



APPROVED

SUMMARIZED MINUTES

**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

**Thursday, September 19, 2024
City Hall Kiva Forum
3939 N. Drinkwater Boulevard
Scottsdale, AZ 85251**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Miller called the meeting of the Scottsdale Transportation Commission to order at 5:16 p.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mary Ann Miller, Chair
Robert Marmon
Lee Kauftheil (telephonic)
Mailen Pankiewicz
Kerry Wilcoxon
Emmie Cardella

STAFF: Mark Melnychenko, Transportation & Streets Director
Nathan Domme, Transportation Planning Manager
Sam Taylor, Principal Traffic Engineer
Cristina Lenko, Public Information Officer
Susan Conklu, Senior Transportation Planner
Greg Davies, Senior Transportation Planner
Tim Connor, Environmental Policy Manager
Christopher DiPiazza, Scottsdale Police Department
Kyle Lofgren, Office Manager

GUESTS: Justin Azevedo, Design Laboratory

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public who wished to speak, and there were no written comments submitted to the staff.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chair Miller noted a spelling error on page seven, next steps moving forward, 2a should read “counts performed after acclamation period.”

COMMISSIONER WILCOXON MOVED TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 15, 2024 TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES AS AMENDED. COMMISSIONER MARMON SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SIX (6) TO ZERO (0) BY ROLL CALL VOTE. CHAIR MILLER, COMMISSIONERS MARMON, KAUFTHEIL, PANKIEWICZ, WILCOXON, AND CARDELLA VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

2. Shade and Tree Plan

Tim Conner, Environmental Policy Manager, reviewed the background leading up to creation of the Shade and Tree Plan. He said that initiation of the plan came out of the Cooler Scottsdale heat study conducted in partnership with ASU. Study results can be found on the city’s website. He introduced Justin Azevedo with the Design Laboratory to provide a brief presentation of the progress to date in developing a Shade and Tree plan for the city.

Mr. Azevedo’s presentation included an overview of existing conditions, which is being documented through field documentation; iTree Canopy, which is a U.S. Forest Service system to determine coverage of large areas; and Tree Score Analyzer (TESA), which is remote documentation utilizing LiDAR data from the city and county, developed with the U.S. Forest Service. Mr. Azevedo said that the plan will identify practical solutions to enhance shade and cooling strategies; will be a user-friendly guide for residents, businesses, city staff, and policymakers; optimize water usage on trees; share integrate practices for longevity and will enhance community resilience.

The primary deliverable of the plan will be The Tool Kit, which will include definition of trees, structures, and water harvesting techniques that can be implemented, and precise locations where they are the most viable and useful. The tree plan will go into detail about types of trees, pros and cons of each tree, and what type to use in certain locations, and will include an appendix including detailed information about each tree species. The shade structure plan will include recommendations about type of structures and the most appropriate locations. The water harvesting plan will provide information on developing on-site water harvesting tools to support trees.

Mr. Azevedo reviewed next steps, noting that they are currently in the “Cultivate” portion of the schedule and producing the final graphics for the document. He encouraged everyone to attend open houses and public events, and to take the online survey. Information regarding the plan can be found on social media sites and at Scottsdaleaz.gov, search “Shade and Tree Plan.”

Commissioners were given an opportunity to ask questions. Concerns were raised about the long-term feasibility of maintaining trees, particularly in the desert environment and whether Scottsdale has a plan to sustainably maintain trees over time without budget cuts impacting water usage. Mr. Azevedo acknowledged that while there is no perfect solution, Scottsdale can learn from other desert cities who have implemented successful systems with desert-adaptive trees that require minimal watering after their initial establishment period. These cities have shifted their approach to water usage, especially during peak summer months, and utilized natural water retention methods such as water harvesting. Scottsdale's plan aims to increase water efficiency and find innovative ways to balance tree planting with conservation.

