



Minutes City of Tempe Transportation Commission September 10, 2013

Minutes of the Tempe Transportation Commission held on Tuesday, September 10, 2013, 7:30 a.m., at the East Valley Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility, 2050 W. Rio Salado Parkway, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Charles Huellmantel (Chair)
Aaron Golub
Pam Goronkin
Kevin Olson
Gary Roberts
Peter Schelstraete

Ben Goren
Nikki Gusz
Philip Luna
German Piedrahita
Benjamin Sanchez

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Don Cassano
Sue Lofgren
Charles Redman

City Staff Present:

Shelly Seyler, Deputy Public Works Director
Transportation
Eric Iwersen, Acting Transportation Planning Manager
Sue Taaffe, Public Information Officer
Mike Nevarez, Interim Transit Manager
Joe Clements, Transportation Financial Analyst
Yvette Mesquita, Sr. Management Assistant

Robert Yabes, Principal Planner
Tanya Chavez, Neighborhood Services Specialist
RC Noderer, Transit Operations Coordinator
Travis Mullen, Administrative Assistant
Mark Vinson, City Architect / Design + Preservation
Manager

Guests Present:

Mark Soden, Landscape Architect Consultant

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 August 13, 2013 meeting and asked for a motion.

Motion: Commissioner Gary Roberts

Second: Commissioner Phillip Luna
Decision: Approved

Agenda Item 3 – College Avenue Streetscape Project

Mark Vinson, City Architect / Design + Preservation Manager, presented an update on the College Avenue (5th Street - University Drive) Streetscape project including design concepts and distributed a handout.

Mark shared information regarding the current College Avenue Commons building ("Block 12") project indicating it is expected to be completed by August 2014 and explained ASU's desire to connect the projects to the Transportation Center as a way to create a unified Streetscape on College Avenue between 6th Street and 7th Street. Key elements and/or changes include:

- Shade pavilion and cooling tower
- Public right-of-way landscape
- Grading and drainage, such as a curbless plaza; facility entries
- Added hardscape materials, such as truncated domes, bollards, and speed tables
- Street alignment improvements
- Bike path integration
- Street lighting
- Consideration for potential problems

Commissioner Huellmantel inquired about the bollard with regard to special events in the area and where buses would go. Mark replied that the bollards are movable to block off streets for events and collapsible for emergency access. Eric Iwersen responded to the question by stating that the bus access issue is being worked on.

ASU's goal is to get the project started after the Insight Bowl and have it completed by August along with the Commons project at no cost to City with ASU signing a maintenance agreement.

Commissioner Ben Goren questioned the led lighting element included in the handout. Mark replied he would double check the information.

Commissioner Roberts asked Mark to verify that the placement of the bollards, truncated domes, and bike path were in the correct order from the shopping center to the streetscape. Mark confirmed the order and stated that this is a curbless plaza.

Commissioner Goren added that this area would be a great location for an integrated shared space with no bike lanes. Eric shared that this type of concept has not been included for various reasons but noted minor design treatments that are being incorporated to move closer towards a shared space concept while still meeting the legal requirements for a street and bicycle facility.

Shelly Seyler mentioned that by not having bike lanes on College Avenue, bikes would be required to ride in the flow of traffic and would not be allowed to pass vehicles when traffic is congested. Commissioner Pam Goronkin agreed that there is a lot of volume on this street and the changes would impact traffic by having bicyclists share the same lane as motor vehicles.

Commissioner Huellmantel commented that he would like to see more pedestrian dominated curbless areas. If the goal is to reduce congestion downtown, thought should be given to relocating some of the busses to another location away from the Tempe Transportation Center. Commissioner Goren added that the Tempe Transportation Center is

located in the center of downtown and some perimeter locations along Mill Avenue and University Drive would be a good way to prevent all the busses from being forced to go downtown.

Commissioner Aaron Golub asked if the hardscape materials are cutting edge for porous materials. Mark answered that none of the pavement would be defined as permeable and we are trying to grade the area to where the rain water would slope towards planting areas.

Commissioner Kevin Olson said that a shared space is a great idea, by not marking the road into separate lanes vehicles will be able to move more freely even with the additional pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Eric responded that ASU is looking for something between the shared space concept and the legal requirements. Commissioner Goronkin added that psychologically, the user slows down and becomes more alert when the road is not designated or marked as obvious areas of travel. Commissioner German Piedrahita pointed out that the busses are predictable; it is the cars that need to be accounted for.

Commissioner Nikki Gusz commented that the shading is important and the lights are a great addition to the area.

Commissioner Goronkin said that ASU is trying to promote high end retail uses in the area and this begins to achieve not a linear experience, but something that pedestrians can explore because there are interesting things to walk to and places to eat.

Agenda Item 4 – David Strang Memorial Update

Eric Iwersen, Acting Transportation Planning Manager, provided an update on the status of the status of the David Strang memorial and distributed a memo.

Eric shared that the 24-inch box native Palo Verde will be planted along the Crosscut Canal Multi-use path. The language of the plaque was verified with David's wife Ellie and will be embedded in a permeable concrete surface adjacent to the tree. The tree will be planted during October to avoid the harsh weather conditions and will be truck watered for 6 to 8 months.

Eric also noted that the tree will be purchased and planted in the next 4 to 6 weeks. An event for the dedication of the memorial will be held after the November commission meeting in the morning.

Commissioner Chair Huellmantel thanked Eric and staff for their service and expertise.

Commissioner Roberts asked why the tree changed from a Mesquite to a Palo Verde. Eric replied that upon further research the Palo Verde was chosen because of its rate of survival. Once a date is identified, and information is shared with David's family an update will be provided at the next Commission meeting.

Agenda Item 5 – Regional Bike Share

Eric Iwersen, Acting Transportation Planning Manager, provided an update on the proposed Regional Bike Share program and distributed a memo, map, and bike graphics. Information shared included:

- Added stakeholders
- Development of a voting/decision making process for stakeholders
- Contractor Cycle Hop hired to put concept together and find a corporate sponsorship
- Timeline is around Spring in 2014 with 250 bikes at 25 locations
- Media information on Twitter, Facebook, and push messages
- Preliminary system brand established

Sue Taaffe, Public Information Officer, presented an update on the system brand and possible changes that could occur in the future regarding the bike color and name. Currently, an orange bike with the name "GR:D" is what the regional committee has suggested to move forward. However, the process of finding a corporate sponsor can alter the name or color in the future. This is going to Council as early as the end of November.

Commissioner Huellmantel asked if there were any changes. Eric said the seat cover colors, grips, the basket size, and the impact of heat on the materials were reviewed and noted the bike is chainless.

Commissioner Goren asked if the bike was shaft driven. Eric replied that it was and that it was single speed. Commissioner Goren asked about the durability of the drive shaft and if it was going to hold up. Eric replied that it was a prototype and that it is working in other cities.

Commissioner Roberts asked where the proposed headquarters would be located and if this location would be where the bikes would be refurbished. Eric answered that it is unknown right now, but indicated a single location or multiple warehouse facilities may serve as a headquarters to hold/refurbish all the bikes and will be based on potential program expansion.

Commissioner Roberts asked if a bike picked up at the Library Complex is dropped off at another location, is there any way to (1) trace the bike cost to the person, and (2) how will the bike be picked up. Eric answered that it is still being organized but the idea is that anyone can leave it anywhere. The program is a hybrid system where the bike does not have to return it to a dock, but can be returned to a bike rack. If you rent the bike for two hours, then after that time the bike becomes available. There is a built in GPS that helps in tracking the bikes location for the maintenance team to find, repair and stock hubs that are low.

Eric mentioned an incentive program is being explored, for example; a free rental could be issued if a renter brought the bike back to a hub with a low inventory.

Commissioner Roberts asked if the \$850,000 is for the 250 bikes and the 25 locations. Eric stated that \$100,000 was authorized by City Council to come from the Tempe Transit Tax; \$750,000 from a Federal grant with the City of Phoenix that was received last year; and the startup cost will come from the corporate sponsorship that Cycle Hop agreed to seek at no cost to the city. The \$850,000 would go towards expansion at some later date. Sue added that a portion of the funds would also be used for promotional media.

Commissioner Goren asked if putting the bikes stations around high population's areas, like apartment complexes has been given any thought. Eric provided examples such as College Avenue and University Drive along with Apache Boulevard and Rural Road as high population areas. Commissioner Goren asked if Hardy Drive and 5th Street would be considered. Eric mentioned that locations are being concentrated in the heart of the downtown and anticipated areas like Hardy Drive and 5th Street would be areas to target for expansion.

Commissioner Huellmantel asked if there are going to be actual stations where there will be a dependable place where you find bikes and if it was possible to link to new development projects to get developers to invest funds. Commissioner Goren asked about the flexibility of station locations when it is realized that a particular area is a hotspot for bicycle commuters. Eric indicated a station prototype is being developed and envisions a system that will be able to identify options and allows for moves to the ideal location.

Commissioner Goren mentioned that dropping the bikes at bus station would be a great way to make sure the bikes would be available to everyone other than having to go to a dock or station.

Agenda Item 6 – Department and Regional Transportation Updates

Sue Taaffe, Public Information Officer, provided information regarding the following events:

- Safe Places Press Conference - September 18th
- Bike Hero Nominations due November 30th
- El Paso Gas Line Multi Use Path Public Meeting - September 26nd at 6:30 pm
- Orbit MiDi bus Prototype Public Meeting - September 28th
- Valley Metro is holding a series of public meetings discussing regional bus changes happening in January (Tempe is not affected by the changes)

Eric reported an update on the Broadway Road Streetscape Project sharing the data collection has started; beginning next week there will be lane closures; a report will be provided to the commission in the future; and Sue shared a public meeting will be held on October 17th at 6 pm

Commissioner Roberts asked if there is going to be any signage letting residents know that the Streets will be blocked off. Eric answered that there will be signage and anyone can call 311 to get additional information. Residents were notified one half miles north and south and other announcements and media notifications were issued.

Commissioner Piedrahita asked about how the lane would be shut off and what activity would be in the area. Shelly explained the purpose of the project signs and announcements was to make sure everyone received information about the street closure. There will be no activity in the area; it is only for the purpose of collecting traffic data for the upcoming projects.

Agenda Item 7 – Future Agenda Items

None

The Commission's next meeting is scheduled for October 8, 2013.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

Prepared by: Travis Mullen
Reviewed by: Yvette Mesquita