



Minutes City of Tempe Transportation Commission December 10, 2013

Minutes of the Tempe Transportation Commission held on Tuesday, December 10, 2013, 7:30 a.m., at the Tempe Transportation Center, Don Cassano Community Room, 200 E 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Charles Huellmantel (Chair)
Don Cassano
Aaron Golub
Ben Goren
Pam Goronkin

Nikki Gusz
Sue Lofgren
Philip Luna
Charles Redman
Peter Schelstraete

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Kevin Olson
German Piedrahita

Gary Roberts
Benjamin Sanchez

City Staff Present:

Shelly Seyler, Deputy Public Works Director Transportation
Eric Iwersen, Acting Transportation Planning Manager
Sue Taaffe, Public Information Officer
Mike Nevarez, Transit Manager
Joe Clements, Transportation Financial Analyst

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

Guests Present:

Gail LaGrander
Catherine Mercado
Patrick Murphy, Off Madison Ave

Matthew Messina
Serena Unrein, Arizona (PIRG)
Taryn Stewart, Off Madison Ave

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

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None

Agenda Item 2 – Meeting Minutes

Commission Chair Huellmantel introduced the minutes of the November 12, 2013 meeting and asked for a motion.

Motion: Commissioner Don Cassano

Second: Commissioner Phillip Luna

Decision: Approved

Agenda Item 3 – Transportation Ridership Research

Eric Iwersen, Acting Transportation Planning Manager, provided a packet, and introduced Serena Unrein of the Arizona Public Interest Research Group who presented the Changing Trends in Transportation and the Impact on Cities. Presentation and highlights included:

Serena shared information regarding the changing trends in transportation and explained that public modes of transportation have been increasing in recent years while the average miles driven have decreased. Key elements shared:

- Vehicle-Distance Traveled trend projections
- Youth use of transportation alternatives
- Reasons why young people are driving less
- The impact of the economy
- The use of technology for travel
- Opportunities from fewer miles driven
- Transportation financing, policy changes, and implications
- Tempe and Phoenix metro trends

Commission Chair Huellmantel mentioned that ASU is the center of our city and we will always have a higher percentage of younger people than the rest of the valley.

Robert Yabes asked what the total percent of commuters traveling by bike was. Serena answered that the percent is still relatively small but it has increased in every city. Eric added that Tempe has the highest bicycle percentage in the state of Arizona.

Commission Chair Huellmantel asked what percentage of youth are getting their drivers licenses closer to 18 years' old rather than 16 years old. Serena responded that she does not have the exact information with her but the information can be obtained from the Arizona Department of Motor Vehicles. Commissioner Cassano added, in recent years due to restrictions, youths could not drive their friends with them when they received a driver's license early. Serena explained that was exactly what the research found.

Commissioner Aaron Golub mentioned that in the year 1980 about 80 percent of all 20 year olds had their driver's licenses, now it is about 50 percent.

Robert asked what is the proportion of urban living compared to rural living now. Commissioner Golub said that the shift of living has not really changed much over the last 20 years.

Robert asked if the trend of people driving less included the people who car pool. Serena indicated that the National Household Travel Survey stated that these are the people who chose "I no longer drive to work," she is not sure if this includes car pools.

Commissioner Ben Goren asked if the disappearing oil fields have had anything to do with the decline in drivers. Serena responded that this was not taken into consideration; all of our research comes from the federal research on how many miles driven per vehicle, which is then cross-referenced with the census data.

Commission Chair Huellmantel added that if we continue providing good alternatives such as bike highways and providing more shade to pathways in Arizona, we will see a huge positive impact in for the future of transportation.

Commission Chair Huellmantel asked if there was a cultural impression difference between bus ridership and rail ridership. Many younger people are interested in riding the light rail over the busses. Many people using the transit system are phasing out and the ones phasing into the system are going to be the predominant users. We need to understand more about these new users, which makes this trend not only important in the next 5 years but the next 10 to 15 years. Robert quoted Christian Reed from a 1971 speech in Los Angeles saying, "Rail is sexy, bus is not."

