

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

DRAFT

HELD ON July 18, 2023

The Transportation Advisory Board of the City of Mesa met in the Lower Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on July 18, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.

| <u>TAB Members Present</u> | <u>TAB Members Absent</u> | <u>Others Present</u> |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Michelle McCroskey (Chairperson) | Rodney Jarvis | Ryan Hudson |
| Melissa Vandever (Vice Chairperson) | | Anna Janusz |
| Lea Bertoni | | Jason Coon |
| Tara Bingdazzo | | Mark Venti |
| Rob Crist | | Erik Guderian |
| Ashley Gagnon | | Mark Venti |
| Mike James | | |
| Daniel Laufer | | |
| Megan Neal | | |
| David Winstanley | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Chairperson McCroskey called the July 18, 2023, Transportation Advisory Board meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Item 1. Approval of the minutes of the Transportation Advisory Board meeting held on May 16, 2023.

It was moved by Board Member Neal, seconded by Board Member Winstanley, that receipt of the above-listed minutes be approved.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – McCroskey – Vandever – Bertoni – Bingdazzo – Crist – Gagnon – James – Laufer – Neal – Winstanley

NAYS – None

Item 2. Acknowledge new Board Members Lea Bertoni and Rob Crist

Chairperson McCroskey welcomed new board members and asked them to tell the board about themselves. Rob Crist and Lea Bertoni introduced themselves to the board.

Item 3. Items from citizens present.

None

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

Mark Venti, Senior Transportation Engineer, introduced himself, along with Phyllis Davis from Kittelson & Associates. He explained they would be providing an update on the Transportation Master Plan.

Mr. Venti elaborated on the two phases of the Transportation Master Plan. Phase one involved data collection and analysis of current conditions. Now they are transitioning to phase two, which focuses on future conditions. The plan will include the development of vision goals and objectives, aligning them with the General Plan. The emphasis is on building the future roadway network.

Ms. Davis noted the scale of the City of Mesa, containing numerous sub areas. She highlighted the challenge of tailoring solutions to each specific area, considering that what works well in one might not be effective in another. The goal is to enhance mobility across all these areas, both now and in the future.

Mr. Venti explained that their focus is not on diving into specific locations, rather they are conducting a high-level overview of the city's future conditions. He shared that feedback revealed concerns about potential delays and congestion for drivers. Additionally, there has been an increase interest in biking compared to the previous Transportation Master Plan update. When gathering input on the allocation of future funds, the majority response was directed towards road maintenance and safety improvements. He emphasized that this Transportation Master Plan maintains a high level perspective, and while concerns like stop signs or potholes are crucial, those requests are handed over to staff members who can address them. This plan does not explore such specific matters.

Chairperson McCroskey inquired about accessing the website and the ability to provide comments on various areas.

Ms. Davis said that the website is tomorrowmesa.com, where there's a link to visit the Transportation Master Plan page. Once on that page, you can access the map survey, and they will update the website with addition surveys as the team progresses through future engagement phases.

Mr. Venti added that you can also access the Transportation Master Plan page from the City of Mesa Transportation Department webpage on mesaaz.gov. He explained that you can drop a pin on the map to mark points related to driving, transit, biking, etc. and provide comments related to specific geographic areas in the city.

Board Member Winstanley expressed his concerns regarding the Pheonix-Mesa Gateway airport becoming a free trade zone. He worried about potential 18 wheeler traffic cutting through his

neighborhood if congestion occurs in the future. He also raised concerns about the homes being built on the Pinal County side of Meridian in Superstition Vistas, which could lead to increased traffic on Mesa roads. He asked if these factors are being considered.

Ms. Davis responded that they collaborate with Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), which already maps out development areas. These factors are being considered along with the respective anticipated traffic increases. The plan will explore ways to enhance safety and mobility on corridors like Meridian. They are also evaluating suitable corridors for freight movement and any necessary accommodations.

Board Member Winstanley inquired if MAG communicates with Pinal County.

Ms. Davis confirmed, noting that their map region extends almost down to Casa Grande.

Board Member Winstanley pointed out recent legislature that allocated \$90 million to extend SR24, potentially increasing traffic from Florence. He also mentioned concerns about the railroad south of the airport, predicting challenges during Queen Creek rush hours. He suggested exploring ways to mitigate traffic disruptions caused by the train.

