

MINUTES OF THE
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
REGIONAL COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

October 11, 2000
MAG Office - Saguaro Room
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Mayor Keno Hawker, Mesa, Chair	Mayor Bill Arnold, Goodyear
* Mayor Elaine Scruggs, Vice Chair, Glendale	Supervisor Jan Brewer, Maricopa County
Mayor Ron Drake, Avondale	Roc Arnett, State Transportation Board
Mayor Cynthia Dunham, Gilbert	

*Those members neither present nor represented by proxy.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Keno Hawker, Mesa, at 10:00 a.m.

2. Approval of July 25, 2000 Meeting Minutes

Mayor Dunham moved, Mayor Arnold seconded, and it was unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2000 Regional Council Transportation Subcommittee meeting, as written.

3. Recommendation for Consultant to Develop Phase One of the MAG Regional Transportation Plan

Eric Anderson reviewed the selection process for a consultant to develop the new Regional Transportation Plan. He stated that MAG received three proposals in response to a Request for Proposals from the consulting teams of Parsons Brinckerhoff, Transcore, Gunn Communications, and Goodman/Schwartz; URS and BRW, Curt Lueck Associates, VRPA Technologies, and Selena Barlow Marketing Consultant; and Wilbur Smith Associates, Kimley Horn and Associates, RH & Associates.

Mr. Anderson stated that the Regional Transportation Plan Advisors, made up of the chairs of the MAG transportation committees, the Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee, the Human Services Technical Committee, a representative of the Indian communities, and representatives of three transportation agencies, was formed on the advice of the Transportation Subcommittee. The Advisors evaluated the proposals and recommended interviewing the three firms. Mr. Anderson stated that the interviews were conducted on October 4, 2000 and a consensus was reached to select URS Corporation. The Transportation Review Committee recommended that URS be selected. It is anticipated that the recommendation of the Transportation Subcommittee will be presented to the Management Committee on October 18, 2000 and the Regional Council on November 1, 2000 for action.

Chairman Hawker asked if the issues of concern to the Advisors had been addressed. Mr. Anderson replied that discussion is ongoing about the commitment of key personnel. He noted that URS was attempting to free up more of John McNamara's time. Chairman Hawker asked for clarification of the expert forums. Mr. Anderson stated that it is anticipated that the forums would be a part of the work plan. He indicated that discussions with the consultant could take place prior to the Regional Council meeting.

Chairman Hawker stated his support to select URS Corporation. He asked for a motion.

Mayor Arnold moved to recommend the selection of a consultant firm to develop Phase One of the Regional Transportation Plan for an amount of \$510,000. Mayor Drake seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Arnett joined the meeting.

4. Recommendation for the Future Designation of the CANAMEX Corridor Through the Maricopa Region

Chris Voigt gave an overview of the process for determining a joint recommendation by MAG and ADOT. He stated that input was received from stakeholders forums, open houses, and public meetings. Mr. Voigt summarized the key points heard during the consultation period. For the northern section of the designation the comments were: do not designate Loop 303 or the Sun Valley Parkway; locate the corridor west of the White Tank Mountains; consider Wickenburg/Vulture Mine Road or Eagle Eye Road; link to Wickenburg Bypass; and consider findings of related studies when they become available. Mr. Voigt showed a slide that displayed the related studies underway and their anticipated completion dates in 2001.

Mr. Voigt stated that for the southern section, support for I-8 and SR 85 was heard. Overall, designation of the entire corridor as soon as possible was preferred. Mr. Voigt stated that a presentation was given to the Governor's CANAMEX Task Force on September 14, 2000. After considering the results of the study and comments received, the Task Force unanimously passed two resolutions supporting the direction of the joint recommendation. Mr. Voigt stated that the joint recommendation was for the future designation of I-8 to SR 85 to I-10 and the Wickenburg Bypass, with no recommendation for the connection between I-10 and the Wickenburg Bypass until further study is completed. Further, the location the I-10 to Wickenburg Bypass connection is to be constrained outside of the nonattainment area for PM-10, eliminating Loops 303 and 101 and any other route through the urban center.

