

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

APPROVED

HELD ON February 18, 2025

The Transportation Advisory Board of the City of Mesa met in the Lower Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on February 18, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

<u>TAB Members Present</u>	<u>TAB Members Absent</u>	<u>Others Present</u>
David Winstanley (Chairperson)	Rob Crist	Ryan Hudson
Melissa Vandever (Vice Chairperson)	Rodney Jarvis	Anna Janusz
Dana Alvidrez		Ryan Stokes
Lea Bertoni		Erik Guderian
Tara Bingdazzo		Sabine Ellis
Daniel Hartig		Yung Koprowski
Mike James		
Daniel Laufer		
Michelle McCroskey		

Chairperson Winstanley called the February 18, 2025, Transportation Advisory Board meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

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

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

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Winstanley – Vandever – Alvidrez – Bertoni – Bingdazzo – Hartig – James – Laufer – McCroskey

NAYS – None

Item 2. Items from citizens present.

None

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 alongside Yung Koprowski from Y2K.

Ms. King explained that they plan to have a draft ready for the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) at the next meeting. She then turned the presentation over to Ms. Koprowski.

Ms. Koprowski started her presentation by outlining the agenda, which includes a Report Update, Strategies and Actions, Tracking and Monitoring, and Next Steps. She stated that 1,359 people were seriously injured or killed on Mesa Streets between 2017 and 2022. She added that crashes cost the City of Mesa \$627,498,828 annually.

Chairperson Winstanley asked if this number applied solely to the City of Mesa.

Ms. Koprowski confirmed that it does and explained that half of this cost is attributed to fatalities.

Board Member McCroskey inquired whether this was an amount the City of Mesa is paying due to accidents or if represents the overall societal cost.

Ms. Koprowski clarified that it reflects the cost to society as a whole. She then continued her presentation, outlining the development timeline and eight key tasks involved in building the plan. She explained how strategies and actions were refined and categorized into infrastructure or non-infrastructure strategies.

Chairperson Winstanley asked whether the two actions under “Promote Safer Speeds” had been merged into “Increase Road Safety Awareness”.

Ms. Koprowski confirmed that one of the actions under “Promote Safer Speeds” was indeed moved to “Increase Road Safety Awareness”. The second action, related to photo enforcement, was categorized under infrastructure strategies.

Ms. Koprowski continued with samples of actions for infrastructure and non-infrastructure strategies, followed by a discussion on the estimated crash reduction tied to each of the strategies and actions. The crash reduction estimates are based upon national crash modification factors.

Board Member Hartig inquired if a crash analysis had been conducted on left turn operations.

Ms. Koprowski confirmed that it had and said that she would address that shortly.

Ms. Koprowski explained how projects were identified using a high-risk network, which differs from the high-injury network. The high-injury network focuses on fatal and serious injury crash incidents and hot spots, while the high-risk network considers the crash history and assigns additional weight to crashes involving vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians, bicyclists, or motorcyclists. Greater weight is also assigned to crashes near schools or disadvantaged

communities and the high-risk network does not rely on whether a crash has occurred at a particular location.

Board Member Hartig clarified that it is still the same type of crashes, just with different weighing based on who was involved and where they occurred.

Ms. Koprowski confirmed this. Then she displayed the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) map, which highlights the top five percent of Mesa roadways with the greatest risk based on their criteria. The roadways were further divided into three tiers, with Tier 1 being the highest priority. She provided details on Tier 1 projects, their costs and expected benefits.

Chairperson Winstanley asked if the benefit values listed for Tier 1 projects reflected society costs referenced earlier or actual costs incurred by the City of Mesa.

Ms. Koprowski clarified that the figures represent a combination of construction costs and the estimated value of prevented fatalities or serious injuries, relating back to societal cost representations.

Board Member McCroskey inquired whether the calculation was based on the \$9.5 million average per fatality.

Ms. Koprowski confirmed this, adding that serious injuries are valued at \$200,000 each for societal cost figures. She then introduced the systemic left turn evaluation.

Board Member McCroskey asked for further clarification on protected left turns.

Ms. Koprowski explained that implementing a protected left turn phase requires adjustments in signal timing and lane capacity. Since vehicles can only turn on a green arrow, the left turn lanes must be able to accommodate longer queues to prevent overflow into the main travel lanes. Additionally, signal heads need to be properly aligned over the left turn lane, which may require reconstructing the traffic signal mast arm. All recommended locations require some level of modification with the traffic signal infrastructure, and some may also include more impactful intersection infrastructure changes.