Mr. Venti explained that the train's impact is being assessed in the MAG report, with consideration for reducing freight traffic on roads and the possibility of overpasses or underpasses at intersections. Returning to the Superstition Vistas question, Mark mentioned their involvement in related meetings with MAG. They combine data from the MAG report and model, insights from Kittleson and Associates and other agencies, and information from the transportation planning staff to develop the Transportation Master Plan.

Board Member Winstanley asked about the plan's approach to neighborhood revitalization.

Mr. Venti explained that Mesa is a large area. He noted that public concerns vary across different parts of the city, with some areas focusing more on car transportation while others prioritize bike paths. He emphasized that they are taking all this information into consideration and determining what will work best. He then invited Ms. Davis to provide more details.

Ms. Davis stated that transportation and land use are interconnected. She clarified that they are examining effective strategies for revitalizing areas and identifying potential needs for arterials and collectors.

Chairperson McCroskey inquired about accessing the information MAG has shared with the city on the MAG site.

Ms. Davis responded that she believes the MAG model may not be directly available on the website, but the outcomes from the model will be included with their working papers.

Mr. Venti added that viewing the model might require specialized software, though the essential information might be accessible on MAG's website.

Chairperson McCroskey invited resident Peter Anello to share his comments as he submitted a comment card related to Item 4 on the agenda.

Resident Peter Anello (10246 E Tiburon Avenue) introduced himself and echoed concerns raised by Board Member Winstanley. He expressed concerns about extending public transportation facilities and services if it is currently underutilized.

Mr. Venti explained that the Transit group is separately developing the Transit Master Plan. He called upon David Calloway from the transit group to provide more insight.

David Calloway, Transit Coordinator, introduced himself and explained that they are currently in the assessment stage of the Transit Master Plan. While Transportation is working on the Transportation Master Plan, the Transit Master Plan will address public transportation needs. They plan to present the data to the board in the future.

Chairperson McCroskey inquired about the consideration of communities north of Mesa during the development of the Transportation Master Plan.

Mr. Venti explained that while the City of Mesa has jurisdictional boundaries, they use a planning area map that includes areas beyond the city limits. County islands are included in their planning process.

Ms. Davis added that they maintain close collaboration with the Maricopa County Department of Transportation throughout this planning process.

Mr. Hudson read an online comment from Chris Woelfel at 8442 E Lockwood St. Ms. Woelfel thanked staff for working on the Master Transit Plan. She highlighted challenges in efficiently traveling from northeast Mesa to southeast Mesa and into Queen Creek. She also mentioned a desire for a direct bus route connecting northeast Mesa to Grand Canyon University in Phoenix.

Board Member Neal inquired if the subareas of the General Master Plan align with those of the Transportation Master Plan.

Mr. Venti clarified that they do not entirely align. Subareas in the Transportation Master Plan are reflective of travel characteristic. The General Plan has more subareas. The final report will aim to establish connections between them.

Ms. Davis added that their focus is on mobility, which slightly differs from the General Plan's objectives.

As an example, Mr. Venti pointed out that even though both Lehi and Downtown Mesa are within Mesa's boundaries, they exhibit different travel characteristics.

Chairperson McCroskey thanked them for their presentation.

Item 5. Hear and discuss a presentation on the Mesa Moves Program Update.

Erik Guderian, Deputy Transportation Director, introduced himself and informed the board that he would be providing an update on the Mesa Moves Program. He explained that he would

present a high-level overview without delving into the individual projects, but he would be available to address any specific questions from the board members regarding any projects of interest.

Mr. Guderian noted that in November of 2020, Mesa voters authorized a 100-million-dollar general obligation bond for transportation projects in the city. He further explained that up to 70% reimbursement can be received for certain projects, potentially raising the available funds from 100 million to 162 million dollars. He proceeded to outline the three project categories represented within the identified bond program projects. The first category covers regional roadway improvements, including intersection improvement and safety projects, totaling 97 million dollars. These projects are eligible for reimbursement through the state and region. The second category allocates 45 million dollars for roadway reconstruction, focusing on the maintenance of existing roadways. Lastly, the active transportation projects category, aimed at addressing bicycle and pedestrian initiatives, has \$20 million allocated. Mr. Guderian emphasized that several projects are concentrated in southeast Mesa due to substantial growth in the area, though much of it remains undeveloped. He highlighted that a two-mile stretch of Signal Butte Road between Williams Field Road and Germann Road has expanded to connect all the way to Queen Creek. Mr. Guderian added that several projects are near the end of their design phase and are expected to begin construction within the next year.

Board Member Winstanley raised a question about the current one lane in each direction configurations of Signal Butte Road between Williams Field Road and Germann Road, asking if there are plans to widen it to two lanes each direction in the future.

