



Minutes City of Tempe Transportation Commission January 15, 2013

Minutes of the City of Tempe Transportation Commission held on Tuesday, January 15 2013, 7:30 a.m., at Hatton Hall, 34 E. 7th St., Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Charles Huellmantel, Pam Goronkin, Don Cassano, Kevin Olsen, Nicolle Gusz, Sue Lofgren, Phillip Luna, Peter Schelstraete, German Piedrahita, Ben Goren, Benjamin Sanchez

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Aaron Golub, Charles Redman, Gary Roberts,

City Staff Present:

Eric Iwersen, Sue Taaffe, Shelly Seyler, Greg Jordan, Nancy Ryan, Yvette Mesquita, Robert Yabes, Joe Clements, Elvia Franco

Guests Present:

Eduardo Tinoco (ASU), Chris Moorman (ASU)

Commission Chair Charles Huellmantel called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None.

Agenda Item 2 – Transportation Master Plan (TMP)

Presented by Nancy Ryan, Community Development

The purpose for the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) is to guide the further development of a citywide multi-modal transportation system integrated with land use plans.

The TMP sets these projects and programs within the context of the broader community goals in the General Plan to guide the growth and development of Tempe to enhance the quality of life; currently the General Plan is under revision. The Transportation Master Plan was formally known as the Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

Staff provided Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) expected population and employment changes for the next 30 years. Nancy Ryan provided the Commissioners with a population and employment projection map. The map represents distribution of employment and population in 2010 from the US Census. Percentage of growth in population and employment was also provided. Nancy Ryan noted that some of the largest employment increases are expected to occur along the light rail line.

Commissioner Goronkin requested clarification in regards to the data located in the population and employment map. Nancy Ryan explained that based on MAG projections there is a possible employment increase of 40,680 and a population increase of 41,730 from 2010 to the 2030-2040 timeframe.

Commissioner Huellmantel stated that it's important to know exactly where the growth is coming from and where it will be in order to make a planning decision.

Commissioner Piedrahita asked if streetcar growth was included in the maps from Mill Avenue to Southern. Nancy Ryan stated she believed growth data related to the planned streetcar route was included in the study but would need to confirm.

Commissioner Huellmantel requested more discussion in regards to population numbers and future number projections. Nancy Ryan mentioned MAG is continuing to update information and although there is a significant amount of projected growth along the Downtown ASU and Light Rail corridor there is additional growth that is not reflected in current data. Because the TMP is written to divide transportation into mode segments, staff is currently interested in rewriting the plan to combine all modes of transportation and to view streets as corridors or "complete streets". The complete streets component will encompass arterials, collector streets, freeways, and all local and neighborhood streets. Nancy Ryan indicated that the TMP will define the concept and characteristics of complete streets based upon input from the Commissioners and public. Commissioner Huellmantel provided background information regarding the TMP to new Transportation Commission members.

Nancy Ryan shared community feedback received placed an emphasis on bike related issues, specific streets requiring transportation investments, expansion of an Orbit system, and Tempe streetcar. More detail regarding community comment will be available within the coming weeks.

Commissioner Goren referenced Objective A: Retain existing traffic capacity while reducing reliance on the SOV and asked if the commission is considering capacity as the number of vehicles per hour or the number of passengers in vehicles per hour. Nancy Ryan stated the discussion is centered on movement of people rather than vehicles.

Commissioner Huellmantel referenced Objective E: Avoid widening streets or increasing their functional classification as a solution to traffic congestion stating Objective E is a high priority as the Commission is concerned with vehicle options and not the widening streets themselves. Commissioner Goren stated it's important to use correct terminology although Commissioner Huellmantel mentioned that the goal is to define terminology.

Eric Iwersen stated Commissioners may choose to combine objectives, such as Objectives A and B. Commissioner German stated that in order to define capacity, a goal or objective must be set that is measurable and that the goal of determining how many passengers are in a vehicle may not be measureable.

Commissioner Goren suggested using the Tempe bike group as a resource may help measure bike capacity as to how many passengers are in busses. Robert Yabes mentioned there is an origin destination report that is conducted by MAG which measures the number of vehicle occupancy.

Commissioner Goronkin commented in regards to combining Objectives A and B under E. Commissioner Goronkin suggested encouraging transit use through mixed use development rather than commercial development on arterial streets and intersections. Commissioner Huellmantel added that if both objectives are to be combined there must be a reevaluation of parking and mixed use development along the Light Rail as there may be potential conflicts. Commissioner Goren suggested a hybrid public transit model solution by placing busses that parallel the light rail line at mid-way blocks. Commissioner Huellmantel shared that economic development generally does not stem from bus service improvements

in the same way as rail improvements because rail improvements offer permanent infrastructure that the private sector can count on not going away.

