.

Christopher O'Barr, 1803 East Dana Avenue, reported that vehicles currently travel at excessive speeds along Williams, a thoroughfare from Main Street to Broadway Road. Mr. O'Barr commented that development of Dana Avenue as a collector street will result in increased traffic incidents.

Shawnda Bowden, 1917 East Dana Avenue, stated that the existing traffic flow is significant along Dana Avenue and that no sidewalks have been installed.

Terry Davis, 2011 East Birchwood, noted benefits of constructing cul-de-sacs but expressed concern relative to increased traffic at streets that have no cul-de-sac.

Arthur Blecha, 1956 East Vine Avenue, advised that because of the frontage road, he presently accesses Gilbert Road via 6th Avenue. Mr. Blecha spoke in favor of constructing a barrier wall and cul-de-sac on Vine Avenue, particularly given the limited length of the street. Mr. Blecha stated that he is willing to sell his property to facilitate the cul-de-sac if necessary.

There being no other citizens present to speak on the issue, Chairman Gilbert declared the public hearing closed.

2. Adjournment.

Chairman Gilbert thanked everyone for their attendance and participation in the meeting. Chairman Gilbert advised that City staff will be available to answer any specific questions pertaining to the improvement project.

Without objection, the Transportation Committee meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Carried unanimously.

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I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Transportation Committee meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 11 day of December 1996. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 23rd day of December 1996

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK