

JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE/ TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

January 26, 1999

The Transportation Committee and the Transportation Advisory Board of the City of Mesa met in a joint meeting in the lower level meeting room of the City Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on January 26, 1999 at 5:30 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Keno Hawker, Chairman
John Giles
Pat Pomeroy

COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

COUNCIL PRESENT

Jim Davidson

ADVISORY BOARD PRESENT

Sylvia Garcia-Suttle
David Glass
Jack Keller
Paul Knowles
Vern Mathern
Mike Rush
Garrett Smith
Lela Steffey
Chester Wilt

ADVISORY BOARD ABSENT

Diane Schmitt
Carl Whaley

STAFF PRESENT

C.K. Luster
Cindy Barris
Jack Friedline
Mike Hutchinson
Ron Krosting
Keith Nath
Jeff Martin
Ellen Pence
Tom Remes
Alan Sanderson
Jim Wright

OTHERS PRESENT

Roc Arnett
Craig Cardon
Joanie Flatt
Leo Mahoney
George Wallace
Others

1. Welcome and introductions.

Chairman Hawker welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked each for their attendance. Chairman Hawker introduced members of the Transportation Committee.

Chairman Hawker recognized representatives from various transportation agencies/committees and requested that each present a brief synopsis of his/her responsibilities and objectives.

Chairman Hawker expressed appreciation to the members of the Transportation Advisory Board for their willingness to serve. Chairman Hawker asked that the members of the Board and staff present at the meeting introduce themselves.

2. Discuss role and relationship between Council Transportation Committee and Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee.

Chairman Hawker provided an overview of the purpose of the meeting and commented concerning the newly expanded role of the Transportation Advisory Board. Chairman Hawker noted the importance of transportation and the Transportation Advisory Board relative to the future of the City. Chairman Hawker highlighted potential issues for the Board's future review, consideration, and recommendation to Council (e.g., MAG Vision 2025, funding sources, freeway acceleration). Chairman Hawker spoke regarding education and encouraged networking with representatives from the transportation community.

Committeemembers Giles and Pomeroy reiterated the importance of transportation to the community and thanked the members of the Transportation Advisory Board for their participation.

Assistant to the City Manager Jeff Martin advised that City staff members will be available to respond to questions/requests from the Transportation Advisory Board. Chairman Hawker encouraged the distribution of materials (e.g., studies) to the Transportation Advisory Board and attendance by Boardmembers at future Council briefings.

3. Hear a presentation, discuss, and consider proposed improvements to the Superstition Freeway.

George Wallace, Manager of Roadway Studies for the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), referred to schematics and presented an overview of the Superstition Freeway (US 60) High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) and General Use Lanes Study currently underway by ADOT. Mr. Wallace advised that the purpose of the study is to reduce congestion, improve access, and enhance operations along the US 60 corridor.

Mr. Wallace outlined the study process, noting that the original limits of the study extended from the Interstate 10 (I-10)/US 60 traffic interchange (TI) east to Gilbert Road and included one HOV lane in each direction along US 60 and an HOV interchange connection to the existing HOV lanes on I-10. Mr. Wallace reported that in response to public input and detailed traffic analyses, the eastern study limit has been extended from Gilbert Road to Power Road and the scope has been expanded to evaluate alternatives to provide one or two additional general use (through) lanes in each direction along US 60.

Mr. Wallace said that two HOV interchanges and three US 60 corridor alternatives have been developed for consideration. Mr. Wallace displayed schematics and explained the proposals, stating that the HOV interchanges are compatible with each of the three corridor alternatives. Mr. Wallace indicated that the project is based on a design year of 2022 and assumes the completion of the freeway system. Mr. Wallace noted the anticipated impact of each alternative on traffic congestion/level of service, commenting that Alternative 3 (existing lanes plus additional general use lanes throughout the corridor plus HOV plus planned auxiliary lanes) represents the most comprehensive development.

Mr. Wallace related concerns expressed by the City of Tempe relative to retaining walls along the freeway. Mr. Wallace presented schematics illustrating tiered, vertical, and offset vertical retaining walls designed to minimize the effect of additional freeway lanes.

Mr. Wallace and Roc Arnett, representing ADOT, responded to questions from members of the Transportation Committee and the Transportation Advisory Board concerning costs (Alternative 3 estimated at \$320 million/Alternative 1 estimated at \$250 million), economies of scale in constructing lanes simultaneously rather than in phases, projected variations in traffic congestion/level of service among the

three corridor alternatives, proposed overpass improvements, potential funding, anticipated time frame for design/construction, and the feasibility/advantages of development as a design-build project.

Mr. Wallace reported that Alternative 3 will not require the acquisition of additional right-of-way along the corridor or the removal of overpass bridges.

In response to a question from Committeemember Giles, Mr. Wallace indicated that expansion to the west of the proposed study area would require the City of Tempe to acquire property/remove overpass bridges and that an extension to the east may additionally affect bridges.

Mr. Wallace advised that the ADOT study is scheduled for completion (final design concept report) in June-July 1999. Mr. Wallace estimated that six to eight years would be required to complete the project if funding were available at this time.

It was moved by Committeemember Giles, seconded by Committeemember Pomeroy, that staff be directed to prepare a resolution for consideration by Council in support of Alternative 3.

Chairman Hawker encouraged input from Boardmembers concerning this issue but suggested that voting be limited to the Transportation Committee at this time.

Mr. Martin noted that the deadline for providing input to ADOT concerning the study is February 1, 1999.

Mr. Wallace reported that an additional public hearing will be held in Spring 1999, at which time the preferred alignment will be identified, and an opportunity will be provided for comment relative to the environmental assessment.

Boardmembers spoke in support of the motion, noting a necessity for additional lanes to relieve traffic congestion. Boardmember Steffey encouraged individuals to forward comments to ADOT regarding the study.

Carried unanimously.

City Manager Charles Luster stated that this item can be added to the agenda for consideration at the February 1, 1999 Regular Council Meeting.

Mr. Wallace and Mr. Arnett responded to questions from members of the Transportation Advisory Board pertaining to the utilization of traffic models and concerns regarding the impact of the proposals on traffic east of Power Road, given current and projected population growth for the area. Mr. Arnett urged Boardmembers to provide input to ADOT.

Chairman Hawker thanked Mr. Wallace and Mr. Arnett for the presentation.

4. Discuss and consider recommendations to the MAG Vision 2025 Committee on transportation issues.

Mr. Arnett noted that Chairman Hawker is a member of the MAG Vision 2025 Committee. Mr. Arnett outlined the objectives of the MAG Vision 2025 Committee in relation to (multimodal) transportation issues. Mr. Arnett indicated that development of a MAG vision plan is anticipated in the next three to four months based on overlays from Valley communities. Mr. Arnett encouraged attendance and input at future public hearings concerning the Vision 2025 plan.

Mr. Arnett spoke regarding projected growth throughout the Valley and the potential for development of a future additional outer loop (freeway).

Chairman Hawker expressed the opinion that development of a vision plan will benefit communities. Chairman Hawker stated appreciation to Mr. Arnett for his comments.

5. Discuss other issues for possible consideration at future meetings.

Mr. Martin provided an overview of the following list of issues for possible consideration at future meetings:

- a. Update on light rail planning, including transit centers and extensions east
- b. Freeway update, acceleration of MAG freeway program
- c. Update on Mesa bus system and plans for future
- d. Discussion on projected traffic congestion in Mesa
- e. Update on Red Mountain Freeway Environmental Impact Study (EIS)
- f. Update on environmental assessment on San Tan Freeway

Mr. Martin noted that receipt of an updated MAG freeway map is expected next week and that proposed acceleration is anticipated to result in completion of the Valley's freeway system by the year 2007. Chairman Hawker recommended that this issue be discussed at the next meeting.

Chairman Hawker advised that the City is preparing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for an urban planner/designer to develop a concept plan for the downtown area, which will incorporate transit locations.

Chairman Hawker requested input pertaining to additional topics for consideration. Discussion ensued regarding photo radar and the continuation of a previous suggestion by Boardmember Glass relating to aggressive driving/"road rage" (public education, enforcement).

Committeemember Giles related concerns expressed recently pertaining to noise levels at the intersection of Route 202/McKellips Road and a recommendation to erect a sound wall. Committeemember Giles suggested that the Transportation Advisory Board schedule a public meeting to solicit input from neighbors regarding the matter.

In response to a question from Boardmember Rush, Mr. Krosting stated that he will request an update from Maricopa County regarding the potential installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Ellsworth and Elliot Roads.

Members of the Transportation Advisory Board spoke in favor of joint meetings with the Transportation Committee, particularly initially, given the recent expansion of the Board's role. Boardmembers requested additional data relating to upcoming Council agenda items and priorities for the City concerning transportation.

6. Adjournment.

Chairman Hawker thanked the members of the Transportation Advisory Board for their time and input. Boardmembers expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate.

Without objection, the joint meeting of the Transportation Committee/Transportation Advisory Board adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

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I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Transportation Committee and Transportation Advisory Board joint meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 26th day of January 1999. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 1999

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK