

# TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

## DRAFT

HELD ON September 19, 2023

The Transportation Advisory Board of the City of Mesa met in the Lower Council Chambers, 57 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street, on September 19, 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)	Daniel Laufer	Anna Janusz
Lea Bertoni	David Winstanley	Jason Coon
Tara Bingdazzo		Mark Venti
Rob Crist		Chad Atterbury
Ashley Gagnon		Yung Koprowski
Mike James		Sabine King
Megan Neal		Vamshi Yellisetty
		Erik Guderian

Chairperson McCroskey called the September 19, 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 July 18, 2023.**

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

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

**AYES** – McCroskey – Vandever – Bertoni – Bingdazzo – Crist – Gagnon – James – Neal

**NAYS** – None

**Item 2. Items from citizens present.**

None

**Item 3. Discuss and take action on staff recommendation to approve the installation of speed cushions on Preston Street between 64th Street and Sericin (Council District 5).**

Ryan Hudson, City Traffic Engineer, introduced himself and gave an overview of the Mesa Speed Hump Policy. He then turned the presentation to Anna Janusz, Senior Transportation Engineer.

Ms. Janusz introduced herself and indicated that she would be giving a presentation to discuss and take action on the staff recommendation to approve the installation of speed cushions on Preston Street between 64th Street and Sericin (Council District 5).

Ms. Janusz explained the characteristics of Preston Street between 64<sup>th</sup> Street and Sericin. She also mentioned that there are speed cushions in other areas of this neighborhood. She explained the results of the study, including that this street segment has a posted speed limit of 25 MPH, with the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed at 35.3 MPH and an average of 958 vehicles per day. She said the Fire Department does not object to the installation of the speed cushions. She further explained that 71% of the affected property owners and 93% of the secondarily property owners were in favor of the speed cushions. She then turned the item over to Chairperson McCroskey for discussion and to take action on the staff's recommendation.

Chairperson McCroskey asked for comment cards to be read.

Mr. Hudson read a comment card from Jason Hawkings at 6527 E Preston Street who is in favor of the speed cushions.

Scott Thompson, resident at 6532 E Preston Street, who attended the meeting, submitted a comment card in favor of the speed cushions but chose to speak. Mr. Thompson is in favor of the speed cushions on Preston Street.

Jack Smith, resident at 6615 E Preston Street, spoke and gave his comments in support of speed cushions.

Board Member James urged the staff to consider the width of roads when developing residential streets.

Chairperson McCroskey added that she feels that on wider streets, people tend to drive faster compared to narrow streets.

Board Member Vandever moved to approve staff's recommendation to install speed cushions on Preston Street, and it was seconded by Board Member Gagnon.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

**AYES** – McCroskey – Vandever – Bertoni – Bingdazzo – Crist – Gagnon – James – Neal

**NAYS** – None

**Item 4. Hear and discuss a presentation on the Center Street Complete Streets Design Concept Report.**

Mark Venti, Senior Transportation Engineer, introduced himself along with Chad Atterbury from Dig Studio and Yung Koprowski with Y2K Engineering. He indicated that they would be giving a presentation on the Center Street Complete Streets Design Concept Report.

Mr. Venti explained that this is the initial stage of looking at a project, then they will proceed to the actual design plans. He mentioned that they were considering a redesign of approximately a three-mile stretch of Center Street extending from Broadway Road to McKellips Road. He then turned the presentation over to Mr. Atterbury and Mrs. Koprowski.

Mrs. Koprowski stated that they are exploring ways to transform the roadway to better serve the community. She went into the specifics of their investigation and potential changes.

Mr. Atterbury emphasized the significance of ADA accessibility and the increased pedestrian traffic in the downtown area. He mentioned their focus on street crossings, providing shade for pedestrians, and expanded pedestrian zones where needed. He also discussed various bicycle accommodations, aiming to implement them in the most cost-efficient way.

Mrs. Koprowski stated that they are considering several different methods, including striping verses reconstruction, as well as the potential drainage and utility impacts. She provided an overview of the current state of the roadway and then handed the presentation over to Mr. Atterbury to discuss the first three focus areas included in the design concept.

Mr. Atterbury explained that the first area was located between 1<sup>st</sup> Ave and Main, near the Mesa Arts Center. He discussed the improvements they were considering for this section. He then mentioned the second area north of Main Street to University Drive and outlined the options under consideration.

Mrs. Koprowski included some additional changes they were considering for the second area and then proceeded to the third area, which is north of University Drive. She mentioned fewer changes for this area, as it is not considered part of the downtown area and discussed those changes. She then invited the board to share their thoughts and questions.

Chairperson McCroskey mentioned the large soccer fields north of McKellips Road. She emphasized the importance of keeping the bike lanes safe, especially for children riding up to the soccer fields in the future. She recommended protected bike lanes all the way up to McKellips Road.

Board Member Neal inquired about the downtown area and whether they had considered allowing pedestrians to cross intersections diagonally.

Ms. Koprowski responded positively, stating that is a good suggestion they can explore those types of concepts for signalized interactions.

Mr. Venti mentioned that they are considering improvements at all intersections along this corridor.

Board Member James highlighted the significance of providing shade from Broadway Road to University Drive and recommended planting more trees in this section. He also suggested adding shade at the stadium connector for those waiting for the signal to cross. He emphasized the importance of keeping the downtown area family friendly with safe biking.

Mrs. Koprowski explained that the separated bike lane is designed for people of all ages and abilities. She then asked Board Member James about his vision for bike parking when he brings his downtown to enjoy the area.

Board Member James mentioned that he feels anywhere by the new park near ASU would be a good place.

Board Member Gagnon asked if they know how many vehicles travel and how many people ride their bikes along this stretch. He expressed a desire to know the numbers that would justify the spending on the project and reconfiguring the street cross-section.

Mrs. Koprowski replied that it is appropriately 10,000 vehicles per day, which could support the lane reconfiguration and reduction to better repurpose this area for other transportation modes.

Board Member Gagnon pointed out a high school along this segment, which sees a lot of people in the morning and afternoon. He advised that they should prioritize safety, especially with more people coming into the downtown area, including transient populations.

Mrs. Koprowski acknowledged his concern and suggested collaboration with other departments, such as the Police Department, to review critical areas. She reiterated that this is a feasibility study, and more safety considerations might come into play during the final design phase.

Board Member Bertoni asked if they have considered where the buses will stop when they reconfigure this road.

Mrs. Koprowski mentioned that they are working with the Transit Department and may relocate bus stops or enhance shade. She asked if there were any other comments or questions about transit.

Board Member Bertoni expressed her preference for buses having their own turnout spaces.

Ms. Koprowski explained their preference to avoid buses stopping in the travel lanes.

Board Member Bingdazzo shared her experience of biking to the downtown area at night and expressed her support for additional safety measures for cyclists.

Mrs. Koprowski asked if she felt the existing roadway lighting was sufficient.

Board Member Bingdazzo replied that it is quite dark, and the visibility is low.

Chairperson McCroskey asked if LED lights would eventually be installed in that area.

Mrs. Koprowski said she did not have that information.

Board Member Vandever expressed her appreciation for the consideration regarding bicyclists, water efficient landscaping and walkability on this roadway. She stressed the importance of providing shade and safety, as well as maintaining a smooth traffic flow farther down the road.

Mr. Venti mentioned the need for continuity and connectivity and how that is a very key component for this stretch of Center St.

Board Member Bertoni inquired if they were considering flashing warning lights or crossing signals at intersections that do not have traffic signals, to make drivers more alert in those area.

Mrs. Koprowski said they can explore some crossing enhancements at strategic intersections.

Chairperson McCroskey recommended adding plenty of shade with the wide walking paths, particularly in the Arizona heat.

Mrs. Koprowski explained that they are looking to enhance the pedestrian experience in the downtown area, but they are not planning on widening the sidewalks north of University Drive. She asked for her thoughts on it.

Chairperson McCroskey stated that adding trees and shade would make the area look better and make the area more usable.

Mrs. Koprowski thanked her for her input.

Mr. Venti mentioned that once they gather all the input from the community, they plan to make quick, easy, low-cost changes. The more detailed changes could be considered in the future through a Capital Improvement Project or with bond funds. He added that they have been exploring new technology for structural shade in cases where planting trees may not be feasible.

Chairperson McCroskey expressed a preference for shade if they could not do both - adding shade and widening the sidewalk.

Board Member James brought up funding and mentioned that other cities have used COVID and CARES Act funding for safety improvements. He asked if there were any opportunities for that in Mesa.

Mrs. Koprowski explained that the federal funding is available and may help prioritize this project over others.

Luis Montes, a resident at the meeting, came up to speak and gave his comments in favor of this project. Mr. Montes expressed that this project should be the highest priority for the City of Mesa.

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

Sabine King, Supervising Engineer, introduced herself and Vamshi Yellisetty from Kittelson and Associates. She stated that Mr. Yellisetty would be giving a presentation on the Transportation Master Plan.

Mr. Yellisetty provided an update on the progress of the Transportation Master Plan. He mentioned that they have completed phase one and are currently in phase two of community engagement. He presented a draft of the Transportation Vision, which was developed based on the General and Transit Plans. He also shared a draft of the Transportation Goals. Mr. Yellisetty advised the board that an online open house would be held tomorrow to gather feedback from areas where they received limited input.

Chairperson McCroskey inquired about the specific areas from which they receive little feedback.

Mr. Yellisetty mentioned that areas 8, 9, 14 and 60 had provided limited feedback.

Chairperson McCroskey requested Mr. Yellisetty to share the website link with the board members so they could share it within their communities.

Mr. Yellisetty confirmed and mentioned that they will promote the link over the next month. He proceeded to display a preview of the website's content and explained that the different areas have distinct needs and travel patterns. To address this, they have developed "travel sheds" which allows them to combine geographic areas with similar travel patterns and social-economic characteristics. This helps identify the transportation improvements needed in these areas. Additionally, they have a layer that looks at the citywide regional network. Mr. Yellisetty compared the downtown area with southeast Mesa, which is experiencing substantial growth. He outlined upcoming steps in this process and stated that they anticipate a final plan for review by the Transportation Advisory Board in January or March of 2024.

Board Member James asked if they had encountered any surprising findings or unexpected aspects while examining these travel sheds.

Mr. Yellisetty confirmed that they found interesting information. He explained that the data they collect helps them prioritize whenever walking, biking or increased lane capacity is more critical for each area.

Board Member Neal asked if they had identified any common factors that overlap in multiple travel sheds.

Mr. Yellisetty mentioned that this type of overlap was common. He provided an example where the southeast Mesa area and the US-60 corridors overlapped. Therefore, when evaluating southeast Mesa, they also consider the US-60 corridor. He added that there are other overlapping areas, so they look beyond the defined boundaries to address those concerns.

**Item 6. Hear and discuss a presentation on the City of Mesa Photo Safety Program.**

Jason Coon, Police Lieutenant, introduced himself and indicated that he would be giving a presentation on the City of Mesa Photo Safety Program.

Lieutenant Coon explained that the program began in the middle of the 1990's and used to include vans. He mentioned that the current program has 18 intersection cameras and 12 school

zone cameras, with plans to add more. He explained staffing and the review process before citations are issued. He provided a breakdown of April, showing there were over 11,000 triggers. The vendor handling the cameras reduced this number to 8,100 after their review. From there, these 8,100 triggers were reviewed by the Mesa Police Department, resulting in only 4,800 citations ultimately being issued. He then handed the presentation over to Ryan Hudson, City Traffic Engineer.

Mr. Hudson mentioned that the Transportation Department has received \$1.2 million in funding each year for years from this program. He explained that this funding goes towards traffic safety driven infrastructure improvements including pedestrian safety measures, bike facility upgrades, crossing enhancements, traffic signal upgrades, crash analysis, schools zone upgrades, and traffic calming. He outlined specific areas and projects that have benefitted from this funding.

Lieutenant Coon then discussed the attempted legislation to abolish photo safety throughout the state. He explained that such attempts occur annually, but this year's attempt went farther than in previous years, passing in the House and Senate. However, the Governor vetoed it in May, preventing its passage.

Chairperson McCroskey asked about the reasons behind the attempts to abolish photo safety.

Lieutenant Coon explained that there are various reasons, including misinformation about how citations are issued.

Board Member Vandever asked if they knew why the Governor vetoed the legislation.

Lieutenant Coon said he did not have that information.

Chairperson McCroskey inquired about the criteria for choosing which school receives upgrades and which do not. She mentioned Mountain View and her belief that it might need an upgrade.

Lieutenant Coon clarified that traffic studies are conducted to determine which schools are in greater need by assessing the safety of students, volume of vehicles and the speed of traffic near the school.

Mr. Hudson explained that a city-wide assessment was performed, and the schools recommended for upgrades or new locations had a higher need than Mountain View, based on the respective traffic study.

Board Member Crist asked what the current cost of installing a school zone camera.

Lieutenant Coon replied that he did not have that information.

Chairperson McCroskey thanked them for the presentation.

It was motioned by Board Member Vandever, seconded by Board Member James, to adjourn the meeting.

**AYES** – McCroskey – Vandever – Bertoni – Bingdazzo – Crist – Gagnon – James – Neal

**NAYS – None**

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm