

# TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

## APPROVED

HELD ON January 17, 2023

The Transportation Advisory Board of the City of Mesa met in the Lower Council Chambers, 57 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street, on January 17, 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
Ryan Wozniak (Vice Chairperson)	Sam Gatton	Jason Coon
Tara Bingdazzo	Melissa Vandever	Elizabeth Valdez
Mike James		Sabine Ellis
Rodney Jarvis*		Vamshi Yellisetty
Daniel Laufer		David Rico
Megan Neal		
David Winstanley		
*arrived during Item #3 discussion		

Chairperson McCroskey called the January 17, 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 November 15, 2022.**

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

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed: Approved

**AYES** – McCroskey – Wozniak – Bingdazzo – James – Laufer – Neal – Winstanley

**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 Delta Ave between Higley Rd and Sunnyvale (Council District 2).**

Ryan Hudson, City Traffic Engineer, introduced himself and gave an overview of the speed hump policy process. This included a summary of the warranting criteria, public outreach, and final step of coming to the Transportation Advisory Board.

Board Member Jarvis asked if speed cushions have ever been removed after they have been installed.

Mr. Hudson explained that while it is very uncommon, there is a process in place for requesting their removal. This process requires a survey to be conducted and more than 50% of the affected property owners need approve of the removal.

Ryan Hudson turned the presentation over to Elizabeth Valdez to discuss the specific street segment being discussed under Item 3.

Elizabeth Valdez, Traffic Studies Analyst, introduced herself and indicated that she would be giving a presentation on staff recommendations to approve the installation of speed cushions on Delta Avenue between Higley Road and Sunnyvale.

Ms. Valdez gave information about the street segment including its width, posted speed limit and the adjacent retention basin on the north side and near the western end of the street segment. She also explained the planned spacing between the proposed speed cushions. She said there is an average 1,050 vehicles per day using this segment, with the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed being 35 miles per hour. She went over the results of the public outreach survey, which met the required approval percentage. Once she was done with her presentation, she turned it over to the chairperson for questions.

Chairperson McCroskey asked why there was striping on one end of the street but not at the other end.

Ms. Valdez explained the striping was for the four-way stop at Sunnyvale.

Chairperson McCroskey asked if striping all the way down the street has been discussed.

Ms. Valdez said it has not and is not typical for a street with these characteristics.

Chairperson McCroskey explained her concern about the street being so wide that it gives the impression that it would have a higher speed limit. She also asked where they are seeing the bulk of the traffic because a school had been mentioned in the presentation. She wondered if the bulk of the traffic on this stretch of road is from the people that are dropping off and picking up their kids from the neighborhood school.

Ms. Valdez explained that a majority of the peak hour traffic is likely generated by the school pick-up/drop-off.

Chairperson McCroskey said in her neighborhood, they had a letter sent out to the parents of students. In the letter they asked parents to slow down for the safety of the children. She said she is not sure if that is something the city has done or thought of doing with this school.

Board Member Bingdazzo asked if the school was an elementary school.

Ms. Valdez confirmed that it was an elementary school.

Vice Chairperson Wozniak asked if there was a safe route to school policy that would affect this area.

Mr. Hudson explained that they do not have a safe route to school policy. He went on to explain that the Safe Routes to School program has not been implemented at this school, and they have not had anything that warranted it.

Board Member Jarvis asked what the oppositions were to speed cushions at this location. He asked if it was for inconvenience and sound.

Ms. Valdez said most opposition did cite inconvenience and noise, but also mentioned that speed cushions were hard on vehicles, they are an eye sore, and would damage property value.

Board Member Jarvis asked if these were speed cushions, not speed humps, so they are not as hard on vehicles.

Ms. Valdez said that was correct.

Chairperson McCroskey confirmed there were no further questions from the board.

Luz Sandoval, 5310 E Delta Ave, spoke in favor of the speed cushions.

Chairperson McCroskey asked about why there is no bike lane along this stretch.

Mr. Hudson said it is a typical residential street with a 25 mile per hour speed limit, characteristics that are generally treated with no pavement markings and promoting a mixed street use.

Chairperson McCroskey asked Mr. Hudson if he was saying people are permitted to park on this street.

Mr. Hudson said yes, they are permitted to park on the street.

Board Member Wozniak made comments of the extra burden put on this street because of how it was designed.

Mr. Hudson thanked him for his comments.

