

# TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 13, 2002

The Transportation Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on May 13, 2002 at 4:30 p.m.

**COMMITTEE PRESENT**

Jim Davidson, Chairman  
Pat Pomeroy  
Claudia Walters

**COUNCIL PRESENT**

Bill Jaffa

**OFFICERS PRESENT**

None

1. Hear a status report on a proposed Intergovernmental Agreement with Maricopa County for the Gilbert Road and Val Vista Road improvement projects.

Assistant Development Services Manager Jeff Martin addressed the Committee and provided a brief overview of this agenda item. He reported that for a number of years, City staff has been engaged in negotiations with Maricopa County relative to the execution of Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA) for various road improvement projects located at Gilbert Road, McDowell Road, Val Vista Drive and Power Road. Mr. Martin stated that in January of this year, staff and County representatives conducted a series of meetings to clarify the terms of the IGAs, which, unfortunately, resulted in a number of miscommunications. He noted that at the urging of Mayor Hawker, the City hosted an April 16<sup>th</sup> meeting with Maricopa County Supervisors Don Stapley and Fulton Brock, Mayor Hawker, and City and County staff to resolve the misconceptions.

Mr. Martin explained that the joint meeting proved to be very productive, but when staff later received the draft agreements from the County, the documents contained substantive differences with regard to a variety of financial issues as compared to what the parties had agreed to at the gathering. He questioned the disparities contained in the County's draft document due to the fact that he, Mayor Hawker and Supervisor Stapley recorded the terms of the agreement during the meeting and that Supervisor Stapley twice verbally repeated the terms of the IGA to everyone in attendance.

In response to a question from Committeemember Walters regarding whether the residents in the area surrounding Gilbert Road have been updated recently on the City's progress to obtain an IGA, Mr. Martin explained that although staff has conducted neighborhood meetings in the past, it would be prudent to apprise the residents relative to the upcoming construction schedule. He advised that it is anticipated that the County will bid the Gilbert Road construction

project in June of this year, with implementation of the road improvements commencing in November.

Transportation Director Ron Krosting commented that he is not aware of any recent County-sponsored neighborhood meetings, but noted that City staff has responded to citizen inquiries on an individual basis. He concurred with Mr. Martin's suggestion that it would be appropriate to conduct a neighborhood gathering at this time. Mr. Krosting added that the County is proposing a design-build project which will decrease the length of time in which to complete the construction of the road improvements.

Discussion ensued relative to the proposed terms of the IGA.

Committeemember Pomeroy suggested that staff contact Supervisor Stapley to determine if he is aware of the terms of the proposed IGA which resulted in the miscommunication between the City and the County.

Chairman Davidson thanked staff for their presentation.

2. Discuss and consider recommended alternatives for Val Vista Drive improvement project, Phase Two, McKellips Road to McDowell Road and the South Canal to the Red Mountain Freeway.

City Engineer Keith Nath, Civil Engineer Anna Leyva-Easton and Engineering Public Relations Specialist Glenn Gorke addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item.

Ms. Leyva-Easton reported that on March 5, 2002, staff presented the Transportation Committee with an update regarding various roadway improvement projects in northeast Mesa relative to corresponding Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Red Mountain Freeway improvements. She explained that at that time, staff informed the Committee that construction on phase one of the Val Vista Drive widening project, which extends from McDowell Road to the South Canal, would commence in May 2002 and be completed by December 2002. Ms. Leyva-Easton stated that the update also included several options for the construction schedule of phase two of the Val Vista Drive project, and that the Committee directed staff to first conduct a public meeting to solicit citizen input regarding such options and then to seek direction from the Committee at a future meeting with regard to the alternatives.

Ms. Leyva-Easton informed the members of the Committee that on April 16, 2002, staff hosted a public meeting at Stapley Junior High School which was attended by 34 citizens. She stated that three options were presented to the public for the completion of phase two of the road-widening project and that staff also responded to questions posed by the members of the audience.

Ms. Leyva-Easton outlined the three options as follows:

- Option 1. The current proposal is to proceed with a project that includes two sections of full improvements from McKellips Road to McDowell Road and from the South Canal to the Red Mountain Freeway. This project is at approximately the 60% design stage, with right-of-way acquisition underway. She clarified that at the time that staff prepared this option, it was anticipated that an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) would be executed

between Mesa and Maricopa County and that the City would obtain right-of-way by this summer. Ms. Levya-Easton added that an IGA is necessary in order to complete the segment from the South Canal to the Red Mountain Freeway. Construction completion for this phase, as currently planned, is expected in September 2003.

- Option 2. Modify phase two to limit the work on Val Vista Drive south of McDowell Road to a spot improvement near Hermosa Vista Drive, providing a limited amount of temporary pavement, and re-stripe the roadway for two through lanes in each direction and a center turn lane. Right-of-way and utility relocations could proceed as under Option 1, but permanent improvements would be delayed until after the Red Mountain Freeway is extended to Power Road in June 2005 or later. Under this option, the County section from the South Canal to the Red Mountain Freeway would be delayed with the permanent Val Vista Drive improvements. This option could be constructed prior to completion of the freeway.
- Option 3. To proceed with the same temporary improvements between McDowell Road and McKellips Road as defined in Option 2. Under this option, the County section would proceed as currently scheduled and not be delayed with the McKellips Road to McDowell Road section. An IGA must still be executed with Maricopa County for the segment from the South Canal to the Red Mountain Freeway. It is estimated that this option could be constructed by June 2003.

Ms. Leyva-Easton explained that of the 29 written comments which staff received from citizens, 28 out of the 29 responses expressed support for the completion of permanent improvements as currently scheduled. (Option 1.) She concluded her presentation by noting that it is the recommendation of staff to proceed with Option 1.

Committeemember Walters commented that she attended the April 16<sup>th</sup> public meeting and thanked Mr. Nath and his staff for their excellent presentation.

It was moved by Committeemember Walters to recommend to the Council that staff's recommendation to proceed with phase two of the Val Vista Drive widening project as currently scheduled (Option 1), be approved.

In response to a question from Committeemember Pomeroy, Mr. Nath explained that staff included Option 2 and Option 3 as alternative schedules wherein permanent improvements would be deferred until after the Red Mountain Freeway is open to Power Road.

Committeemember Pomeroy seconded Committeemember Walters' motion.

In response to a question from Chairman Davidson, Mr. Nath clarified that with regard to phase one of the project, utility relocation has been completed and construction is currently ongoing. He added, however, that relative to phase two, the City is attempting to obtain right-of-way acquisition so that utility relocation can be accomplished.

Development Services Manager Jack Friedline assured the members of the Committee that it is the intent of staff to complete the right-of-way acquisition by July 2002. He commented that if that does not occur, but the City successfully executes an IGA with Maricopa County, staff will come before the Council and ask for condemnation to move the project forward. Mr. Nath

added that the City will proceed with the County section of the project only if the IGA is executed, and that one of the conditions of the IGA is that the County may grant approval to the City to condemn property in the County's jurisdiction.

Carried unanimously.

Chairman Davidson thanked staff for their efforts and hard work in this regard.

3. Hear a status report on landscaping and aesthetic enhancements on the Red Mountain and Santan Freeways, and discuss and consider newly proposed artwork for the Red Mountain Freeway.

Deputy City Engineer Jeff Kramer addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item. He reported that at the March 13, 2002 Transportation Committee meeting, staff presented various landscaping and wall treatment alternatives proposed for the Red Mountain Freeway corridor. He explained that in particular, one of ADOT's design elements included a landform graphic named the South Canal, a geometric pattern which would be located on both sides of the freeway between the South Canal and the Greenfield Road ramps. Mr. Kramer stated that subsequent to the meeting, staff conveyed the Committee's concerns to ADOT that no trees or shrubs had been incorporated into the design enhancement. He noted that as a result of the Committee's feedback and input, ADOT has now revised the South Canal design to include a variety of plant material in the areas surrounding the landform graphic. (See Attachment 1.) Mr. Kramer added that it is the opinion of staff that the updated design is an adequate improvement and acceptable as proposed.

Committeemember Walters stated the opinion that although ADOT has included a variety of plant material within the landform graphic design, at the present time it is uncertain whether such landscaping will ever be planted. She noted that at the March 13 meeting, the Committee was informed that due to the State's severe budget restrictions, ADOT would not award any new freeway landscaping projects without a commitment from local jurisdictions to maintain the additional landscaping until adequate funding becomes available to the State. Committeemember Walters emphasized that at that time, the Committee was unwilling to agree to such a proposal, and added that it continues to maintain the same position.

In response to Committeemember Walters' concerns, City Engineer Keith Nath explained that at the present time, ADOT has not established a schedule for the landscaping phase of the South Canal landform graphic plan and that it is the intent of ADOT is to complete the design phase and to postpone the project until a future time.

Committeemember Walters reiterated her frustration relative to ADOT's inability to adequately fund landscape maintenance costs on the newly constructed freeways in the East Valley.

Mr. Kramer advised that in addition to addressing the lack of landscaping surrounding the South Canal landform graphic, staff also requested that ADOT remove the freestanding citrus landform and replace the snake landform graphic with a design that more closely resembles the proposed southwestern graphic. He advised that ADOT responded to staff's requests by proposing three alternatives for a new landform graphic at Val Vista Drive including a lizard design (Alternative 1), a reptile pattern (Alternative 2), and an orchard/canal pattern (Alternative 3). (See

Attachments 2, 3 and 4.) Mr. Kramer stated that it is the recommendation of staff to proceed with the orchard/canal pattern.

Mr. Kramer reported that in response to ADOT's proposal at the March 13 meeting that the City of Mesa consider assuming freeway landscape maintenance costs (an estimated \$50,000 per mile annually), he noted that Mayor Hawker has sent a letter to State Engineer Dick Wright declining such a request. He added that staff is currently working in conjunction with the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and the State legislature to seek a more equitable solution to this matter whereby all Valley communities would share equally the cost for the maintenance of freeway landscaping.

Mr. Kramer explained that with regard to the Country Club Drive to Gilbert Road segment of the Red Mountain Freeway, ADOT opened bids for the landscaping project, which includes additional plant material funded by the City, but has elected not to award the contract at this time. He said that ADOT intends to "hydro-seed" the project, a spray-applied mixture of native seed, and that in the future when the budget permits, remove the seeded area and re-bid the landscaping contract.

In response to a series of questions from Committeemember Pomeroy, Mr. Kramer clarified that the area surrounding the orchard/canal pattern landform graphic would be hydro-seeded initially, and that in the future, shrubbery would be installed in a systematic pattern to resemble an orchard.

Discussion ensued relative to ADOT's specifications for hydro-seed and the fact that the native-seed mixture is used to prevent soil erosion and to minimize dust pollution.

Committeemember Walters expressed disappointment that Mesa has been obligated to wait for the construction of freeways in the East Valley for many years and is now being asked to subsidize landscape maintenance costs, and yet ADOT is not making the same request of West Valley communities, for example, on freeway segments where the landscaping has already been completed.

(Councilmember Jaffa arrived at the meeting at 5:00 p.m.)

In response to Committeemember Walters' comments, Assistant Development Services Manager Jeff Martin advised that City staff has scheduled an upcoming meeting with several East Valley legislators to discuss ADOT's current inability to fund landscape maintenance costs on newly completed segments of the freeway; that ADOT has sufficient Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF) Bonds available for landscaping maintenance, but that like other State agencies, it was required to reduce its budget to meet Legislative funding goals.

Committeemember Walters thanked Mayor Hawker and staff for their efforts and hard work regarding this matter. She also noted that in addition to the frustration that has been expressed by the Council and staff, she has already begun to receive calls from disgruntled citizens questioning why the freeways are not being maintained properly.

It was moved by Committeemember Pomeroy to recommend to the Council that the City convey a message to the State Legislature that ADOT's inability to fund landscape maintenance costs on newly constructed freeways in the East Valley is not acceptable.

In response to a question from Chairman Davidson, Mr. Nath clarified that staff is seeking Committee direction with regard to the landform graphic alternatives for the Val Vista Drive interchange which does not include a landscape element at this time.

Further discussion ensued relative to the fact that HURF Bonds have been earmarked in ADOT's landscape maintenance budget, but due to the State Legislature's mandated agency budget reductions, the funds have not been appropriated, and the fact that a portion of HURF Bond revenues has been appropriated to fund the State Highway Patrol.

Chairman Davidson stated that he speaks for the entire Committee in expressing everyone's extreme disappointment that the completion of the East Valley freeways is again being delayed in terms of design enhancements, landscaping and the maintenance of the landscaping.

It was moved by Committeemember Walters to recommend to the Council that staff's recommendation to proceed with the Val Vista Drive landform graphic design pattern, Alternative 3, (orchard/canal pattern), be approved.

Committeemember Pomeroy withdrew his previous motion for lack of a second and seconded Committeemember Walters' motion.

Carried unanimously.

It was moved by Committeemember Walters, seconded by Committeemember Pomeroy, to recommend to the Council that the conceptual plans to include plant material in the areas surrounding the South Canal landform graphic (Attachment 1), as well as Committeemember Pomeroy's comments be captured in the motion (see above), be approved.

Carried unanimously.

4. Discuss and consider funding of artwork for US 60.

Deputy City Engineer Jeff Kramer addressed the Committee and reported that the purpose of today's presentation is to provide an update regarding the U.S. 60 Freeway aesthetic enhancements at Dobson Road, Country Club Drive and Mesa Drive, and also to request the Committee's approval to proceed with the implementation of the artwork through a change order to ADOT's Mesa Drive Traffic Interchange (T.I.) project. He explained that in March 2002, the Committee approved the selection of the "Mirage Concept" bolt-on overpass graphics for the above-referenced roads, and at that time it was intended that the artwork would be installed via a change order with ADOT's contractor at Dobson Road and to bid the artwork at Country Club Drive and Mesa Drive as a bid alternate with ADOT's Mesa Drive TI project.

Mr. Kramer noted that in mid-April, ADOT informed staff that as a result of a legal opinion issued by the Arizona Attorney General's Office, the artwork at Country Club Drive and Mesa Drive could not be included in the Mesa Drive project as a bid alternate, and that it would be necessary for the City to either include the work as part of the contract or to proceed under a change order after the project is awarded. Mr. Kramer noted that staff considered both options and ultimately elected not to include the installation of the artwork in the bidding of the project.

Mr. Kramer reported that also in mid-April, ADOT received a quote for the Dobson Road bolt-on graphics artwork from Meadow Valley Contractors, the same firm that is currently working on the Dobson Road and Alma School Road projects, for a total cost of \$74,250; that at the same time, ADOT was informed by staff that it wished to discuss with Meadow Valley the possibility of obtaining a change order to include the installation of the artwork at the Country Club Drive and Mesa Drive overpasses; that ADOT informed the City that they were not in favor of proceeding in this manner due to contractual issues with Meadow Valley, and that it intended to complete the Dobson Road project and close out their contract with Meadow Valley.

Mr. Kramer informed the Committee that ADOT has opened bids for the Mesa Drive project and that although not yet under contract, Meadow Valley has indicated a willingness to do the work at all three bridges under this new contract. He noted, however, that staff was recently informed by Meadow Valley that there may be a change in the firm's project manager and subcontractors and that the original proposal may change. Mr. Kramer stated that based on the quotation received previously, the estimated costs are not to exceed \$80,000 at each location, plus \$3600 for design costs, for a total \$243,600; however, to account for the possible differentiation in costs, staff is recommending a contingency allowance of approximately 10%, which would result in a total financial commitment of \$270,000.

Mr. Kramer said that it is the opinion of staff that a freestanding entry monument is a viable option for a freeway enhancement, and that last week, staff and representatives of ADOT reviewed a number of sites between Price Road and Dobson Road along the U.S. 60 Freeway for potential locations. He advised that one of the most promising locations is immediately adjacent to the Dobson Road Bridge which could potentially present a dilemma if the City were to install the bolt-on graphics at that site. Mr. Kramer explained that it would necessitate that the design of the monument compliments the artwork and would therefore limit the flexibility in the monument's design.

Mr. Kramer concluded his presentation by saying that staff is requesting that the Committee reaffirm its previous decision to proceed with the bolt-on graphics at the three overpass bridges, with the caveat that when a specific location for the freeway entry monument is selected, that staff would make a future presentation to the Committee to obtain input whether the Dobson Road overpass is the most suitable location for the artwork or if the enhancement should be transferred, for example, to Alma School Road, which is an identically designed bridge.

Committeemember Walters stated that due to the fact that ADOT is unwilling to install the artwork via a change order with Meadow Valley at Dobson Road and also unwilling to bid the enhancements at Country Club Drive and Mesa Drive as a bid alternate on the Mesa Drive project, it would be her preference that the Committee delay any action on this issue and wait until staff has obtained additional information relative to specific entry monument sites.

In response to Committeemember Walters' comments, City Engineer Keith Nath cautioned the Committee that if these issues are not addressed initially with Meadow Valley, the City may lose the opportunity for the artwork to be installed per the current quotation and that a separate bid contract would necessitate additional time and effort by staff.

It was moved by Committeemember Pomeroy to recommend to the Council that the recommendation of staff to proceed with the implementation of the bolt-on overpass graphics via a change order to ADOT's Mesa Drive T.I. project, be approved.

Committeemember Walters said she would second the motion for discussion purposes.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that funding for the project would come from HURF Bonds; that the Council initially approved the expenditure of \$2.4 million for landscaping enhancements and the addition of retaining wall art along the U.S. 60 Freeway, and the fact that the City realized cost savings through various suggestions by ADOT's design-build team.

Committeemember Walters stated that it has always been her preference that uniformly-designed freestanding monuments be located at the freeway entrances into the City. She also commented that because she is not supportive of escalating the costs for the implementation of the artwork, that perhaps it would be prudent to move the issue forward to the full Council for further discussion.

Chairman Davidson expressed opposition to the motion and reiterated his previous comments that ADOT's proposal for artwork enhancements is not the best use of tax dollars.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES - Pomeroy-Walters  
NAYS - Davidson

Chairman Davidson declared the motion carried by majority vote.

Chairman Davidson thanked staff for their efforts and hard work regarding this issue.

5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Transportation Committee meeting adjourned at 5:30 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 13<sup>th</sup> day of May 2002. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK