



**APPROVED**  
**SUMMARIZED MEETING MINUTES**

**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE  
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING**

**Thursday, April 20, 2023  
Kiva-City Hall  
3939 N. Drinkwater Boulevard  
Scottsdale, Arizona 85251**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Iacovo called the regular meeting of the Scottsdale Transportation Commission to order at 5:18 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Pamela Iacovo, Chair  
Don Anderson, Vice Chair  
Emmie Cardella  
Karen Kowal  
B. Kent Lall  
Mary Ann Miller  
Kerry Wilcoxon

**STAFF:** Mark Melnychenko, Transportation & Streets Director  
Susan Conklu, Senior Transportation Planner  
Nathan Domme, Transportation Planning Manager  
Cristina Lenko, Public Information Officer  
Phil Kercher, Traffic Engineering Manager  
Kyle Lofgren, Office Manager

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Heather Phillips, a resident at 68th and Osborn Road suggested upcycling the asphalt to be reutilized within areas of Scottsdale. This idea came from a presentation from the Scottsdale Aviation Park where they recycled their asphalt from the taxi runways and used it to pave the WestWorld parking lot. She noted that the use of outdated pre-COVID data can lead to misleading conclusions. When the rental prices doubled residents sought alternative housing, such as shared housing. This would mean that one house could have up to six vehicles, which

impacted Old Town and southern Scottsdale and needs to be considered when doing traffic counts. More logic needs to be applied to situations and less statistics.

## **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Miller noted on page 5, section 3, paragraph three, second sentence, last word should be "successor" instead of "predecessor."

VICE-CHAIR ANDERSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION ON FEBRUARY 16, 2023, AS AMENDED. COMMISSIONER WILCOXON SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED 6-0 WITH CHAIR IACOVO, VICE CHAIR ANDERSON AND COMMISSIONERS CARDELLA, KOWAL, MILLER, AND WILCOXON VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE WITH NO DISSENTING VOTES. COMMISSIONER LALL ABSTAINED.

## **2. THOMAS ROAD COMPLETE STREET 56<sup>TH</sup> ST TO 73<sup>RD</sup> ST PROJECT INFORMATION**

### **Public Speakers:**

- ▶ Deborah Gregor, a resident of North 69th Street, inquired if there was any consideration to moving the power lines to be underground on the south side of Thomas Road between 68th Street and Scottsdale Road as the poles sit on the road, are an eyesore, and collision hazard.
- ▶ Lee Karftheil, a resident of East Thomas Road, stated he was excited about the changes and the complete bike path. A concern raised were the light poles that sit on the sidewalk at 68th Street and Thomas Road and make it hard to navigate. Between 68th Street and 64th Street there is no access to cross the street; he hopes this project would include such access. He is in favor of anything that reduces car speed and allows room for people as opposed to cars.
- ▶ Alex McLaren, a resident of East Osborn Road, stated he is in support of the project which has been on the books and discussed by the City for many years. This project will provide more flexibility for bicyclists and pedestrians. He inquired if the project would affect the carrying capacity as the roadway was reclassified to a minor arterial as part of the 2022 TAP.
- ▶ Austin Fairbanks, a resident at North 61st Place and a lifelong resident of Scottsdale was dismayed with the project, which led him to do more research. His concerns relate to the reduction of an eastbound lane based on congestion, growing population, road safety, and proposed transition of vehicle to bicycle lane. As part of his research, he learned the average vehicle traffic volume in 2020 for Thomas Road, 52nd Street to Scottsdale Road was an average of 24,000 vehicles per day. The reduction would add 2,000 additional vehicles per day per lane and capacity soon be met. MAG predicts Scottsdale's population will be approximately 300,000 by 2040, which is a significant increase. More roads will be needed. Approximately 75% of the Scottsdale working population chose to use vehicular transportation to get to work compared to the .8% who rode their bike to work. Studies show four-lane roadways have more collisions per million miles drive than a five-lane roadway.
- ▶ Heather Phillips, a resident of 68th Street and Osborn, stated she is concerned with the use of pre-COVID studies and the housing and building project explosion that will increase traffic. She expressed concern with drivers who use the right lane and cut off people in the straight lane, the congestion at traffic lights that cause some drivers to get angry, and the potential increase for accidents. She suggested that bicyclists be held to standards like that of a vehicular driver and have their bikes registered and inspected, to carry liability insurance, and be ticketed if they are outside of the bike lane.

Mark Melnychenko, Transportation and Streets Director, presented the project information. This project was initiated in 2007, and due to the length of the various stages this presentation is for the new commission members and others who were not part of the initiation. Extended public outreach is underway regarding where they are with Thomas Road

The commonalities within the documents that lead our efforts, such as the 2008 Transportation Master Plan, which was updated in 2016, the 2022 Transportation Action Plan, and the design standards for City projects are: Complete streets, multi-modal transportation, accommodation for all users, refinement and maintenance of existing infrastructure, livable and safe streets for all users. Projects like Thomas Road where lanes are being reduced, improving and filling in gaps, and creating a full transportation network for all modes of transportation are not new.

