TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

APPROVED

HELD ON AUGUST 19, 2014

TAB Members Present	TAB Members Absent	Others Present
Dawn Fortuna, Chairperson	None	Alan Sanderson
Bruce Hallsted, Vice Chairperson		Sabine Ellis
Ian Bennett		Lenny Hulme
Kay Henry		Jodi Sorrell
Jim LeCheminant		Ed Jones
Jennifer Love		Mark Venti
Ian Murray		Jim Hash
Troy Peterson		Sgt. Sean Kelly
Michael Schmidt		
Ron Wilson		
David Camp		

Chairperson Dawn Fortuna called the August 19, 2014 Transportation Advisory Board meeting to order at 5:32 pm.

Item 1. Approval of the minutes of the Transportation Advisory Board meeting held on June 17, 2014.

Board Member Ian Bennett moved to approve the minutes as written. Board Member Kay Henry seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 2. Acknowledge incoming Board Member, Mr. David Camp.

Chairperson Fortuna welcomed and introduced Board Member David Camp to the Board.

Item 3. Items from citizens present.

None.

Item 4. Hear a presentation and discuss the Transit Master Plan Update.

Transit Services Director Jodi Sorrell introduced herself, Transit Coordinator Ed Jones, and Matthew Taunton, the Technical Consultant from HDR for the Transit Master Plan Update. Ms. Sorrell explained that the Transit Master Plan was in a final version and ready for the Board to review before it moves on to City Council.

Mr. Taunton began discussing the Transit Master Plan. He explained that the Plan builds upon land use identified in the City's General Plan and how the planned land use helps to identify Transit priority corridors. Mr. Taunton presented a map of the existing system in Mesa

and the way in which it is oriented around an arterial grid. He reviewed the current high capacity network on the map and discussed services such as Light Rail and its planned extension and also discussed existing Link services. Mr. Taunton explained to the Board how the most productive routes are identified by looking at average daily boarding's, describing how certain modes and routes, like light rail and Route 61, are some of the most highly performing transit routes. Mr. Taunton discussed with the Board several different scenarios based around five planning horizons; one short-term, two mid-term, and two long-term. Mr. Taunton began by identifying some elements of the short-term horizon which he explained correlates with the year 2018. Short-term horizon planning takes into consideration the planned extension of light rail to Gilbert Road, expanded premium bus services such as the Link, and the importance of connecting to transit corridors to Fiesta District, Downtown and other activity centers throughout the City. Mr. Taunton briefly discussed the itemized list of short term Transit improvements provided to the Board. Mid-term scenario one was then presented to the Board. In this scenario, the light rail is extended to Power Road and East Mesa bus services are expanded, including an extension of Link service continuing as far south as Gateway Airport. Mr. Taunton then briefly discussed the itemized list of mid-term scenario one transit improvements provided to the Board. Mr. Taunton went on to describe mid-term scenario two. In this scenario, light rail is extended south on Gilbert Road to the US 60, and east Mesa's north/south bus service is expanded along with the premium bus services, such as the Link. Mr. Taunton then briefly discussed the itemized list of mid-term scenario two transit improvements provided to the Board. Mr. Taunton then presented the first long-term scenario, which correlates to the build out scenario identified in the Transportation Master Plan. Transit services would extend to Superstition Springs Mall, and the scenario also takes into consideration future passenger rail, which is currently being evaluated, but has the potential to run along Ellsworth and US 60 alignments, connecting well with southbound light rail services. Superstition Springs Mall is considered a transit hub in this scenario as it will offer a different option for all transit users. Mr. Taunton then discussed the itemized list for long term scenario one's transit improvements provided to the Board. Mr. Taunton then presented the Board with long term scenario two. In this scenario, light rail is extended south on Gilbert and east along the US 60 corridor, continuing on to Superstition Springs Mall. Connections are provided near downtown Mesa and even further west into Tempe. This scenario highlights alternative transit functions and their flexibility, given the option to utilize any number of functions based on what would be considered the best use at the time. Mr. Taunton closed by explaining that the numerous plans for both mid-term and long-term would help in planning by offering the flexibility to decide which would function best given the needs at the time. He then solicited the Board for questions.

Board Member Ian Bennett inquired about what stage in the planning process the City is at extending light rail to Power Road.

Mr. Taunton explained the current plans extend light rail to Mesa Drive and then Gilbert Road. Future planning to Power Road would need to take into consideration future federal investments, and at this time, no decisions have been made.