Board Member Hartig asked if the evaluation started with intersections that lacked any left turn phasing.

Ms. Koprowski clarified that it applied to signalized intersections that did not already have protected left turns.

Board Member Hartig asked if the identified intersection could currently have protected permissive left turns.

Ms. Koprowski confirmed that some did.

Ms. Koprowski presented the path forward which showed an estimated annual reduction in fatalities and serious injuries. She then reviewed the tracking toward the goal slide.

Chairperson Winstanley inquired whether the plan would include recommendations for design criteria changes.

Ms. Koprowski responded while the strategies and actions are more general, the Tier 1 projects include preliminary designs with cost estimates. However, it is still undetermined whether projects will be designed and implemented at that level.

Chairperson Winstanley clarified that he asked whether new developments would follow specific design criteria. He inquired if a specific design checklist is used.

Board Member McCroskey added that the Transportation Advisory Board has previously discussed separating the bike lanes from vehicle lanes and asked if this recommendation would be reflected in future designs.

Ms. King stated that they hope to implement design changes gradually over the years, though they are not necessarily tied to this plan. She explained that new developments will incorporate safety measures where possible, but this plan does not mandate design standard changes.

Ms. Koprowski added that current design standards are already safer than those used in the past and that newer areas of the City of Mesa do not experience the same crash history.

Ms. King added that this ties into the street topologies concept that was addressed in the Transportation Master Plan.

Ms. Koprowski stated that as the plan is implemented, specific targets would be identified for each strategy. However, no explicit targets are currently set due to uncertainty in available resources. She noted that many strategies and actions can be accommodated within existing programs that are already underway.

Chairperson Winstanley inquired if the 30% reduction goal includes a mix of funded and unfunded initiatives.

Ms. Koprowski confirmed that achieving the 30% reduction by 2030 would require additional resources.

Chairperson Winstanley asked if they were clear on the recommendations.

Ms. Koprowski confirmed that infrastructure changes are expected to result in a 10 percent reduction in crashes, but the impact of non-infrastructure measures, such as education and enforcement, is more challenging to measure. She then outlined the next steps.

Ms. King stated that in Phase 3, they will focus on public engagement by encouraging the residents to take responsibility for their actions, drive safely and obey traffic laws. They plan to attend community events, expand the bike and pedestrian safety program, and offer education classes.

Chairperson Winstanley asked if the Transportation Advisory Board will receive a draft of the plan.

Ms. King confirmed that once the review process is complete, they will share it with the board.

Chairperson Winstanley said he would like to review the full report for better understanding.

Ms. Koprowski stated that she was available for any further questions.

Board Member Hartig inquired if there was a county-wide coordination with surrounding cities to align safety efforts.

Ms. Koprowski explained that the county is not currently involved in this plan, and she is not aware of any county specific initiatives.

Erik Guderian, Assistant Transportation Director, introduced himself and stated that those discussions are starting to happen on a regional level. He noted that the Maricopa County Associations of Governments (MAG) has developed a comprehensive safety action plan. He emphasized that a cohesive regional approach makes sense, as different cities should not have conflicting safety campaigns. Mr. Guderian added that discussions now involve transportation agencies, law enforcement, and emergency services.

Board Member McCroskey asked to go back to the CSAP Projects map slide. She then requested clarification on one of the locations, as it seemed like there was a Tier 2 project for Lehi Road.

Ms. Koprowski explained that it was a Tier 2 project that was identified on the high-risk network map, but she was unsure of the exact location.

Ms. King clarified that it was McKellips Road and Mesa Drive, not Lehi Road.

Board Member McCroskey inquired whether any statistics are available regarding accidents involving bicycles with vehicles.

Ms. King explained that Ryan Hudson's group has been collecting data for years. She said the data includes phone usage, seat belt use, whether someone was under the influence of drugs or alcohol, lighting condition, whether pedestrians were crossing in unmarked crosswalks, age, and other relevant data. She added that this report is prepared annually to track how the City of Mesa is doing year to year.

Mr. Hudson added that this information is part of the crash report they produce annually, which is posted on the City of Mesa's website. He stated he would be happy to give a presentation on these annual crash reports. He mentioned that they look at specific categories such as fatalities, serious injuries, pedestrians, bicycles, and – new this year - motorcycle crashes, due to recent trends in the City of Mesa and the region. He said they use this data to identify trends across all these categories.

