

# Meeting Notes

**Meeting Date:** June 11, 2009  
**Subject:** Yuma West Corridor Development Plan PRT Meeting #1  
**In Attendance:**

- |                                    |  |   |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>ADOT:</b> Mike Normand          | <b>Goodman-Schwartz:</b> David Schwartz                      | <b>METRO:</b> Wulf Grote, Jim Mathien                             |
| <b>Gannett Fleming:</b> John Derr  | <b>Blaydes Consulting:</b> Lonnie Blaydes                    | <b>RPTA:</b> Stuart Boggs, Carol Ketcherside                      |
| <b>Wickenburg:</b> Gary Edwards    | <b>MAG:</b> Kevin Wallace, Marc Pearsall                     | <b>URS:</b> Tim Baldwin, Kammy Home, Rick Pilgrim, Matt Carpenter |
| <b>Surprise:</b> Randall Overmyer, | <b>Phoenix:</b> Mark Melnychenko                             | <b>Goodyear:</b> C. Esquiver                                      |
| <b>El Mirage:</b> Scott Chesney    | <b>Buckeye:</b> David Johnson, Suparna Dasgupta, Sean Banda  | <b>Avondale:</b> Ken Galica, Kristen Taylor, Rogene Hill          |
| <b>METRO:</b> Jim Mathien          | <b>Phoenix:</b> Jay Dewitt, Lorenzo Barcellone, Maria Hyatt, | <b>Tolleson:</b> Shaunne Lee Rice                                 |
| <b>Peoria:</b> Dave Moody          |  |   |

Meeting Notes:  
Marc Pearsall, MAG gave an introduction to the group, describing the committee and briefly described the Yuma West Corridor Development Plan project.

Rick Pilgrim, URS began the presentation by introducing the study team and described the roles of the groups involved in the project. The presentation followed the outline of the agenda:

- Introductions and Roles/Responsibilities of the Team
- Project Background and Overview
- Study Goals and Objectives
- Objectives/Work Flow
- Schedule
- Coordination/Milestones
- Next Meeting

## Introductions and Roles

The role of the PRT will be to refine and review the work product that is produced from the consultant team.

Rick Pilgrim, MAG Study Team, then introduced the consultant staff tasked for this project.

### **Project Background & Overview**

Rick Pilgrim, MAG Study Team, stressed that the purpose of this corridor development plan is to address the question of whether commuter rail service has a future in this corridor. Rick added that the question of the logical locations for stations will be raised during this study process.

### **Study Goals and Objectives**

Marc Pearsall, MAG, provided an update regarding local representation at Union Pacific Railroad. Luis Herredia, formerly with Union Pacific, will be replaced temporarily by Jerry Wilmoth until a permanent replacement is determined.

Lonnie Blaydes, MAG Study Team, mentioned that the railroads are swamped with requests for meetings, consultations, etc. due to the stimulus money made available through the ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) grants to states demonstrating viable, shovel ready high speed commuter rail projects.

Rick Pilgrim, MAG Study Team, later mentioned that the MAG Commuter Rail Strategic Plan helped develop a strategy for addressing corridor develop plan work for the region, as well as a system approach throughout the valley.

Rick added that at one point in the Yuma West corridor's history Amtrak service was used in the corridor, but ended in 1996.

Stuart Boggs, RPTA, asked if all extensions identified within the strategic plan would be modeled. Rick Pilgrim mentioned that 15 networks would be modeled within the System Study process. Rick added that population and densities are a few of the criteria weighed during the modeling process.

### **Primary Project Objectives and Work Flow Corridor Development Framework**

With respect to why Yuma West was corridor chosen an initial study corridor identified within the Strategic Plan, Rick Pilgrim mentioned that the corridor ranked as one of the highest for potential success within the system.

With regard to vehicle technology, Rick stated that diesel locomotives are becoming more and more environmentally friendly.

Tim Baldwin, MAG Study Team, indicated that a successful commuter rail implementation will require agreements to be in place early between the governmental entity and the railroad.

Tim added that other transit modes such as Light Rail Transit (LRT) is limited because of distance. Most commuter rail stations are in place every 5+ miles. LRT stations are typically placed every mile.

Rogene Hill, City of Avondale, asked whether the study process is taking into account changes to local plans and the transit life cycle program. Rick Pilgrim, MAG Study Team, answered in the affirmative that these would be considered.

With regard to modeling, Rick Pilgrim indicated the modeling process would focus on years 2030 and buildout.

Rogene Hill, City of Avondale, mentioned that the City is considering a no-build stance on the 801 highway.

David Johnson, Town of Buckeye, asked whether this study is looking at the way things are funded to accomplish this project. Rick Pilgrim confirmed that a general review of financial means to support commuter rail implementation would be conducted within the System Study.

Mike Normand, ADOT, asked whether rail and highway projects would be evaluated by costs. Rick Pilgrim indicated that both would be evaluated. Rick added that if a highway project was not built, the level of travel demand commuter rail could influence would be evaluated.

Mike Normand added that there may be rail funding for these sort of projects. The region, as well as the State, needs to be in a position to take advantage of these funding opportunities.

Tim Baldwin, MAG Study Team, mentioned that railroad coordination is very important to the success of the project, as well as potential future commuter passenger service.

Tim Baldwin added that another large factor is the liability issue for operating services on the railroad track or right of way.

Tim Baldwin mentioned that a large cost to railroad companies is the Federal Railroad Administration requirement (within 5 years) for positive train control (PTC). Ron Rypinski, MAG Study Team, indicated the estimated cost to implement PTC is \$1-1.5M per mile. PTC will add a level of complexity and costs to the implementation of commuter service.

Stuart Boggs, RPTA, asked whether leasing or purchasing rail equipment is more effective. Lonnie Blaydes, MAG Study Team, indicated leasing new vehicles is likely the best first step.

Regarding transit oriented development, Tim Baldwin, MAG Study Team stated the governmental entity or alike should be in a position to dictate land use development. Tim added that higher density near a station is best, allowing for a reduced carbon footprint.

Mike Normand, ADOT, stressed the importance of station modal connectivity, e.g. bicycle, pedestrian, vehicle, light rail transit, etc.

Marc Pearsall, MAG, indicated that it is too early to determine station locations within the study process.

Suparna Dasgupta, Town of Buckeye, indicated the Town has had recent conversations with Union Pacific Railroad to discuss property development for freight operations.

Jim Mathien, METRO, indicated this study should recommend the locations of future park and rides, in the interest of reserving property.

Marc Pearsall, MAG, stated that park and ride location determination is not the study's charge per say – there is not a dedicated funding stream to make those decisions at this point.

Jim Mathien, METRO, added that the study's capital cost estimates should be inflated to accommodate for costs of facility location and construction.

Rick Pilgrim, MAG Study Team, indicated that general, universal station planning guidance will be provided to the jurisdictions as part of this study process.

Rogene Hill, City of Avondale, asked how difficult it is to change or add station locations. Tim Baldwin, MAG Study Team, indicated that it's easy to add or change in the planning stages. Tim mentioned a sample cost for a platform is in the range of \$6-8 M. To this point, Mike Normand, ADOT, mentioned that it's more expensive the longer you wait.

Tim Baldwin, MAG Study Team, mentioned that federal funding will likely be involved in the construction of stations – by addressing stations earlier (environmental, property acquisition), the delay of implementation of service may be shortened.

Rick Pilgrim, MAG Study Team, indicated the corridor development planning process will make use of the best combination of factors involved in the implementation of service.

David Schwartz, MAG Study Team summarized the number of stakeholder meetings for all three study processes that will occur in the calendar year. David indicated a total of three stakeholder meetings would occur in the year.

A question was raised as to where future stakeholder meetings would be located, specifically within the corridor. Kevin Wallace, MAG, advised that the study team will consider the possibility for one for a meeting to occur in the corridor, e.g. Avondale, Buckeye, etc.

Kristin Taylor, City of Avondale, indicated they'd be willing to host future PRT meetings. Kevin Wallace, MAG, stated they'd likely still occur at the MAG offices.

### **Project Schedule and Coordination/Major Milestones**

Rick Pilgrim, MAG Study Team, summarized the meeting schedule and major milestones (see PowerPoint), which are to conclude at the end of the calendar year.

Next Meeting: August at MAG