Board Member Troy Peterson asked about the graphic for the first long term scenario exhibiting high capacity transit in east Mesa and how it will correlate with transit plans throughout the southeast valley.

Mr. Taunton explained that the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) is currently in the process of doing a southeast valley transit study, taking into account key corridors north, south, east and west. Many surrounding cities are updating their transit plans at this time and those plans will also be included into the MAG study. The focus of the City's Transit Plan was on the City of Mesa, but Mr. Taunton explained that other regional plans would be taken into consideration as the Transit Plan is implemented in the future.

Chairperson Dawn Fortuna commented on the gap in commuter and passenger rail on Gilbert Road in the long term scenarios and asked how that gap will be addressed.

Ms. Sorrell explained that the Town of Gilbert holds some of that jurisdiction and evaluation would need to be conducted on the feasibility of extending light rail to the passenger rail. In the meantime, Ms. Sorrell explained, another type of bus service would likely fill that need. She went on to describe how the extension of light rail to commuter stations depends largely on where those commuter stations are located. Ms. Sorrell explained that the passenger rail study is still very new and would be incorporated into regional plans as necessary.

Board Member Jennifer Love inquired as to whether or not the MAG southeast valley corridor study was available for the City of Mesa to use for planning.

Ms. Sorrell explained that light rail extensions would be negotiated through multiple cities and Valley Metro. She explained that there is time to do more studies to ensure the City of Mesa is in queue with the MAG southeast valley study co-led by Valley Metro.

Board Member Bennett inquired as to whether or not the monies from Proposition 400 would be pay for the aforementioned studies.

Ms. Sorrell explained that long term planning funding would most likely come from a sales tax initiative. She explained that cities are beginning to prioritize projects for future sales tax. The Transit Plan will help guide the City in identifying appropriate funding sources.

Item 5. Hear a presentation and discuss the draft final version of the Mesa Transportation Plan Update.

Senior Transportation Engineer Mark Venti introduced himself and Planner II Jim Hash to the Board. Mr. Venti went on to briefly review the Mesa 2025 plan which was adopted in June of 2002. He explained that building and shaping roads in Mesa was based on the traditional use of the Mesa 2025 plan. Most of the roads and streets have been completed, but there are many changes moving beyond the 2025 plan. During the development of the new Transportation Plan, staff began to hear new challenges and concerns from the public in Mesa in terms of what they wanted from the City, and the Transportation Advisory Board supported the same idea of a Transportation network at a neighborhood level. Mr. Venti provided examples of the ways in which Transportation Plans have changed nationally to become more geared toward residents and the ways in which the roadways can best fit their needs. Mr. Hash discussed the opportunity to coordinate between the City's General Plan and the Transportation Plan, to make them cohesive documents that support one another. Mr. Hash went on to explain the intent of ensuring the Transportation Plan was an integrated, well balanced plan, with multi-modal choices for residents to get to and from different points within

the City. The Plan has been developed to be livable and fluid giving it the ability to be work for the duration of the planning horizon. Care was taken in the development of the Transportation Plan to ensure that it followed the guiding principles of the City's General Plan, making sure to take into account all modes of transportation for residents to use. throughout their daily lives. The Transportation Plan ensures that the Complete Streets plan and those concepts are utilized in Mesa. Mr. Hash explained that in the long term, the Plan would ensure that the City of Mesa is staying on track and in alignment with what the City's residents want.

Mr. Hash went on to describe the plan outline, identifying three parts: Introduction, Goals, and Objectives, Modal Elements, and Mesa's Circulation Blueprint. The Plan's vision is aligned with the General Plan to ensure a cohesive relationship between the two. Mr. Hash explained how the goals identified in the research and development of the Plan assigned objectives to ensure the City moves forward into the future within the expectations of the residents.

