



**APPROVED AS AMENDED**

**SUMMARIZED MINUTES**

**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE  
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
PATHS & TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING**

**FLORENCE ELY NELSON DESERT PARK  
FEN CONFERENCE ROOM  
8950 E. PINNACLE PEAK ROAD  
SCOTTSDALE, AZ 85251**

**THURSDAY, October 3, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting of the Paths & Trails Subcommittee was called to order at 5:22 p.m. A formal roll call confirmed the presence of subcommittee members as noted below.

**ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Lee Kauftheil, Chair -- Transportation Commission  
Kerry Wilcoxon, Vice-Chair, Transportation Commission  
Susan McGarry, Commissioner – Parks and Recreation Commission  
Bradley Adame, Subcommittee Member (Remote)

**STAFF:** Mark Melnychenko, Transportation & Streets Director  
Susan Conklu, Senior Transportation Planner  
Greg Davies, Senior Transportation Planner  
Nathan Domme, Transportation Planning Manager  
Kyle Lofgren, Staff Coordinator

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Kyle Davis, a previous subcommittee member for six years, who has been elected to the Transportation Commission. He took this opportunity to discuss the extensive work that has been done on the multi-use path system and the value the city places on it. He discussed

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the many projects that have been completed, the future projects, grants secured, and staff's hard work and dedication to maintain and develop the paths and trails network. He looks forward to working with the subcommittee in the future.

Copper Phillips, a previous subcommittee member for twelve years who helped to design the trails, network, and preserve. Discussed the decision to move paths and trails to Transportation instead of the Recreation Department. Explained one important part was missed, being ensuring communication between the Building and Transportation Departments to ensure portions of dedicated trails are not being consumed by homeowners. An example of this situation was provided. The dedicated trails should be added to the plans and inspectors should be ensuring nothing has been built across the trail.

Mr. Lofgren advised written comments were received both in person and through the online portal and were distributed to Subcommittee Members.

## **1. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

Mr. Lofgren noted there is a change on page 5 sub-bullets were added to clarify the devices each discussion point included.

COMMISSIONER MCGARRY MOVED TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 1, 2024, PATHS AND TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES AS AMENDED. SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER ADAME SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FOUR (4) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR KAUFTHEIL, VICE-CHAIR WILCOXON; COMMISSIONER MCGARRY, SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER ADAME VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

## **2. TRAIL PROGRAM HISTORY**

Susan Conklu, Senior Transportation Planner, presented the trail program history. The benefits of using unpaved trails for nonmotorized uses include a safe place for people to travel, provides access and connectivity, and enhances the quality of life. The vision was built from a foundation of citizen driven processes that started in the 1960's with "STEP" forums that initiated the Indian Bend Wash. The Indian Bend Wash Greenbelt Flood Control Project including recognition for trails, paths, and connections on a linear park system occurred in the 1970s. Procedures and criteria for bikeways and horse trails were put in place in 1980s.

The McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission and the Desert Preserve Task Force were formed, the Desert Foothills Character Area Plan and the Conceptual Trails Plan for the preserve were created in the 1990s. Continuing the momentum, in 2004 the Trails Master Plan was completed and adopted by the City Council and the Trails Task Force became a City Council directive which lead into the development of the Paths and Trails Subcommittee. The approved 2021 and 2022 General Plan and Transportation Action Plan (TAP) have shaped paths and trails work.

In 2022, the TAP was adopted by the City Council and aligns with other documents and policies, such as the General Plan, Network Planning, and design standards. One of the important goals is to close system gaps and improve local and regional connectivity

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with path systems, trail corridors, and transit routes. To clarify, a path is a paved and a trail is unpaved. The plan includes the following elements: street, transit, bikeway, trail – connectivity in neighborhoods, and educate the public regarding easements, rights-of-way, and maintenance, pedestrian, and implementation. Currently the unpaved trail network has 160 miles of existing trails with 140 miles that are planned to include 200 miles of existing trails within the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Over the past decade the trail mileage has increased by 26%. Inventories of the trail network were completed in 2012 and 2022 which help to verify existing trails, alignments, evaluate conditions, identify any barriers, and were used to develop the current proactive, community education, maintenance trail program

There are four types of trail classifications used that are unique standards that align the trail to its environment and influence the trail width. The context of the area is matched as much as possible with the trail types and designs.

