

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

DRAFT

HELD ON May 17, 2016

TAB Members Present

Bruce Hallsted, Chairperson
Kay Henry
Mike Schmidt
Ron Wilson
Michael Book
Louis Stephen
David Camp
Vern Mathern
Jennifer Love

TAB Members Absent

Troy Peterson, Vice Chairperson
Ian Murray

Others Present

Sabine Ellis
Lenny Hulme
Renate Ehm
Erik Guderian
Joe Draper
Commander Mike Beaton
Kyle Wax

Chairperson Hallsted called the May 17, 2016 Transportation Advisory Board meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Item 1. Approval of the minutes of the Transportation Advisory Board meeting held on February 16, 2016

Board Member Henry motioned to approve the minutes as written. Board Member Schmidt seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 2. Acknowledge incoming Board Member Michael Book

Board Member Book introduced himself and gave a brief background.

Item 3. Items from citizens present

Chairperson Bruce Hallsted called forward Robert Allen.

Mr. Robert Allen lives at the corner of Harris Drive and McLellan Road. Mr. Allen expressed concern with the bike lane striping saying that the bike lane forces bicyclists away from the curb and closer to traffic.

Chairperson Hallsted told Mr. Allen that the Board would take his concerns into consideration. Chairperson Hallsted explained that the Board could not make comments on his concerns because the item is not on the agenda. Chairperson Hallsted informed Mr. Allen that the Board would discuss his comments with staff.

Chairperson Hallsted called Ward Condit to address the Board.

Mr. Condit expressed concern with some aspects of the Speed Hump Policy as well as staff's interpretations. Mr. Condit said he recently became aware that speed humps had been approved for installation on E. 1st Place between N. Lazona Drive and E. 1st Street, and that that decision showed why some changes to the Policy are needed. He presented several proposals to the Board for modifying the Policy.

Chairperson Hallsted explained to Mr. Condit that the Board could not discuss or comment on his concerns because the item is not on the agenda. Chairperson Hallsted informed Mr. Condit that the Board would discuss his comments with staff.

Item 4.

Discuss and take action on staff recommendation to approve the installation of speed cushions on Sunnyvale between Broadway Road and Delta Avenue (Council District 2)

City of Mesa City Traffic Engineer, Sabine Ellis, described the location of the planned speed cushions on Sunnyvale east of Higley Road and south of Broadway Road. Ms. Ellis confirmed that the Fire Department had approved the use of speed cushions on Sunnyvale. Ms. Ellis explained the statistics of the speed cushion survey. The 85th percentile speed was recorded at 32.6 mph. The traffic volume was recorded at approximately 1,200 vehicles per day. Ms. Ellis explained that a neighborhood survey had been conducted of the 100 properties considered to be most affected. 77% were in favor of speed cushions and 23% were opposed. Ms. Ellis explained the next step in the process was to allow for a public comment period. She explained that other road users were given two weeks to give their opinion either via an online survey or over the phone. The public comment phase yielded 32 responses. 25 of the 32 lived outside of the affected area. 28% of the responses were in favor with 72% opposed. An additional 28% did not provide addresses therefore it was not possible to determine whether they lived inside or outside the affected area. Ms. Ellis explained that of the 28% who did not provide an address, 53% were opposed and 47% were in favor. Ms. Ellis continued to discuss the survey process, explaining that staff looks for a minimum of 70% approval and once that is attained, the project moves to the public comment phase. Three sets of speed cushions are proposed in this segment at an approximate cost of \$15,000. Ms. Ellis solicited questions from the Board.

Board Member Henry inquired as to why speed cushions could not be installed on the entire Sunnyvale alignment all the way down to Enid Avenue at Enid Park.

Ms. Ellis referred the Board to the map. She explained that when neighborhoods request speed cushions, the affected area is identified and staff designates natural break points. The area in question identified 100 properties that would be affected. She explained that at that point, the decision is left to the neighborhood liaison to determine how far they want to go. Ms. Ellis explained that the neighborhood survey is typically completed in half mile segments so as to limit the amount of work required to be done by the neighborhood liaison.

