

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

APPROVED

HELD ON November 21, 2023

The Transportation Advisory Board of the City of Mesa met in the Lower Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on November 21, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.

<u>TAB Members Present</u>	<u>TAB Members Absent</u>	<u>Others Present</u>
Michelle McCroskey (Chairperson)	Ashley Gagnon	Ryan Hudson
Melissa Vandever (Vice Chairperson)*	Rodney Jarvis	Anna Janusz
Lea Bertoni	Daniel Laufer	David Calloway
Tara Bingdazzo	Megan Neal	Daksha Masurkar
Rob Crist		Sabine King
Mike James		Vamshi Yellisetty
David Winstanley		
*arrived at 5:37pm		

Chairperson McCroskey called the November 21, 2023, Transportation Advisory Board meeting to order at 5:33 pm.

Item 1. Approval of the minutes of the Transportation Advisory Board meeting held on September 19, 2023.

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

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – McCroskey – Bertoni – Bingdazzo – Crist – James – Winstanley

NAYS – None

Item 2. Items from citizens present.

None

**Board Member Vandever arrived at the meeting at 5:37 pm, after Items 1 and 2 were completed.*

Item 3. Discuss and take action on staff recommendation to approve the installation of speed cushions on Harris Drive between Brown Road and 8th Street (Council District 1).

Ryan Hudson, City Traffic Engineer, introduced himself and indicated that he would be giving a presentation on staff's recommendation to approve the installation of speed cushions on Harris Drive between Brown Road and 8th Street.

Mr. Hudson provided an overview of the area where staff recommends the installation of speed cushions on Harris Drive.

Continuing, Mr. Hudson shared the results of the speed study. He explained that just under 1,000 vehicles traveled this road per day, with the 85th percentile speed slightly over 35 MPH, despite the posted speed limit of 25 MPH. He added that 79% of the affected property owners and 98% of the secondarily affected property owners were deemed in favor of the speed cushions, while 67% of those outside the affected and secondarily affected areas were opposed to them, per the 2-week open public survey.

Chairperson McCroskey began by letting the citizens present speak.

Gwen Carey at 815 N Harris Dr spoke in favor of the speed cushions.

Mr. Hudson then read comment cards from other residents which included the following:

Laura Schaffer Metcalfe at 1535 E Fountain St is in support of the speed cushions.

Maurice Carey at 815 N Harris Dr is in support of the speed cushions.

Alexa Bilankov at 845 N Harris Dr is in support of the speed cushions.

Edward Gunthner at 1529 E Frost is opposed to speed cushions.

Camille Whiting at 837 N Harris Dr is in support of the speed cushions.

Kimberly Shields at 1603 E Elmwood St is in support of the speed cushions.

Lauren Pew at 1013 N Barkley St is in support of the speed cushions.

Breanne Johnson at 1010 N Harris Dr is in support of the speed cushions.

Paul Johnson at 1010 N Harris Dr is in support of the speed cushions.

Richard Travis at 1556 E Fountain St is opposed to speed cushions.

Aubrey DeFilippo at 1602 E Fountain St is in support of the speed cushions.

Lori Roberts at 1136 N Harris Dr is in support of the speed cushions.

Board Member James inquired about the possibility of adding a speed cushion south of Barkley on Harris Drive.

Resident Gwen Carey responded, noting a property owner's objection within 50 ft of their property. South of Barkley would fall within that proximity, and this is something that was determined as part of the survey that she circulated.

Mr. Hudson confirmed this information, emphasizing that the Transportation Department also considers factors such as utilities, proximity to a driveway and an intersection when determining the speed cushion locations.

Chairperson McCroskey inquired if parking on both sides of the street is permitted.

Mr. Hudson confirmed that this segment has no parking regulations.

Chairperson McCroskey noticed the absence of bike lanes, or markings on this street and asked if that is normal.

Mr. Hudson confirmed that it is normal for a typical 40-foot-wide residential street like Harris Drive not to have striping.

Chairperson McCrosky asked if there are plans to add a bike lane.

Mr. Hudson stated there were no current plans to add one at this time, but the Mesa Traffic Studies Team is always open to explore the possibility if there is a demand and if any such striping would be warranted, independent of the speed cushions installation.

Chairperson McCroskey inquired if a follow up survey is conducted after installing speed cushions to assess their effectiveness.

Mr. Hudson confirmed, saying that a follow-up speed study is typically conducted between the installed speed cushions to determine their effectiveness.

Chairperson McCroskey sought clarification on the process if the neighborhood wished to have bike lanes installed.

