



# TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

January 10, 2001

The Transportation Committee of the City of Mesa met in the Auditorium at Shepherd Jr. High School, 1407 North Alta Mesa Drive, Mesa, on January 10, 2001 at 6:30 p.m.

## COMMITTEE PRESENT

Jim Davidson, Chairman  
Pat Pomeroy  
Claudia Walters

## COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

## OTHERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson

## COUNCIL PRESENT

Keno Hawker  
Bill Jafa  
Mike Whalen

### 1. Introduction by Committee Chairman.

Chairman Davidson welcomed everyone and informed the audience that the subject of the meeting is the proposed Recker Road interchange to the 202/Red Mountain Freeway. Chairman Davidson explained how the various Council Committees, including the Transportation Committee, aided the City Council in its decision-making process and stated that although Committeemembers would not respond to questions at this meeting in accordance with Open Meeting Laws, various staff members and ADOT representatives were present and will respond to questions regarding the proposed interchange.

Committeemembers Pomeroy and Walters introduced themselves to the audience.

Chairman Davidson encouraged the audience to attend the *Mesa 2025 Shared Vision Public Workshops* scheduled throughout the City and to provide input regarding the City's General Plan update. Chairman Davidson explained that the General Plan includes economic development, transportation, land use, and parks and recreation.

2. Presentation on Transportation Issues.

Steve O'Brien, Traffic Engineer with DMJM, addressed the Committee regarding this agenda item and referred to graphics displayed in the Auditorium regarding ADOT's accelerated program regional freeway system (Red Mountain Freeway, Higley to Power Road). Mr. O'Brien explained that DMJM was retained by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) as the general consultant for the regional freeway system and charged with the responsibility of developing preliminary engineering for the entire regional freeway system, including preliminary geometrics, interchanges, and initial studies used to prepare construction documents. Mr. O'Brien detailed the timeline associated with the Higley Road to Power Road segment of the 202/Red Mountain Freeway, including: preliminary design phase to be completed by December 2001; construction document (final design) phase to be completed June 2003; right of way acquisition to be completed June 2003; construction to begin January 2004, and completion with end-of-freeway condition at Power Road, June 2005.

Mr. O'Brien stated that construction of the Recker Road interchange is included in the timeline and that funding for the project is available. Mr. O'Brien added that if the interchange is not constructed for this portion of the freeway, the funds allocated for its construction will go back into the general fund for the regional freeway system with no guarantee that there will be funds available to construct the interchange at a later date.

Mr. O'Brien discussed the history associated with the Recker Road interchange and explained that, as part of the preliminary design phase, traffic projections were prepared for 2005 and 2025. Mr. O'Brien noted that ADOT typically obtains 20 year projections (from date of completion) and that 2005 projections were obtained to assess whether there would be any issues associated with the end-of-freeway condition at Power Road and the inclusion/exclusion of the Recker Road interchange. Mr. O'Brien added that the traffic projections were obtained from the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), a regional body that is responsible for providing information on the entire regional freeway system.

Mr. O'Brien discussed traffic volume projections for years 2005 and 2025 for the Higley Road, Power Road and proposed Recker Road interchanges; projections were also provided for Higley Road and Power Road with exclusion of the Recker Road interchange (volume from Recker Road split 50/50 between Higley and Power). Mr. O'Brien noted that the traffic projections for 2005 reflect the end-of-freeway condition at Power Road, and that projections for 2025 reflect completion of the entire regional freeway system. Mr. O'Brien referred to graphics that pictorially depicted levels of service designated "A" through "F" and commented on projected levels of service with respect to delay, travel speed, and ease of ingress/egress at interchanges. Mr. O'Brien discussed surface street conditions to be considered with the end-of-freeway condition at Power Road and with exclusion of the Recker Road interchange, including change of residential street traffic patterns due to area residents accessing Higley Road and Power Road interchanges and also increased traffic on Recker Road, Higley Road, Power Road, Thomas Road and McDowell Road. Mr. O'Brien also commented on significant traffic increases, especially truck traffic, associated with development of the commercial park area along Recker Road.

Chairman Davidson noted that Mayor Keno Hawker, Councilmembers Bill Jaffa and Mike Whalen, and City Manager Mike Hutchinson were present in the audience and thanked Mr. O'Brien for his presentation..

3. Presentation on Public Safety Issues.

Fire Chief Paul Wilson addressed the Committee regarding this agenda item and emphasized the fact that the Assistant Mesa Fire Department is dedicated to protecting the lives and property of Mesa residents. Chief Wilson also stressed the fact that travel time is critical when responding to medical emergencies and fires.

Chief Wilson referred to graphics displayed in the Auditorium that depicted the location of Fire Station #14, the area served by Station #14 and the various travel routes to be used by the Fire Department to respond to emergencies on the freeway with and without the Recker Road interchange. Chief Wilson noted that the Power Road/McDowell Road interchange is a split configuration and will result in increased response times to some freeway emergencies. Chief Wilson discussed the amount of emergency calls responded to by Station #14 and the fact that when Station #14 was built in 1995 it was with the understanding that there would be an interchange at Recker Road when warranted. Chief Wilson stated that the Fire Department's primary concern associated with exclusion of the Recker Road interchange is increased response time to motor vehicle accidents on the freeway and spoke in strong support of proceeding with the construction of the freeway.

4. Presentation on Economic Development Issues.

Economic Development Director Dick Mulligan addressed the Committee regarding this agenda item and referred to graphics displayed in the Auditorium. Mr. Mulligan stated that MAG ranked Mesa below the regional average with respect to jobs per capita and discussed the City's goal to increase employment within Mesa. Mr. Mulligan also discussed the key employment corridors within Mesa with emphasis on growth in the Falcon Field employment area. Mr. Mulligan noted that Falcon Field Airport generates annual revenues of \$595 million, and is ranked second in the State behind Sky Harbor Airport with respect to revenue.

Mr. Mulligan identified numerous major employers and industrial centers in the Falcon Field employment area and noted that 10,000 workers are presently employed in the area. Mr. Mulligan also discussed the importance of freeway access to present and future industries/businesses and workers. Mr. Mulligan stated that due to the available labor source and future freeway access, it is expected that the area will become a regional employment center.

5. Comments from the Public.

The following citizens spoke in opposition of the Recker Road interchange:

Virginia Healey	4020 N. San Gabriel Circle, Mesa
Bob Nuss	3811 N. Sawtooth, Mesa
Ray Youngers	2627 N. Lema Drive, Mesa
Bradley Nelson	6110 E. Virginia Street, Mesa
Gerry Bush	6334-12 E. Viewmont Drive, Mesa
Chris Foster	6403 E. Quartz Street, Mesa
Pamela Trucks	6333-72 E. Viewmont Drive, Mesa
Wendell Smith	2617 N. Salem, Mesa

Stephen Smith	4055-46 N. Recker Road, Mesa
Mike Havird	6247 E. Riverdale Street, Mesa
Lynnette Hicklin	2329 N. Recker Road, Lot 59, Mesa
Verl Farnsworth	6134 E. Star Valley, Mesa

Citizens spoke in opposition of the proposed interchange at Recker Road for the following reasons:

- Proposed interchange disruptive and unnecessary;
- Recker Road is primarily residential and dead ends in Red Mountain Ranch;
- Red Mountain Residents will be hostage to freeway interchange, residents deserve ingress and egress to neighborhood without interchange;
- MAG traffic study flawed, volume overestimated, Red Mountain Ranch is primarily built out with no potential for increased residential development near proposed interchange, area recently denied request for traffic light on basis of insufficient traffic, traffic analysis and projections based on peak hour calculations from I17 interchanges in Phoenix is not an equivalent measure;
- Less freeway interchanges mean less construction expense and less maintenance expense;
- Safety of residents will be compromised due to increased commercial traffic on Recker Road;
- Safety of residents will be compromised due to increased lake and river “party” traffic including motorists attempting to avoid police check-points on Power Road;
- Increased interchanges negatively impact “long passage” users of the freeway;
- Interchange is proposed to serve businesses/industry in the area and not the residents of Red Mountain Ranch and Ridgeview;
- Problems associated with Power Road interchange (limited land available for interchange, poor design of interchange, end of freeway condition) are driving force behind the Recker Road interchange, and can be solved by redesigning/reengineering the interchange;
- Recker Road/202 can be compared to Lindsay Road/US 60 which did not require an interchange because the area is primarily residential;
- Many Red Mountain residents selected area because it was far away from growth and had limited capacity for growth;
- Proximity of proposed interchange to Fire Station #14 will result in additional motor vehicle accidents;
- Increased freeway interchanges result in increased merging related motor vehicle accidents;

The following citizens spoke in favor of the proposed interchange at Recker Road:

Robert Neely	3055-84 N. Red Mountain, Mesa
Nicholas Camillone	7617 E. Sayan Street, Mesa
Andrew Haney	3060-18 N. Ridgecrest, Mesa
Kevin Moran	2 N. Central, Ste. 1950, Phoenix
Dorothy Johnson	3923 N. Higley Road, Mesa
Gary A. Smith	6238 E. Star Valley Street, Mesa
Ralph Pew	10 W. Main Street, Mesa
Nancy White	2433 N. 64 <sup>th</sup> Street, Mesa
Bill Puffer	8330 E. Thomas Road, Mesa
Dan Reeb	122 N. Macdonald, Mesa

Citizens spoke in favor of the Recker Road interchange for the following reasons:

- Emergency response time from Fire Station #14 and adjacent fire stations will be compromised without interchange;
- Safety of residents and motorists will be compromised without interchange;
- Eliminating interchange represents poor planning and will result in inequitable distribution of traffic to Power Road and Higley Road corridors;
- MAG traffic study flawed, freeway traffic projections underestimated, growth of entire area will be greater than what is projected;
- Surface streets will carry larger volume without interchange resulting in more accidents;
- Safety of children residing at Sunshine Acres will be compromised due to increased traffic at Higley;
- Residents of Red Mountain Ranch and Ridgeview will have to use Higley Road and Power Road interchanges to access freeway, creating additional traffic volume for residents of those corridors;
- Entire area best served by including interchange;
- Transportation professionals' advice should be heeded;
- Interchange is necessary for successful development of acreage on Recker Road that is zoned for commerce park type purposes;
- Maximizing freeway access keeps motorists on the freeway and out of neighborhoods as much as possible;
- When comparing Recker Road/202 with Lindsay Road/US 60, just as the exclusion of an interchange at Lindsay resulted in heavy traffic at the Gilbert Road and Val Vista Drive interchanges, the exclusion of an interchange at Recker Road will produce heavy traffic at the Higley Road and Power Road interchanges;
- Improved access to the planned park at Recker Road and Thomas Road.

In response to a question regarding the proposed widening of Recker Road, Transportation Director Ron Krosting stated that Recker Road is presently classified as a collector street and will become a four-lane roadway with the classification of arterial street.

In response to a question regarding acquiring land from the existing church on the east side of Recker Road at the proposed interchange, Mark Gilliland, Project Manager for DMJM, advised that although plans associated with widening Recker Road are still in the preliminary stage, it is anticipated that the widening will occur only on the west side of the roadway. Mr. Gilliland also responded to a question regarding noise attenuation associated with the interchange and stated that although a final sound study had not yet been conducted, the Environmental Impact Statement calls for sound walls on the north and south sides of the freeway.

In response to questions regarding projected traffic volumes, Mr. O'Brien explained the process that MAG uses to determine projected traffic volumes, which takes into account land uses/zoning of the affected area for various commercial, industrial and residential uses, including the number of homes in the area. Mr. O'Brien stated that the MAG projections have been typically understated for other valley areas with volumes occurring much sooner than predicted.

Chairman Davidson thanked the audience for attending the meeting and said that City staff would endeavor to answer any remaining questions immediately following the meeting.

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Transportation Committee meeting adjourned at 8:20 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 10th day of January 2001. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2001

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BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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