



Minutes City of Tempe Transportation Commission February 11, 2014

Minutes of the Tempe Transportation Commission held on Tuesday, February 11, 2014, 7:30 a.m., at the Tempe Transportation Center, Don Cassano Community Room, 200 E 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Pam Goronkin (Chair)
Don Cassano
Aaron Golub
Ben Goren
Nikki Gusz
Charles Huellmantel
Sue Lofgren

Kevin Olson
German Piedrahita
Charles Redman
Gary Roberts
Peter Schelstraete
Cyndi Streid

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Philip Luna

City Staff Present:

Shelly Seyler, Deputy Public Works Director Transportation
Eric Iwersen, Principal Planner
Sue Taaffe, Public Works Supervisor
Mike Nevarez, Transit Manager
Joe Clements, Transportation Financial Analyst
Noah Johnson, Commander

Travis Mullen, Administrative Assistant
Bonnie Richardson, Principal Planner
Julian Dresang, Traffic Engineer
Tanya Chavez, Neighborhood Services Specialist
Robert Yabes, Principal Planner

Guests Present:

None

Commission Chair Pam Goronkin called the meeting to order at 7:32 a.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None

Agenda Item 2 – Meeting Minutes

Commission Chair Goronkin introduced the minutes of the January 14, 2014 meeting and asked for a motion.

Motion: Commissioner Peter Schelstraete

Second: Commissioner Sue Lofgren

Abstained: Commissioner German Piedrahita

Decision: Approved

Agenda Item 3 – Streetscape and Transportation Enhancement Program (STEP) Funding

Shelly Seyler, Deputy Public Works Director Transportation introduced the item and provided background information regarding the Streetscape and Transportation Enhancement Program (STEP) .

Shelly indicated the STEP program was expanded in 2008 to include tools beyond speed humps. The goal of the program is to work with residents to help address livability issues, which can result in an increase in alternative modes of travel. Shelly mentioned that since 2010, the program has gone unfunded due to the downturn in the economy. She provided an example of how the Daley Park Neighborhood under the new program made it as far as the petition process before it was halted due to the economic downturn. She explained that the STEP program had been previously submitted for inclusion with Transportation and ROW Capital Improvement Program projects (currently supported by general obligation bonds); however, when competing against other projects that addressed Public Health and Safety and Asset Preservation, the request did not receive priority and was not funded.

The City is seeking alternative options to help fund the program and is requesting the Transportation Commission review and take action regarding the request to place the STEP program into the Transit Capital Improvement Program funding request. Shelly referred the Commission to additional information included in the packet, which discussed the goals of the program and those outlined in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

Commissioner Chair Goronkin asked the cost of one speed hump. Shelly responded the price used to be around \$2,500, but the cost has increased to approximately \$4,000 to \$5,000 each due to the need to include traffic control for construction. Shelly mentioned on average, a street typically has between two and three speed humps installed but it can depend on length. The speed humps are placed every 300 to 500 feet for best results.

Commissioner Chair Goronkin asked how healthy the Transit Fund was and how the fund has maintained this level over time. Shelly responded that going into next year the fund might see a deficit, however, in the next two to three years the fund is expected to have a surplus.

Commissioner Kevin Olson said he was unclear how this project was a transit function. Shelly responded that the program includes tools to address and install streetscape elements along the entire street. Speed humps are one tool that can be used as part of the program that will result in slowing traffic down and increasing quality of life. Similar results can be seen in streetscape projects currently funded by the Transit Fund.

Commissioner Olson acknowledged that he understood the rationale but explained he still failed to see the connection regarding speed humps. Commissioner Olson added that this program seemed to be a low priority as compared to other projects.

Commissioner Chair Goronkin asked if the neighborhoods have asked about funding speed humps through the Neighborhood Grant Program. Shelly responded that a few neighborhoods had and explained they are still required to go through the same process. Daley Park was successful in getting a neighborhood grant in their effort to address traffic concerns within the neighborhood.

Commissioner Chair Goronkin asked what the budget was for the Neighborhood Grant Program. Tanya Chavez responded \$150,000 annually. Eric Iwersen added that with the Neighborhood Grant Program there were a few neighborhoods that requested traffic circles, such as in the neighborhood around Hudson Park. Commissioner Olson stated traffic circles are different from speed humps.

Eric noted that the STEP program originally started out as a speed hump program. As neighborhoods started to realize the benefits of other traffic calming measures, traffic circles and medians were requested based on the ability to add landscaping and public art.

Commissioner Olson asked about the proportion of funding for speed humps compared to other traffic calming measures. Shelly responded that there has been nothing funded out of the program since the changes were made in 2008 because it has gone unfunded.

Commissioner Huellmantel asked if there were other projects that could use the funding. Shelly responded the money could go to anything that is supported through the Transit Tax. Commissioner Chair Goronkin asked if the HURF (Highway User Revenue Funds) dollars could be used for any of the projects mentioned. Shelly explained that it was unlikely that the program would compete well for HURF (General Obligation Bonds) funding given prior years request. Shelly explained that the HURF fund has been collecting just enough to support personnel and operating costs including street maintenance.

Commissioner Chair Goronkin asked if the STEP funding proposal was on the calendar for Council. Shelly stated that the Capital Improvement Program will be presented to the Council for the first time on Thursday, February 13, 2014.

Commissioner Don Cassano shared a concern when the Transit Tax was first passed so that the funding could be used for anything related to transit. The money is slowly shifting off course to areas that other parts of the City should be handling. Shelly responded that maintenance type items would not qualify for funding under the Transit Fund.

Commissioner Huellmantel asked if the STEP program request was an annual or one-time transfer of funds. Shelly responded that the proposal request was for ongoing funding for five years; however, the Commission could request a change to support a one-time request.

Commissioner Cyndi Streid commented that the STEP program would promote economic development and mobility for all persons by making it safe for kids to ride their bikes in the neighborhoods instead of being restricted to the parks. Commissioner Ben Goren suggested a review of the complete system using the whole street rather than just one speed hump.

Commission Chair Goronkin asked for a motion to approve funding the STEP program proposal presented for one year.

Motion: Commissioner Huellmantel

Second: Commissioner Goren

Opposed: Commissioner Peter Schelstraete, Commissioner Don Cassano, and Commissioner Kevin Olson

Decision: Approved

Agenda Item 4 – Bike Registration and Bike Theft Program Update

Police Department Commander Noah Johnson provided an update on the bike registration program as well as efforts to reduce bike thefts.

Noah shared that he currently supervises the Northside Patrol Division serving north of Broadway Road and has served within the Crime Prevention Unit; Gang Unit; Tactical Response Unit; K-9 Unit; Downtown Bike Squad; among other units. The knowledge and experience he has gained will help him to reach out to the public to increase bike registration, which in turn will reduce bike theft.

Noah said the current goal of the bike registration program is for bike stores to pass out the registration information to the owner at the point-of-sale. An obstacle to overcome relates to the Arizona State University students who opt-out of the registration because ASU offers its own form of bike registration.

The Arizona Crime Prevention Association is looking to expand their efforts in order to tie City bike registration programs together, which will assist in reducing theft across Arizona.

Commissioner Olson asked if a national bike program has been contacted and if Tempe was already part of that program. Noah responded that there are concerns relating to PD theft inquiries late at night and early in the morning when attempting to communicate between the program operators and bike owners. Noah indicated that this is one operational problem that all groups are attempting to explore options, such as sharing databases.

Commissioner Huellmantel asked what the difference was between the ASU system and the Tempe Police Department bike registration system. Noah responded that they are simply two different systems. Commissioner Huellmantel asked if they could share information directly. Noah responded ASU couldn't give that information immediately.

Commissioner Goren asked if there are technical issues that prevent the two systems from interacting effectively. Noah shared ASU is hesitant to combine the systems due to registration system differences; however, Tempe PD can call ASU PD to get the information when needed. Noah added that this is a new system where volunteers are required to sign up and where old databases that were collected in the past are not being used.

Commissioner Lofgren indicated the presentation with ASU regarding bike registrations seemed to indicate an interest in merging. Noah said both entities are working through the process.

Noah presented information from 2012 and 2013 pointing out there has been an increase of bike thefts in Tempe. In 2012, the Downtown Bike Squad arrested quite a few people for bike thefts, but the efforts had no real impact on the bike theft rate. The Operation Bike Peddler was put into action with the goal of arresting bike thieves selling drugs. The crime of stealing a bike is a misdemeanor while bike thieves who traffic drugs is a felony.