Chairperson McCroskey asked if there was a police officer that patrolled this street.

Ms. Sandoval said the police they normally see are watching traffic on Higley. She said residents have requested officers to patrol this street, but they have been told that sometimes resources are limited and the officers are needed somewhere else.

Mr. Hudson read the five on-line comments cards since there were no other speaker cards from the crowd.

- 1) Staci Alle, 5305 E Dolphin Ave, was in favor of the speed cushions.
- 2) Tera Betts, 5322 E Delta Ave, was in favor of the speed cushions.
- 3) Daleen Barrick, 5350 E Delta Ave, was in favor of the speed cushions.
- 4) Sarah Jones, 5255 E Delta Ave, was in favor of the speed cushions.
- 5) Tanner Jones, 5255 E Delta Ave, was in favor of the speed cushions.

Board Member Winstanley asked Ms. Sandoval when she started this speed cushion process with the city.

Ms. Sandoval responded by saying the beginning of 2022.

It was moved by Board Member Bingdazzo, seconded by Board Member Jarvis, to approve the speed cushions on Delta Ave between Higley Rd and Sunnyvale.

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Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

**AYES** – McCroskey – Wozniak – Bingdazzo – James – Jarvis – Laufer – Neal – Winstanley

**NAYS** – None

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

Sabine King, Supervising Engineer, introduced herself and Vamshi Yellisetty to provide updates on the Transportation Master Plan.

Vamshi Yellisetty from Kittelson and Associates introduced himself and shared that they had completed the data collection and review. He said they are coordinating with the General Plan and the Transit Plan updates to ensure that they complement each other during this study. He said they reviewed what the city has done towards planning, such as bond programs, to ensure that the Master Plan they develop aligns with the city's goals and objectives. He said that any differences, they brought to the attention of staff to decide on the best course of action. He said their draft is complete and under review by staff. He explained that the next step is an existing conditions review, which is currently in process. The public outreach phase, part of phase one, will start soon. He presented the first draft of their study street network, which includes collector and arterial streets with a few key local streets added for connectivity. They aim to complete the entire update by December 2023. He said phase one of public outreach is scheduled for January through March, which will provide a general idea from the public. Then

phase two is scheduled from June to July, which will target more specific transportation questions. He said they have a Transit Plan coordination meeting on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and he explained that their goal is to finalize the plan update by January 2024 with a buffer of couple of months.

Mr. Yellisetty asked for TAB board comments and questions about the Transportation Master Plan.

Board Member Winstanley inquired about the data they collected.

Mr. Yellisetty explained that they collected a variety of data, including crash data, traffic counts, speed limits, signal locations, number of lanes throughout the street network, and bike and pedestrian data.

Board Member Winstanley asked about the top-level goal.

Mr. Yellisetty clarified they had not yet created a vision. He explained that this is a multi-step process that will help them reach that point. He said that they are currently seeking input from TAB, City Council, and others to determine what the top-level vision will be for the Transportation Plan update. He said phase one is listening to all these different groups.

Board Member Winstanley said he wanted to clarify that they are working with the people handling the General Plan. He sought clarification on whether they were gathering data from large businesses and those focused more on freight.

Mr. Yellisetty said freight movement data is part of it. He said they look at which corridors are used for freight movement and assess how safe and efficient they are.

Board Member Winstanley expressed concerns over two areas. First, the Mesa Gateway Airport which is now accepting customs items through the airport that leads to increased traffic around the airport, but the roads in the area have not been developed to handle this traffic. Second, the state trust land that was recently sold, and there are plans to build about 10,000 homes in the area between Meridian and Ironwood. He was worried how the traffic from this area would impact Mesa neighborhoods on the way to the freeway.

Ms. King said the name of the community is Superstition Vistas.

Mr. Yellisetty said the community is outside of Mesa, but he understands it will affect the Mesa street network. He said that this plan is considering both local and regional traffic, including traffic from places like Superstition Vistas.

Board Member Winstanley asked when cost will enter this thought process.

Mr. Yellisetty explained that the plan is still in the conceptualization stage. He explained that they will come up with several ideas as solutions, and this is where cost comes in. Depending on the cost of each idea and how much money the city must devote to each item, cost will be one of the elements that determines which concepts and designs will work best for the city.

Board Member Winstanley requested further information about the communication plan with the TAB and when the public would be able to give their input.

Mr. Yellisetty explained that they are in the process of developing a plan to gather public opinion through various means, such as websites, flyers, public events, and open houses. He also stated that they plan to provide updates to the board at every TAB meeting.

Chairperson McCroskey asked how many communities with acre lots are included in the scope they are looking at.

Mr. Yellisetty said they are waiting for General Plan to provide that information.

Chairperson McCroskey pointed out that Mr. Yellisetty had mentioned they were looking at bike and pedestrian paths in parts of Mesa. She inquired if the plan includes safe paths for horses and if the horse communities will be consulted.

Mr. Yellisetty clarified that horse trails are not a specific focus, but they are looking at the street right of way and what types of corridors may go through there. Then they could determine which corridors are suitable for horses.

Chairperson McCroskey said the horse community around Gilbert Road is lucky to have their horse path but not all horse communities have something like that.

Board Member Jarvis said he has seen a lot of push back on building apartments in Mesa. He asked if it was true that multi-family construction increases public transportation and how the Transportation Plan could support more multi-family residential developments. He believes increasing urbanization is necessary to make public transportation more viable and reduce traffic. He then asked Mr. Yellisetty for his opinion.

Mr. Yellisetty agreed that public transportation is more successful in dense areas.

Board Member Jarvis asked if the Transportation Plan can push City Council to approve more apartments to help public transportation.

Mr. Yellisetty explained that the plan can only provide the data. His request is outside the scope of the plan.

Board Member Jarvis asked that the plan should explicitly state how multi-family communities can increase public transit.

Ms. King said this is why they coordinate with the General Plan and the Transit Plan during this process.

Board Member Jarvis said rather than waiting for the General Plan to tell them, they should be more proactive in pushing for it.

Chairperson McCroskey asked where they are planning for light rail to be. She said in Tempe, there are tons of apartments along the light rail as well as the University. She said in this area

many people do not need a car and she believes that apartments should be built along the light rail and not in areas that will not be serviced by public transit. She said she is in support of public transit in the right areas where it can support the right communities.

Board Member Bingdazzo raised a concern about transportation to and from the airport because she had heard that it is not Uber friendly and Uber drivers are not willing to drive out there. She said some people fly into Mesa Gateway and are not aware how far it is from certain places.

Mr. Yellisetty clarified that services like Uber and Lyft are outside the scope of the Transportation Plan. The plan is looking to see if there are streets that lead to the airport and if they are adequate for the traffic that goes there.

Vice Chairperson Wozniak said he would like to see the Transportation Plan address corridors that are transit ready and which areas should push for more urbanization.

Mr. Yellisetty welcomed the suggestion which they will keep in consideration as they develop the plan. He said they are coming up with a complete network that will show which streets are good for which mode and which streets need to be built out. He said they do not want to build streets in an area that does not need them.

Vice Chairperson Wozniak inquired about the trail network and how this fits into the plan.

Mr. Yellisetty explained that the focus of the Transportation Plan is to ensure safe connections to trail paths, but it is not about planning the trail paths.

Vice Chairperson Wozniak wanted to ensure the trail paths would be noted and if additional crossings were needed.

Mr. Yellisetty explained they will look at where the trail network is, where the connections are, and if additional corridors are needed.

Vice Chairperson Wozniak talked about street scaping and redevelopment that may help the streetcar be a successful project, but he also expressed his concern about areas that are automotive oriented and that hinder the streetcar's success. He felt that it is important that these are pointed out in the plan.

Mr. Yellisetty explained that they will coordinate with the Transit Plan, but it will not be a plan that is developed on its own. He said they will have to evaluate the impact of the transit corridors on other modes of transportation.

Vice Chairperson Wozniak clarified that he was talking about characteristic of the arterial and design elements.

Mr. Yellisetty said yes.

Chairperson McCroskey asked if there was any discussion about having light rail go to Mesa Gateway Airport like it goes to the Phoenix Airport. She explained her thoughts on benefits of

taking light rail to the airport where there is limited parking and it is expensive. She also said that apartments could be built along that light rail path, which she does not believe there would be a lot of push back against.

Mr. Yellisetty explained the Transit Plan will look at what type of public transportation is needed in that area. He added that on the Transportation Plan, they will be looking at the best street infrastructure to support transportation to the airport.

Board Member Winstanley inquired if they will have regular updates on the Transit Plan Committee.

Ms. King assured that Jodi Sorrell, Transit Services Director, would be present to provide updates on the Transit Plan.

Chairperson McCroskey shared with the TAB members that she works with Ryan on the agenda, and if they require more information or updates on particular topic, they can inform her, and it can be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Ms. King stated that they are in the process of creating a website for all the plans (General Plan, Transportation Plan, and Transit Plan). Once operational, the webpage would be shared with the TAB members. She also added that the public outreach was not yet started but would soon come.

Board Member James suggested looking at the bike paths, pedestrian facilities, stadium connectors and canal paths built by Mesa to see how we can make connections to those. He also mentioned redeveloping areas to provide new transit opportunities.

Board Member Neal asked whether focus areas would be determined since Mesa is so large.

Mr. Yellisetty said that depending on the item they present, they will use a city-wide map or zoom in on specific areas to display greater detail. He also advised the board to inform him what they would like to look at.

Board Member Neal said she is waiting on data and hoping for mapping that will show existing vs future.

Mr. Yellisetty said that their data will be more visual than text.

Board Member Neal said it would be great to understand the airport growth plan.

Chairperson McCroskey thanked Mr. Yellisetty for his presentation.

Ms. King confirmed that the presentation would be shared online.

**Item 5. Hear and discuss an update on Mesa's Crash Analysis.**



Mr. Hudson explained that a portion of the crash data to be presented to the board is from 2021, and Mr. Rico would explain why 2021 data is being presented in 2023.

David Rico, Sr Traffic Studies Analyst, introduced himself and indicated that he would be providing a presentation on Mesa's Crash Analysis. Mr. Rico explained that he oversees crash data, including the Police Departments crash data. He provided a detail overview of the crash data analysis process, statistic and trends, a high-level look at 2021 and, a preliminary look at 2022 fatal crash data.

Mr. Rico explained that the process begins with a collision, which prompt the Police Department to respond fill out a police report. Once approved, the report is sent to ADOT for further processing. Mr. Rico said at this point they have access to the PDF and some supplemental documents from the Police system. He said that in about four to five months, they will get the complete ADOT records. He stated that sometimes they can get them a week later depending on how long it takes them to process the electronic reports.

Mr. Rico said they analyze the data in two primary ways: an in-depth locational study and historical crash trends.

Mr. Rico said that nationally, the early estimates show about a 10.5 % increase in vehicle fatalities from 2020, which is the largest increase in over a decade. He added that the early analysis shows that impaired driving, speeding, and failure to wear a seatbelt are the primary behaviors leading up to these fatal crashes nationally.

Mr. Rico then went onto the state and regional data. He reported that the state saw an increase in total crashes, injury collisions and fatal crashes with increases in lane departures, pedestrians and bicyclists' fatalities. He pointed out that Maricopa County Association of Governments also showed an increase in fatal crashes on arterial and local roads.

However, in Mesa specifically, there was no rise in pedestrian fatalities, even though there was a rise in many other items. Mr. Rico said that in 2020 there were 16 pedestrian fatalities, which went down to 8 pedestrian fatalities in 2021. The reason for these crashes is failure to yield, disregard for signal and speeding. He noted that 50% of the Mesa's fatal crashes in 2021 were drug or alcohol related. He added that the preliminary snapshot of 2022 is showing a significant increase in fatal crashes with 44 (from 36) crashes reported, 39 of which involve impairment as a factor. Pedestrian fatal crashes increased from 8 in 2021 to 13 in 2022. He said they are also seeing an increase in motorcycle fatalities; 2021 had an increase, and 2022 is showing an increase from 2021. Mr. Rico stated that Mesa is trending along with the national statistic showing an increase in fatalities. He said that over the years, there has been a decrease in serious injuries, but it went up in 2021 and it might increase in 2022. For bike crashes, they have seen a general decrease. Pedestrian crashes have seen an increase. He said 2020 saw the greatest peak for pedestrian fatalities, but 2022 is still showing a large increase. He said motorcycle fatalities are also showing an increase from 37 to 45.

Mr. Rico stated that he isolated pedestrian and bicycle crashes from 2014 through 2021 to identify the most predominant crash manners associated with these types of fatal collisions. He noted that pedestrian crashes still account for Mesa's highest percentage of fatal crash types,

with left turn type crashes directly under it. Additionally, single vehicle crashes and angle crashes are fairly high.

