

Planning Partners

Meeting #3 Summary Notes

Date: August 9, 2010; 1 – 3 p.m.

Location: MAG Saguaro Room

Handouts: Meeting Agenda, Study Area Existing Conditions Maps

Participants: Stuart Boggs, Valley Metro RPTA; Eric Buskirk, City of Phoenix; Dawn Coomer, City of Tempe; Jason Crampton, City of Chandler; Robert Darr, City of Glendale; Robert Gubser, City of Peoria; Carol Johnson, City of Phoenix; Jim Mathien, Metro Light Rail; Mark Melnychenko, City of Phoenix; David Moody, City of Peoria; Scott Omer, ADOT; Shane Silsby, City of Phoenix; and Robert Yabes, City of Tempe

MAG Staff and Consultants Present: Jerry Bird, John Conrad, and Jenny Daigre, CH2M HILL; Dennis Wahl, IBI Group; Eric Anderson, Monique de los Rios Urban, Bob Hazlett, Micah Henry, and Tim Strow, Maricopa Association of Governments; Jack Lettiere, Jack Lettiere Consulting; Peggy Fiandaca and Audra Koester Thomas, Partners for Strategic Action, Inc.; and Mike Falini, Dan Marum, and Amy Moran, Wilson & Company

Meeting convened at 1:05 p.m.

I. Introductions and Project Update

Bob Hazlett, MAG's Central Phoenix Transportation Framework Study (CPHX) project manager, welcomed all in attendance and participants were introduced. Mr. Hazlett gave an overview of the agenda and expectations for the meeting.

Mr. Hazlett gave an update on the following relevant projects:

Southeast Corridor MIS – This major investment study is underway by MAG and is currently in the data discovery phase. As part of this study, the area around the Broadway curve is of particular focus and will consider options to address congestion. HDR is the lead consultant and has been active in attending initial outreach activities of CPHX. The next planning partners meeting for this study is scheduled for September 3.

I-17 Corridor – ADOT has initiated an environmental impact study for I-17 to identify what kind of transportation facility this will be in the future. MAG has been coordinating with ADOT on this study, specifically in examining potential transit options through the corridor. Similar to the CPHX timeline, a decision on the I-17 EIS is anticipated in 2012.

Inner Loop Traffic Operations Model – Caliper Corporation, along with HDR, have been hired by MAG to create what is likely the largest traffic operations model in the world. This study covers everything within the Loop-101 and was initiated about one month ago. The model has an expected delivery date of 2011.

II. Evaluation Criteria and Implementation

Dan Marum with Wilson & Company introduced the peer review panel:

Mike Falini, Wilson & Company
John Conrad, CH2M Hill
Jack Lettiere, Jack Lettiere Consulting

Mr. Marum noted that the purpose of the Peer Review team was to provide ADOT and MAG opinions on best practices and recommendations for the agencies to consider in terms of multimodal transportation improvements to the system. Mr. Marum noted that the panel is playing a similar role on the MAG CPHX study. Mr. Marum said that the CPHX study products will be filtered through this expert panel.

Mr. Lettiere provided an overview of the transit recommendations that were made as part of the Peer Review Study:

- Facilitate integrated, multimodal transportation planning instead of isolating modes. To be more effective, an integrated approach to transportation planning and implementation is recommended.
- Create critical mass to facilitate a successful public transportation system. It was recommended that the region reanalyze park and ride needs and accelerate the completion of the park and ride system.
- Keep fares at rider-inducing levels.
- Focus on convenience as a business focus when planning transit, emphasizing speed and reliability.

Mr. Conrad provided an overview of the HOV recommendations:

- Review and update the HOV plan and policy.
- Analyze bottlenecks and develop improvements where needed. HOV volumes are at or over capacity when the restrictions go into effect, but are free flow during “peak” times.
- Develop a plan to increase HOV utilization.
- Review enforcement issues. Observed violations along portions of I-17 reached 33%, compared to average violation rates of 1-3% in Seattle.
- Revisit HOV Toll (or HOT) study to determine if use within the Valley might be appropriate.

Mr. Conrad continued, providing an overview of freeway operation and management recommendations:

- Accelerate implementation of the planned freeway management system (FMS). While FMS have been programmed as part of Proposition 400, installation lags behind freeway improvements; the sooner FMS and freeway improvements can be aligned the better.
- Maintain variable message signs (VMS) and improve the information provided, ensuring reliable and current messages are provided to users.
- Review and update the 2000 Statewide Incident Management Plan.
- Investigate use of Active Traffic Management Techniques, or “smart highways”, now being implemented in communities like Seattle and Minneapolis/St. Paul.

Mr. Lettiere provided an overview of the park and ride recommendations:

- Update the park and ride and HOV plans together. This approach is to get more volume and system capacity so folks get out of their cars and would maximize the system.
- Identify value-added park and ride opportunities. Some critics say that park and ride lots are not the highest and best use of land. Consider making park and ride facilities multi-use activity centers, providing users commercial and retail activity that is complimentary to riders needs.

Another recommendation, Mr. Lettiere noted, was for the region to initiate and integrate the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program. By modulating parking fees you can make transit more attractive. Additional considerations might be road pricing, HOT lanes, or toll facilities.

