

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

July 13, 2001

The Transportation Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on July 13, 2001 at 1:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Jim Davidson, Chairman
Claudia Walters

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mike Whalen

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson

COMMITTEE ABSENT

Pat Pomeroy

Chairman Davidson excused Committeemember Pomeroy from the meeting.

1. Hear an update on the planned freeway interchange at the intersection of US 60 (Superstition Freeway) and Loop 202 (Red Mountain and Santan Freeways).

Transportation Planning Administrator Kevin Wallace addressed the Committee and stated that this is the third update to the Committee regarding the planned freeway interchange at the intersection of US 60 and Loop 202. Mr. Wallace said that the Transportation Advisory Board will receive the same update next week and he introduced Steve Wilcox from the consulting firm of DMJM, the Arizona Department of Transportation's (ADOT) consultant regarding this project.

Mr. Wilcox advised that the purpose of the update is to apprise the Committee regarding the Citizen Advisory Team's (CAT) recent selection of Alternative B as the preferred alternative interchange design and to solicit input from the Committee regarding the alternatives.

Mr. Wilcox introduced several CAT members, including Gene Knipfel, Jack Sellers and Sandy Watson. He also introduced John Godec, of Godec, Randall & Associates, who managed the public involvement portion of the project; Mary Vigarina, the ADOT Project Manager; and Steve Jimenez, the manager of Valley Project Management.

Mr. Wilcox referred to maps on display in the Council Chambers and reported that the overall project limits encompass the area from Broadway Road on the north to Warner Road on the south, and from Crismon Road on the east to Power Road on the west. He reported that the planned lane capacities for US 60 and Loop 202 are the same for all three alternatives, including three basic lanes, plus a high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane in each direction of travel on US 60, with the ability to add an additional basic lane in the future; and three basic lanes, plus a future HOV lane, in each direction of travel on Loop 202. He described the planned elevation of Loop 202, which will go beneath Broadway Road and Pueblo Road; over Southern

Avenue, US 60 and Baseline Road; beneath Guadalupe Road; and over Elliot Road, Warner Road and Hawes Road. He noted that only basic widening of US 60 would be needed to accommodate the proposed improvements for all three alternatives. Mr. Wilcox reported that all the alternatives provide for full interchanges on Broadway Road and Guadalupe Road and a partial interchange at Baseline Road (with ramps on the south side of Baseline only); two-lane ramps in all directions, except for ramps from southbound Loop 202 to eastbound US 60 and from westbound US 60 to northbound Loop 202, which will be single lane ramps; and the capacity to implement a future HOV ramp between eastbound US 60 to southbound Loop 202.

Mr. Wilcox commented on the differences in the three alternative designs. He said that Alternative A provides partial access at Sossaman Road and Ellsworth Road by excluding ramps on the east side of Sossaman Road and the west side of Ellsworth Road. He noted that this alternative provides the highest efficiency possible with respect to freeway-to-freeway movement, at the sacrifice of local access.

Discussion ensued regarding the interchange planned for Broadway Road and the elevation of Loop 202 in the Broadway Road area.

Mr. Wilcox reported that Alternative B provides full access to US 60 from Ellsworth Road and he described the ramp configurations planned to accommodate this change. He said that Alternative C provides full US 60 access at Ellsworth Road and Sossaman Road and he described the ramp configurations planned to accommodate this change, which includes access to eastbound US 60 from Sossaman Road via a two-mile frontage road to Ellsworth Road. He stated that none of the alternatives allow access to Loop 202 from Ellsworth Road or Sossaman Road due to their close proximity.

In response to a question from Committeemember Walters regarding the previous issue of impacts to US 60 retention basins with Alternative C, Mr. Wilcox said that retention walls and other design modifications were incorporated to eliminate encroachment on the retention basins. He noted that the design modifications increase the cost of Alternative C by approximately \$3 million.

Mr. Wilcox discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each of the alternatives and said that from a freeway level of service and safety standpoint, Alternative A has the highest rating and Alternative C the lowest. He stated that from a local access standpoint, Alternative C offers the highest degree of local access and Alternative A the lowest.

Discussion ensued regarding the anticipated traffic patterns on local City streets for the three alternatives including volumes projected by the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) during peak hours in year 2025.

Mr. Wilcox commented on right-of-way (ROW) requirements and said that ROW acquisition is the same for Alternatives A and B. He said that Alternative C would require additional ROW acquisition including an entire row of homes in the Silveridge community plus additional homes in the southwest quadrant of the interchange.

Mr. Wilcox stated that the total project cost of Alternative A is approximately \$219 million, Alternative B is \$229 million and Alternative C is \$252 million.

Discussion ensued regarding the impacts to the Valle del Oro community.

Mr. Wilcox provided a complete history of the public involvement process surrounding the projects to date and explained the selection process for the three alternatives. He outlined future activities and the timeline associated with the project, including additional presentations to the Transportation Advisory Board and MAG in July, meetings with ADOT and the Federal Highway Administration to review input and determine ADOT's preferred alternative in August, update to the Transportation Committee and to the public in October regarding ADOT's preferred alternative, followed by the final selection of an alternative and approval of the final technical environmental documents by the end of 2001.

In response to a question from Chairman Davidson, Mr. Wallace stated that due to anticipated growth in the Williams Gateway area and in nearby Pinal County, staff's primary concerns with respect to the project as a whole are maximizing freeway capacities at the onset, incorporating expansion capabilities and maximizing freeway access to address City street capacities and emergency access.

Discussion ensued regarding the affect of increased freeway access on the City's street system.

Chairman Davidson instructed staff to provide the Committee with an analysis of the costs associated with the street improvements necessary to accommodate the three alternative interchange designs.

Jack Sellers, a CAT member, addressed the Committee and reported that Alternative B was selected by CAT as a consensus decision. He said that the basis of the decision is that it provides the best value for investment and that traffic projections for Ellsworth Road are significantly higher than for Sossaman Road. He stated that the issue of local freeway access was discussed extensively by CAT.

Discussion ensued regarding anticipated traffic impacts to Ellsworth Road and Sossaman Road as a result of the various alternatives.

Assistant Fire Chief Paul Wilson addressed the Committee and stated that although the Fire Department initially selected Alternative C as their preferred alternative, they are now supportive of Alternative B. He noted that Alternative C was initially selected due to the fact that the Fire Department was under the mistaken impression that Alternative C would provide direct access onto eastbound US 60. He explained that the frontage road from Sossaman Road to Ellsworth Road does not provide the benefit of access underneath the stack area. Chief Wilson reported that there is a Police/Fire substation on Ellsworth Road south of US 60 and that Alternative B provides full US 60 access at Ellsworth Road. He stated that public safety access for both police and fire is essential in the stack area of the interchange. He added that none of the alternatives provide access to Loop 202 when accessing US 60 from Ellsworth Road or Sossaman Road, which is a concern.

Committeemember Walters voiced support for Alternative B due to the fact that it provides increased US 60 access at Ellsworth Road and will mitigate surface street traffic at other freeway access points.

Chairman Davidson concurred with the comments of Committeemember Walters. He said that the Council will be apprised of the Committee's informal selection of Alternative B as the preferred alternative but reiterated his request that staff provide a cost analysis regarding street

improvements necessary in conjunction with the three alternative designs. Chairman Davidson voiced appreciation to Mr. Wilcox, ADOT, staff and the members of the Citizen Advisory Team for their efforts in this matter and for the comprehensive update.

2. Adjournment.

Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 2:07 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Transportation Committee meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 13th day of July 2001. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

pjt