

Synopsis of the Transportation Master Plan discussion at the Sept. 25, 2017, City Council meeting

Prepared and released Oct. 3, 2017, by Lauren Browne, citizen engagement coordinator

In three meetings in August and September, City Council discussed the results of the survey, and funding recommendations made by a citizen work group. That group, who has been studying these issues for the last year, recommended a one percent sales tax to fund the projects listed in the 10-year Transportation Master Plan. In last week's meeting, City Council continued to give direction on each of the strategies as follows: (note: when it says pursue immediately, it is up to City Council to decide which strategy would be pursued in what order since a sequence of priorities would need to be established. It is not intended to imply all would be pursued immediately.)

1. Traveler Information Signs – Staff recommendation: Pursue immediately. ADOT has indicated a willingness and desire to provide this type of information to the public. The intent would be to have these signs implemented as soon as possible (SR 260 likely only after current construction is complete). **Council direction:** Council supported this strategy and directed staff to provide clarification regarding the \$1.2M projected cost, and to confirm \$100K is the projected design and construction costs for each electronic message sign proposed.

2. Visitor Transit Village of Oak Creek/Oak Creek Canyon – Staff recommendation: Pursue immediately but implementation is contingent on developing partnerships and cost sharing. Begin developing Memorandum of Understanding's (MOUs) with partnering agencies to identify roles and potential for funding obligations. Begin with AZ State Parks, who has already reached out to the City to begin discussions about a shuttle system to Slide Rock. Although US Forest Service has indicated that they cannot contribute financially, they will still play a vital role. Also, continue working with the Oak Creek Canyon Traffic Matters group. The City has secured Transit Planning Grant funding (\$120,000 grant plus \$30,000 match for a total of \$150,000) that could be used for this project. The grant funding expires in October 2018, which would necessitate any additional planning to commence soon. **Council direction:** stay engaged with the Forest Service and State Parks efforts on this project and continue to explore options to share costs.

3. Commuter Transit to Village of Oak Creek – Staff recommendation: Pursue immediately but implementation is contingent on developing partnerships and cost sharing. Develop MOUs with Yavapai County and Verde Lynx. An appropriate cost sharing agreement for this service would include majority (if not all) funding provided by sources other than the City. **Council direction:** explore options to share costs with Yavapai & Coconino Counties and ADOT.

4. Uptown Roadway Improvements – Staff recommendation: Pursue immediately. This improvement offers the best overall benefit with some of the most reasonable costs and tradeoffs. **Council direction:** Council agrees with staff's recommendation and to start with outreach and design concepts.

5. Major Road Connections – Staff recommendation: Pursue both the Forest Road connection and the Ranger/Brewer connection immediately. However, Council needs to resolve whether or not these improvements are pursued contingent upon or regardless of having a willing seller where property acquisition is needed. **Council direction:** Pursue a one way in to Portal Lane, a connection of the patron lot at Tlaquepaque to Ranger Road, and extend the west end of Forest Road to 89A Southbound as alternatives to widening 179 as referenced in upcoming bullet point 8. There were no Council objections to the City's authority to use the process of eminent domain (as last resort), as a means for the acquisition of property for the extension of Forest Road to Southbound 89A project.

6. Neighborhood Connections – Staff recommendation: Pursue immediately. Staff is proposing connections only where no destruction or removal of improvements is necessary. However, Council needs to resolve whether or not these improvements are pursued contingent upon or regardless of having a willing seller where property acquisition is needed. While prioritized routes included in the Transportation Master Plan would be pursued immediately, staff also recommends initiating a process to consider any other beneficial neighborhood connections not already identified. **Council direction:** Council supported this item, however no consensus was reached regarding the value or sequence of the seven connections proposed.

7. Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements – Staff recommendation: Pursue immediately. Start with projects identified in the Transportation Master Plan and or Capital Improvements Program. Would need to prioritize projects and begin looking for easement/acquisition opportunities for bicycle boulevards and shared-use paths. Staff also recommends initiating a process to consider any other beneficial bicycle and pedestrian improvements

not already identified. **Council direction:** take an incremental approach with preference given to the most sensible projects.

8. Schnebly Hill/Y Improvements – Staff recommendation: Pursue this strategy incrementally, starting with addressing pedestrian movements at Tlaquepaque and constructing the northbound Y right turn lane. Evaluate the performance of implemented strategies prior to considering the southbound Y right turn lane. Wait to implement other improvements meant to address northbound SR 179 congestion before pursuing widening of the Schnebly Hill roundabout and road north to the Y. If widening is eventually determined to be necessary, start with the Schnebly Hill roundabout and northbound SR 179 lane, then consider the southbound widening only if necessary. **Council direction:** Council agrees with this approach.

9. West Sedona Access Improvements – Staff recommendation: Pursue immediately. Start to develop a program for driveway consolidation, providing incentives, and taking advantage of any redevelopment applications. Consider medians or additional striping in select areas where safety is a concern. Wait on continuous raised median until needed. **Council direction:** take an incremental approach.

10. Uptown Pedestrian Improvements – Staff recommendation: Start with pursuing a view-shed analysis to better estimate the impacts of pedestrian bridges. Evaluate the performance of the Uptown roadway improvements, pedestrian crossing signals and traffic control support prior to considering pedestrian bridges. **Council direction:** Council agrees with this approach.

11. Neighborhood Vehicles – Staff recommendation: Begin identifying interested partners, and potential for monetizing through advertising. Evaluate for added value (such as the feasibility of transit to select trailheads). Wait to pursue until partner support is generated. **Council direction:** Council agrees, this would not be something to pursue right away unless outside funding was obtained.

12. Uptown Parking – Staff recommendation: Analyze occupancy and emergence of transit to determine if extensive parking improvements are necessary. Could be further analyzed through the Uptown CFA process. **Council direction:** Council agrees with this approach.

13. Red Rock Crossing – Staff recommendation: Continue to view this as a long-term strategy but defer to Yavapai County. City would provide support and potential funding if/when partnering agencies want to pursue. **Council direction:** Council agrees with this approach.

14. Pave Schnebly Hill Road – Staff recommendation: This option will not be included as a proposed strategy in the final plan. **Council direction:** Council agrees with this approach.

By majority consensus, Council agreed to discussing a minimum .5 percent (half cent) sales tax, with a \$35 million ceiling, including applying 30 percent of the General Fund reserve balance towards Transportation Master Plan projects.

This item will be brought back to City Council for further direction/possible action at future meetings.