

**SOUTHEAST MARICOPA/NORTHERN PINAL COUNTY
AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
Kickoff Forum Notes**

November 27, 2001 – 10:00 am
Town of Queen Creek

Agency Invitees:

City of Apache Junction, City of Casa Grande, City of Chandler, City of Coolidge, Town of Florence, Town of Gilbert, City of Mesa, City of Phoenix, Town of Queen Creek, Town of Superior, City of Tempe, Gila River Indian Community, Maricopa County, Pinal County, CAAG, MAG, RPTA, ADOT, Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS), Arizona State Land Department (ASLD), State of Arizona Prison Operations, and FHWA

Attendees:

Agency Representatives

Bob Jackson, City of Casa Grande
Dan Cook, City of Chandler
Tami Ryall, Town of Gilbert
Jeff Martin, City of Mesa
Kevin Wallace, City of Mesa
Kelly Fletcher, City of Phoenix
Bill Heath, Town of Queen Creek
Dick Schoener, Town of Queen Creek
Rick Hettler, Town of Superior
Amber Wakeman, City of Tempe
Art Allan, Williams Gateway Airport
Urban Giff, Gila River Indian Community
Reed Kempton, Maricopa County DOT
Mike Sabatini, Maricopa County DOT
Bruce Varker, Pinal County
Teri Collins, RPTA

Andy Smith, ADOT-TPD
Diana Stein, DPS
Victoria Carella, ASLD

CAAG, MAG, and Consultant Staff

Brent Billingsley, CAAG
Karen Clum, CAAG
Maxine Leather, CAAG
Eric Anderson, MAG
Roger Herzog, MAG
Jack Tomasik, MAG
Chris Voigt, MAG
Caryn Logan Heaps, LSD
Patrizia Gonella-Ramos, Lima and Assoc.
Dan Hartig, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Cathy Hollow, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Gregg Snyder, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Linda Meronek, Wilber Smith Associates

Introduction

Brent Billingsley opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to Queen Creek for the Southeast Maricopa/ Northern Pinal County Area Transportation Study agency kick off meeting. Eric Anderson asked everyone to introduce himself or herself. The sign-in sheets for meeting attendees are attached. Eric then turned the meeting over to Dan Hartig of Parsons Brinckerhoff.

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Scope of Work

Dan Hartig distributed copies of the Scope of Work and Power Point slides of his presentation. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Review the Scope of Work
- Define the study area
- Discuss the field tour

Dan briefly described the three phases of the Scope of Work: Phase 1 - Data Collection and Issue Identification; Phase 2 – Define and Analyze Alternatives; and Phase 3 – Develop Recommendations. There was a suggestion that CAAG be mentioned more in the Scope to reflect the partnership of CAAG and MAG on this study. There was consensus that the Scope would be revised to include more references to CAAG and specifically state that both MAG and CAAG would have ownership of the final products.

Study Area

The next agenda item was a discussion of the study area. The following points highlight the discussion.

- The City of Mesa is very interested in the proposed growth along its eastern and southern borders and the impact on the City's transportation system.
- Casa Grande recently completed a transportation plan and does not believe they need to be included in the study area; however, they are interested in development on the Gila River Indian Reservation.
- The Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) is interested in cooperating with the study.
- The Town of Superior is interested in the study and the results, but does not expect to be an active participant.
- CAAG feels it is important to do joint planning for Apache Junction, Queen Creek, Hunt Highway, and US 60.
- The City of Chandler is interested in the impacts from the GRIC, Casa Grande, and Maricopa Road.
- MAG indicated that the modeling area for the study needs to be large enough to include the effects of the planned development in Pinal County.

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- Pinal County suggested that the area include Florence, Coolidge, and the Hunt Highway corridor.
- The Town of Queen Creek asked what the eastern boundary of the Southwest Study is and the answer was generally the county boundary.
- The City of Mesa commented that growth along Maricopa Road needs to be included.
- After more discussion, CAAG and MAG both agreed that there should be an overall study area that would be included in the transportation model and that there would be a smaller focus area where the study effort would be concentrated.

A copy of the preliminary study area map is attached to these meeting notes.

Field Tour

The next agenda item was a discussion of the planned bus tour of the area. RPTA has agreed to provide the bus(es) and driver(s) and suggested that the start time be around 10:00 am after the morning rush hour. There was consensus that the tour should occur after some initial study data collection, probably around mid-January. There was discussion about the participants and there was a desire to include elected officials as well as staff. This will be investigated further to determine the invitees and schedule.

Issue Discussion

The last item on the agenda was an initial discussion of preliminary issues as well as feedback from the agencies on what would 'make a successful study'.

- CAAG asked if the GIS data being prepared for this study was transferable to their system, which uses ADOT's ATIS. The two are not compatible, but this will be investigated further.
- The City of Mesa said that public outreach and good consultation is important. Adequate meetings are needed to coordinate all the on-going studies. Be innovative – this study is to develop transportation concepts and we need to look at activity centers and integration of modes.
- ADOT said that it is important to include State Land and other studies.
- CAAG said that this is an opportunity to do coordinated planning with MAG, help Pinal County communities, and provide a product that makes

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- planning in Pinal County easier. It is important to provide public officials with a usable product. It is an opportunity to be innovative.
- The Town of Superior would like to see US 60 as a divided highway through town.
 - Maricopa County suggested that the Flood Control Districts from both counties be included and that regional activity centers be identified. Provide good east-west and north-south connectivity and take advantage of the opportunities provided by Hunt Highway and Rittenhouse.
 - The City of Casa Grande is interested in implementation and funding options.
 - The GRIC sees an opportunity to coordinate among a diverse group.
 - The City of Chandler said they expect this study to consider multi-modal nodes, provide updated modeling, implementation strategies, and planning for all modes.
 - RPTA said that communication with the public is important and that reverse commute patterns need to be documented.
 - The Department of Public Safety (DPS) is concerned about the increase in traffic on two-lane roads particularly in the Florence and Coolidge areas.
 - The Town of Queen Creek is specifically interested in coordination of construction projects on Power Road and sees an opportunity for regional planning.
 - MAG said that this study needs to consider two significant development areas – the Williams Gateway Airport and the General Motors property.

Next Steps

The upcoming activities for the project include develop the website, prepare the consultation plan and coordination plan, initiate data collection, and schedule the filed tour.

If there are any comments or revisions to these notes, please contact Roger Herzog (602 254-6300), Brent Billingsley (520 689-5004), or Dan Hartig (480 921-6879).

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