Mr. Venti then reviewed the different components that make up the entire transportation system, including complete streets, aviation, intelligent transportation systems, roadways, transit, pedestrian and bicycle elements and travel demand. Each component is focused on providing transportation options on a neighborhood level in ways that are integrated to provide connectivity to activity centers. In the Transportation Plan, complete streets has become the guide by which the City will design and shape it's streets into the future. Mr. Venti provided a brief review of what a complete street is, highlighting that it is a street that can be used by all users of the roadways, from pedestrians to motor vehicle operators and so on. The Complete Streets policy will be approved alongside the Transportation Plan and will be included in the Plan itself. Mr. Venti explained how the future roadway plan has moved away from projects and costs and moved toward identifying priorities at the time of need and utilizing principles and ideas, goals and objectives when deciding on future projects. Mr. Venti went on to describe Mesa's circulation blueprint and reemphasized the ways in which the vision, goals and objectives of the Plan support future mobility and correlate with the City's General Plan's vision and land use plans. Mr. Venti explained that a design guide will be utilized to enhance part three of the Transportation Plan once the Plan is adopted by City Council. The guide will provide a means of applying different concepts from the Transportation Plan, including the complete streets concepts. Mr. Venti explained the term "neighborhood unit" would replace "square mile neighborhoods" in the final plan since all neighborhoods do not necessarily follow the square mile grid. The key idea is to create transportation choices for neighborhood units. Mr. Venti discussed the Urban Street Design Guide developed by the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) and the way it has influenced the City's decision to create a similar guide customized for Mesa.

Mr. Hash began describing the three major themes of the Plan: flexibility, neighborhoods, and user friendliness. Mr. Hash reemphasized the importance of the Transportation Plan's alignment with the General Plan and the way in which it follows the guiding principles established within the General Plan. Mr. Hash spoke to the Board about the importance of establishing a balanced, integrated system that is well connected and supports all land use.

Chairperson Fortuna commended staff for their outreach for public involvement and sharing the desires of the City of Mesa residents.

Board Member Bennett asked for more information on the Urban Street Design Guide.

Mr. Venti explained that the document was established by NACTO and there is an interactive PDF available.

Board Member Bennett asked about the process of evaluating citizen input.

Mr. Hash explained that while the City takes into account public input, consideration is also made for a larger cross section of residents, such as those who do not want to walk versus those whose only mode of transportation is walking. The goal of the Transportation Plan is to provide choices for all residents within the City of Mesa and the region.

Deputy Transportation Director/Traffic Engineer Alan Sanderson explained the way in which walkability will be built into the City of Mesa as it develops and redevelops the City.

Chairperson Fortuna expressed her excitement for Mesa's involvement in creating a more walkable City and how successful such philosophies have been throughout other areas in the nation.

Board Member Kay Henry discussed with staff and the Board the importance given to walkability within the City during the City Center workshop she attended. She explained that walkability would be addressed project by project, with a goal of encouraging people to get out and walk.

Board Member Ron Wilson asked about measures for success.

Mr. Venti and Mr. Hash explained the measures for success being included in the sub-plans of the Transportation Plan. They further described the intent of the Transportation Plan to create a Vision, and the measures would be included thorough strategic and measurable objectives within the sub-plans.

Mr. Sanderson explained the reasoning behind using the Transportation Plan as a visionary document, to provide flexibility to make changes as leadership and priorities change throughout the City over time.

Board Member David Camp asked Mark and Jim if the canals were being considered, and how they would be incorporated into a neighborhood concept.

Mr. Venti and Mr. Hash addressed the way in which the bike plan and some of the other sub-plans address the canals and consider using them as recreational paths. They discussed how adjacent neighborhood and commercial centers could utilize canal banks. Mr. Venti and Mr. Hash also explained the great amenity the canals can be as people use them for bicycling, walking, and jogging. Mr. Venti explained that the canals are not owned by the City of Mesa, but by other utilities with whom the City will work with when developing plans for those areas. Mr. Venti briefly described the Porter Park Pathway. He described the way the City is utilizing a buried canal, which is actually an SRP facility, and working with the neighborhood to develop it as an area that will become a neighborhood asset. Mr. Venti explained to the Board how the use of this canal will be part of the Safe Routes to School initiative, connecting neighborhoods to surrounding schools.

Board Member Ian Murray commended staff for signalizing canal pathways.

Board Member Troy Peterson commended staff for the course taken in developing the new Transportation Plan. Board Member Peterson described the Plan as one that is very personal and easy to understand.

Mr. Sanderson recognized and thanked Mark Venti and Jim Hash for the work done on the Transportation Plan.

Board Member Henry said the final draft of the Transportation Plan did not include the requested corrections to the Maricopa County Trip Reduction Program section that she submitted at the January 21, 2014 Transportation Advisory Board meeting. She provided staff with her proposed language changes.

Mr. Hash closed by explaining to the Board that the Plan is a working draft and once all the comments are made, it will be finalized and reviewed one last time before it goes to City Council toward the beginning of October.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.