Commissioner Golub asked the commission if its current structure is equipped to deal with these emerging issues and suggested the commission consider a restructure to accommodate some positions for members under the age of 30. Commission Chair Huellmantel agreed with the possibility of adding more youths to the commission and added that when Commissioner Goren was giving his presentation, he noted how articulate and thoughtful his viewpoints were on emerging issues.

Commissioner Nikki Gusz shared that Phoenix has one the highest percentage of disengaged youth between 16 and 24 years old and asked whether there were any efforts or studies related to this population. Serena answered there has been some research of young people with jobs driving more and youths without jobs driving less; however, she said that she would look into that subject more to provide more information.

Commissioner Cassano asked how the reduction of travel on the freeway system would affect the public and private sector funding. Serena answered that she has never heard of any groups that have stopped construction because they think people will be driving less; but additional information will gathered. Commissioner Cassano added the discussion should be aimed at total economic development in combination with transportation needs. Eric also added that Arizona Department of Transportation is responding to the traffic data by adding a rail planning section to their department and by modifying existing plans for the I-10 as a way to add other alternative modes of transportation rather than widening and adding lanes.

Commissioner Golub commented that you could give the same presentation to retirees, showing the benefit from alternative transportation options, and receiving a much different reaction from the youth.

Commissioner Goren commented that moving goods by long haul trucking would still need to be considered when making the roads more efficient because the light rail cannot go everywhere. Perhaps this would make a good area for private sectors investment.

Commission Chair Huellmantel thanked Serena indicating the discussion was a very healthy topic and suggested that the commission would like to have her back to discuss this further. Serena ended by stating her contact information was included in the packet and she was available for further questions.

Agenda Item 4 – Media Plan Update

Sue Taaffe, Public Information Officer, handed out an updated media plan and introduced Patrick Murphy with Off Madison Ave Advertising, who presented the recommended transportation media plan for FY 2014/15.

Sue updated the commission on the purpose of the media plan including the following:

- Bike events and safety education, transit pass programs, public meetings, transit ridership and detours are the main messages.
- Target audiences include ASU and high school students along with Tempe residents and professionals.
- Types of advertising mediums range from light pole banners, social media, online print, Pandora and Cable TV.

Sue stated that the current media budget is \$100,000 and Staff is requesting through the annual supplemental process an additional \$50,000 to increase the media budget to \$150,000 annually.

Patrick reiterated that there are several varieties of messages to raise awareness for the city of Tempe's public transportation programs included in the 2014/15 media plan. Different tactics will be used for different audiences especially when targeting ASU students. The goal is to reach the audience at home and on the go, with special attention during the school year while avoiding major holidays.

Using Scarborough data, research was analyzed in the Phoenix metro area, which found the three heaviest used media outlets are online, television and mall media. Sue asked where Pandora internet radio would fall in these categories. Patrick responded that Pandora falls between the radio and online form of media.

Local online media publishers such as azcentral.com, azfamily.com, Facebook, statepress.com, high school newspaper web sites, and brandexchange.net will receive major focus. Using zip codes and IP addresses to narrow in on Tempe based professionals and residences will maximize the responses to the ads.

Ad placement on the recently Tempe sponsored bike map located on the ASU off-campus housing guide will be a great opportunity to get the message out in front of a relevant audience. Outdoor ads will continue to consist of light pole banners, Mill Avenue banners and the College Avenue sign.

Commissioner Cassano asked if the only cost to the outside ads was the production of the banners. Patrick answered that is correct. Sue added that the city has a contract to hang all banners. Commissioner Goren asked if it was \$950 to have a banner placed on a pole. Sue explained that the cost is the labor to hang, repair and replace the brackets.. Commissioner Goren asked if the cost was for one pole or the area, and Sue responded that it was for the area specified.

Mall media at Tempe Marketplace is also recommended for FY 2014/15, and consists of three different posters in the mall area, which will offer additional opportunities within the market. Patrick continued to go over the media plan stating that online advertising will consist of twenty percent of the total budget, print media will also be be twenty percent, streaming radio will be thirty percent, and television will take up another thirty percent of the budget.

Commissioner Goren asked since Millennials prefer to get on the bus or bike rather than drive, are we targeting any specific advertisements to this population. Sue responded yes, the bike registry is an example of an ad that is altered slightly to appeal to different demographics of bike riders.