Board Member Henry asked if the residents south of Delta Avenue were surveyed.

Ms. Ellis said they were not.

Board Member Henry asked if the City would go back to Sunnyvale at a later date to install speed cushions south of Delta Avenue to Enid Avenue.

Ms. Ellis explained that a request would be considered if the neighborhood came forward with a request. The proper procedures would be followed for additional speed cushions in the area.

Board Member Stephen asked how many people are typically surveyed and how those people are chosen.

Ms. Ellis explained the process to the Board. She stated that the surveyed are those who appear to be immediately affected by the speed cushions. This includes anyone connected to the street in question.

Board Member Stephen questioned how the neighborhood survey is conducted, specifically those who are not home when contact is attempted and what happens to their vote, and whether or not the project still moves forward.

Ms. Ellis explained that the project only moves forward once a minimum of 70% approval is reached.

Chairperson Hallsted referred to the Speed Hump Policy given to Board members by the City of Mesa Transportation Department regarding survey guidelines and definition of the affected area.

Board Member Book questioned how this project is to be funded and how much per year is put toward such projects.

Ms. Ellis explained that City funds of around \$150,000 are set aside for these types of projects.

City of Mesa Transportation Department Director Lenny Hulme confirmed that City Council has this budgeted for \$150,000 to be set aside for these projects. Council can choose to go higher or lower.

Chairperson Hallsted had questions about the provided map, and whether affected parcels were shown.

Ms. Ellis confirmed this.

Chairperson Hallsted asked if Catalina Avenue could be used to avoid the proposed cushions.

Ms. Ellis confirmed this.

Chairperson Hallsted called Ms. Joy Crandell to speak.

Ms. Crandell explained that she was for the proposed speed cushions.

Chairperson Hallsted called Ms. Amy Kelly to speak.

Ms. Kelly explained she was for the proposed speed cushions.

Chairperson Hallsted opened the floor to questions from the Board.

Board Member Stephen asked how speed was recorded.

Ms. Ellis described the device that is used and the amount of time it records.

Chairperson Hallsted asked how the recording time is broken up.

Ms. Ellis explained that it is done over a two-day period.

Chairperson Hallsted asked when this is done.

Ms. Ellis explained that recordings are done over 48 consecutive hours, either

Tuesday/Wednesday or Wednesday/Thursday because these are the heaviest traffic flow times and weekends are not as busy.

Board Member Stephen inquired about the effect these have on traffic accidents.

Ms. Ellis explained that accidents are not looked at as part of this study.

Board Member Wilson asked about results of speed studies pre- and post- cushion installation.

Ms. Ellis explained that previous studies have shown an average six mile per hour decrease in the 85th percentile speeds. She went on to explain that speed humps and cushions proved to be the most effective traffic calming tool.

Board Member Book asked if the City had traffic reduction numbers after implementation of speed cushions.

City of Mesa Senior Transportation Engineer Renate Ehm commented that the number is around 10%.

Chairperson Hallsted asked about other options explored to help calm traffic, specifically lowering the speed limit.

Ms. Ellis explained that a speed limit reduction would not be possible here. 25 mph is the lowest legally allowed speed limit and the area is already posted 25 mph. Ms. Ellis also explained that striping had been considered but not chosen because cushions have been tested and proven as most effective. However, if the speed cushions did not pass, striping would be another option.

Board Member Stephen asked about police response and presence in the area regarding speed.

City of Mesa Transportation Deputy Director Erik Guderian explained that the police availability is unfortunately not large enough to cover all of these areas.

Board Member Wilson described past experiences with similar issues on the Board.

