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US-60/Grand Avenue COMPASS

Loop 303 to Interstate 10

Grand Avenue Coalition Meeting
March 6, 2014

Communiiversity @ Surprise
15950 N. Civic Center Plaza

THESE NOTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL MINUTES FROM THIS MEETING THAT WAS CALLED BY THE SURPRISE MAYOR AND ORGANIZED BY SURPRISE CITY STAFF. THEY ARE COMPILATION OF NOTES FROM THE MEETING ATTENEDED BY MAG STAFF AND THE US-60/GRAND AVE COMPASS CONSULTANT.

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

Mayor Lana Mook – City of El Mirage

Councilman Gary Sherwood – City of Glendale

Supervisor Clint Hickman – Maricopa County

Mayor Sharon Wolcott – City of Surprise

CITY MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATIVES

City Manager Spencer Isom – City of El Mirage

Town Manager Jeanne Blackman – Town of Youngtown

Other staff from the cities—including intergovernmental representatives and technical staff—was also present.

MAG STAFF REPRESENTATIVES

Dennis Smith

Eric Anderson

Bob Hazlett

CONSULTANT TEAM REPRESENTATIVE

Jason Pagnard – Burgess & Niple

Mayor Wolcott welcomed everyone and gave an overview of the meeting purpose.

US-60/GRAND AVENUE COMPASS UPDATE

Bob Hazlett provided a brief overview of the study's progress and the concepts identified earlier in the year. Mr. Hazlett reported that a draft Vision Statement has been developed and will be circulated for review and comment. He also reported that the study team will be looking at a funding "toolbox" as part of the study deliverables, and that work is underway with ADOT on the potential of a signing package and plan for the US-60/Grand Avenue corridor

Mr. Hazlett also reported on the latest developments from the Access Management Plan component of the study. He reported that the purpose of the plan will be find opportunities to consolidate access points along the US-60/Grand Avenue corridor. On March 4 and 5, the study team met in workshops with staff from each stakeholder agency to review access management

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concepts, identify potential opportunities and strategies to consolidate/minimize access points, and discuss related opportunities and constraints. Because each access point increases traffic accidents by 4%, design of driveways, length of turning bays (that appropriately calculate taper, deceleration and storage length) and turning bay locations is critical to a safe and functional corridor. Mayor Wolcott indicated the potential to largely reduce the number of driveways that open onto US-60/Grand Avenue was exciting, and inquired as to whether federal safety funding could be obtained to assist with implementation. Eric Anderson indicated that ADOT has safety funding available that could potentially be tapped for implementing an access management plan.

Mr. Hazlett indicated that a coordinated access management implementation effort would be necessary from both a land use and transportation perspective which was reiterated by Mayor Wolcott who agreed that partnership amongst agencies would be necessary. Mr. Hazlett noted that the timing seemed to be right to move forward on an effort; Glendale, in particular, has set a great precedent for implementation, and synergy amongst agencies seems to be growing. He continued, and indicated that zoning overlays were a potential implementation tool communities could use in incrementally applying an access management plan. Mr. Hazlett indicated that decision trees and draft policy language would be a final product of this effort.

In discussions regarding signal timing, Mr. Hazlett noted that in order to optimize signal timing for both directions of traffic, equal-distant spacing of signals is needed. Mayor Wolcott remarked that a coordinated planning effort amongst the municipalities would have to occur.

In part due to the constraints of limited river crossings in the Northwest Valley, Mr. Hazlett indicated that creative solutions may be required for optimizing mobility through the US-60/Grand Avenue corridor. He reviewed potential operation improvement strategies, including Median urban Diamond (MUD) and Upstream Signalized Crossover (USC) being considered in various locations.

Mr. Hazlett concluded his presentation by briefly reviewing the Trip Reduction Program surveyed patterns and the benefits to a transit feeder network to accommodate the work trip patterns observed from the survey data. Dennis Smith commended the County on the survey and its value to regional transportation planning.

TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES

Steve Banta, CEO of Valley Metro, provided opportunities and challenges to transit alternatives within the US-60/Grand Avenue corridor, focusing specifically on bus alternatives. One key advantage of US-60/Grand Avenue observed by Mr. Banta is that the corridor serves multiple downtowns, providing access and service to key activity centers; additional opportunities include a high need for transit bi-directional connectivity in a high-growth, potentially high-capacity transit viable region.

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Mr. Banta noted that capital costs associated with bus transit options range from \$1.5 to \$3 million per mile for LINK and \$10 to 30 million per mile for bus rapid transit with annual operating costs of \$200,000 to \$350,000 per mile of service for bus rapid transit and approximately \$100,000 per mile annually for LINK.

While several opportunities exist for bus rapid transit along the corridor, land availability and potential for redevelopment is a constraint, as is the need for partnership and support from the various local jurisdictions and agencies invested in the region (i.e., municipalities, county, ADOT). In order to fully analyze the potential, Mr. Banta noted a feasibility study should be conducted; such a study would take 12 to 24 months and potentially cost \$250,000 to \$500,000.

Mr. Smith asked that if a study is conducted and bus rapid transit is deemed viable, what about funding for implementation? HURF cannot be used for transit. Perhaps a property tax could be levied against bonds and/or use of municipal funds for operations and maintenance. Mr. Banta observed that if the region can work together and find funding to cover the costs of operations and maintenance, the funding for the capital purchases can usually be found. In the East Valley, LINK is a regional asset, not an individual city asset. Mayor Wolcott suggested that municipalities should join together and ballot funding (tax) propositions at the same time

Mayor Wolcott: Bus rapid transit is a perfect way to demonstrate need and value. The West Valley wants more than LINK and to connect to more than just light rail. The possibilities to provide mobility options to the active Sun City/Bennevilla community would be valued. This would be an opportunity to be bold and unique from the East Valley.

Mr. Smith observed that existing land use can be a constraint and was unsure as to how much land use will change over time.

Mr. Hazlett observed that right-of-way exists outside of SR-101L, but inside SR-101L is a challenge—there is little or no right-of-way.

Supervisor Hickman noted that ridership issues had previously led to system removal or service reduction and inquired as to how options fit culturally. Mr. Banta noted that transit performance measures and standards are used in such an evaluation (e.g., use of dial-a-ride in rural communities).

Mr. Anderson inquired as to whether the East Valley's LINK has a feeder service/system; Mr. Banta responded that there are pockets of such service, however, increased frequency and a feeder system would help to develop LINK. Mr. Anderson noted that optimally, if a system would be devised, establishing such a feeder system would provide dependability and support to a more comprehensive program. To that end, Mr. Smith noted that such a program for the West Valley would require "imaginative" land use changes to assist implementation, but Mr. Banta responded that it could really work (citing Route 471 where frequency doubled and ridership increase four fold.) Supervisor Hickman concurred, and noted that such a transformational concept

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could help drive the land use changes within the region, but Mayor Wolcott warned that partners need to be realistic and that not every jurisdiction may see the same “transformation”.

NEXT STEPS

The next steps in the process are as follows:

- COMPASS study: one-on-one meetings with key stakeholders, April Charter Partners meeting, May public engagement.
- Grand Avenue Coalition: meeting subsequent to April Charter Partners (early summer?)