Mr. Hudson explained that they would contact the Transportation Department and talk to staff. Staff would then evaluate the street segment characteristics to determine if any pavement markings are warranted. Typically, this type of striping on a residential street, such as Harris Drive, is only considered if there is substantiated need to delineate the different users/modes such as travel lanes, parking, and bikes, and there is adequate street width to accommodate.

Board Member Bingdazzo requested the numbers again, including support and opposition to the speed cushions.

Mr. Hudson reported that of the online comment cards received, eleven were in support, while two were opposed.

Board Member Winstanley shared an experience where adding striping to a wider road significantly reduced traffic speed. He asked if striping could be considered for Harris Drive.

Mr. Hudson explained that striping bike lanes is not an option for this 40-foot-wide road, without prohibiting on-street parking.

Board Member Winstanley stated that he would not have thought a stripe would help prior to it being done but it did make the road feel like it was smaller.

Mr. Hudson explained that striping decisions depend heavily on the corridor, and in this case, the street is not wide enough to accommodate striping for travel lane, parking, and bike lanes. He continued by saying they have studied streets where pavement markings were added on a road like this, and it had a negative effect on speed. He said in some cases it raised the speed. He added that they use this tool to delineate the different modes of travel, however, this street is not wide enough to install dedicated bike lanes without prohibiting on-street parking.

The motion to approve the installation of speed cushions on Harris Drive between Brown Road and 8th Street was moved by Board Member James, seconded by Board Member Bertoni.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – McCroskey – Vandever – Bertoni – Bingdazzo – Crist – James – Winstanley

NAYS – None

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

David Calloway, Transit Coordinator, introduced himself and indicated that he would be providing an update on the Transit Master Plan along with Daksha Masurkar, Project Manager/Transportation Planner at AECOM.

Mr. Calloway explained that they completed phase two of their public outreach, detailing their surveys and the methods used to gather feedback. He then delved into their vision, goals, and objectives of the Transit Master Plan.

Ms. Masurkar continued the presentation, explaining the needs assessment summary, which analyzed current and future needs. She outlined recommendations derived from the assessment which includes service improvements, route modifications, new routes, emerging markets, and high-capacity transit.

Mr. Calloway added that this approach provided valuable insights into micro-transit and unexplored areas in Mesa.

Chairperson McCroskey sought clarification on micro-transit.

Mr. Calloway explained that micro-transit typically involves shared-ride vehicles, like a minivan or small airport shuttle.

Board Member Winstanley inquired if it resembled Tempe’s circular vehicles.

Mr. Calloway clarified that it is smaller unless he is thinking of the older ones. Micro-transit typically operates within a designated zone connecting to regional transit service.

Chairperson McCroskey asked if driverless vehicles were part of this.

Mr. Calloway clarified that, for now, micro-transit still involves a human driver.

Ms. Masurkar continued the presentation, addressing recommendation prioritization and discussing transit supportive strategies like land use and technology.

Mr. Calloway explained a package of mobility options, like one fare to use on micro-transit, light rail, and bus. He outlined the recommendations categorized as near-term (through 2026), mid-term (up to 2035) and long-term (up to 2050). He said as they are flushing those out, they will seek public feedback, assess cost estimates, and explore funding. Additionally, Mr. Calloway revealed that their final report is planned for completion in Spring 2024, with a subsequent presentation to the board.

Board Member Vandever expressed support for micro-transit and inquired about advancements in bus stop technology. She asked if new technologies are integral to the current plan or if they are anticipated in the future.

Mr. Calloway mentioned an ongoing project for new bus shelters, but it is separate from the Transit Master Plan.

Board Member Winstanley noted the perceived vagueness of goals and objectives, asking about the metrics used for accountability.

Ms. Masurkar clarified that each goal has 4 to 5 quantifiable objectives. She expressed the need to draft a comprehensive set of goals and objectives for submission to the transit team, with the intention of subsequently sharing them with the TAB.

Board Member Winstanley inquired if the objectives were their metrics.

Ms. Masurkar confirmed that.

Board Member Winstanley then asked if these objectives were published.

Mr. Calloway mentioned they would be part of the final report in Spring 2024, available for presentation thereafter.

Mr. Winstanley inquired about page six's recommendations and their applicability to transit modes.

Ms. Masurkar explained the summary and provided additional details.

Mr. Calloway added that the new routes are typically east of Gilbert Road, with opportunities for north and south service. The route modifications are aimed at better connecting routes and serving the community.

Board Member Winstanley asked what service equity is on page seven.

