



Minutes City of Tempe Transportation Commission May 13, 2014

Minutes of the Tempe Transportation Commission held on Tuesday, May 13, 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
Ben Goren
Charles Huellmantel
Philip Luna
Cyndi Streid

Jeremy Browning
Aaron Golub
Kevin Olson
Charles Redman
Gary Roberts
Peter Schelstraete

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Nikki Gusz
Sue Lofgren
German Piedrahita

City Staff Present:

Don Bessler, Public Works Director
Shelly Seyler, Deputy Public Works Director
Eric Iwersen, Principal Planner
Yvette Mesquita, Sr Management Assistant
Kathy Wittenburg, Administrative Assistant
Ken Jones, Finance and Technology Director
Alex Smith, Real Estate Development Supervisor
Robert Yabes, Principal Planner
Joe Clements, Transportation Financial Analyst

Guests Present:

Loyd Thomas
Brett Wood, Kimley Horn
Bryan Sager, Kimley Horn
Jim Coffman, Coffman & Associates
Jorge Luna, MAG
Marc Pearsall, MAG
Sonya Pastor La Sota, Valley Metro

Commissioner Goronkin called the meeting to order at 7:31 a.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

Loyd Thomas, Tempe resident, came to hear the MAG presentations on pedestrian design projects and wanted to remind the Commission to incorporate the needs of cyclists in their future plans and appreciates the effort put into the transportation program.

Agenda Item 2 – Minutes

The minutes of the April 8, 2014 Transportation Commission meeting were approved.

Motion: Commissioner Huellmantel

Second: Commissioner Cassano

Decision: Approved

Agenda Item 3 – HURF Fund Long Range Update

Ken Jones gave a brief overview of the Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF). Historically, HURF money is received from the state to maintain the City transportation system, such as street lights, street projects, etc.

The HURF fund receives money from the state and uses it for cash payments for street improvements. The debt repayment of \$2.77 million dollars was phased out over the last three years to help balance the fund. Next year, the City expects to receive up to \$19.5 million in HURF funds. Don and Shelly have designated how and where those funds will be directed next year.

Don Bessler stated that in 2010, 40% of the workforce that maintained the streets were let go and there were no funds directed toward street maintenance. It was determined that it would take \$8 million annually to just maintain streets. The formula used to designate street budgets is outdated and there are not enough funds available to properly maintain the streets. Don encouraged the Commission to identify their priorities and provide staff direction.

Commissioner Goronkin stated that comparatively, Tempe streets are far better maintained than surrounding communities.

Shelly Seyler stated that the City has used Capital Improvement Projects (CIPs) to manage many assets in the system, including street infrastructure (concrete and asphalt) roadway pavement and signage, striping and signal systems, which are all funded through the HURF fund. Every three years, the pavement quality is assessed by a consultant and rated from zero to 100. The average rating of streets in Tempe is currently 59. Our goal is to improve the system wide average to 75, by systematically identifying where there is the most need. The focus will be on upgrading one to three miles of arterial streets and one residential neighborhood every two years. The next project will focus on McClintock Drive between Elliot and Broadway, which has numerous cracks, potholes, dips, failing asphalt structure and could possibly lead to unsafe conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.

The department works to coordinate improvement efforts with other utilities to maximize resources and results. As for the structural street light program, over time they updated the installation process and are working to replace all of the street lights through the CIP process; managing it as a proactive asset management program as opposed to a reactive maintenance program.

Commissioner Goronkin asked how many complaints the department receives about the condition of the streets in Tempe.

Don and Shelly responded that there are approximately 20 to 30 different types of calls annually that are identified as complaints. The amount of calls can be affected seasonally by potholes that appear after inclement weather. Don added that if a private utility company performs street maintenance within three years of City generated repairs, the contractor is charged a premium for performing that work out of sync with the City's plan.

Commissioner Luna commented that the City does a good job, overall, with such small budgets.

Shelly replied that within the district, the City spends \$3 to \$5 million per year to address several miles of arterial and residential roads annually. The City uses rubberized asphalt, which performs better, and coordinates efforts with utility companies to reduce wear and tear and repairs to the streets.

Don added that the two elements that cause the most wear on asphalt are moisture and extreme temperatures. Tempe has a lot of cross through traffic and as such, the streets carry large volumes.

Shelly added that staff is developing a calendar over the next few months for the Commission and Council to review and be aware of and voice their recommendation on what projects staff has proposed for funding, where the CIP/grant process is, and when submittals are due for both the Transit and Transportation projects.

Commissioner Goronkin asked for more questions and comments and thanked staff.

Agenda Item 4 – Transit Fund Long Range Update and Transit A la Carte

Ken Jones gave a brief overview of the transit fund. 16% of the fund comes from a half-cent dedicated sales tax and can only be spent on Transit services and projects.

Ken introduced Joe Clements as the accountant for the Transit Fund. Ken also walked the Commission through an interactive spreadsheet tool. This spreadsheet illustrates the Transit budget as well as projections and costs; enabling Council to use this tool to select transit options and projects.

Revenues and expenditures are now being tracked very closely. Historically, this account was underfunded and had a structural deficit of between \$15.8 and \$18 million. Through good forecasting and management, the fund has now been stabilized. This budget year, the revenues include \$52 to \$54 million in Transit Funds. Transit is funded by a number of sources and some revenues are more difficult to project because they are derived from federal grants, user fees, etc. that can fluctuate annually. Council approved a policy that specifies that 25% of the annual revenue must be maintained as a minimum fund balance to ensure that services are maintained. The options of projects slide illustrates that there currently is a 50% fund balance, as well as current expenditures. The Council can now use this tool to make decisions about how to spend those funds. Ken continued to explain that an element of the spreadsheet also reflects \$8 million in debt that is earmarked to be reimbursed by federal funds and will be disbursed at a later time.

In another example, Ken described that in fiscal year 2014/2015, a non-recurring expenditure can occur and by using the interactive spreadsheet, will help Council forecast what expenses they would like to address in the future for long term planning.

Commissioner Goren asked if the street car is built into spreadsheet and Ken confirmed that it is.

Don Bessler added that this is the interactive tool, and that the fund tool, called Transit a La Carte, will be seen by Council first. It is a menu document that illustrates where all the revenue funds come from on one side and the second side illustrates the costs and options for spending. Don acknowledged that terms get confusing, but staff is bringing this information to help Council and the public understand the big picture.

Don Cassano asked if one of the spreadsheets could be created for capital expenditures. Ken replied that although that fund operates differently, capital expenditures do not maintain a balance in the Capital Fund. If debt is issued from that fund, monies will be transferred to that fund to pay for the expense.

Agenda Item 5 – Downtown Parking Study

Eric Iwersen introduced Brett Wood with Kimley Horn, who will make a presentation to Council in June about bike parking, structures, on-street parking, commercial vehicle loading, etc. Alex Smith added that DTC is part of the team and a funding partner.

Brett Woods gave a brief overview of the draft presentation and explained some of the work that had been done over the last five months, including curb lane management, bike parking, parking requirements, asset management, revision of future parking facilities and traditional parking analysis. A survey was distributed and they received 200 responses to help set up a baseline for recommendations.

Reviewing the 5th Street corridor from Farmer to College, they assessed what improvements are possible and determined the need to improve landscape to stay in context with Mill. The designs are more about creating a tree canopy, focused more on parking, and buffered bike lanes, removing patch spaces to add more parking spaces, and keeping the bike lane. At this point, it's a very conceptual approach and more work is needed to complete the design.

Commissioner Goren asked if there is anything separating bikes and cars.

Brett replied options are a painted line or bollards, depending on the right of way available.

Eric added that these projects can take years to complete and transitional measures may be applied, and they are looking at more affordable solutions to facilitate the protected bike lanes. He later continued that a new concept is to have the bike lanes on the passenger side of automobiles.

Brett interjected that looking at this conceptually, it could cost up to \$5 million over a long period of time, and there could be opportunities to generate revenue.

Commissioner Olson commented that a part of the interim solution can transform the use of a property, as he has witnessed at his office location.

Brett added that landscaping can change behavior and use.

Commissioner Huellmantel confirmed that these plans are indeed concepts and the Commission will look at it again at a later date and Commissioner Goren asked about the budget.

Eric confirmed that this concept is at the early stages and no budget has been established.

Brett addressed curb lane management issues, such as designating commercial loading times, designating taxi loading stations, and revisions to street parking to include overnight, pre-paid overnight parking to encourage consumers to use alternative measures and deter impaired driving.

Brett identified that there is a lack of active bicycle parking, and they recommend reviewing best practices. Bike parking and implementing standards need to be revised as the private development application is lacking and also offer long-term parking. He then showed an example of an on street bike corral (in Colorado) which replaced one parking space with a bike only parking rack for up to eight bikes. The group suggests piloting the concept to assess activity and promote bike parking on Mill. Another concept presented was event bike parking and permanent bike valet.

The team identified a 1,000 public parking space (13%) surplus over the entire downtown area, which is minimal, if not subpar. Adding bike parking in current projects, such as movie theaters, State Farm, and University Place could offer better parking facilities and development.

Alex added that although he acknowledges parking is limited and we are putting a maximum limit on the number of parking spaces a new development has, there is a demand for suburban parking models in urban downtown environment. We need to balance the demand with weekly business and weekend event needs.

Commissioner Huellmantel recapped that the benefit of these discussions is that it identifies costs, including transportation, and that uses change, consumers change and the transportation needs will evolve.

Brett summarized his presentation and remarked that the best model focuses on customer service and community to be able to fund that plan by charging revenue to pay for future development.

Commissioner Goronkin confirmed that this presentation will go to Council June 12 and verified a general consensus that the Commission supports this program.

Alex added that Council received this information in the Friday packet and staff will meet with them before the IRS.

Commissioner Roberts asked if there is any incentive for businesses to use to require less parking. Brett replied that there are subsidies for employers to have their employees get rail and bus passes in other cities.

Commissioner Olson commented that he would like to add a sixth item to increase transit options and incentives to reduce auto traffic.

Eric confirmed that staff would send out a statement reflecting the Commission's support to Council.

Agenda Item 6 – MAG Pedestrian Design Assistance Grant Funded Projects

Eric gave a brief update on the concepts created to determine the alignment for the rail trail within a seven mile corridor between Tempe Town Lake and Knox Road. The Highline Canal Path Project received \$3.3 million in federal funds and is almost entirely funded.

Bryan Sager described the varying areas of pathway types, concepts and opportunities.

Eric also added that there will be provisions for pedestrians, lighting or maintenance vehicles as warranted. Union Pacific is concerned about safety so staff is identifying land that has right-of-ways and would be most amenable to provide good design and function.

Jim Coffman presented information on the Highline Project and updated the Commission about a recent bike ride, work sessions, concept designs, and reviewed the map from Highline to Guadalupe with paved paths, fences, and improvements to access points, alley ways, and possibly a bridge crossing. The presentation was cut short due to time and will be brought back at another meeting.

Agenda Item 7 – Southeast Valley Transit System Study

Robert Yabes, Principal Planner, Jorge Luna (Valley Metro), Sonya Pastor La Sota (Valley Metro) and Marc Pearsall of Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) presented information on the Southeast Valley Transit System Study.

The Southeast Valley project covers nearly 20 communities and is funded by MAG and Valley Metro. This is the first study that MAG and Valley Metro have partnered on to study the Southeast Valley Transit System.

Marc Pearsall explained that the Study Area expects to determine transit needs by optimizing existing services, identify current unmet needs and changing conditions. The MAG region has expanded into Florence and Coolidge. Public outreach will run through next year. However, due to lack of funding, there is a shortage or gaps between, Mesa, Tempe, and Chandler for which they hope to address.

Marc provided a summary of items being studied, such as transit service characteristics, reviewing opportunities to maximize service in the Southeast Valley, identifying funding strategies, and concerns about increasing dial-a-ride costs.

Sonya Pastor La Sota identified the project website and reported they have collected 660 survey results so far, and will continue to collect them through June 16. The team is also attending master plan public meetings, events, and community meetings to collect input.

Marc added that there is ongoing coordination with the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) Market based approach to transit and meeting approximately every six weeks to review data.

Commissioner Roberts inquired if the vanpool program is part of the study, as it is a cost effective option to address current issues.

Jorge Luna replied that maps of commuter traffic are being established and observed as a part of this review and Julie Morrison, whose passion is TDM transit has joined the study team and has brought TDM to the study, which is paying for itself. A component of TDM will be a part of the study.

Commissioner Goren asked if the trip reduction data is a part of the study.

Jorge replied yes, that data is being incorporated into the study for companies who have 50 or more employees, and enables them to map traffic patterns.

Agenda Item 8 – MAG Pedestrian Design Assistance

Eric explained that MAG releases funds annually and asked the Commission to review the packet with proposed project ideas, and reviewed highlights of several of those projects. Eric also clarified that after the review, the Commission can recommend one project.

Commissioner Roberts expressed support for the Alameda project based on the benefit it would bring to the area which consists of railroad tracks.

Commissioner Huellmantel commented that the Commission has made great progress last year and believes they have the most impact on the community with this type of decision.

Commissioner Cassano suggested considering the pedestrian bridge on Baseline at the Western Canal.

There was a general discussion about how to determine what project criteria would be the best candidate to get funding.

Commissioner Goronkin summarized the consensus that there are two projects that have the most regional significance.

Agenda Item 9 – Department and Regional Transportation Updates

Postponed in the interest of time.

Agenda Item 10 – Future Agenda Items

None

The Commission's next meeting is scheduled for June 10, 2014.

Meeting adjourned at 9:26 am

Prepared by: Kathy Wittenburg

Reviewed by: Sue Taaffe