

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

DRAFT

HELD ON March 19, 2024

The Transportation Advisory Board of the City of Mesa met in the Lower Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on March 19, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.

<u>TAB Members Present</u>	<u>TAB Members Absent</u>	<u>Others Present</u>
Michelle McCroskey (Chairperson)	Daniel Laufer	Ryan Hudson
Melissa Vandever (Vice Chairperson)*	Ashley Gagnon	Anna Janusz
Lea Bertoni		Ryan Stokes
Tara Bingdazzo		Sabine King
Rob Crist		Maria Deeb
Mike James**		Rae Stephani
Rodney Jarvis		Mark Venti
Megan Neal		Vamshi Yellisetty
David Winstanley		
<i>*arrived at 5:34pm</i>		
<i>**arrived at 5:40pm</i>		

Chairperson McCroskey called the March 19, 2024, Transportation Advisory Board meeting to order at 5:32 pm.

Item 1. Approval of the minutes of the Transportation Advisory Board meeting held on January 16, 2024.

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 – Jarvis – Neal – Winstanley

NAYS – None

Item 2. Items from citizens present.

None

Vice Chairperson Vandever arrived at 5:34 pm.

Item 3. Hear and discuss a presentation on the Mesa Safe Streets for All Safety Action Plan.

Sabine King, Supervising Engineer, introduced herself and indicated that she would be presenting the Mesa Safe Streets for All Safety Action Plan along with Maria Angelica Deeb, Transportation Projects Coordinator, and Rae Stephani, Engineering Designer at Y2K Engineering.

Ms. Stephani highlighted the project's funding source - a federal grant requiring a self-certified safety action plan for disbursement. She outlined the project's goals, scope of work, and achievements to date. She then presented a QR code to an interactive survey soliciting feedback from board members.

Board Member James arrived at 5:40 pm.

Ms. Stephani explained their public engagement strategy, detailing planned events and activities in three phases. She expressed the team's intent to return in May with a progress update for the TAB. Then she opened the presentation up for questions.

Board Member James inquired about future grant opportunities.

Ms. Stephani explained that there are a lot of grant opportunities. The Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) is \$5 billion over 5 years. She emphasized the necessity for agencies to possess a self-certified safety action plan that meets the FHWA criteria of SS4A to qualify.

Chairperson McCroskey raised a concern regarding the KSI (Killed or Seriously Injured) collisions, seeking data on red light runners and cyclists' involvement.

Ms. Stephani acknowledged the request, committing to provide the breakdown for the board at the May presentation.

Board Member Winstanley requested details on the methodology for determining the total risk score for discussion at the May meeting.

Ryan Hudson, City Traffic Engineer, mentioned comment cards from attendees and invited them to share their input.

Ryan Wozniak, at 1309 W 9th Street, shared his thoughts on the safety action plan and the action plan's importance. His focus would be to emphasize and prioritize a reshape of Mesa's Street design. Mr. Wozniak described the ideal street design factors and how there are trade offs to creating an equitable transportation network. He expressed a need to calibrate the city's street design standards to be more focused on bike and pedestrian facilities.

Jonathan Bush – no address given – advocated for protected bike lanes. Mr. Bush described his personal experience being involved in a collision as a cyclist being struck by a vehicle. He discussed his appreciation for some of the traffic calming and bike lane projects that have happened in the Mesa transportation network, but more needs to be done. The transit system and bike infrastructure are insufficient from a safety perspective. Mr. Bush is an advocate for a more progressive approach to creating safer streets for all road users in Mesa.

Board Member Jarvis highlighted the growing popularity of electric bikes among schoolchildren and the importance of safety. Additionally, he mentioned the results of the survey they took, noting that the majority of the responses were concerned about impaired driving.

Chairperson McCroskey inquired staff about addressing electric bikes in the upcoming May discussion, stressing the need for safe accommodation.

Ms. King recalled the Police Department's prior discussion on electric bikes, noting their variety and regulatory challenges.

Mr. Hudson sought the presence of Ric, who submitted a comment card.

Ric Castillo, resident of 455 E 1st Avenue, expressed support for funding biking and pedestrian infrastructure projects that received voter approved initiatives. Mr. Castillo explained that the Mesa bond in 2018 included the Eastern Canal Pathway improvements which is a crucial link connecting Mesa neighborhoods. He stated that it was unacceptable that the Lehi Loop shared use path project was happening before the Eastern Canal project which has been delayed for six years now. This project ties directly to dense areas of Mesa where there would be a major traffic safety benefit. He emphasized that the City of Mesa must allocate its resources to projects that will have the most significant benefit and impact. This is most impactful in the most dense areas where the public relies on modes of traffic other than by vehicle.

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

Mark Venti, Senior Transportation Engineer, introduced himself and indicated that he would be presenting an update on the Transportation Master Plan with Vamshi Yellisetty, Senior Principal Planner at Kittelson & Associates. He provided a timeline on what to expect.

Mr. Yellisetty showed the board the agenda and outlined his presentation. He explained that they use all the information gathered to assess current conditions for today, near-term (year 2030), mid-term (year 2035) and long term (year 2050) to identify future project needs. He presented both funded and unfunded Capital Improvement Projects, followed by a summary of phase II public outreach.

Mr. Venti emphasized that this effort was coordinated with the General Plan update.

Mr. Yellisetty explained that the website received over 2,000 visits and almost 1,700 comments. He mentioned that the average time spent answering the survey was eight minutes and shared the survey feedback.

Mr. Venti added that two of the documents provided were summaries of phases one and two of the public feedback. He noted that on the back of the summaries are hundreds of comments for the board's review.

Mr. Yellisetty reviewed the public feedback and offered to send detailed reports to the board upon request. He elaborated on a question regarding preferences for bike lanes, noting that 48% of the responders prefer more comfortable and safer bike routes than less expensive but more bike lane mileage.

Chairperson McCroskey sought clarification, questioning if the remaining 52% did not want the comfortable, safer routes.

Mr. Yellisetty clarified that the 48% constituted a majority response, as there was a neutral option available. He proceeded with the presentation, explaining the feedback received, including the public prioritization of maintaining the current infrastructure and ensuring safety as their top two goals.

Mr. Venti affirmed that this information was included in the PDFs already received by the board and would be included in the final report.

Chairperson McCroskey inquired about the location of the information.

Mr. Hudson confirmed that the information has been uploaded to the TAB website last week with the pre-meeting materials.

Mr. Yellisetty proceeded by discussing the varied preferences of each travel shed and highlighted the differing desires between areas with existing transit and those without. He explained that areas with transit sought enhancement, while areas without transit wishes for its addition.

Mr. Venti added that they considered all aspects together, emphasizing the interconnectedness of the transit, bike, and pedestrian networks to maximize synergy.

Mr. Yellisetty noted that this approach aids city staff in identifying areas requiring more attention.

Mr. Venti presented the three documents available on the TAB website. He explained that staff would provide a draft to the TAB on May 6th and present their findings at the May 21st meeting.

Chairperson McCroskey inquired about the staff's proposed timeline for the board.

Mr. Venti explained that the plans would be distributed to the board on May 6th, two weeks before the meeting and they hoped to receive the board members' comments during the week of the TAB meeting.

Chairperson McCroskey expressed concern, mentioning the board's unfamiliarity with such tasks and requested clarification and reminders.

Mr. Venti assured the board that they would coordinate with Mr. Hudson to ensure the board is informed of the release and can review it for comments at the May meeting.

Chairperson McCroskey mentioned the difficulty of seeing small presentation comments on the screen during meetings.

Mr. Venti outlined that phase III public outreach would gather final comments from the public. He added that the final draft would be available for public viewing around May-June 2024, with a provided link for the board to share with others. Then he stated that the final plan would be completed in June 2024.