Board Member McCroskey stated that she would like the board to receive a yearly update on this information.

Chairperson Winstanley noted that they had reviewed the annual crash reports in the past.

Ms. Koprowski emphasized that there will be an appendix in the plan showing those statistics and how the data is connected.

Board Member McCroskey said one of the slides mentioned non-infrastructure support for safer vehicles, and she wanted to know how they are supporting that.

Ms. Koprowski explained that the largest decrease in fatalities can be attributed to vehicle improvement, such as mandatory seatbelts use. While this is not something the City of Mesa can directly control, they are seeing safety technologies like blind spot monitoring and pedestrian recognition being added to vehicles. The City of Mesa can help by implementing measures such as wider bike lane stripes, allowing automated vehicles to better detect infrastructure. She added that the City of Mesa has participated in **emerging technology** pilot programs. For example, new technologies could allow intersections to communicate with vehicles, alerting them to the presence of pedestrians.

Board Member McCroskey asked where red light running fits into the plan.

Ms. Koprowski responded that it falls under “supporting safer speeds”, as photo enforcement includes both red light running and speed enforcement. She said their recommendation is to expand the enforcement program.

Chairperson Winstanley inquired if there was funding for this.

Ms. Koprowski responded that the City of Mesa currently has 19 photo safety cameras, which are funded and have been in place for 17 years.

Chairperson Winstanley inquired if they planned to add more cameras.

Ms. Koprowski confirmed that it was part of their recommendation.

Chairperson Winstanley added that they have his full support.

Ms. King clarified that expanding the program is part of their strategy.

Board Member McCroskey mentioned that during a presentation on red light running, she learned that a bill had been passed by the legislature to remove red light cameras - but fortunately, Katie Hobbs vetoed it. She requested that the Transportation Advisory Board be informed when such developments occur in the future.

Ms. King responded that such proposals tend to come up every year.

Board Member McCroskey reiterated her request that the Transportation Advisory Board be notified when something like that arises, and she would be happy to contact her legislator.

Board Member James asked for clarification on what was happening on Dobson Road since it had a long red line on the map.

Ms. Koprowski responded that she doesn't have all the information, but she believed it is pedestrian related. She assured Board Member James that the details would be included in the report that the Transportation Advisory Board will receive.

Board Member James commented that the crossing distances are enormous. He added that the introduction of a streetcar could provide an opportunity to include a median and shorten those pedestrian crossings. He also mentioned that the roadway reconfiguration on Southern Avenue between Dobson Road and Center Street looks promising.

Ms. Koprowski said that this segment is one of the key studies highlighted in the report. She added that other projects are also highlighted to show how the City of Mesa is implementing safety improvements throughout the community.

Board Member James said it would be helpful to see the map indicating which projects are already part of Capital Improvement Projects (CIP).

Ms. Koprowski responded that while that information is not in the plan, it is documented for City of Mesa staff to review.

Chairperson Winstanley thanked them for their presentation, as there were no further questions.

Item 4. Discuss and take action on the staff recommendation to modify and establish speed limits on Val Vista Drive between Pomegranate Street and north City limits (Council District 1).

Ryan Hudson, City Traffic Engineer, introduced himself and indicated that he would be presenting the staff recommendation to modify and establish speed limits on Val Vista Drive between Pomegranate Street and the north city limits.

Mr. Hudson stated that a section of Val Vista Drive between the south canal and Thomas Road was recently annexed into the City of Mesa. With new developments on both sides, planned roadway improvements, and the vertical and horizontal curvature of the road north of Quenton Drive, staff is recommending the speed limit being lowered to 35 miles per hour on Val Vista Drive between Quenton Drive and the north city limits.

Chairperson Winstanley asked about the thought process and criteria for reducing the speed limit.

Mr. Hudson explained that a major factor is the roadway geometry. Based on the radius of the curves and the design speed, they meet the requirement for 40 miles per hour design speed. He noted that posted speed limits are typically set 5 miles per hour lower than the design speed, which is why staff is recommending the 35 mph speed limit. Other contributing factors include the existing roadway characteristics, the proposed types of developments and the planned installation of a pedestrian hybrid beacon which is a signalized pedestrian crossing between the south canal and Thomas Road.

Board Member McCroskey added that there is also a horse trail that will need to cross in this area. She mentioned that while there was initially a plan to route it under Val Vista Drive, that is no longer an option. Given the horse crossing, she is glad to see the speed limit lowered.