Ms. Masurkar clarified that involves disparities related to zero car households and other demographics such as disabilities, youths, seniors, low income, and minority populations, ensuring balanced coverage.

Mr. Calloway explained the transit propensity score shown on Slide no. 5. He stated that the darker purple regions are the areas with the higher transit propensity score.

Ms. Masurkar emphasized that those areas exhibit a higher propensity for projects, given the likelihood that residents in those locations/regions are more inclined to use transit services.

Board Member Winstanley expressed surprise at Eastmark's high propensity score, questioning if it was accurate.

Mr. Calloway confirmed that was accurate.

Ms. Masurkar stated that they are also concentrating on population density and employment density, which would shed light on why the Eastmark area is highlighted.

Board Member Winstanley mentioned discussion about linking to other transit areas and inquired about plans to connect to Apache Junction and Queen Creek. Currently, the area is lacking substantial transit options in those cities, he noted the potential demand and sought insights into collaborative initiatives.

Ms. Masurkar explained that such connections depend on population density, and if lacking, the cost per rider would be too high.

Board Member Winstanley emphasized the potential benefits of connecting to growing areas like Apache Junction (the Superstition Vista Community, which is within a mile of the Mesa border) and Queen Creek. He expressed uncertainty about ongoing discussion with other municipalities.

Mr. Calloway explained that Apache Junction and Queen Creek are part of the MAG (Maricopa Association of Governments) planning area which is based on a larger regional scale.

Board Member Winstanley asked if it was one of their goals and objectives to connect to the cities.

Ms. Masurkar said they want to make sure there are good connections to the light rail which helps provide that regional connection.

Board Member Winstanley expressed concern about potential oversight in certain areas. He suggested that valuable opportunities lie in connecting to cities like Apache Junction and Queen Creek.

Board Member Vandever asked Board Member Winstanley what would happen if they established a transit system that leads to nowhere.

Board Member Winstanley responded by cautioning against such an approach, emphasizing the importance of discussion with other cities.

Mr. Calloway highlighted the focus point on Mesa connecting to existing transit. He mentioned ongoing exploration of opportunities in southeast Mesa, including micro-transit zones and other service types, but clarified that these considerations are part of longer-term plans.

Board Member Winstanley stated that he did not note any plans for Gateway Airport.

Ms. Masurkar clarified that there are existing routes going to Gateway Airport and outlined transit plans encompassing the Gateway and Eastmark areas.

Mr. Calloway confirmed that there are detailed plans for the Gateway Airport area and that transit for the respective area would be included in the final report.

Board Member Winstanley asked if the unanswered questions would be addressed in the final report.

Mr. Calloway assured him that it would be clarified in the final report and would be clear once the maps were available.

Ms. Masurkar sought clarification from Board Member Winstanley regarding the Gateway Airport transit.

Board Member Winstanley explained concerns about a large passenger terminal relocation, prompting questions about rapid transit access.

Ms. Masurkar asked if the concern mainly focused on access to the east and west terminals.

Board Member Winstanley expanded on planning for a large airline passenger terminal and inquired about transit's role in minimizing traffic.

Mr. Calloway highlighted existing transit options aligned with the airport terminal in the current Master Plan.

Board Member James brought attention to the absence of economic development in the goals and suggested a 20-minute transit frequency. He then asked if they were looking at a circulator to downtown Mesa.

Mr. Calloway explained that transit needs evolve with development changes.

Board Member James then raised the issue of TDM, referencing Tempe's examples for new development.

Board Member Winstanley sought clarification on TDM.

Board Member James elucidated Transportation Demand Management (TDM), describing various technics developers use to promote alternative modes of transportation. Subsequently, he inquired about the city's exploration of connections to Dana Park at Val Vista & Baseline/US-60.

Mr. Calloway stated considering Dana Park as one of the potential new routes is under review.

Chairperson McCroskey inquired about key destinations mentioned earlier.

Ms. Masurkar listed recreation, nonprofit organizations, and high schools, as some of examples.

Chairperson McCroskey questioned if the airport was indeed a key destination.

Ms. Masurkar confirmed that the airport is indeed a key destination.

Mr. Calloway added that these are just the major ones, not an exhaustive list.

Chairperson McCroskey shifted the focus to public transit safety measures and their effectiveness on safety.

Mr. Calloway briefly explained the coordinated safety approach between the City of Mesa and Valley Metro, highlighting the positive outcome of the transit ambassador program.

Chairperson McCroskey shared her recent experience with the ambassador program during the light rail ride.

