

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

APPROVED

HELD ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2015

TAB Members Present

Bruce Hallsted, Chairperson
Troy Peterson, Vice Chairperson
Michael Schmidt
Ron Wilson
David Camp
Vern Mathern
Louis Stephen

TAB Members Absent

Ian Bennett
Kay Henry
Jennifer Love
Ian Murray

Others Present

Erik Guderian
Sabine Ellis
Renate Ehm
Jim Hash
Lt. Michael Beaton

Vice Chairperson Bruce Hallsted called the September 15, 2015 Transportation Advisory Board meeting to order at 5:26 pm.

Item 1. Approval of the minutes of the Transportation Advisory Board meeting held on June 16th, 2015.

Chairperson Bruce Hallsted moved to approve the minutes as written. Board Member David Camp seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 2. Acknowledge incoming Board Members, Vern Mathern and Louis Stephen.

Item 3. Items from citizens present.

None.

Item 4. Hear an update of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Pathways Projects.

Transportation Deputy Director Erik Guderian introduced himself and Planner II Jim Hash to the board. Mr. Guderian then proceeded to provide the board with an update on the bicycle and pedestrian pathway projects in the City of Mesa as was provided to City Council at a recent Study Session. He presented the predominant vision of what the bicycle and pedestrian pathway plan entails and provided background on the 2012 Bicycle Master Plan. Mr. Guderian went on to explain that the recently completed Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan laid the groundwork for the network as presented. He acknowledged that priorities have changed as a result of engaging with the public and elected officials, however the program is still moving forward. Mr. Guderian discussed the intent of the plan to provide access to residents to destinations and regional connections via the bicycle and pedestrian pathways. He

explained that the City is looking at utilizing existing rights of way or shared rights of way with the Salt River Project (SRP), Roosevelt Water Conservation District (RWCD) and Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) to keep costs down. Mr. Guderian went on to present the maps on the forecasted projects, both funded and unfunded. He explained that funding could come from Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) dollars and through the City's Bond program.

Mr. Guderian went on to describe the first area of focus as being in northwest Mesa. The Rio Salado Pathway will connect to Tempe's recently completed pathway beneath the Loop 101 and Loop 202. Mesa's portion of the path will connect to the Cubs spring training facility and will be under construction this fall. The City anticipates completion in time for spring training 2016. The second section of the Rio Salado Pathway will eventually connect to Dobson Road.

Mr. Guderian described the West Mesa Connector project as unique. He explained that the City is looking to use more than just existing canals and ADOT rights of way. The path will be built on Country Club Drive and Alma School Road, taking a lane of traffic to create a separated bikeway. Once completed, one can travel from Baseline Road along the Consolidated Canal and travel all the way into Tempe and further. Mr. Guderian showed a rendering of the separated bike lane and cycle track with the median between the cycle track and the traffic lanes. He also explained there is a lot of interest in creating loops to appeal to the running community in the City and the City will continue to look for opportunities to provide such loops.

Board Member Louis Stephen asked if the pathways are specific to bicycle and pedestrian use and asked about safety features on the paths.

Mr. Guderian explained that the pathways that are constructed are multimodal use paths. When they are constructed, lighting is installed and improvements are made at crossings to ensure safety.

Board Member Stephen asked if there is police patrol along the canals.

Lieutenant Michael Beaton explained that the canals are not typically patrolled as the City does not have a bike unit at this time. He went on to state that on a daily basis the incidence of crime occurring on the pathways are not high enough to warrant having an officer patrol the areas.

Board Member Stephen asked if funds are allocated for public safety patrol at some point during the peak hours of use. He expressed concern for safety along the canal and feels they pose a danger because they are isolated areas.

Mr. Guderian stated that funding for public safety is something that can be researched, but currently the funding received is strictly for the construction of the pathways.

Planner II Jim Hash explained that each pathway goes through a public safety evaluation through the Police Department. He explained that the Transportation Department and Police

Department work very closely to ensure there are no hidden areas that may be dark and encourage criminal activity.

Lieutenant Beaton explained that the canal pathways are not conducive to crime. The current rates of crime are so low that a dedicated patrol officer during peak hours is not warranted. He went on to explain that police officers are deployed based on statistics and a change in patrol could be initiated if needed.

Mr. Guderian continued his presentation discussing the pathways in southeast Mesa. He explained that the focus at the present time is along Loop 202. A pathway will be constructed along the Loop 202 and connections will be provided further into Mesa and Arizona State University Poly Technic campus. Eventually the pathway will allow access to East Mark and continue east. There are currently projects in design using ADOT right of way along the Loop 202 between Baseline and Elliot along the powerline corridor which will provide a connection and get access to some neighborhoods. He explained that part of this pathway has been completed by private development. The City plans on going into construction in 2016. Mr. Guderian told the board that City of Mesa staff has been working very closely with ADOT to ensure the pathway works for all concerned parties. Future expansion along RWCD connections will provide more access to other neighborhoods as well.

Board Member David Camp asked if there was an opportunity for local cyclists to participate in a survey concerning different areas of the pathways.