Board Member McCroskey then asked whether there was an elevation change in the area and whether drivers would be able to see horses and children crossing.

Mr. Hudson responded that north of Quenton Drive, there is a vertical curve as vehicles approach the south canal.

Board Member McCroskey then inquired to clarify the location of the bike lanes.

Mr. Hudson explained that Val Vista Drive is being upgraded to a four-lane arterial road with a raised median. The improvements will include standard bike lanes and detached sidewalks.

Board Member McCroskey expressed disappointment with the location of the bike lanes. She believes they should be closer to the sidewalk and separated from traffic for cyclists' safety.

Mr. Hudson noted that Val Vista Drive is only being improved adjacent to the developments, meaning the changes will not extend beyond those areas. He explained that the new bike lanes will connect to similar, existing bike facilities.

Board Member McCroskey acknowledged that while continuing the existing design is not wrong, she feels that with ongoing safety discussion, it is worth reconsidering. She argued that separating bike lanes from traffic might not be as expensive as assumed and referenced examples from the City of Scottsdale, where creative solutions have been implemented to keep bicyclists off the main road.

Mr. Hudson responded that the area is designed to encourage cyclists to use the Lehi path rather than the roadway.

Board Member James inquired whether the City of Mesa has a shared use path standard detail. He believed that Board Member McCroskey was referring to a 10-foot-wide shared use path that is detached instead of a sidewalk.

Mr. Hudson stated that while the City of Mesa has implemented widened sidewalks in some areas, there is no standard detail for that approach.

Mr. Guderian added that modifying bike lanes placement is not an easy conversion. Many of the bike lanes run along primary utility corridors, meaning moving the curb line involves more than just relocating a bike lane. He noted that there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

Board Member James suggested that the City of Mesa should consider such changes whenever new developments are planned.

Chairperson Winstanley then asked when the right time and right way is to make these changes.

Mr. Guderian explained that when developers only improve the roadway in front of their property, it is difficult to adjust bike lane placement in isolated sections.

Board Member Alvidrez inquired whether the City of Mesa can request from the developer a design that differs from the standard one.

Mr. Guderian responded that the City of Mesa can request additional features, but these current developments have been under discussion for three to five years.

Board Member Hartig asked about the total length of the proposed 40-mph speed limit section.

Mr. Hudson stated that it is 700 feet. He added that signage will be installed to show the gradual speed reduction from 45 mph to 40 mph, and then down to 35 mph. While 700 feet is a relatively short stretch, it is sufficient for the speed transition.

Board Member Hartig asked if dropping directly from 45 mph to 35 mph was impractical.

Mr. Hudson agreed that while it could be done, a progressive reduction is preferred to slow traffic down and to utilize clear transition points, such as the public street intersections.

Vice Chairperson Vandever asked what a pedestrian beacon was.

Mr. Hudson explained that it is a signalized pedestrian crossing.

Vice Chairperson Vandever then asked whether it would function like the flashing pedestrian signals used in the Town of Gilbert has.

Mr. Guderian explained that it is like the one on Mesa Drive north of US60, but it is more than just a flashing sign.

Vice Chairperson Vandever asked if there would be a designated pedestrian beacon at the canal.

Mr. Guderian responded that there will not be a signal in the ultimate conditions.

Board Member McCroskey mentioned that she has been told there would be one.

Mr. Guderian explained that a temporary traffic signal will be installed this year at the canal because the trail portion of the canal is completed, but the tunnel is not. Once SRP completes electrical work, the City of Mesa will finish the tunnel under Val Vista Drive, and this will create a grade separated crossing for pathway users.

Board Member McCroskey emphasized that a traffic signal needs to remain in place until the tunnel is fully completed and accessible.

Mr. Guderian agreed, stating that the temporary traffic signal is expected to remain for six to nine months.

Board Member McCroskey also noted that the push button for the walk indication needs to be placed higher so that horseback riders can reach it.

Mr. Guderian said he understood.

Vice Chairperson Vandever inquired whether the speed limit would return to 45 mph after the tunnel is built or if it would remain at 35 mph.

Mr. Hudson confirmed that it will stay at 35 mph. He clarified that the speed limit is being reduced due to multiple factors, not just the tunnel.

Vice Chairperson Vandever asked what the speed limit was on Gilbert Road from the curve to the 202 freeway.

Mr. Hudson stated that the speed limit is 40 mph on that stretch. He explained that Gilbert Road has different characteristics from Val Vista Drive and that Gilbert Road does not have a vertical curve.