Mr. Voigt displayed a map presenting the joint recommendation. He noted that benefits to the region from the joint recommendation would include a new alternative route for truckers, safety and air quality advantages for the urban center, and federal funding for which SR 85 and the Wickenburg Bypass would be better positioned. Mr. Voigt showed a schedule of presentations to committees, with anticipated action by the Regional Council on November 1, 2000. He said that the designation would be considered by the State Transportation Board before Federal designation.

Chairman Hawker asked for clarification of governance. Mr. Bourey replied that Congress is the ultimate governing entity; however, the Regional Council, the State Transportation Board and the CANAMEX Task Force will be key players in developing recommendations. Chairman Hawker asked for clarification of benefits to the State once the designation has been made. Mr. Bourey explained about some of the corridor

funding being earmarked federally. Chairman Hawker asked for if Vulture Mine Road was beyond the linkage to the Wickenburg Bypass, since it appeared on the map. Mr. Voigt confirmed that it was. Chairman Hawker asked if Eagle Eye Road tied into the overpass. Mr. Voigt replied that in the original set of options, Eagle Eye Road did not tie into the linkage, but still appears on the map because at the July 24th forum, the County expressed interest in studying the route further. Dennis Smith stated that at one of the CANAMEX public meetings, a citizen supported Eagle Eye Road. Mr. Anderson stated that Eagle Eye Road could tie into US 60 instead of SR 74, which could tie into the Bypass.

Supervisor Brewer expressed her support for the resolution. She expressed concern for Eagle Eye Road as a possible route, since it is too far out. She commented on the fact that people will use the shortest route. If a route is too far out of the way, truckers will use an alternate route. Supervisor Brewer asked about the potential for loss of funding if the designation between I-10 and US 60 is delayed. Mr. Smith stated that recommendation of a partial route could be used in seeking federal funds. He commented that not requesting the route to be designated at this time would assist in not lobbying Congress twice for the full designation.

Supervisor Brewer asked for clarification of the amount of available funding. Dale Buskirk stated that the borders and corridors program allocates \$120 million annually. He stated that \$60 million was earmarked each of the past two years. Mr. Bourey added that the region could get earmarked funds as well, by working with congressional representatives.

Mr. Arnett commented on designating the Wickenburg Bypass from US 60 around route 74. Mr. Smith stated this would be a new road. Mr. Arnett asked for clarification that funding was not available for a new road. Mr. Smith replied that was correct. Mr. Arnett stated that having a broader scope may present more of an opportunity for funding than by narrowing down the route. Mr. Buskirk stated that federal law is ambiguous and various routes provide an opportunity for funding. Mr. Arnett expressed concern for limiting what can be funded by designating only a partial route. Mr. Buskirk replied that it could be interpreted as either limiting or focusing. He stated the focus has been to provide improvements to SR 85 to alleviate the significant traffic. Mr. Arnett commented on the inclusion of SR 85 in the Five Year Plan. Chuck Eaton stated that projects on both ends of SR 85 are included in the Plan. Mr. Arnett asked if SR 85 would benefit more by a designation than not. Victor Mendez replied that a designation would be more beneficial. He commented on competing for funding in the Five Year Plan. There is a shortfall of funding for SR 85.

Supervisor Brewer expressed the need for finality in consideration of Loop 303 if the resolution were approved. Mr. Smith replied that the citizens in Sun City expressed their opposition to Loop 303 being a truck route. This resolution was drafted to show that designating 303 would be not be considered further. Mr. Smith commented on the studies being completed to determine the connection. The extension of SR 85 to US 60 without using Sun Valley Parkway, perhaps the Vulture Mine Road in conjunction with the Wickenburg Bypass was discussed. Chuck Eaton stated that although figures are not yet available, the cost for improving Wickenburg Road to truck standards could be approximately \$10 to \$30 million per mile. Mr. Arnett stated that the \$60 million available in the borders and corridors program would not go far at this rate.

Chairman Hawker commented on controlling access and right of way on the possible routes on Sun Valley, Eagle Eye and Vulture Mine Roads. Mr. Smith stated that the County has jurisdictions on the roads, and there are many unanswered questions. Chairman Hawker stated that it is logical to study these routes, otherwise the traffic will head back into the urban area. He stated his support for the resolution.

Mr. Arnett commented that he had discussions with Knight and Swift Transportation Companies at the outset of the study. They had indicated that preference to use I-17 north, which is the logical route unless they were headed to Las Vegas. He stated that the result is to get traffic to the bridge. Mr. Arnett stated he would support the resolution.

