

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

June 15, 1998

The Transportation Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on June 15, 1998 at 3:45 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Keno Hawker, Chairman
John Giles
Pat Pomeroy

COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

COUNCIL PRESENT

Jim Davidson

STAFF PRESENT

C.K. Luster
Anthony Araza
Denise Bleyle
Russ Colbath
Linda Crocker
Glenn Gorke
Mike Hutchinson
Barbara Jones
Harry Kent
Peter Knudson
Ron Krosting
Keith Nath
Ellen Pence
Others

OTHERS PRESENT

Gus Dekavallas
Connie DeMichili
Dale Douglas
Philip Lowrey
Others

1. Hear an update on the widening of Gilbert Road south of Southern Avenue to north of Main Street.

Supervising Engineer Peter Knudson, Transportation Engineer Robert Araza and Senior Civil Engineer Russ Colbath addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item.

Mr. Knudson provided the Committee with brief background information on the Gilbert Road widening and noted that the project was initially discussed approximately two years ago. Mr. Knudson stated that in the Spring of 1997, staff received final approval from the Council to proceed with the design of the project. Mr. Knudson advised that the project has been divided into three phases, Phase I consisting of cul-de-sac and residential wall construction, which, if awarded, will begin August 1, 1998 and should be completed by February 1999; Phase II, utility relocation, which will be undertaken by the utility companies, and Phase III, roadway construction, which is scheduled to begin in February 1999 and be completed in the Fall of 1999.

Mr. Knudson informed the Committee that the project will widen Gilbert Road from its existing two lanes in each direction and single left-turn lanes in the intersection to three lanes with a raised, landscaped median and double left-turn lanes at most major intersections. Mr. Knudson added that in addition to widening Gilbert Road, the major cross-streets, Main Street, Broadway and Southern Avenue, will also be widened approximately 1200 feet both east and west of the Gilbert Road intersection.

In response to a question from Committeemember Giles, Mr. Knudson advised that an 8-foot wall will be constructed along Gilbert Road. Mr. Knudson added that there will be minor traffic disruption in Phase I during the construction of the cul-de-sac and said that during the construction of the wall, a portion of the outside lane will be closed to traffic at various times. Mr. Knudson estimated that the three phases of construction will take approximately one year to complete and stated that the goal is to be completely finished with the project by Fall 1999.

In response to a question from Committeemember Pomeroy relative to the proposed color of the sound wall, Public Works Manager Harry Kent stated that the Council chose the color combinations for a similar wall constructed on McKellips Road and added that the colors may be changed if the current Council so chooses but stressed the importance of tying the colors selected for the Gilbert Road wall with those used on McKellips.

Chairman Hawker stated that it is the consensus of the Committee that staff be directed to proceed with the project as outlined.

2. Discuss and consider the proposed improvements to the Dobson and Guadalupe Road intersection.

In response to a request from Chairman Hawker, Supervising Engineer Peter Knudson provided the Committee with brief background information relative to this agenda item. Mr. Knudson advised that in 1997, staff presented the Transportation Committee with a proposal to widen the Dobson/Guadalupe Road intersection to three lanes in each direction with double left-turn lanes. Mr. Knudson commented that the Committee directed staff to pursue the feasibility of constructing raised landscaped medians. Mr. Knudson commented on the public hearings that were held relative to this project and the extensive public input that was provided. Mr. Knudson informed the Committee that as a result of input received, the Committee directed staff to pursue the elimination of raised medians everywhere except next to the intersection and asked that staff also consider shifting the road south in an effort to avoid the relocation of power poles located in the northeast quadrant.

Mr. Knudson reported that staff has analyzed both options and prepared recommendations for the Committee's consideration. Mr. Knudson said that the proposal includes moving the road south to avoid the relocation of the power poles and briefly outlined additional recommendations.

Discussion ensued relative to landscaping options, the construction of a brick median for the majority of the project's length, the fact that the revised proposal has been presented to various businesses and property owners and the fact that minimum negative input was received, and the fact that the project is designed to alleviate traffic congestion

Gus Dekavallas, a resident in the area, questioned the necessity of expanding the east/west lanes on Guadalupe Road. Mr. Dekavallas stated the opinion that the current congestion levels do not warrant the additional lanes and added the opinion that the construction of the lanes will result in added use of the road by students attending Dobson High School. Mr. Dekavallas expressed the opinion that the proposed lane addition is unwarranted and will negatively impact the surrounding area.

Philip Lowrey, a member of the Dobson Ranch Homeowners' Association, addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item and requested that the Committee consider allowing right turns only at the intersection and constructing a bus pullout at that location. Mr. Lowrey also questioned the actual connection of the 101 Freeway to Guadalupe Road and stated the opinion that the 1987 traffic data referred to in the reports should be updated for accuracy reasons.

Discussion ensued relative to the construction of the Guadalupe Road traffic interchange, proposed landscaping, and the fact that drivers will be able to access and exit the freeway from this location.

Connie Demache, an educator with the Tempe School District, expressed the opinion that the road widening will encourage speeding. Ms. Dermache commented on the close proximity of Dobson High School to the project and stated that efforts should be initiated to reduce rather than increase traffic levels at this location.