Commissioner Goren asked if these ads are targeting every mode of transportation in every demographic. Sue responded that the only way to reach all of them is by using Facebook and targeting people's interests. Commissioner Goren asked if the target for the ads should be aimed at the people who are already riding the bus or for those who are not. Sue answered that the ads are designed to capture both the new riders and existing riders that use the bus often.

Commissioner Gusz asked how the additional funds would be dispersed across the advertising medians. Sue answered that this media plan includes the proposed supplemental. If the media budget remains as is, Staff would have to eliminate or cut back certain types of media or reduce ads in certain months.

Commissioner Gusz asked how the "impressions" are tracked on Pandora, and if it tracks the increased use of transit passes. Based on the census data of the previous fiscal year, about 45 percent of eligible youth are enrolled in the program. There is no way to track if Pandora is generating interest in the Youth Transit Pass Program other than through the biennial telephone survey,

Agenda Item 5 – Bike Hero Nominations

Sue Taaffe, Public Information Officer, requested the commission to review the criteria and select a recipient for the city's annual Bike Hero Award. Nominees include:

- Bicycle Coalition @ ASU
- Bike Saviours
- Mehdi Farsi
- Shannon Bruce Nace
- Ryan Guzy
- Ryan and Jennifer Guzy
- Dick McQueen
- Mary Snow

Commission Chair Huellmantel mentioned that Ryan Guzy is a huge advocate for biking and is responsible for organizing the annual Fat Tire bike ride. He admitted that the candidates this year make the decision very difficult because they all make a tremendous impact on the bike culture in Tempe.

Commissioner Cassano mentioned that Ryan's application is in two places as a nominee. Commission Chair Huellmantel responded that Ryan is not interested in credit, but he is interested in moving the bike culture along. Commissioner Golub added that Jennifer Guzy was included in his nomination because Ryan's wife puts in as much work and time as he does.

Commission Chair Huellmantel introduced the nominees for the Bike Hero Award and based on the discussion asked for a motion to select Ryan and Jennifer Guzy as the recipient.

Motion: Commissioner Don Cassano

Second: Commissioner Ben Goren

Decision: Unanimously Approved motion to recommend Ryan and Jennifer Guzy

Agenda Item 6 – Path and Streetscape Project Update

Eric Iwersen, Acting Transportation Planning Manager, distributed a handout and presented an update on the Path and Streetscape projects. Presentation and highlights included:

- Rio Salado Multi-use Path connecting Phoenix to Tempe, construction begins spring 2014 and is projected to be completed summer of 2014
- University Drive Streetscape, construction begins spring 2014 and is projected to be completed in fall 2014
- Hardy Drive Streetscape, construction begins spring 2014 and is projected to be completed in fall 2014
- Rio Salado Bank Multi-use Path (McClintock to city of Mesa), design begins spring 2014 and construction begins 2014 to 2015
- Broadway Road Streetscape, design begins spring 2014 and construction begins 2014 to 2015
- El Paso Gasline Easement Multi-use Path, design begins fall 2013 to spring 2014 and construction begins summer 2014
- Bike Share, begins spring 2014 and will be ongoing
- Creamery Branch / 8th Street, design begins fall 2014 and construction begins 2015
- Rio Salado Southbank Path Underpass, design begins 2014 and construction begins 2015 to 2016
- Highline Canal Path, concept begins 2014, design begins 2014, and construction begins 2015 to 2017
- North South Rail Spur Path, concept begins 2014, design begins 2014, and construction begins 2016 to 2020
- Streetcar, design began 2012 to 2015 and construction begins 2015 to 2016

Commissioner Goren asked if the Rio Salado Multi-use Path connecting Phoenix to Tempe would cross Priest Drive. Eric replied that it does not cross Priest Drive; it will transition up to the sidewalk. A design process begins this spring for an underpass for this multi-use path at Priest Drive.

Commissioner Goren asked if Phoenix would connect the path on the west side. Eric answered saying Phoenix does have funding and construction should be completed in five to seven years. Commission Chair Huellmantel asked where Phoenix would take the path from Priest Drive. Eric said that Phoenix would create the path from Route 143 to Central Avenue in downtown Phoenix.

Eric updated the commission on the concept-funding proposal for the Highline Canal Path project through Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG). Tempe was awarded \$65,000 and the project is moving forward. Robert and Eric submitted a construction funding grant proposal request to MAG last week. As a result, Tempe was awarded \$3.3 million in federal funding for the construction of the four mile Highline Canal Path, which will come into effect in 2016 and 2017.

Commission Chair Huellmantel asked who was designing the Highline Canal Path. Eric answered that Coffman Studios was selected from the MAG on-call list.

Agenda Item 7 – Protected Bike Lanes

Eric Iwersen, Acting Transportation Planning Manager, presented information on protected bike lanes and distributed a packet with plans and photos of current projects.

Eric informed the commission that Tempe's goal is to provide better support for all modes of travel; create a safer place for bicyclists; and introduce new types of bike lanes such as buffered bike lanes, separated bike lanes, green bike lanes and cycle tracks. Commissioner Goren asked if a green paint that does not fade quickly would be used. Eric responded that Tempe is looking at a thermo-plastic application that will last longer.

Eric shared two items about the protected bike lanes that are moving forward. The first item was "The Green Lane" initiative, which is a nationwide project. People for Bikes along with the U.S. Department of Transportation are creating prototypes for the Best Bike Lanes project for communities. To be chosen for the next round of cities for this initiative, Tempe is working on submitting an application by identifying projects for case studies. Upcoming projects considered are the 8th Street project going from Rural Road to McClintock Road and Priest Drive from Washington Street to Van Buren Street.

Eric mentioned that the second item was in the northern area of Tempe on Priest Drive and Galvin Parkway. Recently a proposal from The Salt River Project (SRP) and the City of Phoenix presented an idea to create a better pedestrian and bike pathway around the SRP headquarters. The proposed design recommends the removal of two lanes of travel (one Northbound and one Southbound) on Priest Drive from Van Buren to Washington for separated or buffered bike lanes.

Eric introduced Julian Dresang, Senior Civil Engineer to explain the details of the Priest Drive proposal. Julian said that SRP has many locations around this area with the goal to connect the locations using a bike-share program.

Commission Chair Huellmantel asked what separates the bike lanes from traffic. Julian responded that initially it would be standard striping with five to six feet of space until funding is available to create a physical barrier. Eric referred to what Phoenix has done on the Central Avenue addition of a buffered bike lane. Commission Chair Huellmantel asked if a minimum of a three-foot buffer would be maintained between the lanes of traffic and the bikers. Eric and Julian both replied it would be.

Julian added that Phoenix would be connecting portions of the bike lane project as well at SRP. Commissioner Sue Lofgren asked if Scottsdale would be participating in this project. Julian stated they would not because they already have existing bike lanes on the extension of Galvin Parkway that is 64th Street in Scottsdale.

Commissioner Phillip Luna commented that it is great that other governments are working together on this but other alternative transportation options need to be explored. Physical barriers and multi-use lanes are preferred for the safety of bikers. Commissioner Lofgren added that she is fortunate to work with a city like Tempe where alternative transportation options exist. We have to explore the options of when these bike paths meet traffic lanes and bypass them in a way that makes them a true safe option.

Commissioner Gusz asked about SRP's role to create the separated bike lanes for the Priest Drive project. Eric responded that SRP is interested in a bike share program; they want their areas of transportation to reflect that. Julian mentioned some on-site improvements include a public area, creating new paths, and making a connection to the Cross Cut Canal.

Commissioner Goren made a comment stating the striping, from the pictures of Central Avenue, is exactly what the bike lanes should look like as there is a large separation zone and the striping is easily visible and low cost.

Commission Chair Huellmantel thanked Eric, Shelly Seyler, and staff for finding new ways to make transportation safe and innovative, he said he respects, and appreciates all the effort put into these projects. Eric added that there would need to be a letter of support for the "Green Bike Lane" initiative; the commission members unanimously agreed to provide the letter.

Agenda Item 8 – Department and Regional Transportation Updates

None

Agenda Item 9 – Future Agenda Items

None

The Commission's next meeting is scheduled for January 14, 2014.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

Prepared by: Travis Mullen

Reviewed by: Yvette Mesquita