

**Minutes
Development Review Commission
STUDY SESSION
February 11, 2020**

Minutes of the study session of the Development Review Commission, of the City of Tempe, was held in the Tempe History Museum, 809 E Southern Avenue, Tempe, AZ

Present:

Chair David Lyon
Vice Chair Michael DiDomenico
Alt Commissioner Michelle Schwartz
Commissioner Don Cassano
Commissioner Philip Amorosi
Commissioner Andrew Johnson

City Staff Present:

Chad Weaver, Director, Community Development
Ryan Levesque, Deputy Director, Community Development
Suparna Dasgupta, Principal Planner
Steve Abrahamson, Principal Planner
Karen Stovall, Senior Planner
Robbie Aaron, Planner II
Dalton Guerra, Planner I
Joanna Barry, Administrative Assistant II

Absent:

Commissioner Scott Sumners
Commissioner Thomas Brown
Alt Commissioner Barbara Lloyd
Alt Commissioner Angela Taylor

Chair Lyon began the Study Session at 5:30 p.m.

Review of January 14, 2020 Minutes

- Item #1 - Study Session Minutes – ~~January 14, 2020~~ – Postponed to 2/25/20 DRC Meeting
- Item #2 - Regular Meeting Minutes – ~~January 14, 2020~~ – Postponed to 2/25/20 DRC Meeting

Review of February 11, 2020 Regular Meeting Agenda

Item #3 – EASTLINE VILLAGE – PHASE I (PL190059) – to be heard

Item #4 – LEWIS RESIDENCE (PL190259) – to be heard. Mr. Robbie Aaron, Planner I, advised the Commission of changes that the applicant had made to the plans since the last time the DRC heard the case. Commissioner Amorosi asked if the Commission was going to see visuals of the type of screening that will be used on the Lewis Residence deck. Mr. Aaron advised that the applicant would be providing that information during their presentation.

Item #5 – TEMPE FARMERS MARKET (PL190327) – to be heard. Mr. Steve Abrahamson, Principal Planner, briefly discussed with the Commission a memorandum that was received from the Tempe Police Department regarding this case. It was neither for nor against the project, but just expressed some possible concerns.

Other:

Chair Lyon updated the Commission on a meeting he had with Community Development Department staff. Staff wants to improve communication between staff and the Commission as to what the Commission's concerns are on items so they can be better addressed between staff and applicant prior to being brought before the Commission. If there is something a Commission member feels very strongly about, they need to explain it as specifically as they can so that staff can address the concern raised and guide the applicant. Chair Lyon thanked the staff and urged the Commission members to reach out to staff with specific concerns rather than calling the staff out during a public hearing. He also advised the Commission members to ask questions of staff in a manner that is professional, amicable and non-accusatory.

PRESENTATION:

Tempe/Mesa Streetcar Feasibility Study - Presentation by Deron Lozano, Project Manager, Valley Metro

Mr. Lozano stated that they initiated the study about a year and a half ago and have presented it to various Tempe commissions about a year ago. He is mainly here to give the Commission an update on the Tier 2 study. Mr. Lozano advised that it was a joint partnership formed by Tempe, Valley Metro and Mesa that initiated the study for the purpose of determining what would be the best next expansion for the streetcar. He stressed this was a technical feasibility looking at the streetcar only, not light rail or other bus options, to connect key employment centers such as downtown Tempe as well as the Fiesta District in Mesa. He advised that their regional funding is initiated through MAG/Proposition 400 and expires at the end of 2025 so cities are putting projects into what the extension would be. The process started in 2018 with an identification of the corridors and where potential lines could be located. They then conducted the Tier 1 evaluation which was a very high-level, qualitative analysis where they looked at population, employment, and the major destinations along the alignments. They are now at Tier 2 which is a more in-depth analysis where they look at where the city is going in regard to future economic development along with looking at ridership to prioritize different corridors. Mr. Lozano advised that once this step is completed they would then recommend corridors by prioritization to present to City Council. Tier 2 criteria looks at mobility improvements such as ridership, alignments that have good bike/pedestrian connections, potential environmental impacts/constraints such as railroad crossings and Tempe Town Lake. Land use and economic development plays a key role in what Tempe is doing and why they are looking to the streetcar in the future. With regard to cost, they took a high level look at how the alignments compare amongst each other. Essentially the longer the route is the more expensive it would be than a shorter route. They also looked at efficiency to see if there was a way to phase some of the corridors. The results of the Tier 2 evaluation showed the five highest ranked corridors and alignments for the streetcar only, which included Rio Salado East, Dobson/Southern/Country Club, Mill Avenue, Rural Road, and Rio Salado West.

Chair Lyon asked Mr. Lozano how they factored in NOVUS and if they weighted it in the plan, such as 50% or 100%. Mr. Lozano advised that they did assume that NOVUS was 100% built out.

Mr. Lozano stated that their next step is to present the recommendations to City Council in mid-2020. The next steps in regard to the new regional transportation plan, which is being referred to as Proposition 400-E (extension), is to determine how these corridors come into play as Tempe packages the projects into the next regional sales tax.

Commissioner Johnson noted that in Tier 1 they had connections on both Rural Road and Mill Avenue all the way to Baseline Road and asked why that was changed in the Tier 2 evaluation where now they only go to Southern Avenue. Mr. Lozano stated that one of the constraints was the crossing of the US-60 so they ended the alignments on Southern Avenue for the purpose of analysis. They have received some comments as to how they can connect south Tempe and that will be something that will be integrated into their final report.

Commissioner Amorosi stated he has heard from residents in south Tempe that they do not want to come to north Tempe because of the traffic and he noted the area around the library would be a good location for a hub. He advised that if they want the buy-in from south Tempe they need to look at the route from Rural Road into downtown Tempe.

Staff Updates:

Ms. Dasgupta advised the Commission that the next meeting would be held in the Tempe Public Library as the opening date for the City Council chambers was pushed back and then updated the Commission on items that would be on the February 25, 2020 agenda.

The Study Session adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Prepared by: Joanna Barry
Reviewed by: Suparna Dasgupta



Suparna Dasgupta, Principal Planner