Mr. Lettiere continued, noting the linkage of land use and transportation is critical. How and what you build will determine the transportation system that should be developed. Land use has a direct impact on the types of transportation the region needs. If you don't do this you ultimately fail at both land use and transportation. Mr. Lettiere said that the MAG region has a perfect opportunity to do that in this region.

Mr. Falini introduced the specific freeway and highway system facilities reviewed.

- I-10 Papago (west of the stack) Congestion
- I-10 Broadway Curve
- I-17 Maricopa Freeway
- South Mountain Freeway
- I-17 Black Canyon Freeway (north of the stack)

Mr. Lettiere provided an overview of the guiding policy for congestion and provided the following suggestions:

- Stabilize congestion; establish an upper limit to highway expansion based on sound transportation principles
- Promote and expand transit service
- Adopt advance traffic operations and demand management techniques to squeeze out as much efficiency as possible

- Link land use and transportation; recognize that you are creating a great place to live, work and play and that is why you are building the transportation system
- Form an integrated planning group (collaborative approach to plan a solution)
- Having that shared vision is critical
- Iterative decision-making process
- Have a clear plan in place before you get to the project level.

Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, provided some thoughts about the direction of CPHX. He said that the CPHX Study will be the case study for integrated planning, eliminating the tendency to plan within modal silos and to ensure land use planners are at the table.

Mr. Hazlett then opened the floor to questions and comments from the Planning Partners.

Carol Johnson said that the City of Phoenix is in the general plan update process and they are currently talking about the concept of mobility and how to integrate all modes to maximize choice. Phoenix's goal is to align with the direction at the federal level, increasing access and opportunities. Shane Silsby, also from the City of Phoenix, noted the struggle with the growth ring concept.

David Moody, City of Peoria, said that if there is a Prop 500, we have to get rid of each city's localized taxes and create a regional tax to support a regional system, especially if considering a transit system.

Robert Yabes, City of Tempe, said that it is hard for a community like his to give up its dedicated tax because cities don't control land uses outside of their community. In Prop 400, so much of the highway funds went to projects outside of the core. Why would a community like Tempe want to contribute to a regional tax when it knows improvements will occur further away? Tempe has been successful building a truly multimodal transportation system within its community.

Bob Darr, City of Glendale, agreed that an integrated transportation plan and system is what has to work. In order for individual communities to be successful, the entire region needs to be successful; setting aside individual desires to focus on the region is what needs to occur.

Mark Melnychenko, City of Phoenix, encouraged proactive planning. Instead of making a parcel of remnant land "work" for a park and ride, ensure that park and ride facilities are part of the system design.

Stuart Boggs, Valley Metro RPTA, reminded participants that Phoenix is not New Jersey. With a system reliant on sales taxes instead of property taxes for infrastructure funding, it is really tough for individual cities to collectively agree on regional plans because cities are always competing for those sales tax proceeds.

Dawn Coomer, City of Tempe, said that it is important to remember that transportation is a way to meet other community goals, such as our quality of life and that quality multimodal transportation solutions provide more than just mobility solutions.

Scott Omer, ADOT, said that what they are hearing through the Long Range Transportation Plan Update process is that in addition to land use planning, future economic development opportunities and key economic development drivers need to be identified so that the transportation system works long-term. As such, economic development partners need to be at the table during the planning process.

III. Outreach Efforts

Audra Koester Thomas, public outreach task member, provided an overview of the Outreach Efforts to Date using the PowerPoint presentation.

Focus Groups – Ms. Thomas provided an overview of the five topical focus groups that were held July 19 and 20. They provided a good opportunity to hear specific input from stakeholders and noted 85 individuals participated over the two days of focus groups.

Key Leadership Interviews – Ms. Thomas provided an overview of the Key Leadership Interview process to date. The purpose of this approach is to touch base with key stakeholders to explain what the study is about and what the anticipated outcome will be. These interviews are being held in August and September and have been useful in understanding opportunities early in the process.

Mr. Hazlett mentioned that based on the valuable information provided by officers in the Public Safety Focus Group, the team was trying to meet with police departments of the cities within the project area. Mr. Hazlett requested that the Planning Partners provide any contacts or assistance in accommodating this request.

Geographically-Based Dialogues – Ms. Thomas explained that the purpose of the dialogues is to discuss regional connectivity. These start on Wednesday. Ms. Thomas mentioned that the study's first e-newsletter was distributed in July and provided a project overview and served as the invitation to participate in the geographically-based dialogues.

IV. Existing Conditions Working Paper Overview Presentation

Mr. Marum gave an overview of Working Paper #1 table of contents and selected draft mapping from the document. Mr. Marum noted that Working Paper #1 will be distributed in by the end of August for review prior to the September 13th Planning Partners meeting. Everyone is encouraged to provide comments, and the document will evolve through the process.

V. Growth Forecast Status

Mr. Marum provided a brief review of some of the growth forecast projections, and noted that these figures will be further refined as the study moves forward.

VI. Next Steps/Agency Updates

Mr. Hazlett provided an overview of next steps:

- Completion and distribution of Working Paper #1.
- Completion of the first round of outreach.

Mr. Hazlett noted that the next Planning Partners meeting would be September 13, 2010 at 1 p.m. He mentioned that the October Planning Partners meeting might be canceled.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.