Greg Jordan stated that on Apache, stops are closer with an average walking distance of a quarter mile. Therefore the hybrid model suggestion may not be as effective on Apache.

Commissioner Huellmantel suggested creating a comfortable pedestrian friendly environment by creating shade that should be a high priority, similar to Maple and Ash. Commissioner Lofgren added that proper lighting and shade should be a priority at every bus stop location. Commissioner Cassano stated the shade structures should be consistent and effective in providing shade at all times throughout the day.

Commissioner Gusz suggested using solar energy as a resource to provide shade. Commissioner Huellmantel commented that several bus stops have solar panels; implementation of shade on pathways and transit stops should be a priority.

Nancy Ryan referred to Objective C: Mitigate heat, storm water runoff and climate condition along streets, where appropriate stating Objective C addresses the climate but does not specifically address shade. Nancy Ryan also referred to Objective L: Expand and improve the safety, security, and comfort of bus stops.

In regards to shade, Commissioner Goronkin commented about the types of trees and suggested the City of Tempe standards be reviewed to determine which types of trees are pedestrian friendly. Commissioner Goren referenced the Maricopa County master garden program and mentioned maintenance needs to be provided in order for trees to flourish.

Nancy Ryan mentioned that green streets refer to streets where there is a high volume of bicyclists and pedestrians. Green streets serve as priority routes for bicycles and pedestrians as well as connections to multi-use paths. Green streets are located inside and outside of pedestrian overlay districts and are important in providing pedestrian bicycle access for parks, schools, and shopping locations. Green streets were recently under Objective C, now the concept is under Objective D.

Commissioner Gusz asked if there were other priorities for bicycles. Nancy Ryan responded by stating the community has indicated safety for bicycles moving through the city, transitional bike paths, and space allocated to bicycle lanes are a priority.

Commissioner Lofgren asked if there is anything in the design review process that addresses shade. Commissioner Huellmantel mentioned that it is a challenge to address shade in a design review process as there are conflicts in the design review process code in regards to right-of-way.

Commissioner Goren stated bicycles require a large and complete space that is free of obstacles. Commissioner Huellmantel stated that it is not possible to widen all bike lanes on every street. Eric Iwersen mentioned that at a future commission meeting Commissioners will be able to focus on cross section streets; and the issue of inadequate bike lanes can be discussed in detail to further narrow priorities.

Commissioner Huellmantel mentioned that the goal of the discussion is to focus on which specific areas need improvement and to discuss various kinds of streets.

Commissioner Olson mentioned it is important to provide transit alternatives and there should be a focus on creating a balanced system. For example, there should be a focus on the Orbit system as the program is underinvested. Commissioner Gusz added the community should know which transit options are available to them as there is not enough awareness of transportation system options.

Commissioner Goronkin offered a suggestion in regards to the light rail and streetcar system stating there should be an effort to direct and locate those services where there is the best opportunity to drive development and redevelopment.

Commissioner Piedrahita inquired as to whether something should be done in relation to connectivity to adjacent cities in regards to all modes of transportation. Greg Jordan responded by stating while Tempe's transit system is robust, it fragments at the borders because other cities have not invested to Tempe's level.; staff is strategically working with neighboring cities to improve this situation.

Nancy Ryan requested Commissioners take five to ten minutes to identify some opportunities to improve and challenges of the transportation system in Tempe. Commissioner Huellmantel suggested forming groups to identify possibilities. Comments were collected and shared with the Commission.

Opportunities to improve transportation included:

- Landlocked – defined area
- Lots of activity centers; compactness
- Light Rail miles established
- Building blocks in place
- Town Lake as transit corridor
- ASU, young people become adopters
- Willingness to accept different modes
- Progressive City Council
- Existing density
- Quality of Life
- The leader in innovative transportation design

Challenges identified for the transportation system included:

- Money (Funding)
- Car Culture; Perception/Mindset
- Political Will
- Desert Climate – Heat
- Disconnect north to south (US 60; but also Salt River/202 corridor)
- Union Pacific
- Travel Time (it takes double time to take light rail vs. car to Phoenix)
- Need bike access across railroad between Rural/McClintock and McClintock/Price

Agenda Item 3- Future Agenda Items

The commission was asked whether a separate meeting should be scheduled to discuss the TMP; or 30 minutes be used during each future Transportation Commission meeting to receive updates on the TMP.

Commissioner Guzs stated it would be useful to receive information from the past in order to see how the TMP was used to make a change. Nancy Ryan indicated information regarding previous projects will be provided in the future.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

The Commission's next meeting will be held Tuesday, February 12, 2013 at 7:30 a.m. Don Cassano Community Room at the Tempe Transportation Center, 200 E. 5th St., Tempe, Arizona.