Board Member Bertoni inquired if there would be a way for the public to provides comments over time if things don't develop the way staff thought in this Transportation Master Plan.

Mr. Yellisetty assured the board that the plan would be reassessed every 10 years and adjusted accordingly. He also mentioned that as projects are implemented, there will be a public outreach at that time.

Mr. Venti emphasized that the plan would be accessible on the Transportation website, and his team would be informed of any new construction that could impact the right of away because it is sent to his team for review.

Board Member Winstanley inquired about the usefulness of the feedback received in January and whether it met expectations.

Mr. Yellisetty confirmed that the feedback was valuable and aligned with public input.

Board Member Winstanley mentioned a survey question regarding a travel lane no longer needed. He inquired about the criteria used to remove such a lane, citing a specific example of Ray Road, which the council is considering removing.

Mr. Yellisetty explained that they consider future traffic volumes, the subject street's level of service after lane removal, and is it impact on the surrounding network.

Board Member Winstanley pointed out that Ray Road extends into Pinal County and noted development of a new 10,000 home community, which will significantly impact the traffic volume on Ray Road.

Mr. Yellisetty confirmed that the model does expand into Pinal County, so all that traffic is captured.

Board Member Winstanley expressed his admiration for this approach.

Mr. Venti said that whenever they have an idea for a change, they will refer back to this documentation to determine if it seems like something the public would support. He added that any project they plan takes 5-15 years to study, design, build, get feedback and complete.

Board Member Winstanley expressed his gratitude.

Chairperson McCroskey expressed enthusiasm for their next presentation.

Board Member James referred to the budget process, expressing interest in viewing the proposals staff intends to present to the council with all these different plans coming together.

Mr. Venti appreciated his feedback and indicated their willingness to collaborate with staff to provide the requested information.

Chairperson McCroskey highlighted the need for clarity when staff discuss enhanced bike facilities and bike buffers, suggesting it would be beneficial for the board to see visual representations of these concepts in the future.

Mr. Yellisetty responded that the final report would include example graphics to illustrate what these facilities would look like.

Chairperson McCroskey pointed out that while staff may be familiar with transportation terminology, the public might not be, recommending that future surveys include examples to bridge that gap.

Mr. Yellisetty appreciated the feedback and confirmed it would be considered.

Mr. Hudson advised the board that comment cards had been submitted regarding this item.

Ryan Wozniak, at 1309 W 9th Street, shared his thoughts on the transportation masterplan and process in updating the plan. Mr. Wozniak expressed a great need to ensure that transportation infrastructure considers the complimentary features of land use and urban design within the travel sheds, not just being focused on connectivity. He discussed opportunities through redevelopment to rethink transportation infrastructure to be more direct with providing useful and safe connections. Mr. Wozniak described overbuilt parking lots, or seas of asphalt, that could be redeveloped to provide these useful connections. He would like to see more documentation on what the barriers are in to achieving the goals for the master plan. He cited the previous transportation master plan goals and how he feels that Mesa has not achieved them. Mr. Wozniak also discussed his support for reallocating unneeded lanes to support safer and less hostile streets given the benefits to quality of life.

Sarah Meaney, resident of 457 E Fairfield St, discussed her concerns and aspirations regarding bike and pedestrian safety in Mesa. Ms. Meaney described her experiences in other municipalities and things where she feels Mesa could do better. She expressed that Mesa needs improved measures in school zones and for safer bike lane facilities and connections. Ms. Meaney discussed the Stadium Connector shared-use path and bike route She also inquired whether the Transportation Master Plan draft would be available online for public review.

Mr. Hudson confirmed that it would be. He explained that everything presented today is available on the Transportation Advisory Board webpage.

Chairperson McCroskey referred to a point Ms. Meaning made about other cities having superior bike and pedestrian corridors. She encouraged attendees to document any effective ideas they encounter in other cities, share them with the board, and alert the Transportation Department.

