

Meeting Minutes

City Council Work Session

May 23, 2024 | 4:00 p.m.
Council Chambers Conference Room
88 E. Chicago St., Chandler, AZ



Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Kevin Hartke at 4:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Council Attendance

Mayor Kevin Hartke
Vice Mayor OD Harris
Councilmember Angel Encinas
Councilmember Christine Ellis
Councilmember Matt Orlando
Councilmember Jane Poston, attended telephonically

Appointee Attendance

Joshua Wright, City Manager
Kelly Schwab, City Attorney
Dana DeLong, City Clerk

Absent/Excused

Councilmember Stewart

Staff in Attendance

Dawn Lang, Deputy City Manager / Chief Financial Officer
Andy Bass, Deputy City Manager
John Knudson, Public Works and Utilities Director
Dana Alvidrez, City Transportation Engineer
Daniel Haskins, Capital Projects Manager
Toni Smith, Marketing and Communications Manager
Ryan Peters, Strategic Initiatives Director
Dennis Aust, Telecommunications and Utilities Franchise Manager
Melanie Sikes, Principal Engineer
Alexis Apodaca, Mayor & Council Public Affairs Senior Manager
Matt Burdick, Communications & Public Affairs Director

Discussion

1. Coordination and Communication of Road Construction Projects in Chandler

MAYOR HARTKE called for a staff presentation.

JOSHUA WRIGHT, City Manager, introduced the item and discussed the challenges of construction and traffic in Chandler. He highlighted the aging infrastructure, the impact of private development, and increased construction activity due to federal funding. The presentation aims to update the Council on current management strategies and offer recommendations for improvement.

JOHN KNUDSON, Public Works and Utilities Director, presented the following presentation.

- Coordination and Communication for Road Construction Projects in Chandler

MAYOR HARTKE asked for a comparative timeline, such as one year ago or five years ago, to illustrate what this would have been.

MR. KNUDSON said the 700 - 900 range and was surprised by the significant involvement of SRP and PS in replacing old wires and restringing wires in older neighborhoods.

DENNIS AUST, Telecommunications and Utilities Franchise Manager, said that while the number of permits has not increased much, the size of projects have. There are now larger infrastructure projects impacting larger parts of the neighborhoods, such as the two 30 kV lines, the nitrogen line running down to Chandler Boulevard, and the fiber installations for homes. So, although the total number of projects remains similar, they now consist of smaller projects than in the past.

MAYOR HARTKE noted it was a bigger impact with roughly the same number.

MR. KNUDSON continued the presentation.

- Agenda
 - Current construction control and coordination
 - Current communication initiatives for road construction projects
 - Current and near future projects that affect Chandler streets
 - Common questions received
 - Staff recommendations
- Why does the City Complete Projects within the Roadways?
 - Infrastructure maintenance and improvement: keep systems safe and functional for residents. Maintenance prolongs life of assets and create less cost over the life of the asset, which keeps costs lower for residents.
 - Enhanced mobility and accessibility: improve utility, communications, and transportation network for residents.
 - Safety improvements: Traffic signals, street lighting, crosswalks.

- Community revitalization: Revitalize neighborhoods and commercial districts(e.g. Galveston Neighborhood).
- Current Construction Control Policies and Coordination
- City Policies
 - Holiday Moratorium: No work surrounding major retailers from the week before Thanksgiving until after New Years Day.
 - Financial penalties for street cuts on roads paved within six years.
 - Required Right-of-Way Encroachment Permits: Allows and documents all work in the city's ROW, including detour routes.
 - Avoid city CIP road projects on adjacent arterial roads (does not include utility and other projects).
 - Police officers at major intersections during construction.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked if officers were required to stay in the car or if just the police car presence was needed.

MR. KNUDSON said the policy requires an officer and a car to manage traffic signals, direct traffic if needed, and handle accidents. Staffing has been an issue due to the extra police overtime during COVID.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS asked how the city deals with potholes and the associated risks, especially with ongoing construction projects and heavy trucks causing road damage. He also inquired about the possibility of reimbursement for such issues.

MR. KNUDSON mentioned that the streets department has a small group that includes a first responder who looks for potholes. When potholes are reported, the first responder or the asphalt crew swiftly takes care of them. If a vehicle is damaged due to a pothole, there is a claims process through the legal department. Each claim is handled on its own merit, and while such claims are received occasionally, they are not very frequent.

KELLY SCHWAB, City Attorney, stated that claims for that kind of damage are rare. They usually occur in relation to active construction projects and are directed to the responsible contractor or utility entity. Random potholes are reported only occasionally, every few years.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS inquired about the nails and debris on the road.