- Primary Trails – provide regional connectivity, links between residential areas, and have destinations like schools, businesses, and other significant activity areas. Generally found along canals and roads.
- Secondary Trails – provide a connection between other trail types. Often found in or along desert washes, scenic corridors, along roads, vista corridors, or between developments.
- Neighborhood Local Trails – provide access in and around neighborhood areas and connect to primary and secondary trails. Often thought of as feeder trails to the regional network but still provide close to home recreation facilities. They also serve as sidewalks in some areas, like North Scottsdale.
- Minimally Improved / Rugged Trails - Found far away from traffic as possible but in locations near existing options that comply with ADA requirements, typically near a paved path or sidewalk.

Previously trail maintenance issues were addressed through the code enforcement process or issues reported by the public. Currently there is a proactive maintenance system that includes education, social media messaging, and system wide information sharing about maintenance responsibilities. The first phase of the maintenance program involved a residential area without an HOA and community education. The second phase will include commercial properties and HOA that maintain trails. Trail rehabilitation is also part of the maintenance, projects include clearing vegetation, putting up new signs, trail construction

The focus of the historic documents and policies is to minimize the development impacts, preserve the rural and equestrian character lifestyle, stay consistent with the Sonoran Desert, and minimize impacts to the natural environment, scenic corridors, and native vegetation. The focus is on the world character type, such as the Desert Foothills Character Area.

Copper Phillips discussed with excitement the Via Dona Trail runs in front of her house and how it has become a social networking opportunity for her and her neighbors to get to know each other.

Subcommittee Members complimented and thanked staff for this presentation and their

DESERT FOOTHILLS TRAIL EXPANSION PROJECT

Nathan Domme, Transportation Planning Manager, provided an overview of the Desert Foothills Trail Expansion Project noting it is to provide unpaved trails on one side of the roadway in this neighborhood between Jomax Road and Pinnacle Vista Drive, specifically along Pinnacle Vista, 79<sup>th</sup> Street, and 77<sup>th</sup> Street with connections on Redbird Road West and East. There will be some connections to existing trails towards the McDowell Sonoran preserve to establish further connections within the existing trail network. The budget is \$80,000 funded by local sales tax.

The initial plan was defined as the “Neighborhood Connection” in the 2004 Trails Plan. In 2019 a residents requested the project due to Dust Palliative coating. The improvements were initiated in 2022, mailers went out to residents showing the project in July 2024, public meetings were held in August and September 2024. The project will be presented to the Transportation Commission in November 2024 with construction projected to start in December 2024.

The purpose of the project is to provide pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian connections safely within the neighborhood separate from auto traffic, support and connect to citywide trail program, and maintain natural look and character. Following the Design Standards Manual an unpaved trail / sidewalk will be put on at least one side of the roadway. Cross sections will vary to fit the topography and landscaping. The policies and design standards regarding right-of-way requirements are based on space needed for street development and include unpaved or sidewalk trails. This project aligns with goals of the 2022 TAP, being complete streets and enhancing the quality of life for the community.

Trail design elements are accomplished with each trail built and include providing legal public access to areas of interest, blend with the surrounding environment, minimize impacts to adjacent landowners, require minimum levels of maintenance, etc. Many concerns have been raised regarding native plant preservation and trails are aligned to avoid disturbance and minimal effect on plants listed on the native plant registry. The project will be a 4-foot dirt trail, using native material, meander around mature vegetation, detached from edge of road, compact and stable surface, and all within the right-of-way. Trails used to be cut by boy scouts, contractors come in now with machinery to make the trails look good, stable, and long lasting.

