

MINUTES OF THE
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

May 15, 2013
MAG Office, Saguaro Room
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Mayor W. J. "Jim" Lane, Scottsdale, Chair
Mayor Jackie Meck, Buckeye, Vice Chair
F. Rockne Arnett, Citizens Transportation
Oversight Committee
Ron Barnes, Total Transit
Dave Berry, Swift Transportation
* Jed Billings, FNF Construction
Councilmember Cathy Carlat, Peoria
Vice Mayor Ben Cooper, Gilbert
Councilmember Dick Esser, Cave Creek
Supervisor Clint Hickman, Maricopa County
* Mark Killian, The Killian Company/Sunny
Mesa, Inc.

Joseph La Rue, State Transportation Board
* Lt. Governor Stephen Roe Lewis, Gila River
Indian Community
Mayor Georgia Lord, Goodyear
Mayor Mark Mitchell, Tempe
* Garrett Newland, Macerich
* Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers, Avondale
Vice Mayor Jack Sellers, Chandler
* Mayor Scott Smith, Mesa
Mayor Greg Stanton, Phoenix
Karrin Kunasek Taylor, DMB Properties
* Mayor Jerry Weiers, Glendale
* Mayor Sharon Wolcott, Surprise

* Not present

Participated by telephone conference call

+ Participated by videoconference call

1. Call to Order

The meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) was called to order by Chair W. J. "Jim" Lane at 12:05 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mr. Roc Arnett participated in the meeting by telephone.

Chair Lane welcomed Supervisor Clint Hickman to his first TPC meeting. Supervisor Hickman received a round of applause.

Chair Lane noted that material for agenda item #7 was at each place.

Chair Lane requested that members of the public fill out blue cards for Call to the Audience and yellow cards for consent or action items on the agenda, and then turn in the cards to staff, who will bring them to him. He stated that parking garage validation and transit tickets for those who purchased transit tickets to attend the meeting were available from staff.

Chair Lane noted that this was the last TPC meeting for Councilmember Dick Esser, who will be completing his term of office as a Cave Creek councilmember in June. He thanked Councilmember Esser for his commitment to the TPC and the MAG region and noted that Councilmember Esser will be honored with a Resolution of Appreciation at the May 22 Regional Council meeting. Councilmember Esser received a round of applause.

Vice Chair Meck presented Chair Lane with a Resolution of Appreciation that was prepared in recognition of his service as Chair of the Transportation Policy Committee. Vice Chair Meck read the Resolution. Chair Lane expressed his appreciation for the recognition and that it had been a delight working with the Committee. Chair Lane received a round of applause.

Vice Chair Meck left the meeting for another commitment.

3. Call to the Audience

Chair Lane stated that an opportunity is provided to the public to address the Transportation Policy Committee on items that are not on the agenda that are within the jurisdiction of MAG, or non action agenda items that are on the agenda for discussion or information only. Citizens will be requested not to exceed a three minute time period for their comments. A total of 15 minutes will be provided for the Call to the Audience agenda item, unless the Transportation Policy Committee requests an exception to this limit. Those wishing to comment on agenda items posted for action will be provided the opportunity at the time the item is heard.

Chair Lane noted that no comment cards had been received.

4. Approval of Consent Agenda

Chair Lane stated that agenda items #4A and #4B were on the consent agenda. He stated that public comment is provided for consent items, and noted that no public comment cards had been received. Chair Lane asked members if they would like to remove any of the consent agenda items or have a presentation. No requests were noted.

Mayor Mitchell moved to recommend approval of agenda items #4A and #4B on the consent agenda. Councilmember Esser seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

4A. Approval of the April 17, 2013, Meeting Minutes

The Transportation Policy Committee, by consent, approved the April 17, 2013, meeting minutes.

4B. Project Changes - Amendment and Administrative Modification to the FY 2011-2015 MAG Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Policy Committee, by consent, recommended approval of the amendments and administrative modifications to the FY 2011-2015 MAG Transportation Improvement Program, and as appropriate to the Regional Transportation Plan 2010 Update. The fiscal year (FY) 2011-2015 MAG Transportation Improvement Program and Regional Transportation Plan 2010 Update were approved by the MAG Regional Council on July 28, 2010, and have been modified twenty four times, with the last approval on March 27, 2013. Table D lists proposed administrative corrections and project changes in the Highway programs. These modifications include deferrals, advancements, project modifications, new projects, and financial updates. Table D was recommended for approval on April 25, 2013, by the MAG Transportation Review Committee, and on May 8, 2013, by the MAG Management Committee.

5. Progress Report on the COMPASS Study for Grand Avenue

Bob Hazlett, MAG Senior Engineer, reported on the Corridor Optimization, Access Management Plan and System Study (COMPASS), which started in 2012 and is intended to provide a vision and plan for the Grand Avenue corridor, from Loop 303 in Surprise to downtown Phoenix.

Mr. Hazlett noted that the corridor recently was widened to six lanes from 83rd Avenue to Loop 303. Mr. Hazlett stated that rehabilitation of pavement and improved access control from 83rd Avenue into downtown Phoenix are in process. He stated that other Grand Avenue projects included in the Regional Transportation Plan include grade separations at Bell Road and Grand Avenue, intersection improvements at Thunderbird Road and Grand Avenue in El Mirage, and some unspecified projects.

Mr. Hazlett stated that the COMPASS project charter was signed by officials of Grand Avenue jurisdictions in February 2012 and such a charter is without precedence in the Valley. Although the corridor has been studied extensively in the past, this is the first study to look at the corridor from an economic development/transportation perspective. Mr. Hazlett remarked that the oversight and participation by elected officials will result in a better product. He noted that Grand Avenue was once going to be a freeway, and is now a corridor that is a cross between a freeway and an arterial.

Mr. Hazlett stated that at the beginning of the COMPASS study, MAG staff and the consultant met with the city managers and staff of all cities on the corridor. Mr. Hazlett stated that there have been 54 different projects and/or studies on Grand Avenue since 1988. He stated that the focus was automobiles in the 1980s and 1990s, an expressway or grade separated facility in the 1990s to 2000s, and perhaps a movement toward a more multimodal focus in 2013.

Mr. Hazlett stated that the consultant examined other similar travel corridors that were planned, but never became, freeway corridors, such as Route 1 in Michigan and Route 1 in Boston. He noted

that Santa Fe Drive in Denver was also planned as a freeway, but evolved to a people moving corridor – accommodating both an arterial corridor and light rail tracks.

Mr. Hazlett stated that another area of the study underway is the principles and practices of access management to look for better ways to have private property access. He stated that there are currently 427 driveways along the 22-mile Grand Avenue corridor. Mr. Hazlett stated that access management can be used to delineate key economic development zones.

Mr. Hazlett stated that any study of Grand Avenue also requires a study of high capacity transit. He noted that Grand Avenue connects the downtowns of six cities. No other corridor in the Valley connects and serves that many centers. Mr. Hazlett spoke of the growth potential for the area around the corridor: an increase of 41 percent in population and 52 percent in employment by 2030, which will need to be accommodated.

Mr. Hazlett spoke of place types shown on a graphic from the MAG Sustainable Transportation and Land Use Study. He noted that some place types are unique and not every place type will be on every corridor.

Mr. Hazlett stated that they are working on four concepts for Grand Avenue: (1) Continue with planned improvements from the Regional Transportation Plan; (2) Reconsider the US-60/Grand Avenue Expressway option; (3) Plan for commuter rail with operational improvements; (4) Identify an economic development-centric opportunity with multimodal enhancements.

Mr. Hazlett stated that advanced traffic operations work on the corridor has taken place, but the problem lies with the intersections, and if improvements are made to the intersections, perhaps not as many traffic lanes will be needed. Preliminarily, the study is showing that those traffic lanes could be taken away and could then be utilized for multimodal opportunities.

Mr. Hazlett stated that the completion date of the COMPASS study is anticipated for Spring 2014. He noted that tasks underway include formulating goals and vision for the corridor, establishing alternative schematics, analyzing alternatives and developing recommendations. He said that the study is in the beginning stages of public outreach.

Mr. Hazlett reported on the I ♥ Grand Avenue initiative requested by Mayor Stanton and Mayor Wolcott. He said that one year from now, most of the improvements from 83rd Avenue to McDowell Road will be completed and they are looking at a corridor-wide event to roll out the new options.

Chair Lane thanked Mr. Hazlett for his report and asked if there were questions.

Ms. Taylor asked if the economic development cluster scenario would be studied in the alternatives analysis. Mr. Hazlett replied that was correct – they have an economist on board. He said that initial findings have shown that just adding pavement or widening the corridor does not change the

economic situation in the corridor, but adding multimodal opportunities could have an impact on the economic side.

Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, noted there is a policy question. He said that Grand Avenue has been a state route for a number of years. In 1985, the citizens voted for a sales tax to build the freeway system. At the time, Mayor Renner of Glendale said that just because this region passed a sales tax, it did not relieve ADOT of investing in this region. Mr. Smith stated that when an area begins to look more urban, ADOT will sometimes try to implement the turnback policy. He recalled former Glendale Mayor Renner saying Grand Avenue would remain a state route. Mr. Smith stated that ADOT is a multimodal agency and Grand Avenue with multimodal options could remain with ADOT. He stated that another unique element in this region is that Proposition 400 sales tax funds were used for the interstate system, which is unheard of in the United States. Mr. Smith stated that the MAG region has been a great contributor to the state highway system, but ADOT needs to retain its responsibility for Grand Avenue.

Chair Lane asked if there was anything in the plans that would run counter to that. Mr. Smith replied that there is the fear if one traffic lane is taken away and multimodal options added that ADOT would be given a reason to walk away from funding Grand Avenue. He said that he thought we need to embrace the multimodal nature of ADOT and appreciate all of the beautiful improvements made to Grand Avenue by ADOT. Mr. Smith stated that one example of a state department of transportation working with a transit agency is the Colorado Department of Transportation, which has been working very effectively with the area's RTD.

Chair Lane asked about moving forward with a program that also maintained the multimodal connectivity. Mr. Hazlett replied that ADOT is at the table on the study and the agency's director signed the Partnering Charter. Mr. Hazlett noted that the biggest goal is to stimulate economic development in the corridor. He said that Grand Avenue can be widened all we want but there might be a better solution and we want to keep all options on the table.

Mr. Berry referenced Concept Four. He said that he assumed large parcels of land for large employers and public facilities (hospitals, universities) had been mapped out and multimodal options become the backbone to support and attract that type of development. Mr. Hazlett replied that was correct. He noted that there are already two hospitals on Grand Avenue and added that Grand Avenue could be supportive of facilities in the Sun Cities area. He noted that there are many vacant parcels of land along Grand Avenue that could provide significant opportunities. Mr. Hazlett stated that Colorado Department of Transportation still controls Santa Fe Drive and works cooperatively with stakeholders on improvements.

Mr. Berry asked if it is expected that cities will work cooperatively on incentives and appropriate activities. Mr. Hazlett replied that is the intent of the Charter.

Mr. La Rue said that he thought the key to this is the Charter and the members working together. He said that one of ADOT's big challenges over the years is requests for new curb cuts, which results in Grand Avenue functioning not as an expressway, but as a collector street. Mr. La Rue

indicated that ADOT then felt if is the type of road the area wants, they could turn it back to the cities. He said that the cities in the Charter are saying that is not what they want, and as long as the governance structure stays intact, the policy question is OK, but if it unravels, the policy will need to be revisited.

Chair Lane remarked that the existing rail lines on Grand Avenue have continuing value and we do not want to do anything to diminish that industrial connection with the rail/truck component. Chair Lane asked if that was incorporated into this study. Mr. Hazlett replied yes and said that the MAG commuter rail studies looked at the BNSF corridor. He said that the intent is not to take functionality away because it serves so many land uses and businesses.

6. Report on the Status of I-10 / I-17 Improvements

Mr. Hazlett provided a report on improvements to Interstate 10 and Interstate 17, referred to as “The Spine,” because these arteries are the backbone of the regional freeway system. He said that \$1.47 billion is included in the Regional Transportation Plan for improvements on these corridors. Mr. Hazlett noted that the Environment Impact Statements (EIS) being done for these two corridors showed that alternatives totalled about \$4 billion and substantially exceed the funding in the Regional Transportation Plan.

Mr. Hazlett noted that the EIS process, especially for Interstate 10, was taking too long and new ideas have emerged for meeting travel demand. Mr. Hazlett stated that one recommendation from the EIS was to widen the Broadway Curve to 25 lanes. He also noted that new airspace regulations at Sky Harbor Airport say that if any improvements made to the freeway in the vicinity of the Interstate 10/Interstate 17 split interchange, the freeway would need to be reconstructed and moved out of the Sky Harbor airspace. As a result, the two EIS’s were suspended.

Mr. Hazlett stated that at a charette for the Central Phoenix Framework Study, MAG, ADOT, FHWA, Tempe, and Chandler discussed a revised process to identify immediate, near-term, and long-term solutions. In the first part of the path forward, MAG, ADOT, and FHWA identified spot improvements within ADOT rights-of-way, such as addressing bottlenecks, the weave at SR-143, and perhaps some restriping.

Mr. Hazlett stated that money for improvements on the Spine was included in the Regional Transportation Plan, but the improvements were not defined, and ADOT proceeded on defining improvements to levels of service. He noted that this resulted in wide cross-sections and significant right-of-way needs. Mr. Hazlett stated that a corridor master plan will be developed over 12 to 18 months to define improvements to the Spine.

Mr. Hazlett stated that environmental studies, a federal requirement, would be done after the corridor master plan. He said they would be done in smaller sections to allow for faster implementation.

Mr. Hazlett then described elements to corridor operating principles: transit integration, freight considerations, and advanced traffic management, and the goal of the master plan is to blend them together. Mr. Hazlett spoke of right-of-way. He said that not much right-of-way is available from the Stack to Loop 101 and they want to ensure that Interstate 17 flows well, but we stay within the program.

Mr. Hazlett stated that a charter of project partners (elected officials, MAG, FHWA, and ADOT) would help to make this happen, and the group of MAG, FHWA, and ADOT (management partners) already meets weekly. He added that the charter partners would give approvals at decision points before moving forward. Mr. Hazlett stated that they would like to proceed on this process as soon as possible.

Chair Lane asked if there were any questions.

Vice Mayor Sellers stated that the South Mountain Freeway will play a significant role on Interstate 10. He asked if that would be considered in the corridor plan. Mr. Hazlett replied that for planning purposes, they assume that the South Mountain Freeway will be in place because it is a part of the Regional Transportation Plan.

Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, stated that time is of the essence because there is \$1.5 billion to be programmed for these two corridors and it is important to identify solutions fairly quickly and get some cost effective spot improvements underway to provide congestion relief. Mr. Anderson stated that the Interstate 10 EIS has been underway for 12 years and a lot has changed. He noted that a large part of the estimated cost is from right-of-way. Mr. Anderson stated that large expenditures for right-of-way purchases do not really provide a lot of benefit to the motoring public and result in significant neighborhood upheavals. Mr. Anderson stated that keeping improvements within the existing right-of-way provides a cost effective solution and minimizes impact to the community. He stated that capping the footprint of these two corridors is needed because not a lot of right-of-way is available nor acquired easily. Mr. Anderson stated that with technical advances, they think that active traffic management could be deployed and could increase throughput by 20 percent with the existing pavement. He said that efforts to identify spot improvements have been accelerated. Sometimes to move forward you have to step back and this is what they are doing because some of the solutions were just too expensive. Mr. Anderson stated that the last thing they want is to have a project on the shelf because it is too expensive to build.

7. Legislative Update

Eileen Yazzie, MAG staff, provided an update on legislative issues of interest. Ms. Yazzie stated that on April 26, 2013, the federal government issued a notice of funding availability (NOFA) for the 5th Round of Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) discretionary grant funding. She advised that there is a total of \$473.8 million available through a multimodal, merit-based, competitive grant program, with \$120 million for rural areas, and \$353.8 million dedicated to projects in urban areas.

Ms. Yazzie noted that the application process has quick deadlines and turnaround times, with grant submissions due on June 3, 2013. She added that projects are required to be through the federal design, environmental, and right-of-way process by September 30, 2014, with priority for projects that can meet the federal requirements by June 30, 2014. Ms. Yazzie stated that projects submitted must have a minimum 20 percent local match, and it has been suggested by the USDOT to have a 40-60 percent local cost share to be competitive. She added that the usual local match for federal projects in our region is 5.7 percent.

Ms. Yazzie stated that MAG, working with Valley Metro and member agencies, identified two projects that can meet the federal requirements and compete for TIGER funding: the Tempe Streetcar (which is in the Regional Transportation Plan and the MAG TIP) and the South Phoenix Transit Facility Refurbishment (which is in the MAG TIP).

Ms. Yazzie stated that this item was on the agenda for possible action to support the applications of these two regional projects for TIGER grants.

Chair Lane thanked Ms. Yazzie for her report and asked if there were questions.

Mayor Mitchell asked for clarification on the June 30, 2014, date for projects selected to receive the TIGER grants. Ms. Yazzie replied that projects need to have completed the federal process (pre-design, right-of-way clearances, environmental process) by that date, but do not need to have started construction.

Mr. Smith asked Ms. Yazzie the success rate of projects in the MAG region receiving TIGER grants. Ms. Yazzie replied that past applications were not led by the region, and so far, no projects submitted by cities or towns from our region have received an award. She noted that this was the first concerted effort to submit an application from a regional perspective.

Mr. Smith stated that keeping a regional focus could result in this region receiving an award. Mr. Smith stated that the application could be funneled through the TPC and Regional Council, and then to the Congressional Delegation.

Chair Lane stated that the submission date is June 3, 2013. He said that he assumed many of the technical details are already in motion, such as the availability of matching funds.

Ms. Yazzie replied that was correct. She said that the table on page two of the handout material shows the matching funds that have been identified. Ms. Yazzie pointed out that the Tempe Streetcar project has approximately 30 percent match rate and the South Phoenix Transit Facility Refurbishment has more than 50 percent match rate. Ms. Yazzie stated that both of these projects are already in the MAG and federal processes.

Chair Lane asked for clarification if any of the matching funds are Proposition 400 funds. Ms. Yazzie replied that the majority of the Tempe Streetcar match is Proposition 400 funds and the majority of the South Phoenix Transit Facility Refurbishment match is local Phoenix funds.

Chair Lane asked if the funds for the Tempe Streetcar project had already been allocated. Ms. Yazzie replied that both of the projects are programmed in the Regional Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program. She noted that receiving TIGER grants would provide the ability to complete the projects more quickly, and the projects' existing funding (Proposition 400 and federal 5307 funds) would be freed up for other projects.

Chair Lane asked for clarification of action needed. Mr. Smith stated that the Transportation Policy Committee was requested to make a recommendation to the Regional Council to support these projects for TIGER grant applications.

Chair Lane asked for clarification that a vote was not for reallocation of funds. Mr. Smith replied that was correct.

Mayor Mitchell asked for clarification if Valley Metro had come before MAG to get approval of the projects for TIGER applications. Mr. Smith replied that in the past, member agencies would submit individual applications and would ask MAG for a letter of support to accompany the application. He noted that all of the projects competed against each other, and after submitting applications four times and not winning any awards, they thought there could be a better, and more successful, option – by submitting projects as a region. Mr. Smith noted that this region is a donor – it is the 14th largest metro region in the country and has not received any funds from the TIGER grant program.

Mayor Mitchell asked for clarification if the recommendation would include the amounts of the applications would be requesting. Ms. Yazzie replied that TPC and Regional Council action would be sought for support of the project applications, not a recommendation of the amount being applied for. She noted that the South Phoenix Transit Facility Refurbishment application would be approximately \$10 million and the Tempe Streetcar application would be approximately \$10 million to \$20 million. Ms. Yazzie noted that the average awards for TIGER grants are not large – usually in the \$13 million to \$16 million range. She noted that in the first round of TIGER grants, projects received larger amounts – a Kansas City project received \$30 million to \$50 million, but the amounts awarded have been getting smaller as time goes on.

Mayor Mitchell asked for clarification of the amount of Proposition 400 funds being freed up, if each project received \$10 million, for example. Ms. Yazzie replied that both of the projects are already funded and in the TIP. She said that Tempe is competing for new federal Small Starts/New Starts funding, so it is not completely funded, but Phoenix's project is currently funded in the TIP with local and federal funding. Ms. Yazzie stated that if TIGER funding was awarded, allocation of the funds freed up would come back through the MAG process for any modifications to the TIP. She noted that the Phoenix project is in the TIP with local and federal funds and if the project received a TIGER grant, federal 5307 transit funds would be freed up to use for other transit projects.

Mayor Stanton moved to recommend support of the Tempe Streetcar and the South Phoenix Transit Facility Refurbishment projects for TIGER grant applications. Vice Mayor Sellers seconded. Chair

Lane noted that no public comment cards had been received. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

8. Request for Future Agenda Items

Topics or issues of interest that the Transportation Policy Committee would like to have considered for discussion at a future meeting were requested.

Mayor Stanton suggested an update or a field trip on SkyTrain at Sky Harbor Airport.

9. Comments from the Committee

An opportunity was provided for Transportation Policy Committee members to present a brief summary of current events. The Transportation Policy Committee is not allowed to propose, discuss, deliberate or take action at the meeting on any matter in the summary, unless the specific matter is properly noticed for legal action.

No comments were noted.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:07 p.m.

Chair

Secretary