Board Member Bertoni inquired about additional outreach or education for first time transit users.

Mr. Calloway mentioned the potential to incorporate more education into the plan.

Chairperson McCroskey expressed her interest in additional education efforts.

Board Member Crist raised concerns about potential negative economic impacts on business with the extension of light rail and more streetcars to the east.

Ms. Masurkar clarified that the extension of the light rail is a lengthy process, and suggested extension may not be completed by 2050, a long-term assessment.

Item 5. Hear and discuss a presentation on the Transportation Master Plan Update.

Sabine King, Supervising Engineer, introduced herself and indicated that she, along with Vamshi Yellisettyi from Kittleson and Associates, would be providing an update on the Transportation Master Plan.

Mr. Yellisetty explained the collaborative effort with the Mesa General Master Plan and the Transit Master Plan. He then delved into specifics on their public outreach, incorporating insights from other municipalities. Expressing a desire to align with the Transportation Advisory Board Members, he initiated an interactive survey during the meeting.

Highlighting the ongoing online public survey, Mr. Yellisetty urged board members to encourage public participation for a broader range of feedback. He detailed the division of the city into eleven different travel sheds, seeking public input within their primary areas. Acknowledging three travel sheds with limited responses, he assured the board that feedback from those areas had started coming in since the last meeting. Looking ahead, he outlined the upcoming meetings, expected outcomes of the Transportation Master Plan, and the importance of street typologies in optimizing infrastructure placement. Mr. Yellisetty gave an example explaining how they differentiate collector roads within the more urban areas of the city and those in a more rural setting, guiding recommendations based on specific needs.

Board Member James expressed his appreciation for the board's ability to provide input.

Chairperson McCroskey asked Board Member James about the survey and its relation to what he shared.

Board Member James noted that the online survey contained more information than what was discussed in the meeting today.

Mr. Yellisetty clarified that while more details were available online, the condensed version was presented to the TAB.

Chairperson McCroskey suggested improved communication about new surveys, ensuring that TAB members are informed and can spread awareness in their areas. She also raised concerns about neighborhoods with horse privileges, urging identification of R-43 neighborhoods and the establishment of safe paths for equestrians.

Mr. Yellisetty assured the board that they were actively exploring the best way to accommodate the equestrian component.

Board Member Winstanley commented on the incorporation of board input from the last meeting, particularly regarding truck information. He expressed regret for missing in-person meetings in the southeast area and emphasized the importance of utilizing the TAB for disseminating information. Seeking clarity on street topologies, he inquired whether they were a more detailed street classification.

Mr. Yellisetty clarified that the city has a design for collector, arterial, and local streets, emphasizing the focus on functional needs rather than land use. He referred to his slides illustrating the difference between roads in the city/urban areas and in a rural area, reiterating that recommendations vary based on these distinctions and the overall street context.

Board Member Winstanley asked about a timeline for completing the plan, seeking clarification on whether it would be part of the general plan vote.

Ms. King said the Transportation Master Plan is tied to the General Plan.

Board Member Winstanley inquired about the availability of draft for review.

Both Mr. Yellisetty and Ms. King confirmed that the draft will be available for review.

Board Member Winstanley requested the distribution of the drafts to the TAB members, which was echoed by Chairperson McCroskey.

Mr. Hudson informed the board that the presentation and relevant documents were uploaded to the TAB webpage.

Ms. King confirmed the completion of their review, making the documents assessable for the board members.

Mr. Hudson mentioned public comment cards from attendees and invited them to share their input.

Luis Montes, representative for Bike Mesa, provided insights on Downtown micro-mobility, the Transportation Master Plan, and biking paths' safety and connectivity. Luis mentioned that he felt options for micro-mobility in the Downtown Area were well overdue and felt that there have been shortfalls from the previous master plan. He discussed his feelings on shortfalls in shared-use paths throughout the city and that the Lehi Loop shared-use path should not be prioritized as a project. He feels that the canal connection north of McKellips must be made to make this proposed loop accessible for others than those that just live in Lehi.

Rick Costillo gave his comments on the 2050 Transportation Master Plan update, emphasizing the need for engaging a wider range of neighborhoods. Rick discussed the importance of the master plan and that there are shortfalls throughout the city. He mentioned complete streets and that there is a lack of such facilities, even though this was included in the previous master plan. Also, there is a major need for more genuine community input where voices are not being heard.

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

AYES – McCroskey – Vandever – Bertoni – Bingdazzo – Crist – James – Winstanley

NAYS – None

Meeting adjourned at 7:12 pm