Board Member Wilson motioned to approve the installation of speed cushions on Sunnyvale between Broadway Road and Delta Avenue. Board Member Mathern seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 5. Discuss and take action on staff recommendation to approve the installation of speed cushions on McLellan Road between Harris Drive and Gilbert Road (Council District 1)

Item 6. Also includes Item 6: Discuss and take action to reduce the speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph on McLellan Road from Stapley Drive to Gilbert Road (Council District 1)

Ms. Ellis gave a brief description of the area, and described McLellan Road between Stapley Drive and Gilbert Road as a collector street in a residential area. Ms. Ellis commented that new striping was added as a traffic calming measure consisting of 8-foot parking lanes, 5-foot bike lanes, and 11-foot travel lanes in each direction. The current posted speed limit is 30 mph but neighbors have requested lowering the speed limit to 25 mph. There are two 15 mph school crosswalks between Stapley Drive and Harris Drive that have heavy student foot traffic.

Ms. Ellis explained that the 85th percentile speed on McLellan Road between Harris Drive and

Gilbert Road was recorded at 38.6 mph. The roadway had a traffic count of close to 1,300 vehicles per day. The Fire Department approved of the installation of speed cushions and it was moved to the neighborhood survey step. 52 properties were included in the neighborhood survey; 81% were in favor and 19% were opposed. During the 2-week public comment phase, people living outside of the affected area responded with 66% in favor and 34% opposed.

Board Member Book asked if driver speeds in the 15 mph school zones were reflected in the 85th percentile speed.

Ms. Ellis said that the counts were taken outside of the 15 mph school zones and that the 15 mph speed limit in the school zones would not be affected by proposed speed limit change along McLellan.

Chairperson Hallsted called Marty Pritchard to speak.

Mr. Pritchard expressed opposition to the proposed speed cushions and no opinion on the speed limit change.

Board Member Wilson asked if the striping had been done after the speed survey was conducted.

Mr. Pritchard confirmed.

Board Member Wilson asked if it were normal for speed cushions to go through bikes lanes.

Ms. Ellis explained that a standard three-foot break would be in place to make way for bicycles. Ms. Ellis explained the measurements for where the speed cushions sit in regard to bicycle and traffic lanes.

Chairperson Hallsted asked about the speed cushion placement relative to the sidewalk.

Ms. Ellis explained that the speed cushions are placed 3.5 feet from the face of curb and that this space is for drainage purposes.

Board Member Henry expressed concern for the cushion going into the bike lane but understood the necessity.

Mr. Pritchard expressed concern with the bike lane being so close to the traffic lane paired with an already narrowed traffic lane. He is concerned it could create a dangerous condition for bicyclists from vehicles trying to avoid road hazards.

Chairperson Hallsted called Melinda Trego to speak.

Ms. Trego expressed support for speed cushions and no opinion to the speed limit change proposal.

Chairperson Hallsted called David McNamara to speak.

Mr. McNamara expressed opposition to speed cushions and approval of the speed limit change.

Chairperson Hallsted called Robert Allen to speak.

Mr. Allen expressed opposition to speed cushions and support for the speed limit change

Board Member Wilson inquired into Mr. Allen's exclusion from the initial neighborhood survey.

Ms. Ellis explained that this was due to an error in policy interpretation. She explained that the public, however, had two weeks to input opinions and were provided an email address and phone number on large signs placed in the area.

Board Member Book asked how soon traffic counts would be redone after the striping changes and the proposed speed limit change.

Ms. Ellis said that generally, speed counts can be used for up to five years unless a major change occurred in the area since the counts were taken. With the speed limit change, the counts would have to be redone.

Board Member Book asked if this would need to be citizen initiated.

Ms. Ellis said the City simply follows up on its own.

Chairperson Hallsted asked how many citizens requested to change their vote.

Ms. Ellis responded that a total of three changed their vote during the public comment phase. Ms. Ellis explained that this sometimes happens when two owners of the same property have different opinions.

The Board asked staff how far in advance people are notified before striping takes place.

Ms. Ellis explained that because no changes in traffic operations were being made with the new striping, no contact was made. Vehicle lanes were narrowed, but no detractors happened. Ms. Ellis explained that travel lanes were reduced in width to provide the proper width for on-street parking and bicycle lanes. Ms. Ellis explained that a large number of children utilize the bicycle lanes before and after school.