Thomas Road will be a successful project that uses the existing right of way to add another mode of transportation and fill in a gap in the network. This will provide a consistent roadway from Pima to the Phoenix border at 56<sup>th</sup> Street The Thomas Road corridor was reclassified in 2016 to a minor arterial roadway with a 2-1-2 configuration, being a center turn lane with two travel lanes in either direction with bike lanes that address the needs of all users. This is all part of the guiding documents.

These decisions of the planning and engineering staff are based on data such as the biannual collision and volume report, which is key to how the project moves forward. Additional data used is the pavement, bicycle counts near the canal, and the bicycle pedestrian collision report.

Nathan Domme, Planning Manager, continued the presentation for the Thomas Road project. Travel demand for most corridors in the City has not grown significantly over the past 20 years, even with continued development. The graph goes back to 1998 and shows the traffic volumes decreasing, which started when the freeway system was completed. Current volumes are within the proposed project capacity and the road will maintain the current and future traffic volume. Pedestrian counts from 2020 taken at four different locations and during four different weeks, showed considerable usage from pedestrians and bicyclists. For comparison purposes counts will be retaken for the same time and location post project.

The goal is to provide network connections for direct links to the multi-use path system, fill in bike lane gaps, create consistency of east-west arterial roadway, and provide upgrades for multiple users. Phoenix has a proposed project that would offer the same improvements to 48th Street for an additional connection to a multi-use path.

As part of the approved and adopted 2016 TAP, Thomas Road was fully reclassified as a minor arterial way with bike lanes from Pima to the Phoenix border. Thomas Road follows direction in the Standards Design Manual and standard configuration. The curbs will stay the same with the addition of paint and striping. For comparison purposes, the 2020 special project at 60th Street and Goldwater Boulevard was reclassified to a minor arterial with six lanes reduced to four to create roadway consistency with added buffered bike lanes, and it still functions appropriately.

Important improvements, active transportation upgrades, and safety improvements for auto use included in this project are additional space for dedicated right-turn lanes that allow for free-flowing abilities for through lanes. Federal requirements for ADA accessibility are met by replacing the outdated ramps. Coordinating with SRP to underground wires, installation of new traffic signals at every intersection to bring it them to modern standards, and pavement treatment for the entire corridor. Most importantly, the lanes will not be shared with bicyclists.

The minor arterial standard fills in the bike lane and gives a six-foot buffer that provides more comfort to pedestrians, which can also serve to mitigate speeding.

The project timeline and approvals:

- 2007 Project initiated for all of Thomas Road.
- 2018 Approval for Federal Funding
- 2019 Adopted by City Council for CIP budget and remained there
- 2022 TAP adopted but did not include this project
- 2022 Public open houses and outreach
  - April 17, 2023, Open house where residents came to gather information and provide comments. These are still being pulled together and will be provided upon completion.
  - April 10 - 12, 2023, Staff canvassed businesses door to door providing information and getting feedback on this project.
  - December 5, 2022, Initial open house
  - Between 2019 - 2022, Extensive mailing went out, several neighborhood meetings were held
- 2023 Design was completed
- 2024 Construction begins

Commissioners were given an opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Domme stated the project will last seven to eight months with intermittent construction. The primary improvements are striping and pavement. Phoenix is ready to go, but waiting for Scottsdale to complete their work first. The numbers shown are for 2021 as no counts were taken during COVID. Numbers were revised in 2022. Staff coordinates with MAG and looks at their growth projections in tandem with the City's real counts. The information shows the traffic volume will stay under the post project capacity.

Mr. Melynchenko noted the trend of usage is pulled from the Volume and Collision Report. Volume trends over the past 20 years are static in spite of growth and development. Staff works with the Planning Department on planned units either active, under construction, or planned. Mr. Domme clarified that the bicyclist and pedestrian count data from 2020 are the total number of each category over a six-hour period. The power lines are only going underground at the intersection of 68th Street and Thomas Road

Staff acknowledged that the pedestrian and bicyclist counts were done during the two hottest months of the year. It may have been better to do them during other months. Mr. Melynchenko noted they try to do the counts during the most opportune times, but often the counts are reactive to the need and availability of staff and the counters. The trends during COVID showed more people were out walking and biking, which is counterbalanced by the yearly bicycle counts that show a dip in the summer.

Phil Kercher, Traffic Engineering Manager, advised the design for this project was done in-house. The length of the right-turn lanes is based on the space available and standard lengths. Mr. Domme confirmed the arterial network system was in place prior to the completion of the interstate which reduced the capacity on Thomas Road. The inclusion of the buffered bicycle and pedestrian lane is a known mitigation measure to slow down traffic. The current speed limit is 45 mph and will decrease to 40 mph. Mr. Melynchenko stated one of the culprits for speeding is excess or under capacity roadways. The removal of the telephone poles at the intersection of 68th Street and Thomas Road will increase sight distance.