Mr. Hash explained that a public input process was included when the pathway plans were initiated. He went on to state that there will be more public meetings moving forward.

Board Member Camp asked for the board to be notified when the public meetings are held.

Mr. Guderian continued his presentation focusing on the north part of Mesa. Council and City Management supports moving forward with pathways in the area. Currently no funding is in place for this area, however, the City anticipates being able to use future bond and grant monies to fund these projects. Grant applications have been submitted for southeast Mesa along the Loop 202 and the South Canal in northwest Mesa. The South Canal pathway will be an important connection from west Mesa to Gilbert. The Lehi Falls Loop/Shared Use Path will utilize part of the South Canal right of way. While informal trails exist as a connection to Lehi Crossing, there are opportunities to improve the pathway. Eventually the pathway will provide access from west Mesa to Granite Reef Dam. The City of Mesa is coordinating with other government agencies regarding the opportunities present in the area for the bicycle and pedestrian pathways.

Mr. Guderian concluded his presentation and solicited questions from the board.

Board Member Stephen asked about skateboard accommodations on the pathways.

Mr. Hash explained that the Parks, Recreation and Commercial Facilities Department has some facilities for skateboarders. He explained that City staff is always looking at how they approach a build so that it has the least impediment to wheels, including roller blades and skateboards.

Board Member Camp inquired as to why the pathway does not continue to Power Road.

Mr. Hash explained that Maricopa County Parks and Recreation is improving the trail to Hawes Loop and across to the Usery Pass Area, which will include Power Road.

Item 5. Discuss and take action on staff recommendation to increase the speed limit from 40 mph to 45 mph on Signal Butte Road from Baseline Road to Guadalupe Road (Council District 6).

City Traffic Engineer Sabine Ellis introduced herself and began her presentation on Staff's recommendation to increase the speed limit from 40 mph to 45 mph on Signal Butte Road from Baseline Road to Guadalupe Road. Ms. Ellis explained that Mulberry Development at the northwest corner of Signal Butte and Guadalupe will be developed along with the entire west side of the street. Staff recommends adjusting tapers and removing design constraints to allow for the new design of the street to accommodate 45 mph. Mulberry will absorb the cost as part of their development.

Board Member Stephen inquired about installing crosswalks on Signal Butte.

Ms. Ellis explained that there are no marked crosswalks along the roadway except where signalized intersections exist. She did note that unmarked crosswalks exist. She pointed out that the houses in the area do not front the street and that pedestrian activity at this time is very low. She explained that City staff would continue to monitor pedestrian activity and evaluate the need for crossings moving forward.

Chairperson Hallsted inquired about the timeline for construction completion. Ms. Ellis explained that construction was anticipated for completion in May of 2016.

Chairperson Hallsted asked about the timing for the change of the speed limit in the area.

Ms. Ellis explained that once staff makes the recommendation and the recommendation is approved by City Council, an ordinance is established and becomes effective 30 days later. She went on to state that the change will take place closer to construction completion. Ms. Ellis continued to explain that striping would eventually change and improvements would be made to improve Signal Butte south of Guadalupe. She stated that some improvements would be completed by developers, including sidewalk ramps, curb, gutters and their half of the cross section. At this time, there is no timeline for development.

Board Member Stephen inquired as to why speed is a factor between the two points in question.

Ms. Ellis explained that the arterial street has a six lane configuration that warrants the standard of 45 mph based on the classification of the street.

Board Member Stephen expressed concern for pedestrian safety in the area and expressed that he feels that should take priority over establishing a higher speed limit for the area.

Ms. Ellis explained that staff will make sure to accommodate the needs of the residents as the area moves forward in its development.

Board Member Ron Wilson pointed out that the 45 mph speed limit will make the roadway consistent with the speed limit on Signal Butte Road north of Baseline Road. Ms. Ellis confirmed.

Chairperson Hallsted requested a motion to approve. Board Member Wilson motioned and Board Member Michael Schmidt seconded the motion. The motion passed with seven board members in favor, and one opposed.

Item 5. Discuss and take action on staff recommendation to stop reporting recent parking prohibitions that have been approved by the City Traffic Engineer since the last Transportation Advisory Board meeting.

City Traffic Engineer Sabine Ellis explained the nature of this request is to remove the parking prohibitions from the agenda. She provided history on the reason the prohibitions have been included and discussed staff's desire to simplify the Transportation Advisory Board Agenda process by removing the prohibitions. Ms. Ellis said that the information is tracked internally and that staff can provide answers at any time. She also noted that no questions or oppositions have occurred from the Board related to the parking prohibitions.

Chairperson Hallsted explained that he had discussed the prohibitions with staff and understood the efforts of compiling the information for the Board. In his experience, Chairperson Hallsted explained that he could not recall a time the prohibitions had ever been discussed. He supports staff eliminating the prohibitions from the agenda.

Chairperson Hallsted sought a motion and second from the Board. Board Member Camp motioned and Board Member Schmidt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

This meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m.