Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: **October 8, 2009**

Subject: **Commuter Rail System Study – SRT Meeting #3**

In Attendance:

RPTA: Stuart Boggs	**MAG**: Marc Pearsall, Kevin Wallace	**METRO**: Jim Mathien
Florence: Mark Thompson	**El Mirage:** Pat Dennis	**URS**: Tim Baldwin, Rick Pilgrim, Jennifer Pyne
ADOT: Mike Normand	**Surprise:** Bob Maki	**Maricopa:** Kellee Kelley
Avondale: Margaret Boone-Pixley, Ken Galica	**Peoria:** David Moody	**Phoenix:** Maria Hyatt, Connie Randall
Buckeye: Brian Rose	**Tempe:** Dawn Coomer	**MCDOT:** Mitch Wagner
Queen Creek: Wendy Kaserman	**Glendale:** Matt Dudley	

Meeting Notes:

Tim Baldwin, MAG Study Team, conducted the meeting. He reviewed the input from the SRT during the September 22 meeting related to potential refinements for the final round of modeling.

Modeling Results to Date

Tim Baldwin reviewed the results of the base model runs; some of this information repeated what was presented at the September 22 meeting. These results included boardings estimated for each individual corridor using 30/60 headways as well as daily boardings per revenue mile. New information presented included line loadings for each individual corridor; this was a response to requests at previous meetings for more information on where riders were getting on and off.

Overall, SE, Grand Avenue, and Chandler are the strongest individual corridors in this model run. Heavy peak use and low off-peak use occurred consistently along all corridors. When combining corridors, generally ridership grew, with the exception of the Chandler corridor (likely because it would compete with SE in those combinations). Strong bus and LRT connections were noted as strengthening some corridors and station areas.

Some preliminary interlining results were presented. Five alternatives were modeled, including a Grand-SE combination and Yuma-SE. Three multi-corridor combinations also were run with varying headways. Boardings increased in interlined alternatives.

Boardings per revenue mile for all five alternatives were above the national average. More detailed interlining results will be presented at the next SRT meeting.

The next steps in the ridership forecasting process include completion of the analysis of interlining results, refinements to the model, sensitivity tests, and analysis of potential future extensions.

Proposed Final Modeling Approach

Six elements of the proposed final round of modeling were presented.

A: Assess impacts associated with a reduction in highway improvements.
B: Model program refinements, including potential changes to the end-of-line drive access and wait times.
C: Interline with Chandler to assess performance compared to the other east valley corridors.
D: Best Refinements scenario: use the best interlined scenario with the following adjustments:

- Along Grand Avenue, move the State Capitol station to 19th Avenue and Jefferson and tie in to LRT station.
- Along Yuma West, remove Liberty station and consolidate 2 Goodyear stations into one.
- Adjust BRT to feed CRT corridors – refinements so other transit feeds CRT rather than competes with it.

E: Use Best Refinements scenario and evaluate 4 potential extensions:

- Hassayampa
- Hidden Valley
- Tempe to Maricopa
- SE to Coolidge/Florence

F: Use Best Refinements scenario and evaluate additional extensions:

- Hassayampa
- Hidden Valley
- Hidden Waters
- SE to Coolidge/Florence
- Superstition Vistas to Coolidge/Florence

A sketch-planning approach is proposed to evaluate other issues that have been raised, including:

- Potential ridership to Palo Verde Generating Station that is currently using vanpools
- Special events ridership
- Growth impacts beyond 2030 model horizon

Discussion

Stuart Boggs, RPTA, noted that mini-peaks occur on freeways throughout the day. It was recognized that the model being used to assess commuter rail is inherently commuter-oriented, and it was questioned whether peak/off-peak patterns have evolved over time in peer cities. With regard to light rail, non-home-based work trips have been a higher proportion of all trips than was projected. The study team will consider this, and also will be completing sketch-planning considerations of special events ridership.

Ken Galica, Town of Avondale, asked whether I-10 is considered a barrier within the catchment area. The model does not view I-10 as a travel barrier, but rather assesses travel times and assigns trips to the most efficient method of making a trip. Whether a potential rider would be likely to take commuter rail would not depend on whether he/she crosses I-10 on the way but whether I-10 would provide a more efficient method of reaching the destination.

Noted that the team should evaluate potential feeders for the third round of modeling that would capture more ridership on the west side.

Brian Rose, Town of Buckeye, noted that SR 85 is emerging as an important employment corridor. Kevin Wallace stated that MAG is continually updating data for its models, and currently includes information provided by local jurisdictions through February 2007.

Mark Thompson, Town of Florence, noted that CAAG's 2040 projections are near final.

Dawn Coomer, City of Tempe, stated that the evaluation of corridors should consider the model results as one tool, but that it should only be one of the criteria for assessing the alternatives. Tim Baldwin responded that there is a diverse set of criteria for alternatives assessment, and this evaluation will be presented in more detail at the next SRT meeting.

There was discussion of potential delays in RTP projects and whether the modeling could or should reflect these delays. For example, it was noted that 801 is being pushed back although it is still part of the RTP. In addition, there was discussion of whether arterial BRT would be delayed throughout the valley.

As follow-up to the questions raised, MAG will provide more detailed information to the SRT via email on specific modifications to the highway and transit network that are being proposed for the final round of modeling.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will occur on November 16, 2009.