Mr. Azevedo explained that the city has adopted policies through its transportation plan to place shade, typically on the south and west sides of pedestrian areas and is working on refining strategies for tree placement to ensure appropriate tree sizes are chosen for available spaces. Mr. Azevedo said that enforcement is a crucial part of the plan, and the team has been working on a maintenance guide to ensure proper care for trees year-round, particularly considering seasonal factors. This guide is designed to be user-friendly, with a clear focus on long-term sustainability and is intended to provide flexible recommendations rather than ridged rules. The plan will help identify ongoing capital improvement projects and guide future developments. A modular approach is being used to make the plan adaptable to different contexts. Educational materials are being developed, such as one-page summaries on topics like tree planting and the heat impact of artificial turf, to communicate key concepts to the public.

A comment was made that addressing shade and heat concerns requires rethinking pavement use, particularly reducing the amount of parking space required in developments. It was suggested that minimizing pavement and increasing greenspace should be a priority. Mr. Azevedo noted that the plan includes discussions about parking lots, driving lanes, and future development standards. Scottsdale's traffic engineers are also involved in determining how parking needs may change and how to push the limits on reducing pavement.

In response to a concern about urban heat islands, Mr. Azevedo confirmed that solar panels are being considered and that the city is aware of the potential heat issues related to reflective surfaces. A section on shrubs will be included as part of the plan, as they can have a significant cooling effect in urban spaces. He explained that many initiatives are happening concurrently, with multiple overlapping phases. The plan is intended to be adaptable and will evolve as new information and strategies become available. Tree species' pollen production and BVOC emissions are being taken into consideration and the document will include a range of low-pollen trees are included. A commissioner suggested finding ways to disincentivize the use of artificial turf in neighborhoods. A comment was made emphasizing the importance of considering not only the cost of water but also long-term maintenance costs when incentivizing residents to plant trees rather than replace them with artificial turf.

3. Speed Determination and Enforcement

Sam Taylor, Principal Traffic Engineer, discussed speeding as a behavioral issue both nationally and locally, referencing the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and observed speeding trends in Scottsdale. He explained that speed limits in Scottsdale are initially established by Arizona Revised Statutes, particularly ARS 28-701, which sets speed limits ranging from 15 mph near school crossings to 65 mph in other areas. Local jurisdictions have authority under ARS 28-703 to alter speed limits. He provided an overview of how speed

limits are established, explaining that while ARS outlines certain speed limits, adjustments can be made based on local conditions and traffic studies.

The process involves conducting Speed Limit Studies, which are governed by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The key factor in these studies is the 85th percentile speed, which represents the speed that 85 percent of vehicles are traveling at or below. The MUTCD is moving toward a "Safe System" approach, de-emphasizing reliance on the 85th percentile for urban and suburban streets. Once the new MUTCD guidelines are adopted by the State of Arizona, Scottsdale will align with this shift.

Christina Lenko, Public Information Officer, provided a brief update on the "Slow Down Scottsdale" campaign, which includes social media efforts and dynamic message signs currently being tested at 102nd Street and Shea. The pilot program aims to reduce speeding by displaying traffic safety messages. Based on the results, additional signs may be deployed across the city. She described community outreach activities, such as meetings with HOA and neighborhood associations, the development of toolkits for local communities, and plans to extend the campaign to city employees, local businesses, and high schools.

Mr. Taylor talked about additional countermeasures used to manage speed on arterial and collector roads, including speed feedback signs, variable speed limits, and potential adjustments to lane widths or the number of lanes. He clarified that speed cushions or similar devices are not typically used in Scottsdale due to the volume of traffic on these roads.

Police Officer Christopher DiPiazza detailed the police department's role in enforcing speed limits. He explained the structure of the traffic enforcement team, which includes general patrol, the Traffic Enforcement Unit, and the DUI Unit. The department receives annual grants from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety for DUI enforcement, pedestrian and bike safety, and speed programs. He discussed the use of automated enforcement through photo radar systems, noting that the threshold for triggering a violation is 11 miles per hour over the posted speed limit. This threshold is an industry standard for automated systems.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to ask questions. In response to a question about the possibility of using apps to promote safe driving habits, similar to insurance company programs, Officer DiPiazza explained that there is a necessary separation between government and private sector initiatives. Concern was expressed over the effectiveness and safety of using dynamic message signs. Comments were made about the reliance on the 85th percentile for setting speed limits and the 11 mile-per-hour threshold for enforcement, which could contribute to speeding issues. Officer DiPiazza explained that while 11 mph over is a standard for automated systems, officers use discretion when enforcing speed limits. Officer DiPiazza explained the process for issuing photo enforcement violations, noting that the rigorous review process and statutory requirements sometimes prevent violations from being issued. Ongoing updates to the MUTCD will provide the city with additional tools to address speed-related concerns, particularly as the city moves toward a safer, more systemized approach to traffic management.

4. Projects and Programs Update

Mark Melnychenko Transportation and Streets Director provided an update on key projects and programs. He highlighted the city's ongoing efforts to balance maintenance and capital

projects while minimizing disruptions in the community. He commented that the city faces several challenges each year, including special event seasons, building moratoriums, extreme heat, and freeway construction. Scottsdale construction projects are carefully scheduled to avoid these periods when possible. Mr. Melnychenko used the example of the recent improvement project at Indian Bend and Hayden Roads, which was completed ahead of a larger paving effort further south to minimize disruptions. He discussed the importance of planning around large events, such as ensuring street work near Diamondback Stadium was scheduled outside of baseball season to avoid traffic issues for fans traveling to games. He explained how various projects aimed to improve safety, increase capacity, and provide ongoing maintenance, all while trying to minimize disruptions to the traveling public. He emphasized that road closures are typically scheduled during the off-season when traffic is lighter, thus reducing the impact on daily commuters.

Mr. Melnychenko gave an update on the Goldwater/Highland Safety Improvements, noting that the project is nearing completion. The improvements include enhanced visibility on Goldwater Boulevard and the installation of a HAWK crossing on Highland. The next phase of the project will involve extending safety improvements to areas connecting Goldwater with Osborn Road and Scottsdale Road.

Chaparral Pedestrian/Bicycle Underpass project roadway was reopened on September 2, although further work on the underpass is still ongoing. Photographs of the project's various stages were shown to highlight progress.

The West World Paving Project was completed over the summer. Crews paved more than 95,000 square yards of multi-use event space. This project was not just about street paving but also involved improving community venues like WestWorld.

The Historic Streetlight Project is currently in its second phase and is expected to be completed by the second week of November. Mr. Melnychenko presented photos comparing the old streetlights with the new LED lights, which are brighter, more energy-efficient, and easier to maintain. The new lights blend into the historic character of Old Town and have been well-received by downtown merchants.

Mr. Melnychenko talked about the Monsoon Storm Response, specifically referencing the storm on August 7, 2024, near Via Linda. He praised the parks team for their quick response in clearing debris, acknowledging their readiness and effectiveness, especially during the monsoon season. The city's Emergency Response Team includes 15 volunteers from three departments. The team is active throughout the year, responding to an average of 200 calls per year and sometimes handling more than 300 locations for downed trees during a single storm event. While storm response is a major focus, the team is also involved in other emergency efforts.

Mr. Melnychenko said that citizens have been providing input on various transportation issues. He mentioned two specific petitions that the city is currently addressing. The first is a petition requesting the abandonment of plans to build new neighborhood trails near Redbird and 77th Street in Desert Foothills. The second, submitted by a mother and her son, calls for continued studies and safety improvements to support bicycling, particularly for students commuting to school. He outlined the city's petition response process, which involves Transportation and Streets preparing an initial document, followed by review and refinement by the City Manager's

office and legal staff. Once complete, the response goes to the City Council and City Clerk for final action, all within a 30-day timeframe.

Adjournment

COMMISSIONER WILCOXON MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER MARMON SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SIX (6) TO ZERO (0) BY ROLL CALL VOTE. CHAIR MILLER, COMMISSIONERS MARMON, KAUFTHEIL, PANKIEWICZ, WILCOXON, AND CARDELLA VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

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