Supervisor Brewer moved to recommend approval of the MAG/ADOT CANAMEX report and approve the resolution for the future designation of the CANAMEX Corridor through the Maricopa region. Mayor Dunham seconded, and the motion carried unanimously carried.

5. Update on the 303 Corridor Alignment

Eric Anderson stated that the Loop 303 Study is key for mobility of the Northwest Valley. He stated the importance of establishing a connection to I-17 to provide east/west movement. He introduced Mark Schlappi, MAG System Analysis Program Manager. Mr. Schlappi displayed a slide of a map of the study area and the cities within. He said that the study involves the New River alignment, the Carefree Highway, Lone Mountain Road, and Dixileta. The next slide showed a map of the general plan land use. He noted that the green areas represented open space and the red areas denote mixed use. Mr. Schlappi displayed a bar chart that showed North Valley population and employment growth in 2000, 2020, and 2040. He stated that the chart showed that growth is projected to be continuous and steady for the next 40 years and will almost double between 2000 and 2020. Mr. Anderson noted that the growth could occur earlier or later than projected.

Mr. Schlappi stated that the population density map shown on the next slide shows low density in the study area. Mr. Anderson noted that topographical features also lend to the low density. He stated that considerable open space and desert preservation space is shown. Chairman Hawker asked if a county-wide map on population density could be generated. Mr. Schlappi acknowledged that this could be done. Mr. Anderson stated that the land use data is currently being updated. Mr. Bourey stated that a map could be generated for the cities. Mr. Schlappi showed a map of the topographical features in the study area. He said that a traffic forecast of the New River option as a bypass for I-17 traffic. The forecast showed that I-17 would be congested in 20 years. Mr. Schlappi stated that the Carefree, Lone Mountain, and Dixileta could provide east/west availability for the region.

Mr. Schlappi showed a 2020 summary table that showed projected delays on freeways and surface streets. He noted that vehicle miles traveled was also included in the summary. Mr. Schlappi noted that the considerations include the fact that Dixileta cannot continue east because of the mountains. In addition, a wastewater treatment plant on the east side of I-17 on the Dixileta alignment is in the engineering process.

Mr. Anderson stated that interest has been expressed in the connection of the I-17 bypass, but this would not provide an east/west solution. Elimination of the I-17 bypass is not desired. Mr. Anderson noted that Phoenix has expressed concern about the impact to the land use plan around the Carefree and Lone Mountain area. Mr. Smith noted that there are planning, engineering and policy issues that need to be addressed. Once the alignment is determined, a design concept report is needed. With the EIS being started on the South Mountain, the West Valley has expressed interest in protecting the right of way for the 303. He explained that the 303 was a part of the 1985 plan. Mr. Anderson stated that the route needs to be defined first and then the right of way acquired.

Supervisor Brewer commented that residents are resistant to the Carefree option, which will not eliminate congestion. She indicated that citizen input is important on this issue and an east/west corridor is important. Supervisor Brewer stated that the New River option is a positive alternative. Mayor Dunham stated that the New River option will not address the east/west corridor issue. She commented that bringing the roadway south is logical.

Mayor Arnold commented that for the southern route, the Lone Mountain option could completely loop around the valley.

Mr. Arnett commented on the possibility of building a bridge in order to accommodate the flood plain north of New River dam. He asked if cost and size figures were known. Mr. Eaton commented that bridge in this area would need to be approximately one mile or more in length. Mr. Arnett suggested aligning Lake Pleasant Road south of New River dam to Lone Mountain Road, thus eliminating the need for a bridge. He suggested a compromise of Dixileta below the New River dam and align with 67th Avenue to Lone Mountain Road. Mr. Anderson stated that development is occurring in this area; however, alternatives would be considered.

Chairman Hawker stated that the entire Loop 303 over a 30 to 40 year buildout needs to be studied. Mr. Bourey stated that many issues will be resolved in the new Regional Transportation Plan.

6. Meeting Schedule for 2001

Mr. Bourey stated that a calendar of scheduled Transportation Subcommittee meetings through 2001 was drafted. He noted that annual calendars for the Regional Council, Executive Committee and Management Committee had already been sent out.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Chairman

Secretary