



City of Apache Junction

Development Services Department



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION Public Hearing STAFF REPORT

DATE: January 8, 2019

AGENDA ITEM: 18-594

REQUEST: Approval of the City's first Active Transportation Plan.

BACKGROUND

The city applied for funding through the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) for the preparation of an Active Transportation Plan (**Exhibit 1**). The project was approved and the city council provided matching funds by resolution for \$40,000. The plan covers all human powered/non-combustion engine motorized transportation including walking, bicycling, and horseback riding. The plan provides for both a policy oriented approach as well as an infrastructure approach to enable the city to have a complete transportation system that is interconnected with the overall transportation system. The plan is a forward looking document that creates the framework for the city to become more bicycling, walking and horseback riding friendly for both recreational users and for those who rely on modes of transportation other than the automobile.

PLAN CONTENT

The plan is divided up into four sections; Introduction/Background, Existing Conditions/Needs Analysis, Recommendations and Facility Standards, and Implementation and Monitoring.

The plan is built around the 6Es which include; Education, Enforcement, Encouragement, Engineering, Equity, and Evaluation. The plan also provides the basis for the city applying for recognition from the League of American Bicyclists and America Walks.

Each of these organizations have created an approach to levels of bicycling and walking friendliness including Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. There are also programs for bike friendly businesses and colleges as well. By implementing the plan, the city hopes to continually advance in its rankings toward silver and gold.

The plan also takes into account national trends in bicycling, walking and equestrian uses. The plan takes into account current safety issues, preferences of users, the health benefits of active transportation and builds a set of goals and policies for improving the active transportation system in the city. The plan provides a future facilities map for bicycling, walking and trails. The plan also provides a set of recommended trail, path and roadway configuration standards for facilities that will emphasize active transportation modes along with automobile and truck modes. These facility standards are based on the land use character of the city in four distinct geographic areas of the city.

The plan recognizes that transit will also play a role in the future of the city and that active transportation is interrelated with all modes of transportation.

Finally, the plan includes an implementation section that prioritizes projects, policies and programs that will improve the active transportation network over the next 5-10 years. The plan includes a section on monitoring and evaluation which will be reviewed to insure that the Evaluation "E" is carried out.

Funding for projects and programs will not be easily obtained and therefore implementation will depend on the availability of funds. Implementation of policy changes will not rely on funding but rather the will of the staff and elected officials to carry out the plan as recommended by those citizens who provided input during the planning process.

PLANNING STAFF ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Relationship to General Plan:

The 2010 General Plan currently provides the following language regarding bicycle, pedestrian and equestrian transportation:

Alternative Transportation

Since the City's transportation system is largely developed for motorized vehicles, few facilities exist for alternative and non-motorized transportation. As the City continues to develop, these facilities should be provided to link planned communities and neighborhoods to each other, community facilities, and community destinations.

The plan references equestrian, pedestrian, and bicycle transportation (alternative transportation) and has maps associated with these modes. In 2018, it is more common to reference non-motorized or alternative modes of transportation as active transportation since they involve mostly human powered transportation.

The proposed Active Transportation Plan is consistent with the General Plan.

Public Input:

The city and consultant staff held 25 public outreach events over the course of the last 11 months. The city created a Citizens Advisory Committee as well as a Technical Advisory Committee for the purpose of obtaining input from facility users and enthusiasts. The city also held two agency stakeholder meetings consisting of officials and representatives from federal, state, county and adjacent municipalities.

The city maintained a website for the project at <https://www.ajcity.net/active> in order to keep persons interested in the plan up to date on the planning process and meetings.

Planning and Zoning Commission - Park and Recreation Commission - Worksession

Both commissions held a joint Worksession on October 9, 2018. At that meeting the Commissioners asked questions and offered input to improve the plan.

Planning Division Recommendation

Planning Staff offers the following Recommended Motion, along with one recommended condition of approval should the Commission(s) wish to forward a recommendation of approval to the City Council.

RECOMMENDED MOTION

I move that the (Planning and Zoning Commission/Parks and Recreation Commission) recommend to the City Council the (APPROVAL/DENIAL) of the City of Apache Junction Active Transportation Plan, subject to the following conditions of approval:

- 1.) The Active Transportation Plan be incorporated into the Circulation Element of the City's General Plan 2020-2050, "Legendary Landscapes and Lifestyles."



Prepared by Larry Kirch
Director of Development Services

Agenda Item 18-594 (Active Transportation Plan))
PAGE 4 OF 4

Attachments:

Exhibit #1 - Recommended Final Draft of the Active Transportation Plan