Vice Chairperson Vandever inquired if Ms. Meaning had contacted the Transportation Department regarding her concerns.

Ms. Meaning confirmed she had not yet reached out.

Vice Chairperson Vandever encouraged Ms. Meaning, and anyone watching this meeting, to bring their concerns directly to the Transportation Department, which will thoroughly investigate them. She mentioned that topics discussed at the board meetings often originate from concerns previously brought to the Transportation Department.

Chairperson McCroskey added that any member of the public is welcome to speak at a board meeting. She explained that while the subject they raise will not become agenda items for discussion at the current meeting, the Transportation Department has constantly been responsive to her suggestions and investigate them.

Mr. Hudson announced that there was an additional online comment card, this one from Mr. Luis Montes.

Mr. Montes, resident of 945 North Pasadena, discussed his concern about bike safety and his vision for improvements in Mesa. He discussed his desire for there to be more accountability in the Transportation Master Plan. He described that the previous master plan noted aspirations of becoming a bicycle-friendly platinum status and Mesa is at the bottom 17% of large cities for bike infrastructure. Mr. Montes also discussed that Mesa's public bike infrastructure is limited to the multi-use paths. He also discussed the 2018 and 2020 bonds that included shared use paths that have not been built. Mesa is nowhere near the goals that were established as part of the 2014 Mesa Transportation Masterplan. Mr. Montes discussed how he feels there have been efforts with PR around bike facilities but no action in getting safer bike facilities. He also discussed the importance of adding mode options, like transit and bike facilities, as a strategy to reduce congestion.

Mr. Hudson then read a comment card from Lindsey Lyon, resident of 11 W 8th Pl, detailing her aspiration for Mesa to improve Center Street with separated bike lanes from the canal paths to Downtown Mesa.

Item 5. Discuss and take action on staff recommendation to reduce the speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph on 32nd Street between McKellips Road and McDowell Road

Ryan Hudson, City Traffic Engineer, introduced himself and indicated that he would present the staff recommendation to reduce the speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph on 32nd Street between McKellips Road and McDowell Road.

Mr. Hudson mentioned the approval of speed cushions on this street segment at the last TAB meeting. Providing an overview map and street views of this road segment for context he detailed the rationale behind staff's proposal for speed limit reduction. He then outlined the next steps that would be taken if approved through TAB as it involves an ordinance and city code change.

Board Member Winstanley inquired about the duration between bullet 1 and 2 under the “next steps” section of his presentation.

Mr. Hudson explained that upon approval at this meeting, staff would include the recommendation as an ordinance on an upcoming City Council agenda. He stated that the average time frame for an item such as this, which requires a city code modification, to go from the Transportation Advisory Board to the City Council agenda is 30-45 days.

Board Member Winstanley expressed his belief that it wouldn’t go to City Council until the TAB minutes were approved two months later, thinking it was a four-month process.

Mr. Hudson clarified that the TAB’s decision tonight would be incorporated into the City Council report which is not contingent on the TAB meeting minutes approval process.

Board Member Bertoni commented on the unusual aspect of dropping to 25 MPH on a three-lane road. She inquired about the potential plan to remove the center lane and install bike lanes, given the proximity of schools along this corridor.

Mr. Hudson acknowledged that the installation of bike lanes is something that can be considered in the long term. However, he added that it would be a major undertaking with significant impacts to the corridor.

Board Member Bertoni sought clarification about how drivers are informed about the speed reduction.

Mr. Hudson elaborated on plans to synchronize the speed reduction with the installation of speed cushions, facilitating communications to the drivers with updated regulatory and warning signs.

It was moved by Board Member Jarvis, seconded by Board Member Winstanley, to approve a reduction in the speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph on 32nd Street between McKellips Road and McDowell Road.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

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

NAYS – None

It was motioned by Board Member Bingdazzo, seconded by Board Member Neal, to adjourn the meeting.

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

NAYS – None

Meeting adjourned at 7:29 pm