Chair Iacovo commented on the change in normal traffic patterns. She commended staff for providing before and after metrics, which are very important to the Transportation Commission and the City in determining if the project was a success.

Commissioner Wilcoxon also commended staff on this project, noting it will provide a calming effect and make a difference in the quality of life for residents.

Chair Iacovo recognized the public speakers, stating their comments will be part of the public record during open houses, and the Commission will take them under advisement.

### **3. THOMAS ROAD COMPLETE STREET 56TH STREET TO 73RD STREET PROJECT ACQUISITION**

Nathan Domme, Planning Manager, reviewed the property acquisitions as part of the Thomas Road project.

No new rights of way are being acquired for this project, but several public access easements are necessary of key locations to upgrade ramps to be ADA compliant, traffic light signal poles, and new streetlights. Temporary Construction Easements (TCE) will be necessary for the contractor to have sufficient room to do their work. These expire when construction is complete.

The locations for public access easements and TCEs:

- NW corner of Thomas Road and 60th Street for a new ADA ramp and traffic signal pole.
- Thomas Road and 61st Place south side for two new ADA ramps and moving existing traffic signal poles and TCE.
- Thomas Road west of 68th Street south side for two new streetlights.
- Thomas Road east of 68th Street north side for TCE.
- Thomas Road and 68th Street south side for two new ADA ramps, bring existing driveways to ADA compliance, and TCE.
- Thomas Road and 68th Street south side for two new ADA ramps, moving existing traffic signal poles, and TCE.
- Thomas Road and 70th Street south side for new ADA complaint sidewalk and TCE.
- Thomas Road east of Scottsdale Road north side for TCE.

The next steps are to request approval from the City Council in June and once approved staff will commence the process of finalizing acquisitions.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Melnychenko stated the measurements came from the CIP management team and staff will check with them to get an answer on the 55-foot right of way versus the 40-foot right of way. Mr. Domme stated the right of way would be sufficient to accommodate a turning lane. Mr. Kercher explained they did not collect new data and used the information they had.

Mr. Domme explained the process for reaching out to property owners to negotiate the easements that they would be compensated for. These are all new easements that are handled case by case. The approximate cost for all easements would be \$80,000. Mr. Melnychenko advised the land approvals are a requirement for the federal funding process.

COMMISSIONER WILCOXON MOVED TO RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL THE ACQUISITION OF THE EASEMENTS ALONG THOMAS ROAD. COMMISSIONER KOWAL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED 7-0 WITH CHAIR IACOVO, VICE CHAIR

ANDERSON COMMISSIONERS CARDELLA, KOWAL, LALL, MILLER, AND WILCOXON VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE WITH NO DISSENTING VOTES.

#### **4. PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS UPDATE**

Mr. Melynchenko provided an update on the following projects and programs:

- ▶ The drainage corridors that flow from Scottsdale Ranch South to the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. Staff with approval from environmental staff have removed vegetation, minor grading, and some work on erosion control.
- ▶ Light pole replacement has been completed south of Indian School Road and continues, with an annual budget of \$200,000.
- ▶ Scottsdale Road Jomax and Dixileta improvements, which is part of the ALCP Material Life Cycle Program Project, is currently 90% designed with construction to begin in 2024. Two major elements are a multi-lane roundabout at the intersection of Dynamite Road and Scottsdale Road and a high intensity activated crosswalk at Pinnacle Vista Drive.
- ▶ The 68th Street federally funded project will be starting this week and is an integral part in the Thomas Road project.
- ▶ The Osborn Road project will be completed and open to traffic this month.
- ▶ The Thunderbird Trail work as part of the trail system expansion, is completed between Hayden Road and 83rd Street and 76th Street and Via Dona Road
- ▶ On April 16th 75 participants and 11 ride leaders participated in the annual City Art Tours. This event will benefit the application for the Bike Friendly Community award in August.
- ▶ April 27th is bike to work day.
- ▶ The annual Spring Training Trolley route was a success with over 1,000 riders. Staff is looking into other transit options that can be done downtown.
- ▶ April 22nd at North Corp Yard will be a celebration for Earth Day and outreach to possibly hire new drivers.

#### **5. COMMISSION IDENTIFICATION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Chair Iacovo noted they have several meetings scheduled with robust agendas but if there was anything someone would like to add they should email staff. Mr. Melynchenko stated there will be a detailed session on transit during the meeting in May.

#### **6. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved by Commissioner Wilcoxon and seconded by Vice Chair Anderson, the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

AYES: Chair Iacovo, Vice Chair Anderson, Commissioners Cardella, Kowal, Lall, Miller, and Wilcoxon. NAYS: None

SUBMITTED BY:  
eScribers, LLC

**\*Note: These are summary action meeting minutes only. A complete copy of the audio/video**