MS. SCHWAB stated that each claim for road incidents is evaluated independently. Sometimes, drivers are responsible, or other entities may be at fault. It is difficult to prove where a nail was picked up. If the city is negligent, it takes responsibility, but it also considers other negligent parties.

MR. KNUDSON mentioned the city's rigorous street sweeping program, which includes twice-monthly sweeps of main roads and monthly sweeps of residential areas. Despite the challenges, the city is committed to maintaining cleanliness through its street sweeping program.

MR. KNUDSON continued the presentation.

- Current Construction Control Policies and Coordination Efforts
- City CIO Project Process
 - Typical CIP Projects take multiple years from scratch to finish
 - Contractor required to have all material procured before receiving their notice to proceed from the city
 - Coordination with other agencies, developers, and contractors
 - City team holds resolution meetings with all affected stakeholders
 - Night and weekend work considered whenever practical
 - Milestones built into contracts to control work sequence and timing of lane/road closures
- Current Construction Control Policies and Coordination Efforts
- City Communication and Coordination
 - City contractor performs public outreach and business liaison for city projects.
 - Communication starts during design phase until end of construction (multi-year process)
- Design Phase:
 - Prepares and distributes mailers to residents, stakeholders, and business in the area notifying them of the project and upcoming public meetings.
 - Prepares, facilitates, and captures feedback at two public meetings held at 30% and 90% design milestones.
 - Creates and maintains project webpage.
- Construction Phase:
 - Mailers are sent to residents, stakeholders, and businesses in the area notifying them of the upcoming project construction.
 - Project webpage updated (continuously, approximately every three weeks).
 - E-blast begins (project updates emailed to individuals, stake holders, city staff, etc., sent out approximately every three weeks).
 - Variable message boards and static project information boards are posted at the extent of the project. Variable message boards are routinely updated.
 - Project hotline for phone calls

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS inquired whether local firms are hired or if regional firms are considered.

MR. KNUDSON responded that the intent is to hire locally. Chandler has two or three firms that the city frequently collaborates with.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked whether these funds were intended solely for city projects or for the CIP transition as well.

MR. KNUDSON responded that it is regarding CIP.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS inquired about the timing of initial communication from these firms.

MR. KNUDSON responded that it is project-dependent, depending on the size, impact, location, and other factors.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if the city engages with community-specific platforms like Nextdoor for construction updates.

MR. KNUDSON mentioned that the city does not use a lot of social media for construction updates, but it has been recommended.

MATT BURDICK, Communications & Public Affairs Director, mentioned that the use of social media platforms depends on the specific project. The city does use social media for some of their larger projects, with Nextdoor being one platform they commonly use.

MR. KNUDSON continued the presentation.

- Current Construction Control Policies and Coordination Efforts
- City Communication and Coordination:
 - Traffic restrictions project map on chandleraz.gov
 - Streets division sends weekly schedule info news blasts
 - Traffic management center coordinates traffic signal timing, including real-time adjustments
 - Major arterials/federal projects get “no conflict letter” from utility companies
 - Designer and developer/utility companies review and sign each other plans to verify coordination
 - WAZE traffic app
- City’s Current and Near Future Projects
- Current Projects Under Construction

MR. KNUDSON discussed the handout listing current and upcoming capital improvement projects.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS asked if the handout was posted online.

MR. KNUDSON responded that there was more information to share.

MR. KNUDSON continued the presentation.

- Street Rehabilitation Projects Map

- Current CIP Construction Projects Map
- Future CIP Construction Projects Map
- Outside Agencies/Private Development Projects
- Non-City Projects Map
- Coordination Of Non-City Projects
 - Federal pre-emption prohibits the city from preventing non-city utility work.
 - Development Services Policy (DSP-201) “Public Notification for Non-City Utility Projects” requires notification to residents, businesses, and HOAs a minimum of 7 days’ notice within 300 feet of non-city utility construction.
 - Coordination with other agencies, developers, and contractors.
 - City team holds resolution meetings with all affected stakeholders.
 - CIP hosts monthly Transportation Coordination meetings with City staff
 - Traffic control plans are reviewed and monitored by City Traffic Engineering Specialists to ensure that approved traffic control plans are implemented and maintained correctly.
 - Overlapping Traffic Control Plans are not permitted.
 - Traffic Management Center coordinates traffic signal timing making real-time adjustments, as needed.
- Traffic data Related to Road Construction Projects
- Chandler Traffic Engineering Data
 - Sensors on stoplights report time it takes to travel between arterial intersection
 - Data provided gives the ability to calculate average speed of drivers
 - Identification gives the ability to calculate average speed of drivers
 - Identification of problem areas and allows historical data to be compared
 - According to the data, 2% of arterials have seen significant decreases in traffic speed 43% experience non-noticeable decreases in speed and 55% saw increase in speed
 - Near known construction locations (e.g., Price frontage road, previously at Dobson/Chandler), traffic speeds were much slower
 - Vast majority of residents are experiencing similar commute times to last year.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO inquired if the data was a snapshot of morning peak hours or a total period.

DANA ALVIDREZ, City Transportation Engineer, said the data is a snapshot of morning peak hours.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked what time the data was collected.

MS. ALVIDREZ responded between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m., occurring from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. on a weekday.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO inquired if there was any data from the afternoon or evening.

MS. ALVIDREZ responded that traffic data is actively monitored in the traffic control center. This is a snapshot to illustrate what can be seen and what is being examined.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked what other solutions can be pursued to control high traffic areas.

MS. ALVIDREZ explained that the traffic division can communicate with traffic signals to identify areas with issues.

MAYOR HARTKE inquired about what the colors indicate on the data.

MR. KNUDSON mentioned that the gray data is unavailable, and the yellow data is 0 to 25% slower.

MR. KNUDSON continued the presentation.

- Commonly Asked Questions
- Why do traffic control barricades remain up during non-working periods?
 - Safer conditions – provides consistency in driver expectations
 - Barricades in place for possible night work
 - Excavations or other hazards that can't be removed or covered
 - Efficiency in construction – fewer hours spent setting barricades means more time spent working
 - Removal and resetting barricades daily would increase time for the project by up to 35%
 - Overall cost of projects would increase due to extended time, plus increased cost of traffic control
 - Barricade companies not available for this type of service
 - Only barricade companies with IMSA/ATSSA certification and insurance can perform work in right of way
 - Typically, non-city utility contractors are required to remove traffic control

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked if the city could control the situation where barricades dictate traffic.

MR. KNUDSON responded that it would be discussed shortly.

MR. KNUDSON continued the presentation.

- Why don't we do more construction work at night?
- Night and weekend work is allowed and sometimes mandated on some projects
- City's noise ordinance prohibits construction work after hours within 500 feet of residences (weekdays 5 a.m. – 10 p.m., weekends 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. with some permitted exceptions)
- Reduced access to material and project supervision for the contractor and city staff
- Work efficiency can drop to 10-20%, lengthening the project schedule therefore increasing project cost

- Worker safety issues
- If day and night work were required, the schedule may decrease, but the project cost would likely increase significantly (up to 40% increase likely)

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO inquired about Price Road, asking if the construction is limited to daytime or if it can also operate at night.

MELANIE SIKES, Principal Engineer, explained that despite using lights, visibility at night is challenging due to the depth of the excavation and the existing utilities. This was evident during previous work on Dobson and Chandler with two crews.

MR. KNUDSON mentioned that pushing the liners when pulled is important to ensure safety.

MS. SIKES responded that similar to the work done on the 42-inch Northbound Price Road, the operations run all day.

MS. SIKES added that there would be some day, night, and weekend work.

MR. KNUDSON pointed out that many contractors are unprepared for 24/7 work. Adjusting contracts and budgets can help, but there are challenges like safety and staffing issues. Projects have experienced situations where entire crews left or there were not enough workers to finish the job, especially with the current high workload.

MR. KNUDSON continued the presentation.

- Recommendations
- New Communication Procedures for Non-City Projects T
 - One-stop destination page on city website for construction projects that restrict or close city streets in Chandler (in progress)
 - Leverage city communication channels to promote awareness of projects and significant construction activities
 - Select firm to serve as a neighborhood and business liaison during Loop 202 construction to supplement ADOT's outreach efforts (potentially other non-city projects also)
- New Notification Procedures for ADA/Street Maintenance Work
 - Notification to HOAs affected by the ADA/street work (via mail/email)
 - Notification to "ALL" property owners affected by the work (not just driveway impacted residents) via additional door hangers and/or emails (currently 5-7 days).
 - Include notification to residents of upcoming schedule (ADA in Year 1, mill and overlay in Year 2).
 - General project signs will be set approximately 30 days prior to work, notifying residents in general vicinity of the upcoming work and shall remain until work is complete.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS inquired whether the city's coordination with the WAZE app includes updating information about construction projects. If barricades are put up without the city's knowledge, the WAZE app may not reflect this change, potentially causing confusion for drivers.

MR. KNUDSON explained that the standard procedure involves obtaining encroachment and traffic control permits, logging the information into a database, and then transferring it to waste management. If someone sets up barricades on the road without following the proper process, the barricades will not show up. However, if they go through the correct process and the information is added to the city's database, it will appear on the WAZE app.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS stated that if an individual travels down a road and uses the WAZE app and sees barricades that are not showing up on WAZE, it means that the construction company is doing something they are not supposed to.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS inquired about making information on current construction projects available to residents. He suggested using QR codes to provide easy access to project details for residents who are driving by. This would allow them to access project information directly from their vehicles, making it a more proactive and useful approach to engaging residents.

MR. KNUDSON suggested adding a QR code to the construction sign; speaking for traffic engineers, the desire is to avoid drive-by pictures to scan the QR code for safety reasons.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked about the last bullet point in the first section. She inquired whether a new firm will be hired and if the cost will be shared between ADOT and the city, or if the city will absorb the entire cost.

MR. BURDICK mentioned the city will cover the costs and supplement ADOT's efforts for a significant project impacting ramps and freeway-to-freeway energy closures. The city plans to use the same firm they use for CIP projects to inform residents, property management companies, retail centers, and businesses about the upcoming changes.

MAYOR HARTKE mentioned that when working on the two 30 kV lines, there were communication issues with a power company, leading to blame being placed on the city. To address frustrations and phone calls directed at them, they aim to mitigate complaints and improve partnerships with these companies.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO mentioned that despite some communication issues, the residents were happy with the quality of work and professionalism of the staff involved in the ADA project.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS asked for regular debris to keep constituents and partners informed as the plans progress. More communication will help advance the conversation and prevent misunderstandings.

MR. WRIGHT assured that communications plan's full scope and timeline regarding the upcoming ADOT work will be shared. Staff will provide talking points and updates to ensure Councilmembers are prepared for incoming calls.

MR. KNUDSON continued the presentation.

- Recommendations
- Lane Rental Fees – Incentives and Disincentives
- Options
 - Charge per lane per day. Collect fee up front.
 - Charge per lane per day. Collect deposit up front and provide rebate if completed early.
 - Create penalty fees for projects not completed on time.
 - Can do one or all of the options
- Other agencies have lane rental fees that range from \$75 to \$200 per day.
- City inspectors enforce each day and a charge for a Traffic Control Inspection Fee is applied.
- Questions

VICE MAYOR HARRIS inquired about integrating information into the Chandler city app.

MR. KNUDSON mentioned that it may be included in the Chandler PublicStuff app, which has various sections, including one for reporting potholes.

MAYOR HARTKE mentioned that business owners often express frustration when construction obstructs entrances and exits. Efforts have been made to minimize disruption, such as removing barriers over weekends. It is important to be sensitive to businesses affected by construction.

MR. KNUDSON suggested making road project entrances more accessible during weekends and off-work times by adjusting barricades to give the appearance of openness. This could reduce driver anxiety and provide a sense of freedom. Construction provides extra signage to direct traffic to businesses and he suggested developing a general statement encouraging businesses to open entrances during non-work hours.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked whether businesses could also put up signs. If there's construction, would the upcoming policy allow businesses to put up their own signs to help direct traffic.

MS. SCHWAB said the city needs to address that.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON suggested that when the city does construction at an intersection that has a major impact on all four corners, the consideration should be to add extra shifts or work overnight to minimize disruption.

MR. KNUDSON mentioned that future projects will be challenging and time-consuming, with a particularly difficult one coming up at Ray and Dobson in about eight years. Some work must be done at night, but it must comply with the noise ordinance.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO inquired about the status of the Alma School Road project that was already scoped and awarded near Alma School and Loop 202. He expressed curiosity about finding a way to motivate the timely installation of barriers in that area, which he believes would be beneficial.

DANIEL HASKINS, Capital Projects Manager, responded that he is trying to get permission to use CMAR with federally funded projects, but it is a whole new process. There is no guarantee, so he did not want to promise that.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO thanked the staff for their great ideas and acknowledged their challenges. He expressed appreciation for their efforts in improving the situation.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

Mayor

Approval Date of Minutes: June 13, 2024

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Work Session of the City Council of Chandler, Arizona, held on the 23rd day of May 2024. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

DATED this _____ day of June, 2024.

City Clerk