Commission Chair Goronkin asked if the misdemeanors and felonies are local ordinances. Noah responded that it's State law. Commissioner Olson asked why the maximum for the misdemeanor of jail time was not pursued for bike theft. Noah stated the topic is being discussed with the City's prosecutors. However, as it is now, it is not likely bike thieves will get the maximum jail time of six months.

Commission Chair Goronkin asked if the item is on the City Council agenda. Commissioner Huellmantel commented that it is on the agenda and that jail time should be added when prosecuting bike thieves.

Commissioner Goren said bike events are a great way to get bikes registered. Noah stated he believed that would be the easiest way to get large numbers of bikes registered.

Commissioner Lofgren asked the percent of people reporting bikes stolen. Noah indicated it was low and added that other than high dollar bikes; the majority of the bike thefts go unreported.

Commissioner Olson asked if there was a bike bait program and if the program was being posted. Noah responded there was and explained the information is not posted.

Agenda Item 5 – Traffic Safety Update

Julian Dresang, Traffic Engineer presented information on the City safety projects.

Julian informed the Commission that the Federal Government funds safety projects through the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) administers the HSIP program, with a portion of the funding (70%) allocated to statewide projects and the remaining funding (30%) allocated to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), like the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG). The MPOs then distribute the funding to the local governments through a competitive selection process. Shelly added that grants and federal funds have made many of the City safety projects 100% reimbursable.

The three types of safety projects that the City is undertaking are procurement projects, intersection improvements, and additional street lighting.

- Procurement projects include pedestrian countdown signals and audible push buttons, conversion of 8 inch to 12 inch signal heads for visibility, and EMS cards—all of which are 100% reimbursable.
- Intersection improvement projects include Broadway Road & Priest Drive which will be 94.3% reimbursed. This project includes a bus pullout, relocation of artist designed bus shelters, a widened eastbound right turn lane and ADA improvements. There are also projects with the Union Pacific Railroad at 5th Street, University Drive, and Broadway Road – all of which are 100% reimbursable. These projects include median islands, sidewalk improvements, and new gates.
- Street light additions along Broadway Road between Mill Avenue and Rural Road will include 38 new street light poles and 5,800 feet of new conduit, all 100% reimbursable.

Commissioner Olson asked if the standard is LED for new light fixtures. Shelly responded by stating that five years ago the City was not quite ready to install LED light fixtures due to the efficiency and cost ratio, but now LED lighting is being reviewed as an option.

Commissioner Olson inquired as to what percent of the streetlights are currently LED. Shelly explained she did not have the exact ratio, but shared there are around 12,000 street lights.

Commissioner Goren asked if the 5,800 feet of conduit could be used for more than electricity. Julian responded that it would be used for more than electricity, such as fiber optics.

Agenda Item 7 – Department and Regional Transportation Updates

Eric shared that the City Council approved a parking study in downtown Tempe that includes bike parking and street configurations. The design team will be conducting charrettes in March at the Downtown Tempe Community offices allowing people to talk about parking concerns relating to bike and vehicle parking.

Commission Chair Goronkin asked if it included the development at University Drive and Mill Avenue. Eric responded that the development agreement and details have been identified for the number of parking spaces provided and surface lots taken away.

Commission Chair Goronkin asked what the percentages of spaces provided is for public parking. Eric explained he was not sure and stated that part of the reason for the parking study is related to the shrinking and limited parking availability. Eric added that the Transportation Commission is a stakeholder in the charrettes and that the design team headed by Kimberly Horn will provide a presentation to the Commission in April.

Sue Taaffe updated the Commission on the Mary O' Connor memorial bus shelter. Sue said that the money was raised to construct the shelter and on March 20, the design is going to Council for feedback. On April 10, staff will go to Council again with the resolution to rename the bus shelter. Construction will begin this spring and a celebration for the opening will be in early November.

Commissioner Lofgren asked if the design had changed. Sue responded that it has been modified based on funding, the planters were removed and the existing bike racks will be painted rather than replaced. Commission Chair Goronkin commended the dedicated community members who helped raise the money to make the memorial possible.

Agenda Item 8 – Future Agenda Items

Commissioner Huellmantel asked to see more information regarding a bike rack program.

The Commission's next meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2014.

Meeting adjourned at 8:33 a.m.

Prepared by: Travis Mullen

Reviewed by: Yvette Mesquita