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US-60/Grand Avenue COMPASS

Loop 303 to Interstate 10

Charter Partners
March 20, 2013

Maricopa Association of Governments
Cottonwood Conference Room

CHARTER PARTNER ATTENDEES

Lana Mook, Mayor – City of El Mirage
Jerry Weiers, Mayor – City of Glendale
Ron Aames, Council – City of Peoria
Sharon Wolcott, Mayor – City of Surprise

Mike LeVault, Mayor – Town of Youngtown
Dennis Smith – MAG
Eric Anderson – MAG
Scott Omer – ADOT

OTHER ATTENDEES

Sue McDermott, City of El Mirage
Amber Wakeman, City of El Mirage
Thomas Adkins, City of Glendale

Jenna Goad, City of Glendale
Dana Owsiany, City of Phoenix
Michael Celaya, City of Surprise

MAG STAFF

Bob Hazlett – MAG
Micah Henry – MAG
Leila Gamiz – MAG

Kelly Taft - MAG
Nathan Pryor - MAG

CONSULTANT TEAM

Jason Pagnard – B&N
Peggy Fiandaca – PSA

Dan Marum – Wilson & Company

Bob Hazlett welcomed everyone and the participants introduced themselves. Bob gave an overview of the meeting purpose.

PROJECT UPDATE

The project website is active, the Public Involvement Plan has been completed, and the Project Strategic Framework has been updated. The study team has completed three technical memorandums that are currently being reviewed by the Planning Partners.

- Technical Memorandum 2 – Review of Relevant Studies and Projects (Draft)
- Technical Memorandum 3 – National Case Study Review (Draft)
- Technical Memorandum 4 – Principles and Practices of Access Management (Preliminary Draft)

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The team is currently completing Technical Memorandum 1 – Existing Conditions Findings. Bob Hazlett provided a highlight of the studies. He said that there have been approximately 54 studies since 1998. US-60/Grand Avenue has evolved from a freeway to an arterial street through the multitude of studies. Having US-60/Grand Avenue shown as a potential freeway on past planning studies has left landowners in limbo and led to the fragmented, deteriorating land use pattern along the corridor. It was stressed that this study is going to set the US-60/Grand Avenue vision that will lead to a new development pattern and revitalization.

Bob Hazlett provided a brief overview of Technical Memorandum 3 – National Case Study Review that explores similar urban travel corridors in major metropolitan areas: multimodal corridors, higher capacity corridors, freight rail present, and high capacity transit (HCT) present. The case studies were:

- M-1/Woodward Avenue, Detroit, MI
- US-1, Greater Boston, MA
- US-85/S. Santa Fe Drive, Littleton, CO

Mayor LeVault asked for Eric Anderson to elaborate on the ST-LUIS Study and how land use would change with HCT corridors. Eric explained that when you change the transportation characteristics of the corridor, land uses change. HCT corridors are very different in terms of accessibility. When the accessibility changes in an area the land uses responds to the improved accessibility. The market expands as a result.

Mayor Wolcott stated that what makes the US-60/Grand Avenue Corridor different than the case studies is that this corridor connects many different downtowns, each with a different character. As a result, as the HCT corridor is developed connecting these downtowns, a different mix and densities of development will occur.

Bob Hazlett mentioned that no other transportation corridor than US-60/Grand Avenue connects six downtown areas with an estimated population of 566,000 (zip codes that touch the corridor). ST-LUIS findings indicate that “one size does not fit all” and density of residents and employment are needed to ensure HCT works effectively.

Eric Anderson mentioned that this is the first time we have examined the economics as a driver of a transportation study. Through this project, the strategic opportunities for the corridor will be recognized.

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COLLABORATION ON ALTERNATIVES

Bob Hazlett said as the project team has completed the initial research and data collection, the attention has shifted to identifying and exploring potential corridor alternatives. Four concepts have emerged for the Charter Partners to discuss and provide consent to move them forward for further study. He mentioned that these concepts would be used to develop specific alternatives. It was mentioned that access management should be fundamental to all of the alternatives. Without corridor-wide access management, there will not be unified vision. The concepts are:

- **Adopted Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)** – Continue with planned improvements from the RTP with no further action;
- **Expressway** – Implement the US-60/Grand Avenue expressway option;
- **Commuter Rail and Operational Performance** – institute commuter rail and implement roadway improvements to a lesser scale than the Expressway; and
- **Expanded Connectivity** – Focus on the mobility of people and goods through establishing a HCT envelope within the current ADOT right-of-way in conjunction with strategic, targeted roadway improvements at key locations.

Eric Anderson said that in reality, the final recommendation will be some combination of all four concepts; the best ideas from each concept.

Mayor LeVault mentioned that it is all about financing. What we may be looking at is an ala carte menu of options with a phased implementation depending on funding.

Dennis Smith said that it will be critical to be creative about financing. Maybe we need to look at developing a community facility district for corridor transportation improvements or some mechanism that as development occurs over time, the cost is distributed. Financing is very reasonable now, but the region needs a repayment approach that makes sense.

Eric Anderson commented that this is a good corridor to tackle because there are so many under-utilized land uses and under-valued properties. This is a tremendous opportunity.

Mayor Wolcott said that she was pleased where the study was heading and excited about the creative thinking. The approach was a good way to set the stage for future development. She believes that US-60/Grand Avenue can lead the way for a new development pattern in the West Valley. She agreed that creative financing will be needed because sales tax is over used in Arizona.

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Mayor LeVault agreed that it is important to create a novel idea and then get everyone on board.

Mayor Wolcott asked how do we reach out to the community and get people involved.

Peggy Fiandaca from the consulting team provided a brief overview of the upcoming outreach process. She said that starting in May the project team will start a multi-tiered stakeholder involvement process to solicit input on the concepts and vision for the corridor.

The Charter Partners provided direction to move forward with the four corridor concepts and the approach presented.

I ♥ GRAND AVENUE ACTIVITIES

A brief update was provided on the "I ♥ Grand Avenue" activities. It is intended that the 2014 timeframe is the target for events and activities.

NEXT STEPS

The following are the next steps in the process.

- Completion of Technical Memorandum 1 - Existing Conditions Review
- Alternatives development

Next meeting will be in August as the alternatives are under study. The date/time for the meeting will be determined at a later date.

Meeting was adjourned at Noon.