Mr. Guderian clarified that the eventual plan is for the stretch between Williams Field Road and Pecos Road to become a six-lane arterial road. Additionally, the portion between Pecos Road and Germann Road will be a four-lane arterial. He noted that development along the roadway corridor will drive these expansions and the ultimate street cross-section build-out.

Chairperson McCroskey inquired about the city's right of way for those expansions.

Mr. Guderian explained that the city acquired the necessary right of way through the capital improvement project, or the necessary right of way will be dedicated as development occurs. Developers are required to dedicate a portion of their land to the city as part of the development process and the respective half-street improvements.

Chairperson McCroskey stated that she was glad that the planning had been comprehensive from the beginning.

Mr. Guderian elaborated that a roadway typically has a lifespan of 40 to 60 years before requiring complete reconstruction. This is why many of the projects are concentrated in central Mesa. He highlighted specific projects, including the reconstruction of a mile and a half of Southern Avenue and a mile of Country Club Drive at the intersection of Southern Avenue and Country Club Drive. He also mentioned projects on University Drive and on Greenfield Road. Mr. Guderian concluded by addressing active transportation projects, indicating that the four projects highlighted in green on his presentation will proceed with design and construction, while the two projects highlighted in orange require further studies before design and construction can begin.

Chairperson McCroskey inquired about the details of those projects.

Mr. Guderian responded that one project is Lehi Shared Use Path Phase Two and the other involves improving the bicycle and pedestrian facilities along Center Street.

Chairperson McCroskey asked when they are planning to gather more comments regarding phase two of the Lehi project. She emphasized the importance for equestrians, as it is becoming increasingly challenging for them to ride in and out of the area.

Mr. Guderian explained that they are currently conducting a feasibility study, collaborating with the Indian Community and ADOT to determine land usage and available options before seeking public input.

Chairperson McCroskey requested that they ensure outreach to the equestrian community, offering to facilitate communication through her. She stressed that the sooner they can receive comments or suggestions, the more beneficial it will be.

Mr. Guderian noted that they have contacts within the equestrian community. He also added that he should have previously explained that they prioritized the roadway improvements due to reimbursement consideration. They need reimbursements to fund projects in the other two areas, which is why progress may seem slower.

Board Member Neal inquired about any plans to connect Mesa Community College to the light rail.

Mr. Guderian mentioned consideration for enhancing the Dobson Road corridor. He noted current studies for a streetcar and bus rapid transit that may enhance transit options along Dobson Road.

Board Member James recalled previous plans involving Longmore as the bike and active transportation street that did not come to realization. He also commended the Fiesta BUZZ connection from the college to the light rail.

Board Member Winstanley mentioned that about four years ago, he sent a comprehensive document discussing bike paths along 202. He wondered if it had been reviewed. He emphasized the importance of knowing where the path leads and its purpose. Plus, some of the aspects of a bike path, like ending it at a sidewalk ramp, does not work for bicyclists. He promised to resend the document.

Mr. Guderian mentioned that the path along the 202 connects into Gilbert.

Board Member Winstanley clarified that it currently does not connect, which was the main point of his previous letter.

Mr. Guderian clarified that the connection to Gilbert will occur during the construction phase.

Board Member Winstanley requested that Mesa avoids creating a situation like Gilbert did on Higley where riders must navigate to the traffic signal interface to cross the bridge.

Mr. Guderian acknowledged that there are limitations when crossing freeways, but they strive to create user-friendly solutions.

Chairperson McCroskey brought up the shared use path in the Lehi community in northeast Mesa. She mentioned the importance of safe facilities for equestrian riders, stressing that certain aspects are non-negotiable. She said that the phase two path is crucial for her neighborhood and must ensure safety for all users.

Mr. Guderian concluded by highlighting two key concerns. Firstly, he noted that 100 million dollars now does not hold the same value as it did two years ago. Despite this, they have savings and hope to realize the projects they have outlined. Secondly, he mentioned a deadline tied to Proposition 400, which requires projects to be completed by the Summer of 2026 for reimbursement. He acknowledged that while it may seem distant, time will pass quickly.

Chairperson McCroskey thanked Mr. Guderian for his presentation.

It was motioned by Board Member Winstanley, seconded by Board Member Laufer, to adjourn the meeting.

AYES – McCroskey – Vandever – Bertoni – Bingdazzo – Crist – Gagnon – James – Laufer – Neal – Winstanley

NAYS – None

Meeting adjourned at 6:29 pm