

MEETING MINUTES
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
TRANSIT COMMITTEE

March 13, 2014
Maricopa Association of Governments; Ironwood Room;
302 N. 1st Avenue, Suite 200
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

*ADOT: Nicole Patrick	*Paradise Valley: Jeremy Knapp
Avondale: Kristen Sexton	#Peoria: Bill Mattingly for Maher Hazine
#Buckeye: Ed Boik for Andrea Marquez	Phoenix: Ken Kessler for Maria Hyatt
Chandler: Dan Cook for RJ Zeder	Queen Creek: Muhamed Youssef
El Mirage: Jorge Gastelum	Scottsdale: Madeline Clemann, Chair
#Gilbert: Leslie Bubke	Surprise: David Kohlbeck
Glendale: Matthew Dudley for Cathy Colbath	#Tempe: Robert Yabes
*Goodyear: Cato Esquivel	*Tolleson: Chris Hagen
Maricopa: David Maestas	Valley Metro: Wulf Grote
*Maricopa County DOT: Mitch Wagner	#Youngtown: Grant Anderson
Mesa: Jeff Martin for Jodi Sorrell	

*Members neither present nor represented by proxy. + - Attended by Videoconference
- Attended by Audioconference

OTHERS PRESENT

Eileen Yazzie, MAG	Carlos Lopez, ADOT
Marc Pearsall, MAG	Wendy Miller, Phoenix
Alice Chen, MAG	Martin Lucero, Surprise
DeDe Gaisthea, MAG	Abhi Dayal, Valley Metro
Julie Walker, MAG	Jen Pyne, URS

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:08 a.m. by Chair Clemann. She welcomed everyone in attendance and announced that a quorum was present. She noted that five members were joining the meeting by teleconference; Grant Anderson of Youngtown, Ed Boik of Buckeye, Leslie Bubke of Gilbert, Bill Mattingly of Peoria, and Robert Yabes of Tempe. Chair Clemann asked if there were any public comment cards, and there being none, proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

2. Approval of Draft February 13, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Chair Clemann asked if there were any comments or corrections to the Draft February 13, 2014 meeting minutes. Hearing none, she called for a motion. Mr. Martin of Mesa moved to approve the motion, Mr. Kessler of Phoenix seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Chair Clemann then proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

3. Call to the Audience

Chair Clemann stated that she had not received any request to speak cards from the audience and moved onto the next item on the agenda.

4. Transit Program Manager's Report

Chair Clemann invited Eileen Yazzie of MAG to brief the Committee with the Transit Program Manager's Report.

Ms. Yazzie noted that she had four items to present. She began by explaining that JARC (Job Access Reverse Commute) applications would electronically distributed on the following day for review. She said that in conjunction with the notice, there would be a Tuesday morning JARC workshop that was optional for assisting those with questions. She then said that the next round of TIGER, also known as TIGER 6, was issued via a NOFA on March 3rd. There was \$600 million available via TIGER grants, with \$120m for rural and \$35m for planning grants, with \$445m left for urban regional projects. The stipulations were focused on job connectivity for disadvantaged, with more strict and detailed criteria; a change from previous rounds. The time constraints were that the application was due on April 28th, with funding obligations by September FY 2016, and environmental reports due by June of 2016. She then noted that via Valley Metro's RTAG, they issued a call for projects for transit projects due by March 7th. She added that on the non-transit side, MAG would be issuing a call for projects for ideas, to utilize the fast application and to vet the items at TRC for recommendation on March 27th. Mr. Grote added that the VM process was following last year's program guidelines, with a submittal of ideas so that a complete list would be available for a followup meeting two weeks later; for the purpose of coordinated efforts by the region with the FTA. He noted that the process was highly competitive, with many other successful projects aiming for \$5-10 million range with a 50% match. Ms. Yazzie added that the request amounts for the projects were advised to be a minimum of less than \$10 million, with only \$1 million for rural; with an 80/20 percent match for all projects. She also added that the 20 percent match could not come from another match. Discussion followed with input by Chair Clemann, Dan Cook, Jeff Martin and Ken Kessler.

Ms. Yazzie then advised that Vice Chair Maher Hazine of Peoria had retired, thus his position of Vice Chair was open for consideration by interested parties. Staff would be sending out a solicitation email to the TC members. Ms. Yazzie also introduced the new MAG Transit Planner, Julie Walker, who joined MAG recently. Chair Clemann thanked Ms. Yazzie for her report and asked if there were further questions or comments regarding the agenda item. Hearing none, she moved onto the next item on the agenda.

5. Summary of Transit and Multi-Modal Studies

Chair Clemann then invited Ms. Yazzie to present a Summary of Transit and Multi-Modal Studies.

Ms. Yazzie noted that previously Matthew Dudley of Glendale had requested MAG to present a comprehensive summary of all current MAG Region transit and multi-modal studies performed over the past four or so years. She added that since 2010, MAG had completed thirteen studies or plans related to the regional transit system and multi-modal initiatives, as well, Valley Metro had completed Phase 1 of the Regional Transit Standards and Performance Measures in 2013. She also observed that during the recent MAG survey where public sentiment was gauged about transportation and transit with potential new funding sources, it became clear that MAG and Valley Metro had done a lot of work, but those studies had not yet been summarized as a whole.

She then referred the members to a list of completed studies pertinent to transit and multi-modal topics: Commuter Rail System Study (completed 2010); Grand Avenue & Yuma West Corridor Development Plan (completed 2010); Regional Transit Framework Study (completed 2010); Sustainable Transportation & Land Use Integration Study (completed March 2013); Southwest Valley Local Transit System Study (completed April-May 2013); Northwest Valley Local Transit System Study (completed in September 2013); and the Designing Transit Accessible Communities (completed in September 2013). She also referred to the ADOT Passenger Rail Study between Tucson and Phoenix as another example of regional efforts.

Ms. Yazzie also noted that there were a variety of studies pending or underway on the topics of transit and multi-modal disciplines: Valley Metro Performance Measures/Service Standards (Ongoing; with MAG participation); Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Rail Crossing Recommendations Study (completed in Spring 2014); Hassayampa Valley Rail Corridors Cost Analysis (completed in Spring 2014); Grand Avenue Commuter Rail Corridor Cost Analysis Update (BNSF-MAG; ongoing, 2014); Transit Tools (Transit Market Research Study) (Pending; 2014); Southeast Valley Transit System Study (complete by June 2015) and the Regional Multimodal Level Of Service Map (Pending; 2014-15).

She noted that the studies enable the MAG Region to have a better understanding of the options and plans available, should the region be called to formulate a list of potential projects for a future Proposition 500 initiative package. She also explained that MAG had looked at the Regional Transportation/Transit Framework Study, wondering if it warranted an update. When analyzing our future projections, in relation to the recession and downturn, MAG's 2030 projections were in fact now nearly identical to our 2040 projections. Therefore, there was no need to update the four year old analysis, but that in the future we would need to re-enter the new data and re-run scenarios and multi-modal connections within the region.

Chair Clemann thanked Ms. Yazzie for her presentation and asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the agenda item. Mr. Dudley thanked Ms. Yazzie for the report and its assistance with helping with Prop 500 discussions and complimented Valley Metro with their new Regional Transit Standards and Performance Measures.

Brief discussion followed with Chair Clemann and Mr. Grote on the availability of archived studies, and Mr. Youssef, specifically as it pertained to ensuring the MAG region obtaining the best public

input data relating to transit. Mr. Martin added that while there have been many studies, there had not been an overall comprehensive vision of where the MAG Region wants to go in the future. Brief discussion and commentary followed.

Chair Clemann thanked the committee and asked if there were further questions or comments regarding the agenda item. Hearing none, she moved onto the next item on the agenda.

6. MAG Hassayampa Valley Rail Corridors Cost Analysis

Chair Clemann welcomed Marc Pearsall of MAG to present an update to the Transit Committee on the completed Hassayampa Valley Rail Corridors Cost Analysis.

Mr. Pearsall explained that this was the first of two inter-related presentations. The second would be given momentarily by Mr. Carlos Lopez of ADOT on the Wellton Branch Railroad Rehabilitation Study. Mr. Pearsall said that the spirit of the Hassayampa Valley Rail Corridors Cost Analysis was that the area was originally identified within the MAG I-8/I-11 Hidden Valley Transportation Framework Study as a potential illustrative corridor in the future. He said that the purpose was to review the technical feasibility of a new, conceptual railroad line connecting the communities of Buckeye/Arlington with Gila Bend; and Buckeye/Arlington with Morristown near Wickenburg.

He added that the purpose of these freight and passenger rail lines would be to serve a proposed future area of 500,000 residents by connecting the existing Union Pacific Railroad lines in Buckeye/Arlington and Gila Bend and the BNSF Railway line in the Northwest Valley; acting as a reliever line into the Valley as well as contributing to the development of an enhanced CANAMEX transportation alternative for the Hassayampa Valley and the SR-85 corridors. He noted that the footprint of this potential railroad corridor would be within/parallel to the north-south Buckeye-Gila Bend SR-85/I-11 corridor.

Mr. Pearsall continued his presentation by explained the contents of the final report, noting that the Kimley Horn staff, Brent Crowther and Michael Grandy, engaged in a literature review of all previous corridor related studies, such as the Arizona State Rail Plan, the Hidden Waters Corridor Feasibility Study and the MAG Yuma West Commuter Rail Study, field visit of the corridor, as well as a compendium of corridor and crossing cost elements: such as grade separated crossings, bridges, culverts/canals, switches, and utilities. The study also reviewed corridor cross-section, corridor development options as well as cost element quantities (based on rail industry and peer reviewed unit pricing) as well as planning-level cost for each corridor option.

He then displayed a map of the Wellton Branch, along with original survey maps of the original railroad alignments from the 1920s, and also showed the corridors between the Phoenix and Yuma areas, revealing the service levels before and after Amtrak's departure from Phoenix in June 1996. He stated that this left Phoenix, the most populous metro area/city in the U.S. lacking intercity passenger rail service.

Mr. Pearsall then summarized the field review of State Route 85, along with the variations in potential rail corridors from the UPRR Sunset Route/Gila Mainline in Gila Bend through to Buckeye

and then northward through the Hassayampa Valley, Douglas Ranch area to Morristown near Wickenburg, a total of nearly 80 miles of potential railroad. He reviewed the conceptual corridors, Segment 1: Morristown to Buckeye; Segment 2: Buckeye/ Arlington to Gila Bend along with 2A: Old Highway 80 and 2B: SR 85. The corridor cost elements concluded that Segment No. 1 would total over \$1.3 billion for a 50 mile railroad, while Segments No. 2A (Old Highway 80) and No. 2B (SR 85) would total around \$800 million respectively. He noted that any alignment would need to go through a thorough environmental review, and require the community input and approval of the private land owners before being considered a candidate for construction and implementation. He also emphasized that at present there was current market and no identified capital to build or operate the rail lines featured in the study.

Noting that the two items were linked, he stated that both he and Mr. Lopez would answer questions collectively after the next presentation. Chair Clemann thanked Mr. Pearsall and moved onto the next item on the agenda.

7. ADOT Wellton Branch Railroad Study

Chair Clemann welcomed Carlos Lopez of ADOT to present an update to the Transit Committee on the completed ADOT Wellton Branch Railroad Study.

Mr. Lopez of ADOT explained that his study focused on a segment of Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Phoenix Subdivision between Buckeye and Wellton (east of Yuma). He noted that the purpose of the study was to analyze the cost to reinstate both freight and passenger rail service, including the rehabilitation of over seventy miles of out-of-service track from Arlington(near Palo Verde) to Roll(near Wellton). He explained that the line had not seen freight or Amtrak service since the 1996-1997 and served as the primary freight and passenger route from Phoenix to Los Angeles from 1926 to 1996, when it was downgraded to storage.

Mr. Lopez advised that the rehabilitation of the Wellton Branch would provide a direct benefit to Union Pacific, Amtrak, and the State of Arizona by: providing rail connectivity between Phoenix and California, providing Amtrak access directly to Downtown Phoenix with through trains from Los Angeles and Houston/New Orleans; and provide improvements towards the ADOT State Rail Plan vision for passenger rail. He noted that the increase of potential for additional freight customers along Wellton Branch would contribute to the economic development objectives traditionally associated with freight rail.

He then explained the conclusions and assumptions of the study. The study team of URS Corp and ADOT through field inspections, surveys and document review, inspected trackways, ballast, rail, and the need for railroad crossties for Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Class 3 and 4 operations. One necessity would be to lengthen the JBS Five Rivers Cattle Feeding track at the McElhaney Yard siding in Wellton, thus permitting longer freight trains to stay off of the mainline between Yuma and Phoenix.

He noted that additional requirements for the improved railroad would be a new railroad signal system, including the new federally mandated GPS based signal system known as Positive Train Control (PTC). This new system would permit for Class 3 and 4 operation which allows faster

speeds. New at-grade Crossings, upgraded crossings, bridges, safety walkways and handrails, vegetation removal, and cosmetic repair was recommended in the detailed inspection.

Mr. Lopez explained the development of four alternative scenarios for improvements, each with its own cost analysis and range. He noted that the development of each scenario included the following considerations: coordination with Amtrak to discuss current train schedules and potential future train schedules; coordination with Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) to identify current and future train operations; and analysis of the potential requirements and cost for Positive Train Control (PTC). He also added that for each alternative scenario, the train operations requirements and UPRR policies and practices were identified. He then detailed each scenario with the following components: Scenario 1 – Through freight service only (FRA Class 2 Track) w/ max speed = 25 mph; Scenario 2 – Through freight service and basic Amtrak service (FRA Class 3 Track) w/ max freight speed = 40 mph and max passenger speed = 60 mph; Scenario 2A – Same as Scenario 2, but with more expensive PTC and Scenario 3 – Through freight service and higher speed passenger service (FRA Class 4 Track), and max freight speed = 60 mph and max passenger = 79 mph.

Mr. Lopez concluded by noting the planning level cost estimates developed for freight and passenger rail scenarios, then explained the alternatives that were crafted from the scenarios: Alt #1 FRA Class 2 Track with a requirement for active portion of Roll Industrial Lead (11.6 mi); Alt #1: FRA Class 2 Track with requirements for inactive portions of Roll Industrial Lead (19.7 mi) and Wellton Branch (56.9 miles); Alt #2 and 2A: FRA Class 3 Track and Alt 3: FRA Class 4 Track. He also discussed capital cost estimates for each alternative, from the \$165 to \$420 million range.

He also observed that the current freight demand along active Wellton Branch line / Phoenix Line does not warrant re-opening Wellton Branch at present time, but that as freight demand increased, the Wellton Branch line could be rehabilitated in phases. He also said that as for the state's passenger rail vision, two trains per day required rehabilitation of the out of service corridor, but that passenger traffic was not cost effective to justify the infrastructure investment of the corridor. He added that next steps to consider included identifying and developing freight opportunities, conducting a more detailed inventory, coordinating with UPRR and Amtrak to identify potential train and traffic volume flow and conducting train simulations if necessary. Mr. Lopez concluded his presentation.

Chair Clemann thanked Mr. Lopez and Mr. Pearsall for their presentations and asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the agenda item.

Brief clarifying commentary followed from Ms. Yazzie, Ms. Sexton and Mr. Dudley. Mr. Martin inquired as to why MAG was studying this topic. Ms. Yazzie responded that in lieu of a freight committee, the two railroad studies were in the spirit of MAP-21's stipulations under the guise of freight coordination, as it interacts with the MAG Region highway network and with MAG's freight planning and economic development charter. Mr. Anderson commented that studies like this were very good in assisting in building a vision of what the tools are for planning a future, thus using the railroad's right of way for both commodities and passengers. Discussion followed with commentary from Ms. Yazzie, Mr. Cook, Mr. Martin, Mr. Grote and Chair Clemann.

Chair Clemann thanked the committee and asked if there were further questions or comments regarding the agenda item. Hearing none, she moved onto the next item on the agenda.

8. Request for Future Agenda Items

Chair Clemann asked the members of the Committee if there were any issues that they would like added as future agenda items.

Chair Clemann requested that perhaps in the summer of 2014, the committee begin reviewing all of the pertinent documents and studies that were commissioned by MAG and Valley Metro, to assist in crafting a future transit vision. Ms. Yazzie noted that previous vision studies had been done, but with twenty years left on our current RTP and network, it may be difficult to get communities to scrap and revisit previous work in order to create a new vision. Mr. Martin inquired on the possibility of having ASU staff (or other universities) give a presentation on the great work they have done on sustainability. Mr. Youssef added that in the theme of efficient freight movement, that MAG look into working with cities and towns identifying major truck routes. Ms. Yazzie replied that the very task was to identify regionwide truck routes for phase 2 of the MAG Freight Study, as managed by Tim Strow.

Chair Clemann asked the members of the Committee if there were any additional issues that they would like added as future agenda items. Hearing no further comments, Chair Clemann proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

9. Next Meeting Date

Chair Clemann thanked those present and announced that the next meeting of the MAG Transit Committee would be held on Thursday, April 10, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. in the MAG Ironwood Room. There being no further business, Chair Clemann adjourned the meeting at 11:36 a.m.