- It was moved by Board Member Laufer, seconded by Vice Chairperson Vandever, to approve the staff recommendation to modify and establish the speed limits on Val Vista Drive between Pomegranate Street and the north City limits as recommended by staff. This recommendation is to establish a speed limit of 35 mph on Val Vista Drive from Quenton Drive to north City limits in City Code and modify the limits of the existing posted speed limit of 40 mph for Val Vista Drive from Pomegranate Street to Quenton Drive in City Code.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Winstanley – Vandever – Alvidrez – Bertoni – Bingdazzo – Hartig – James – Laufer – McCroskey

NAYS – None

Item 5. Hear and discuss a status update on the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Pecos Industrial Rail Access and Train Extension (PIRATE) project.

Erik Guderian, Assistant Transportation Director, introduced himself and indicated that he would be presenting on the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Pecos Industrial Rail Access and Train Extension (PIRATE) project.

Mr. Guderian began by emphasizing that this is not a City of Mesa project. He explained that Union Pacific Railroad plans to build a six-mile extension. He presented a map to illustrate the details. He clarified that this extension is not a mainline but rather a single track with one way in and one way out. He provided a history of the project, stating that it has been in development for several years, involving multiple agencies, including the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) and various federal agencies. The project is currently awaiting federal approval. As part of the Arizona Corporation Commission's approval, certain stipulations were added to the project.

Specifically, if traffic volumes on Ellsworth Road reach a designated threshold or train crossings exceed two per day, Union Pacific Railroad will be required to build a grade-separated crossing.

Chairperson Winstanley asked whether the Arizona Corporation Commission could regulate train crossings by restricting them to certain times of the day.

Mr. Guderian responded that, to his knowledge, no authority has the power to impose time restrictions. He added that the primary user of the track will be the existing CMC Steel Arizona facility located near Pecos Road and Meridian Road.

Chairperson Winstanley then inquired whether the City of Mesa had authority to approve the project's designs or if the authority rested solely with the Arizona Corporation Commission.

Mr. Guderian explained that while the City of Mesa had the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the design, the City of Mesa held more authority in this area since it had the right-of-way before the railroad. He added that the project has been collaborative, with all parties working together to address concerns.

Chairperson Winstanley then asked if vehicles would have the ability to turn around on the road when a train is passing.

Mr. Guderian stated that no turnaround capability would be available.

Board Member McCroskey followed up by asking where vehicles would go in that situation.

Mr. Guderian explained that the trains using this track spur would be relatively short.

Chairperson Winstanley acknowledged his support for the project but shared a past experience in which he was stuck for 25 minutes with no way to turn around at another train crossing.

Mr. Guderian assured the board that the design of the project eliminates the need for trains to stop on the roadway. Additionally, the City of Mesa will monitor the situation for any potential issues and train traffic is expected to remain minimal.

Board Member McCroskey pointed out that the situation may change in the future. She then asked whether the rail track was being built solely to serve the steel mill.

Mr. Guderian confirmed that it currently was.

Chairperson Winstanley added that its primary purpose is to transport steel.

Board Member McCroskey asked where the steel mill was located on the map.

Mr. Guderian and Chairperson Winstanley pointed out its location in southeast Mesa.

Board Member McCroskey then asked whether the rail line would extend beyond that point.

Mr. Guderian explained that any further extension to the east of Meridian would require acquiring residential lots to access state land.

Board Member McCroskey remarked that, given the current setup, train traffic on the track is unlikely to increase significantly unless there is a sudden rise in steel demand.

Mr. Guderian once again reiterated that this is not a City of Mesa project.

Chairperson Winstanley stated that he was trying to understand the authority that the City of Mesa and the Arizona Corporation Commission have over the project, noting that they can inspect and approve designs.

Board Member McCroskey added that, while the City of Mesa can review the designs, it cannot require Union Pacific Railroad to build an underpass or another type of grade separation.

Mr. Guderian confirmed this, stating that while the road belongs to the City of Mesa, the Arizona Corporation Commission has ultimate authority over at-grade crossing and grade separation.

Chairperson Winstanley decided to close the meeting since there were no more questions

It was motioned by Board Member Hartig, seconded by Board Member Laufer, to adjourn the meeting.

AYES – Winstanley – Vandever – Alvidrez – Bertoni – Bingdazzo – Hartig – James – Laufer – McCroskey

NAYS – None

Meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm