



**SUMMARIZED MINUTES
CITY OF SCOTTSDALE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2009
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE ROOMS 1-3
ONE CIVIC CENTER
7447 E. INDIAN SCHOOL ROAD, SUITE 105
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA 85251**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Howard called the regular meeting of the Scottsdale Transportation Commission to order at 6:07 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: William Howard, Chair
Josh Weiss, Vice Chair
Terry Gruver, Commissioner
Kelly McCall, Commissioner
Howard Sukenic, Commissioner
Paul Ward, Commissioner

ABSENT: Donald Maxwell, Commissioner

STAFF: Mary O'Connor, Transportation General Manager (arrived at 6:36 p.m.)
Susan Conklu, Transportation Planner
Kay Cooper, Assistant City Attorney
Annie DeChance, Public Participation & Outreach Manager
Dan Gabiou, Transportation Intern
Teresa Huish, Principal Transportation Planner
Reed Kempton, Principal Transportation Planner
Dave Meinhart, Transportation Planning and Transit Director
Paul Porell, Traffic Engineering and Operations Director
Lorraine Protocollo, Administrative Secretary
Luis Santaella, Assistant City Attorney
George Williams, Senior Traffic Engineer

SPEAKERS DURING PUBLIC COMMENT (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Suzan Curtin
Dave MacDonald

Robin MacDougall
Stuart Tobin

2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- Study Session of the Transportation Commission - March 23, 2009
- Regular Meeting of the Transportation Commission - March 23, 2009

COMMISSIONER SUKENIC MOVED TO APPROVE THE STUDY SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 23, 2009. COMMISSIONER GRUVER SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY A VOTE OF SIX (6) TO ZERO (0).

Chair Howard noted that this would be Commissioner McCall's final meeting. Commissioner McCall said the Commission would benefit from annual reports from the City's ADA Coordinator and the Government Relations office. She said as technology transfers from gasoline-powered automobiles to electric, less revenue will be generated from gasoline taxes, and the Commission should begin thinking about ways to replace that income to pay for transportation needs. Chair Howard, the Commission and staff presented gifts to Commissioner McCall in appreciation for her service to the City.

3. **Public Comment**

Dave MacDonald thanked Commissioner McCall.

4. **Noise Abatement Policy**

Ms. Huish presented a report on noise abatement. Noise is quantified using a weighted measure of decibels (dB), and a weighted average of decibels (dBA) to determine the high and low pitched sounds of roadway noise. Loudness perception is subjective as people have different hearing sensitivities. The Federal government, ADOT and other entities have established criteria using a range of dBAs. The Federal criteria say that new roadway construction or physical alteration of an existing highway must not have noise levels exceeding 67 dBA. Scottsdale Transportation Master Plan (TMP) uses ADOT's threshold level of 64 dBA. The City of Carefree uses a range of decibel levels for motorcycles that takes into account the age of the vehicle. All neighboring cities have sections of their municipal codes that deal with nuisance or disturbance of the peace, but not roadway or mobile sources.

The Scottsdale TMP indicates a preference for using vegetation or berming for sound mitigation, rather than sound walls. Block walls are commonly used for noise mitigation since they are cost-effective and durable. Wall surface treatments can help achieve even better results. Some walls contain or are built with proprietary materials, but these are more expensive.

Ms. Huish said Scottsdale has several options for noise mitigation:

- A modified version of the ADOT policy.
- When traffic volumes increase to a specified amount over a certain amount of time.
- When modeling indicates that roadway noise is expected to increase over time.

Furthermore, Scottsdale could choose to add a noise element policy to the City's General Plan, amend the policies of the TMP, or identify noise sensitive zones in the city. Neighborhood Services is addressing noise mitigation from stationary sources, and will be reporting to the

City Council in June. Other considerations for noise mitigation are placing limits on construction during certain times of day, and land use restrictions through zoning. Chair Howard reported on his meeting with the residents of Sands East I and II. He expressed confidence that the City would be able to find a solution to that particular issue, but noted that the Commission is trying to set up guidelines to address the noise situation in general. He invited public comment.

Suzan Curtin suggested that noise mitigation be required when the road widening criteria is met, even if the City does not choose to widen the road. When Council voted not to widen Indian School Road, it took away the means for the residents of the Sands East neighborhoods to get noise mitigation. She felt that Scottsdale should establish a cost cap per benefited residence, such as the one ADOT uses.

Robin MacDougall said when she first moved into her house, spending time in her back yard was a pleasant activity. Since the freeway was built, and traffic increased on Indian School Road, that is no longer that case. Dual-pane windows and higher walls helped mitigate interior noise to some extent, but the elevated sidewalk the City recently built has reduced privacy considerably. The neighborhood residents should benefit from the Indian School Road project as much as those traveling through do.

Stuart Tobin said Scottsdale's emphasis seems to have shifted from the "Most Livable City," to the "Most Workable City." The City's past presentations on the Sands East neighborhoods offered practical solutions to making Scottsdale a place where people can both live and work, and he encouraged the Commission to keep them in mind when making decisions.

Dave MacDonald said siren noises often increase with density. Emergency vehicles often blare sirens when there are no cars on the street. He encouraged the Commission to invite public safety officials to discuss their siren policies and how they monitor the use of them.

Commissioner McCall inquired whether noise levels were measured before the Indian School Road project started, and whether a forecast was made of what it would be like afterwards. Ms. O'Connor responded that the consultants involved with the project conducted road noise measurements. With the completion of the rubberized asphalt paving, more measurements will be used to confirm whether or not the actuality is consistent with the expectation. Even though there was no noise mitigation policy in place, the City conducted road noise measurements even though the road was not being widened. Commissioner McCall felt that the TMP addressed the noise policy satisfactorily.

Commissioner Ward said the Commission should focus on noise that results from improvement projects, leaving other sources of noise to groups such as Community Services [Neighborhood Services]. Whether a road is widened or not is irrelevant; what matters is the impact of a project versus what a person could have reasonably anticipated when they bought their property. If the City has plans to widen a four-lane road to a six-lane road from the beginning, and a homeowner decides to buy a house along it, the City should not have to be responsible for noise when the road is actually widened. He also questioned whether rubberized asphalt was the most cost-effective solution choice in every situation. There may be better options depending on the circumstances.

Vice Chair Weiss noted that the Commission at one point discussed taking a consistent approach towards noise mitigation, as opposed to handling roadway issues separately from stationary issues. If the Commission chooses to not use the widening-only criteria, the door could open to many requests being made for noise mitigation. If that is the case, there should

be a second step similar to that used in the Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan (NTMP), which offers a way for the community to request mitigation. Without this, any Commission recommendation would fail, as efforts could potentially cost the City a lot of money, and cause each project to become politicized.

Commissioner Gruver said that in addition to establishing criteria, the Commission should consider requiring that abatement not exclusively be defined as walls. Many factors have to be considered when walls are proposed, and neighbors have a wide range of opinions on what the priorities should be.

Chair Howard took note of some underlying principles, that quiet is better than noise, that irresistible changes are taking place whether people like it or not, and that there is no way the City can indemnify everyone from the effects of growth. He suggested that the policy contain a preamble that says the City's intent is to work with residents to study and mitigate noise problems when they result from direct City actions, as opposed to the general increase in noise associated with growth. The issue is not just over road widening. Noise could be taken into consideration when a project is in the planning stages. He also questioned whether Scottsdale should use a decibel threshold that might be better suited to highways.

Commissioner Sukenic said that if a homeowner buys a house, and the City has a plan in existence that they can access, then the burden to mitigate noise should be on the homeowner. If the City decides to do something later that creates a nuisance, the City should have the responsibility. It is the law of equity. Mr. Meinhart said staff could prepare some thoughts on how to establish an equitable dividing line.

Mr. Porell said Neighborhood Services has been struggling with the issue of the City's responsibility regarding stationary noise sources, particularly when land-use changes impact existing neighborhoods. He felt it would be appropriate for the two groups to collaborate on a solution. Ms. O'Connor added that Citizen and Neighborhood Services is going to be part of the same department as Transportation, which will enhance coordination efforts. Chair Howard felt that the residents should be involved in the discussion. The more they understand the pros and cons of each option, and the issues involved, the easier it might be to obtain their acceptance of the policy.

5. Operating Budget Review / Organizational Structure

Ms. O'Connor said the City's reorganization effort is intended to flatten the management structure, and address recent employee retirements. The proposal would consolidate several City departments. From a practical perspective, few employees will actually move their work locations. Potentially, 25 positions are scheduled for redeployment or layoffs, and a 2% across the board pay cut is proposed for July.

When it comes to transit cuts, staff is proposing the elimination of bus routes 84 and 114, which are the poorest performers, and are often duplicative of trolley services. Ridership has been flat on these two routes for several years, and they have low service quality. The portion of bus route 66 between Loloma Station and Fashion Square would also be eliminated. Under the proposal, the frequency and hours of the downtown trolley would be reduced, but not the neighborhood trolley. The City plans to continue its current structure for senior and ADA Dial-a-Ride and Cab Connection service. Further operational cuts are proposed in travel and training, and the elimination of advertising and brochures, using web services and fixed signage for outreach efforts instead.

Commissioner McCall inquired about fixing the fare boxes. Mr. Meinhart explained that the problem has not been with broken fare boxes, but instead with bus schedule delays caused by slow cash transactions. One key component of the new fare policy is to offer a significant discount to riders for buying day passes off the bus, which would reduce the reliance on cash fares. He said the new fare policy will help generate revenue, but it will not be dramatic enough to avoid cuts in service. One proposal under consideration is allowing advertising on bus shelters and buses.

Vice Chair Weiss said that while commissions and boards are not currently a core focus of the structural reorganization, it would be appropriate for the Commission to vote on a recommendation as Council moves forward. He read the language of his proposal:

"To ensure residents with transportation and roadway related concerns have a clear point of contact, be it recommended to Council that regardless of the division, that the Transportation Commission have a policy role in all elements of transportation, including maintenance and roadway aesthetics."

He noted that currently, residents have no place to go when they have a concern about a roadway project. Ms. O'Connor suggested listing the specific transportation functions for clarity. Chair Howard said Council is currently so involved with budget issues that commissions and boards are not going to be addressed for at least another month. He suggested using that time to refine the language.

Mr. Porell felt it would be best handled as a Commission charter recommendation. The Airport has its own commission for transportation-related items, while another commission establishes policy for how roads should look. This might present an opportunity to clarify the Transportation Commission's role, and clear up some outstanding issues. He offered assurances that the Public Works and Water Resources presentation recognizes the need for the Transportation Commission. Vice Chair Weiss felt that the role should be formalized. Mr. Porell said it might become necessary to reorganize the commission structure at some point. Vice Chair Weiss agreed to table the issue until the next meeting.

6. **Congestion Management**

Ms. Huish said the General Plan Community Mobility Element and the Transportation Master Plan address managing traffic and relieving congestion. The TMP talks about intersection level-of-service standards, multi-modal opportunities, travel time reductions, enhancing transit options, and access management. The TMP recommends that bus bays not be used along roadways designated as "urban," and identifies circumstances where bus bays are necessary.

Ms. Huish reported that the Intersection Mobility Enhancement Program (IME) has completed 97 intersection improvements over the last six years, and an additional 89 intersections are scheduled. Mr. Meinhart noted that in many areas of Scottsdale, travel levels have dropped over the past two years. Multiple trends are influencing this trend nationally, and it might become necessary to reassess whether significant intersection improvements are going to be as critical as once anticipated.

Commissioner Ward said one of the things that has made Scottsdale an attractive place to live is the relative lack of massive intersections. He inquired whether anything could be done to soften the, already wide Hayden and Shea intersection. Mr. Porell responded there are no additional landscaping elements planned as part of that improvement project. Ms. O'Connor

said Commission input on policy direction for these types of cases would be valuable. She explained that generally, road-widening projects have to fit within limited rights-of-way, which necessitates spare treatment.

Commissioner Ward said even though it takes up space, the roads in DC Ranch provide left-turn pockets, which provide visual and physical separation. The right-of-way impact has to be balanced against the cost and the operational efficiency. Quality of life should be taken into consideration wherever possible. He inquired about Michigan left turns. Ms. O'Connor responded that those features require very wide cross-sections, and are generally not consistent with the goals of Scottsdale's system. They are intended to move very high volumes of traffic. She suggested that staff could present information on how those determinations are made.

Chair Howard noted that the Mayor has charged the Commission with presenting a report to Council on congestion as it relates to left and right-turn bays, and bus pullouts. He felt it would be appropriate for staff to put together a congestion management report that the Commission could then provide commentary on. The report could also address design choices and tradeoffs, and issues such as wide intersections. He said the Mayor is primarily concerned about the City taking land to allow enough right-of-way for these bigger intersections. The Commission agreed with Chair Howard's suggestion.

7. **Non-Motorized Path and Trail Update (including discussion on public restroom access on multi-use paths)**

Ms. Conklu updated the status of the Bicycle Facility and Shared Use Path Program. The TMP established the goals of providing a safe connected and convenient, on-road bicycle network, expand the network of off-street shared use paths and trails, and achieve a bicycle friendly community ranking of gold from the League of American Bicyclists. Arizona is currently ranked third best in the nation for bicycling.

Scottsdale's system has grown dramatically since 1995, when there were 37 paved paths, and 35 unpaved trails. This year there are 114 miles of bicycle routes, and 271 unpaved trails. She displayed maps showing the projects currently in design and in construction, noting that the majority of funds came from Bond 2000 and Federal grants. Others are being built by private property owners through the development review process. The City is conducting an inventory of all sidewalks, paths and trails developed or improved since January 26, 1992, to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Ms. Conklu reported there are no national requirements for public restroom facilities outside of buildings. The American Restroom Association (ARA) has created a draft guideline concept document. Most of the existing facilities in Scottsdale are located in parks, trailheads, senior centers and libraries, and are inaccessible when the facilities close. A stand-alone facility costs from \$100,000 to \$150,000 to build, with annual maintenance costs of \$10,000. Staff recommends continuing building restrooms in parks and other facilities, and installing signage to help path and trail users more easily find them. Staff also recommends monitoring path and trail usage for consistency with the ARA draft guidelines. Commissioner McCall encouraged staff to continue improving signage for public buildings on the trails. Mr. Meinhart said adding a way-finding system would be one way to make the entire system more accessible and friendly.

Chair Howard invited public commentary.

Dave MacDonald said the restroom at Loloma Station is heavily used. Changes to bus routing must take into account the impact it is going to have on transit riders, especially disabled persons who rely on those restrooms.

8. **Other Transportation Projects**

Ms. O'Connor provided an update on the efforts to secure Federal funding through several processes. Scottsdale is requesting funds through the Federal Service Transportation Reauthorization Act process, though that would not provide immediate funding. The City has also been working through several regional processes to compete for Federal stimulus dollars. Funding has been allocated for the park-and-ride facility at the Loop 101 and Scottsdale Road. ADOT has doubled the funds available to Scottsdale for two transportation enhancement projects. Staff is working through the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) process to get priority for a variety of projects that are already in the Transportation Improvement Program. Council has directed staff to allocate freed up money to resurfacing projects.

9. **Public Comment**

No members of the public wished to address the Commission.

10. **Identification of Future Agenda Items**

No items were identified.

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to conduct, Chair Howard adjourned the regular meeting at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
A/V Tronics, Inc. DBA AVTranz

NOTE: VIDEO AND/OR AUDIO RECORDINGS OF SCOTTSDALE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETINGS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE SCOTTSDALE TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT FOR UP TO SIX MONTHS FOLLOWING THE MEETING DATE.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROVISIONS OF THE ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES, THE SUMMARIZED MINUTES OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETINGS ARE NOT VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTS. ONLY THE ACTIONS TAKEN AND DISCUSSION APPEARING WITH QUOTATION MARKS ARE VERBATIM.