A homeowner is responsible to clear trails adjacent to their property, such as trim plants and trees, remove thorny plants, litter, and debris, prevent erosion from drainage off the property. The city is responsible to grade and regrade trails and clear and debris caused by storms.

Mr. Lofgren read three written comments.

1. Eric Nelson, “Primary concerns that the proposed trail will pass very close to our property and result in loss of privacy for our family including our young child. Users will be able to not only see into our backyard but also potentially see into our home. We will require significant investment to improve privacy.”

2. Holly Goldstein, "The neighborhood trails are a great asset to our communities. They add value to our homes and enjoyment to our lives. Thank you for this work."
3. Dave and Gretchen Clark, "Want the trail to go through."

- Stephanie Allen discussed concerns with the trail being built in the Redbird neighborhood due to loss of privacy, loss of vegetation, and abatements. It was noted that a petition was filed by most of the homeowners asking to be excluded from this project because they are a small private neighborhood. Ms. Allen clarified that they did not ask for the trails, they asked for the dust to be alleviated because of children with allergies. 3
- Lynn Clayton discussed her opposition to the trails being built in her neighborhood noting they do not need or want the trail. Ms. Clayton noted she and her neighbors proactively requested to meet with the committee and/or city staff but were shut down.
- Madelynn Cardell discussed the need for the trails and presented data related to the number of deaths caused by pedestrians being struck by a vehicle. She also discussed the dust abatement and how the application is slick and unsafe for horse riders.
- Joan Cardell stated the trails are desperately needed.

VC – any standard treatment able to address some of the concerns about privacy / know vague idea / but anything the city doe to help mitigate concerns.

ND – we do not try to prevent any kind of changes to landscape / we are going to put in the appropriate network.

VC – when a trail like this goes in / any indication of / comment ppl coming in from outside the neighborhood / is there any indication / had before on sidewalks/ but never really known any validity to that concern / numbs show that would indicate ppl do come from outside the neighborhood or that traffic increases on trails/ beyond the reach of neighborhood.

ND – we are not going to exclude ppl who are walking the trail in the neighborhood/ but it is a neighborhood connection to connect to the primary and secondary routes / we don't see a massive influx of ppl walking into the neighborhood.

Subcommittee members were given an opportunity to comment and ask questions. In response Mr. Domme noted there were approximately 30 homeowners affected by this proposal. A petition in opposition was received with twelve signatures, some of which were not adjacent to the trail. To clarify the homeowner would be responsible for regular trimming of plants and making sure litter was picked up. Chair Kauftheil suggested it was a partnership between the property owner and the city in terms of trail maintenance.

Mr. Domme advised homeowners they can utilize Scottsdale EZ an online portal to contact the city for extreme maintenance needs. Lack of a petition in favor of the project does not assume the remaining homeowners are in favor of the project. The large space to the right on the map is state owned property and the trail system current

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does not lead there. The trail would be built in the right-of-way adjacent to the roadway. When constructing the trails they do everything to avoid vegetation but there are times when they must be relocated, for this project they will be able to avoid all mature vegetation. Should a trail need immediate attention the city has the equipment and personnel to respond promptly. Ms. Conklu advised the current compact stabilization prevents erosion. Mr. Domme explained this is a neighborhood connection and if we remove it, we will be setting precedence. Most of the properties have backyard fencing.

VICE CHAIR WILCOXON MOVED TO APPROVE THE UNPAVED PROJECT IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE DESERT FOOTHILLS AREA. SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER ADAME SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED THREE (3) TO ONE (1). CHAIR KAUFTHEIL, VICE-CHAIR WILCOXON, AND SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER ADAME VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. COMMISSIONER MCGARRY VOTED IN DISSENT.

**3. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

AYES: Chair Kauftheil, Vice-Chair Wilcoxon, Commissioner McGarry, and Subcommittee Member Adame. NAYS: None

SUBMITTED BY:  
eScribers, LLC

**\*NOTE: These are summary action meeting minutes only. A complete copy of the audio/video recording is available at <http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/boards/Transp.asp>**