Chairperson Hallsted asked about the timeline of the initial request for cushions and when the striping took place.

Ms. Ellis explained that the initial cushion request was made in January and that the striping was done in late March, early April.

Chairperson Hallsted asked for confirmation that the striping was done after the neighborhood survey was completed and after the speed data had been collected.

Ms. Ellis confirmed.

Chairperson Hallsted asked if the public was made aware that striping was going to take place when the neighborhood survey regarding speed cushions was conducted.

Mr. Guderian explained that some of the original requesters were notified but not all residents were notified as the survey was conducted. Striping was not done when the original survey was conducted.

Chairperson Hallsted asked if those who were made aware, had been in contact with the City.

Mr. Guderian confirmed that the residents had been in contact with the City.

Board Member Camp asked for clarification that no striping had been done prior.

Ms. Ellis explained that there were only solid double yellow centerlines dividing traffic previously.

Board Member Wilson asked if the driving lane was in fact decreased from 23 feet to approximately 11 feet.

Ms. Ellis confirmed.

Chairperson Hallsted asked if the new striping was typical.

Ms. Ellis confirmed.

Chairperson Hallsted asked what type of speed changes the City typically sees with striping.

Ms. Ellis explained that past studies have shown that such striping typically yields a one to two mph decrease in the 85th percentile speed.

Chairperson Hallsted noted that based on the assumption that the striping changes on McLellan Road reduced the recorded 85th percentile speed by two mph to 36.6 mph, the warranting criteria for speed cushions would not be met with a posted speed limit of 30 mph. But if the speed limit dropped to 25 mph, it would.

Ms. Ellis confirmed.

Board Member Henry expressed her belief that the speed limit should be lowered and be given time to have effect and cautioned to hold off on cushions.

Chairperson Hallsted recommended tabling the speed cushion install.

Board Member Mathern motioned to table the speed cushion recommendation. Board Member Stephen seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairperson Hallsted motioned to approve the speed limit recommendation. Board Member Wilson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairperson Hallsted motioned to have speed data collected three months after the speed limit change has taken effect after approval by City Council. Board Member Henry seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 7. Discuss and take action on staff recommendation to reduce the speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph on Main Street from Country Club Drive to Hobson (Council District 4)

Ms. Ellis explained that the purpose of the proposed speed limit decrease is to make Downtown Mesa a more livable and enjoyable space. As part of the light rail extension, the Main Street cross section was reduced from two traffic lanes per direction and designated bike lanes to a single traffic lane per direction. No room was left for bicycle lanes. Instead bicyclists have to share the travel lanes with vehicles since City Code prohibits riding on the sidewalk in the downtown area. This section of Main Street has been posted with nationally recognized signage and pavement markings to show that bicyclists should be riding on the street. The City has received complaints from drivers and bicyclists about bicyclists riding in the travel lanes. Drivers want bicyclists to ride on the sidewalk, not recognizing that this is in conflict with City Code, and many bicyclists do not feel comfortable riding in the street due to the 30 mph speed limit.

Board Member Henry asked if on-street parking would remain on the downtown strip and

expressed worry over the danger of exiting a vehicle so close to traffic.

Ms. Ellis confirmed that it would stay in an attempt to create an attractiveness to the area for people to come and enjoy.

Board Member Henry commented on the possibility of this changing in the future.

Board Member Stephen questioned Commander Beaton regarding accidents in the area between pedestrians and vehicles.

Commander Beaton explained that there were none he was personally aware of.

Ms. Ellis explained to the Board that traffic counts dropped by 25%-30% in the area and mentioned that this is reflective of what the City of Phoenix experienced with the areas immediately surrounding the light rail.

Chairperson Hallsted expressed that 25 mph felt much safer in this downtown environment.

Board Member Henry agreed.

Chairperson Hallsted motioned to pass the recommended speed limit reduction from 30 mph to 25 mph on Main Street between Country Club Drive and Hobson. Board Member Camp seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:27pm.