Committeemember Giles stated the opinion that the extra lanes will be necessary to maintain traffic flows, particularly in view of the fact that the freeway ramps will enter onto Guadalupe Road. Committeemember Giles added that he supports staff's recommendations relative to this agenda item.

Committeemember Pomeroy expressed safety concerns regarding the close proximity of Dobson High School.

Chairman Hawker stated the opinion that the project should be delayed pending the completion of the Price/Guadalupe Road interchange in order to assess the actual need for the road widening once the interchange is in place. Chairman Hawker added the opinion that a large portion of the anticipated traffic will be diverted and will not have a significant traffic impact on the area.

Chairman Hawker advised that Committeemember Giles supports proceeding with the project while he and Committeemember Pomeroy support delaying the project pending the completion of the Price/Guadalupe interchange in order to accurately assess traffic impacts on the area.

3. Discuss and consider the proposed improvements to the Baseline and Dobson Road intersection.

Senior Civil Engineer Russ Colbath addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item and advised that the intersection of Baseline and Dobson Road is one of the busiest intersections in Mesa. Mr. Colbath noted that staff explored a variety of alternatives prior to selecting the proposal currently before the Committee for consideration. Mr. Colbath stated that the proposed improvements include double left turns for east bound and west bound traffic, a dedicated right-turn lane for south bound to west bound traffic, and bus pullouts for the north and east legs of the intersection. Mr. Colbath added that the project will include landscape restoration and improvements.

Committeemember Giles stated the opinion that the project is necessary and said that he supports staff's recommendations.

It was moved by Committeemember Pomeroy, seconded by Committeemember Giles, to recommend to the Council that staff's recommendations regarding proposed improvements to the Baseline and Dobson Road intersection be approved.

Carried unanimously.

4. Discuss and consider staff's preferred alignment for roadway improvements on Broadway Road from Sossaman Road to Hawes Road.

Supervising Engineer Peter Knudson noted that Broadway Road is a major arterial roadway in East Mesa and said that the existing roadway consists of two lanes in each direction with single left-turn lanes. Mr. Knudson advised that the roadway is designed with an inverted crown which carries the street run-off drainage down the center of the roadway creating traffic safety concerns during rain storms. Mr. Knudson added that the roadway pavement is deteriorating due to the ponding of roadway drainage in the street.

Mr. Knudson briefly highlighted staff's recommendations relative to the preferred alignment and improvements and noted that an open-house meeting was held to provide area residents with information relative to the proposal. Mr. Knudson advised that if the proposal is approved, staff intends to replace the deteriorating roadway pavement as soon as possible and widen the road to the ultimate width in order to minimize future disruption in the area. Mr. Knudson explained that the south half of the roadway (eastbound traffic) would be widened to three through lanes; that the north half of the roadway (westbound traffic) from Sossaman to 80th Street, would be widened to three lanes and from 80th Street to Hawes, the roadway would be two lanes in the westbound direction. Mr. Knudson noted that a number of small homes in this area front on Broadway Road and said that the owners of those homes would be significantly impacted if the City chose to widen the road in this area. Mr. Knudson informed the Committee that based on the fact that traffic levels do not warrant the widening of the road in this portion of the roadway at this time, staff is recommending that the road widening from 80th Street to Hawes be postponed until future traffic levels necessitate this action.

Mr. Knudson discussed the fact that staff held public meetings with both the Fountain of the Sun and Carriage Manor Homeowners' Associations and noted that the residents' primary concern was potential increases in traffic. Mr. Knudson added that the homeowners in the area also requested that a block type barrier wall be added to the proposal and said that staff is recommending the construction of this type of wall.

In response to a question from Chairman Hawker, Public Works Manager Harry Kent advised that new developments in the City require 65 and 75-foot set backs.

Chairman Hawker questioned the anticipated longevity of the proposed alignment and whether five lanes will be sufficient to handle traffic in view of the project's close proximity to both the Red Mountain and Superstition Freeways. Chairman Hawker requested additional information from staff relative to the costs involved in widening the alignment to six lanes at this time compared to the cost of widening to five lanes now and expanding again when traffic levels necessitate the additional widening.

Transportation Engineer Anthony Araza noted that the interchange and freeway in that portion of the City will not be open to traffic until the year 2012 and stated the opinion that it is prudent to widen the road to five lanes as soon as possible and initiate improvements in anticipation of the Red Mountain Freeway.

Mr. Kent commented that although discussion occurred relative to widening the roadway to six lanes, staff decided not to pursue the expansion until traffic levels justified taking the various properties that would be necessary to expand the roadway.

Mr. Knudson informed Chairman Hawker that staff will compile information on the cost of constructing a six-lane alignment for his review and consideration.

It was moved by Committeemember Giles, seconded by Committeemember Pomeroy, to recommend to the Council that staff's recommendations relative to a preferred alignment for roadway improvements on Broadway Road from Sossaman Road to Hawes Road be approved.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES - Giles-Pomeroy
NAYS - Hawker

Chairman Hawker declared the motion carried by majority vote and stated that he is voting in opposition to the motion pending receipt and consideration of additional information from staff relative to this agenda item.

5. Adjournment.

It was moved by Committeemember Giles, seconded by Committeemember Pomeroy, that the Transportation Committee meeting adjourn at 5:46 p.m.

Carried unanimously.

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 18th day of June, 1998. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 1998

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK