

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

DRAFT

HELD ON May 21, 2024

The Transportation Advisory Board of the City of Mesa met in the Lower Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on May 21, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.

<u>TAB Members Present</u>	<u>TAB Members Absent</u>	<u>Others Present</u>
Michelle McCroskey (Chairperson)	Lea Bertoni	Ryan Hudson
Melissa Vandever (Vice Chairperson)	Mike James	Anna Janusz
Tara Bingdazzo	Daniel Laufer	Maria Angelica Deeb
Rob Crist	Ashley Gagnon	Yung Koprowski
Rodney Jarvis		Erik Guderian
Megan Neal		Mark Venti
David Winstanley		Vamshi Yellisetty

Chairperson McCroskey called the May 21, 2024, Transportation Advisory Board meeting to order at 5:33 pm.

Item 1. Approval of the minutes of the Transportation Advisory Board meeting held on March 19, 2024.

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

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

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

NAYS – None

Item 2. Acknowledge outgoing Board Member Megan Neal.

Chairperson McCroskey acknowledged outgoing board member Megan Neal.

Item 3. Annual election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

Mesa City Code requires that the Transportation Advisory Board select their own Chairperson and Vice Chairperson from among their members to serve a one-year term. By-laws state that no board member shall serve more than two consecutive full terms as Chairperson or Vice Chairperson. Board members who have served two consecutive full terms as an officer may be reelected to that office after at least one intervening year on the Board during which he/she does not serve as that officer. Partial terms as an officer shall not be counted towards term limits. The term of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson will begin at the July 2024 Transportation Advisory Board meeting.

Chairperson McCroskey provided a brief overview of the annual elections and opened the floor to the board members for nominations.

Chairperson McCroskey made a nomination for Board Member Winstanley to be 2024/2025 Chairperson.

Upon no other nominations, it was moved by Chairperson McCrosky, seconded by Board Member Vandever, to elect Board Member Winstanley as the next Chairperson.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

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

NAYS – None

Board Member Winstanley made a nomination for Vice Chairperson Vandever to continue as the Vice Chairperson for the upcoming 2024/2025 term.

Upon no other nominations, it was moved by Board Member Winstanley, seconded by Board Member Jarvis, to elect Vice Chairperson Vandever as the next Vice Chairperson.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

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

NAYS – None

Item 4. Items from citizens present.

None

Item 5. Hear and discuss a presentation on the Mesa Safe Streets for All Safety Action Plan.

Maria Angelica Deeb, Transportation Projects Coordinator, introduced herself and Yung Koprowski from Y2K. She indicated that they would be giving a presentation on the Mesa Safe Streets for All Safety Action Plan.

Ms. Deeb explained that they began working on this plan in December 2023, secured a grant, and outlined the goals. Then she passed the presentation to Ms. Koprowski.

Ms. Koprowski reviewed the agenda and explained how they have used segments, crash history, and risk factors to create the high-risk network. She then presented a map displaying the 95th percentile high risk network and explained that these areas would be the focus for the comprehensive safety action plan.

Board Member Winstanley asked if there are areas further south that are not shown on her map.

Ms. Koprowski responded that there were not any areas south of what was shown on the map.

Board Member Winstanley expressed his surprise.

Ms. Koprowski clarified that this is based on data from 2017-2022. She noted that they will keep in mind that the southeast area of Mesa is continuing to grow, and they will look at the risk factors to highlight areas in the southeast part of the city.

Chairperson McCroskey noted some blue marks on the map in the southeast area.

Board Member Winstanley pointed out that there are three more miles south of those marks.

Ms. Koprowski acknowledged that a significant portion of the city is not shown on the map.

Board Member Winstanley urged the staff to specifically look at Ellsworth and SR-24, as well as the upcoming proposed railroad crossing on Ellsworth Rd.

Ms. Koprowski thanked Board Member Winstanley for his comments, emphasizing that they were seeking such feedback. Then she displayed a slide that showed segments with six, seven or eight overlapping risk factors. She explained that this information helps identify areas for potential projects. Also, when they overlap it with other information like police districts, it can help them target problem areas and trends.

Chairperson McCroskey inquired about which streets are marked in yellow, indicating the eight risk factors.

Ms. Koprowski replied that Alma School Rd, Stapley Dr, Higley Rd, and McKellips Rd are marked yellow. She explained the statistics summary, emphasizing the goal is to reduce serious injuries and fatal crashes by 30 percent. The statistics provide a benchmark for comparison allowing them to focus resources on a certain area to help achieve that goal. She also explained the Predictive Safety Analysis, which predicts expected crashes at intersections under a normalized analysis model. By comparing the actual data with these predictions, they can identify intersections with more crashes than expected and find opportunities for improvement. They

combine the Predictive Safety Analysis with the High-Risk Network for a comprehensive analysis. She then explained Collision Profiles, presenting the top eleven for Mesa and highlighting the four Collision Profiles that account for 63 percent of serious injuries or fatalities.

Chairperson McCroskey asked for clarification on what a fully protected left turn is, as listed in the Collision Profiles.

Ms. Koprowski explained that a fully protected left turn is controlled by a left turn arrow that goes from green to yellow then red, allowing left turns only on the green arrow. The intersections without a fully protected left turn allow drivers to turn on a green ball or flashing yellow arrow, requiring them to yield to oncoming traffic before turning left. She explained the Preliminary Road Safety Focus Areas, which are designed to develop safety strategies that would have the highest impact on reducing serious injuries and fatal crashes. Then she provided an update on their public engagement efforts that are tied to the safety action plan efforts.

Chairperson McCroskey announced to the board that Mr. Hudson will be sending them a link to the survey that is mentioned in the presentation. She encouraged the board members to complete the survey and share the link within their communities.

Ms. Koprowski mentioned that the website is mesasaferstreets.com. She informed the board that the survey responses would be incorporated into this plan, with a second outreach phase planned for later this year. Then she outlined the next steps.

Chairperson McCroskey asked for details on how the grant works.

Ms. Koprowski explained that the grant is available to cities and towns but not to state level agencies. It requires a 20 percent match from the local agency, with an 80 percent grant value, up to 30 million dollars. One of the grant's requirements is to have a safety action plan that meets numerous criteria, which is what is being developed with the Mesa Comprehensive Safety Action Plan that is being presented tonight.

Chairperson McCroskey mentioned a recent city council meeting that discussed preliminary work on Center Street and asked the staff for clarification on their plans as the meeting had not provided clear details.

Erik Guderian, Assistant Transportation Director, joined the meeting to answer the question. He explained that the city council is considering a bond election for different types of traffic safety projects, which must be approved in June to appear on the ballot in November. He mentioned that one project was discussed last night, but that may not be the project that is done with the funding. He added that if the bond passes, the city expects to receive additional funds with 80 percent match of funds from this grant.

Chairperson McCroskey stated that she has a different view from her council member on the subject. She referenced a survey asking people about their feelings on having bike lanes separated from the roadway and noted that securing that funding would be beneficial.

Ms. Koprowski then elaborated on the road safety strategies, stating that they are looking at separating vehicles from other, vulnerable modes of travel (such as motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians) by time and space. This approach includes implementing protected left turns or separating bike lanes from the roadway. She highlighted roundabouts as a highly effective safety measure, as they slow down traffic and reduce the severity of crashes by changing the angle of impact, thereby decreasing the likelihood of serious injury or fatal crashes.

Chairperson McCroskey acknowledged that roundabouts reduce crash severity but pointed out that some studies have shown that many drivers are unsure how to drive them. She inquired if roundabouts result in more crashes, even if they are less severe.

Ms. Koprowski confirmed that while roundabouts might lead to a higher number of crashes, these are less severe. She emphasized that their primary goal is to ensure people reach home safely with a focus on decreasing serious injury and fatal crashes.

Chairperson McCroskey then inquired about how red-light running fit into their plans and how they intend to mitigate it.

Ms. Koprowski explained that red light running contributes to some of the angle crashes they have observed in the data analysis. She noted that the city is already enforcing these areas and that combining enforcement with education is an effective way to reduce such crash types.

Board Member Jarvis pointed out that this presentation shows 78% of crashes involve drivers under 65 years old, and asked why there is a focus on drivers over 65 years old.

Ms. Koprowski explained that while most crashes involve drivers under 65 years old, drivers over 65 years old are overrepresented in severe injury and fatal crashes.

Board Member Jarvis asked if the crash ratio is indeed higher for this age group.

Ms. Koprowski confirmed that it is correct.

Mr. Guderian added that the focus is on severe injury and fatal crashes.

Ms. Koprowski explained that people over 65 years old are more venerable because they are more likely to be seriously injured or die in a motor vehicle crash.

Board Member Jarvis inquired about the action planned to address this issue.

Ms. Koprowski responded that they will conduct further research to develop strategies to address these issues. Some of these strategies include reducing response time to level one traumas, educating caregivers or family members to recognize when elderly should stop driving, and improving transit options so that the elderly can use public transportation instead of driving.

Board Member Jarvis remarked that it would be up to the state to enforce the surrender of driver's license, as the state is the issuing authority. He assumes that people are not going to voluntarily surrender their keys.

Ms. Koprowski added that if their data analysis shows that more of the problem occurs at night, they will consider replacing signs more frequently for optimum reflectivity or improving roadway lighting.

Vice Chairperson Vandever mentioned that she thought the Arizona Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Division tests people every five years for vision after they reach a certain age.

Board Member Winstanley confirmed this.

Vice Chairperson Vandever advised that there should be more education for seniors on Uber and Lift because they often are unfamiliar with them and fear using the apps.

Chairperson McCroskey discussed how many seniors with vision issues might not realize that they qualify for RideChoice and continue driving instead of relying on their children for transportation. She then brought up concerns about children in school zones and proper sidewalk usage. She emphasized that regardless of any new program educating high school students should be implemented.

Ms. Koprowski noted that the existing driver education programs are consistently full. She suggested exploring additional options to ensure that these programs are more frequent and accessible to everyone.

Board Member Jarvis recommended including churches in outreach efforts the 65 plus community, as many members of this demographic attend church regularly, making it an effective platform to distribute the information.

Chairperson McCroskey said the senior communities have presentations there.

Board Member Winstanley inquired about the name of the program.

Chairperson McCroskey clarified that it is called RideChoice, formerly known as Dial-a-Ride. She explained that the program assists individuals to navigate public transportation, offering a safe option for those with sight issues who may be uncomfortable traveling alone. She mentioned that RideChoice is affordable, something like three dollars for a one-way trip, which is super helpful for families.

Ms. Koprowski thanked everyone for their comments and encouraged them to participate in the survey to continue gathering feedback from the board.

Board Member Bingdazzo asked what was the third in trifecta in safety of roundabouts.

Ms. Koprowski responded that the third in trifecta is less conflict points.

Vice Chairperson Vandever pointed out that the distracted drivers had not been discussed and asked if they were addressing that issue.

Ms. Koprowski responded that they expect feedback on distracted driving from their public engagement survey. She explained that determining distracted driving from crash reports is challenging unless a driver admits to being distracted.

Chairperson McCroskey mentioned that the survey includes a section where respondents can prioritize issues.

Ms. Deeb added that sometimes pedestrians walk while looking at their phones instead of paying attention, and they will take that into consideration.

Mr. Hudson informed the board about public comment cards and invited Ric Costillo to speak.

Ric Costillo, resident at 455 E 1st Ave, shared his thoughts on how losing the ability to drive a car does not mean life is over.

Chairperson McCroskey shared her experience with her mother losing her license without knowing about Dial-a-Ride, which led her to frequently drive her mother places. She provided her perspective from a family member's standpoint.

Mr. Costillo continued by expressing his desire for increased safety in the city and supported the idea of reducing lanes to add more safety features. He also expressed his frustration regarding yesterday's City Council study session, where decisions are made purely based on drivers' needs despite the results of the survey. The survey confirmed that most citizens are in favor of reducing the number of travel lanes to enhance bike and pedestrian safety, although that sentiment was not shared by some of the City Council.

Board Member Jarvis supplemented Mr. Costillo's comments by mentioning a street in Phoenix that had numerous fatalities. He explained that the city installed a roundabout and reduced the street lanes to one lane in each direction, which helped slow traffic.

Chairperson McCroskey emphasized the importance of completing the survey for everyone.

Jonathan Bush, resident at 132 E Brown Rd, expressed his desire for safer streets and reducing injuries. He also mentioned yesterday's City Council study session and his disappointment regarding the pushback on the Center St project, emphasizing that better advocacy for the project could be provided by the Transportation Department.

Chairperson McCroskey noted that some City Council members struggled to grasp the concept that a safer separated bike lane could potentially reduce car volumes.

Item 6. 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 on the Transportation Master Plan Update along with Vamshi Yellisetty from Kittleson and Associates.

Mr. Venti explained that as they approached the final stages of the plan, they realized the need to fine tune it. He stated that they would discuss the remaining key components and proceed to give an overview of the Transportation Master Plan.

Mr. Yellisetty provided a preview of the document for the board, emphasizing their approach to addressing future conditions as growth continues before there are problems. He discussed future needs and presented user networks for each mode of transportation, discussing the process of idea collection, needs evaluation, and priority/phasing determination. He provided an example of future needs assessment/identification, such as considering future traffic volumes to warrant road widening and reconstruction or updating the existing bicycle infrastructure to provide more access and increase multi-modal options.

Mr. Venti advised the board not to focus excessively on the maps, explaining that accompanying tables provide more detailed information.

Mr. Yellisetty continued the presentation by discussing different areas and elaborating on travel sheds. He explained the varied needs across different parts of the city and then proceeded to explain street typologies to the board.

Mr. Venti provided an update on the final stages of their work, mentioning the recent receipt of the very first version of the whole document. He indicated that they are aiming to finalize everything for publication on their Transportation website in mid-June. Additionally, he noted that they will provide the link to the Transportation Advisory Board and seek their feedback during the July meeting with plans to have a final document in August.

Board Member Neal inquired about whether this information is being shared with Safe Streets since it's similar.

Chairperson McCroskey expressed her interest in this matter as well.

Mr. Yellisetty explained that while they had shared information, Safe Streets/the comprehensive safety action plan focuses primarily on traffic safety, whereas the Transportation Master Plan takes a comprehensive approach to the Mesa transportation network. There has been significant data sharing and coordination, but the two plans have two very distinct purposes.

Mr. Venti added that they had initially provided Safe Streets with all their data and public outreach feedback.

Chairperson McCroskey mentioned recent last-minute changes to the General Plan that had impacted a couple of communities.

Mr. Yellisetty confirmed that they had uploaded the latest information a week ago.

Chairperson McCroskey mentioned that there was a change yesterday that she believes occurred in an area along Lindsay Rd.

Mr. Venti found it interesting that they had reduced the number of growth strategies from four to three due to confusion over the differences between the two middle ones.

Mr. Hudson informed the board that there was a comment card and invited Ric Costillo back up to speak on this item.

Ric Costillo, resident at 455 E 1st Ave, shared his comments about the Transportation Master Plan, calling it a “north star” and expressed his appreciation for everybody who assisted in creating the final product.

Vice Chairperson Vandever asked whether the City Council is aware of the level of support a project receives from the Transportation Advisory Board.

Mr. Guderian explained that all the Transportation Advisory Board minutes are sent to the City Council for review and approval. He clarified that the agenda items presented to the Transportation Advisory Board are often also brought before the City Council Sustainability and Transportation Sub-Committee. He added that if an item requires a vote from the City Council, staff prepares a council communication that includes whether it was supported by the Transportation Advisory Board.

Chairperson McCroskey emphasized the importance of ensuring that the Transportation Advisory Board is informed if an issue they have voted on is being discussed at the City Council or a study session, as a matter of respect for their input.

Mr. Guderian acknowledged her point.

Vice Chairperson Vandever expressed her interest in knowing when decisions of the Transportation Advisory Board are communicated to the City Council.

Chairperson McCroskey stated that the City Council meetings can be viewed on Channel 11 if anyone missed them.

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

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

NAYS – None

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm