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US-60/Grand Avenue COMPASS

Loop 303 to Interstate 10

Planning Partners
January 30, 2014

Meeting

PLANNING PARTNER ATTENDEES

Michael Celaya, City of Surprise
Bryce Christo, City of El Mirage
Robert Darr, City of Glendale
Denise Lacey, MCDOT

Martin Lucero, City of Surprise
Dana Owsiany, City of Phoenix
Jamal Rahimi, City of Peoria

MAG STAFF

Bob Hazlett
Micah Henry

Chaun Hill
Marc Pearsall

CONSULTANT TEAM

Dana Biscan, Burgess & Niple
Jason Pagnard, Burgess & Niple

Audra Koester Thomas, PSA

HANDOUTS

Agenda, PowerPoint Presentation, draft Vision Statement, draft access management advance information sheet, US-60/Grand Avenue COMPASS High Capacity Transit Analysis, draft selected commute trip reduction survey data, draft select link analyses.

Bob Hazlett, MAG project manager, called the meeting to order at 1:33 P.M.

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Hazlett welcomed everyone and asked all participants to introduce themselves.

2. RECENT ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

Mr. Hazlett provided a summary of recent activities, listing meetings held over the past six months and analysis completed to date. These items were covered in more detail in subsequent agenda items.

3. CITY MANAGERS AND GRAND AVENUE COALITION MEETING SUMMARIES

Mr. Hazlett reviewed key discussion points from the successful December 3, 2013 City Managers and the December 5, 2013 Grand Avenue Coalition meetings. Key action

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items that resulted from those meetings, Mr. Hazlett noted, included the importance of developing an access management plan, acknowledging the desire for commuter rail and the need to investigate potential interim transit-based solutions, and the desire for improved traffic signal timing through the corridor. Additionally, Mr. Hazlett noted that a desire to improve signing throughout the corridor was identified, and efforts include working with ADOT to identify potential wayfinding and advance signage options that provide a unified “branding” through the corridor. Direction was provided that the study should continue with evaluating the Red and Blue alternatives.

Mike Celaya, Surprise, added that these meetings were valuable in crafting a consensus direction on how to move forward.

4. VISION STATEMENT

Audra Koester Thomas, study team member, read aloud the draft Vision Statement that was crafted from feedback received by Charter Partners and stakeholders. Mr. Hazlett reviewed the draft guiding principles and asked participants to consider the draft vision further. Feedback on the draft vision would be solicited electronically from Planning Partners in early February; a revised vision would then be forwarded onto partner agencies intergovernmental relations staff for review.

Jamal Rahimi, Peoria, inquired what extending of the Charter (a draft vision guiding principle) might accomplish. Mr. Hazlett responded that this principle simply articulates the desire by charter agencies to remain committed to the project beyond completion of this study, through implementation.

5. DRAFT CORRIDOR CONCEPT EVALUATION

Mr. Hazlett reviewed the latest analysis regarding the four corridor concepts: Red, continued improvements articulated in the Regional Transportation Plan; Purple, reconsideration of a Grand Avenue Expressway; Blue, plan for commuter rail and operational improvements; and Green, a plan for other high capacity transit options.

Mr. Hazlett noted that a review of the draft results of travel demand analysis, including commute trip patterns and select link analysis, indicated that people generally live and work locally in the West Valley and that further, much of the traffic (today, and that projected in 2035) on US-60/Grand Avenue is very localized. Further, results of the High Capacity Transit Analysis, that reviewed potential transit stop locations using the ST-LUIS evaluation methodology, indicated that only four of the nine locations within the US-60/Grand Avenue corridor met thresholds for further investigation. Jason Pagnard, study team project manager, indicated that the results of this work, combined with other analysis (i.e., MAG Commuter Rail Studies), indicates that the corridor is largely

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“suburban” in nature; while transit options may not be suited for the corridor now, Mr. Pagnard indicated that there might be potential in future investments to build capacity served by interim transit solutions (i.e., bus rapid transit).

Chaun Hill, MAG, inquired if elected officials from stakeholder communities had reviewed the commute trip pattern and select link analyses; Mr. Hazlett noted that the information had been shared with city managers.

Martin Lucero, Surprise, inquired as to the data sources for the commute trip pattern analysis. Mr. Hazlett indicated that the information was derived from the Annual Commute Trip Reduction Survey, empirical data submitted by Maricopa County and MAG’s peer-reviewed travel demand model.

Mr. Lucero observed that the four locations that met the threshold for further transit analysis (Thompson Ranch Road, 27th Avenue, 43rd Avenue, and 59th Avenue) are linear and the potential to “chain” a future transit alternative exists.

Both Mr. Hazlett and Mr. Pagnard indicated that discussions with the city managers focused on future “market share” of development, and although communities may have high density zoning in place, that level of development will not likely occur in all zoned areas. The size of a potential transit oriented development market is constrained within the region and that different areas, including different areas within a city, will be in competition for a piece of the market.

Denise Lacey, MCDOT, emphasized support for interim transit options (e.g., bus rapid transit, local arterial bus, circulators, etc.), observing that a lack of transit connectivity currently exists in the northwest part of the Valley.

Based on analysis completed to date, coupled with the feedback received from stakeholders and public, Mr. Hazlett indicated that the concept screening resulted in the Red and Blue alternatives moving forward for further analysis, and a framework that would:

- Continue with planned improvements from the Regional Transportation Plan;
- Establish a corridor-wide access management system;
- Address remaining bottlenecks and congestion points; and
- Plan for commuter rail with operational improvements.

Mr. Lucero emphasized the need for interim transit capacity to support the development of long-term commuter rail service.

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Ms. Lacey reiterated her support for interim solutions, and together with this study, MCDOT and others should move forward with identifying and implementing improvements that move the vision forward.

Ms. Hill concurred with Ms. Lacey, and noted that the Charter acknowledges action would result from this study effort.

Mr. Rahimi observed that signal timing and access management concepts can be easier pieces of to implement, but that the "grand" vision will need to mature over time.

6. ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Mr. Hazlett initialized discussion regarding access management, requesting that participants review the draft advance information sheet on the subject, and specifically, on the access management zoning overlay concept. Mr. Hazlett noted that in late February, rather than meeting as a group, the study team would be reaching out to stakeholder agencies to hold individual meetings regarding access management and roadway geometric improvements. Participants from Surprise, El Mirage and MCDOT indicated that a joint meeting, along with Youngtown, might be beneficial instead of meeting separately.

Mr. Lucero indicated that discussions of access management can be very disconcerting to property owners. Ms. Lacey concurred, stating that discussions often focus on "taking access" when in reality, the concept is to "improve access." Mr. Pagnard acknowledged these comments, indicating the zoning overlay technique may be a tool local governments can use to effectively implement access management along an ADOT roadway.

7. NEXT STEPS

Mr. Hazlett reviewed project next steps:

- Circulate draft Vision Statement;
- Completion of alternative concept evaluation;
- Develop "straw man" for potential access management and roadway geometric improvements;
- Conduct individual Planning Partner access management workshops/meetings in February;
- Hold one-on-one meetings with major property owners in March; and
- Facilitate two geographically-based public outreach workshops in April.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:30 P.M.