Chairperson McCroskey asked what an angle crash was.

Mr. Rico clarified that angle crashes involve vehicles moving in perpendicular movements. It differs from a left turn crashes where the vehicles move parallel but in opposite directions, with one of the vehicles attempting a left turn. Anything associated with right turn or left turn movements off a residential street onto an arterial road would be considered an angle crash.

Mr. Rico also discussed the predominant violations associated with unit one violations, such as failure to yield, which accounts for 67% of serious and fatal crashes. The most predominant violations with each of these is vehicles failing to yield, pedestrians not using the crosswalk and bike traveling against the flow of traffic.

Board Member Winstanley inquired about reporting e-bike crashes.

Mr. Rico said that these are noted but there is not a lot of e-bike crashes.

Mr. Rico went back to his slides talking about bikes and going against traffic.

Vice Chairperson Wozniak inquired whether the bikes going against traffic were on the pavement or the sidewalk.

Mr. Rico said it is both.

Mr. Rico continued his presentation by going over crashes that involve pedestrians.

Mr. Hudson then took over the presentation and explained how the crash data is used to identify trends and ultimately identify areas for the highest potential for safety improvements.

Mr. Hudson discussed the tools they incorporate, such as the Maricopa Association of Governments intersection rankings. He said the ranking is based on crashes and crash severity focused on safety needs. One of the locations on this list was Southern and Stapley in Mesa. This intersection became an improvement project that was completed last year. Mr. Hudson said as they complete these projects, these locations fall off the map. He explained that with all these tools they are able to identify areas that need improvement. Mr. Hudson pointed out that Sossaman and Baseline is an intersection that was identified, and they have a dedicated safety project that is kicking off this year for it. He said with all this data (from crash reports, MAG, Transit Department, traffic counts, etc.) they are not only looking at intersections, but they are also looking at other areas that have safety needs. He said that they have started to coordinate with the Mesa Police Department to help identify potential issues so they can make a positive outcome for residents through change and education.

Board Member Winstanley questioned whether there was a correlation between construction and accidents. He was also surprised that there was no correlation with Covid. He said with Covid, he expected to vehicle miles traveled to be lower, so he expected accidents to be lower.

Mr. Rico responded that while there was a decrease in crashes in the early part of 2021 due to COVID, there was an increase in serious crashes, as people may have felt they could drive faster since there were fewer vehicles on the road.

Board Member Winstanley then questioned construction impacts.

Mr. Rico said they do have some of that information but did not bring the number with him.

Board Member Winstanly said he assumes there was not a major correlation there or he would have brought the numbers with him.

Mr. Rico said that is correct.

Board Member James said the incident that stood out for him was the pedestrian incidents at Southern and Country Club. He asked if the city was looking at a project or improvements there.

Mr. Hudson confirmed that it is one of the identified corridors for improvements, along with Dobson Road and Alma School Road, and they are in the middle of a project with an enhanced crossing on Dobson Road just south of Broadway.

Chairperson McCroskey inquired whether the issue was related to the Mesa Community College.

Mr. Hudson explained that the problem had many contributors, including two transit stops, a high concentration of zero car households, coupled with the pedestrian and bicycle crashes that were occurring there. He then returned to the question about Southern and Country Club, stating that there is a reconstruction project coming through the corridor that involves some minor cross section changes and that they would keep a close eye on the area, looking for any opportunities to incorporate targeted safety improvements.

Board Member James suggested that the improvements made at Mesa Drive could be beneficial for Country Club as well.

Mr. Hudson appreciated the feedback and explained that with the current project design, they were working on a raised median installation, which is a great starting point. He further stated the pedestrian crossing facilities is something they are continuing to address.

Vice Chairperson Wozniak provided input on additional datasets to incorporate into crash and safety analysis. A primary dataset to start considering is transportation equity.

Mr. Hudson said they are always trying to build on that and look to those type of datasets. He added that although it was not yet integrated, they are looking to integrate that kind of feedback.

Vice Chairperson Wozniak suggested that the group be briefed of the tradeoffs in design and what is being left off the table.

It was moved by Vice Chairperson Wozniak, seconded by Board Member Laufer, to adjourn the meeting.

**AYES** – McCroskey – Wozniak – Bingdazzo – James – Jarvis - Laufer – Neal – Winstanley

**NAYS** – None

Meeting adjourned at 7:29pm