

Planning Partners

Meeting #11 Summary Notes

Date: April 23, 2013
Location: MAG Ironwood Room (302 N. 1st Ave.)
Handouts: Meeting Agenda, PowerPoint presentation

Participants: Cathy Colbath, City of Glendale; Daniel Cook, City of Chandler; Abhi Dayal, ValleyMetro; Ray Dovalina, City of Phoenix; Matt Dudley, City of Glendale; Chaun Hill, ADOT; Reed Kempton, City of Scottsdale; Scott Omer, ADOT; Dana Owsiany, City of Phoenix; Connie Randall, City of Phoenix; Robert Samour, ADOT; Ed Stillings, FHWA; Robert Yabes, City of Tempe; Tim Wolfe, ADOT;

MAG Staff and Consultants Present: Bob Hazlett and Tim Strow; Mike Falini, Alan Ferreira, Dan Marum and Amy Moran, Wilson & Company; Audra Koester Thomas, PSA, Inc.

Meeting convened at 1:33 p.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Bob Hazlett, MAG's Central Phoenix Transportation Framework Study (CPHX) project manager, welcomed all in attendance and led participant introductions.

2. Why Are You Here

Mr. Hazlett provided a review of issues and opportunities facing the metropolitan system, including funding uncertainties, freight and goods movement, transit successes and pending operations and maintenance needs. Combined, Mr. Hazlett underscored that these realities necessitate a more regional, system consideration instead of previous efforts that focused on localized projects. He invited participants to Transportation Policy Committee meetings where key issues focused on these sorts of realities would be discussed in the coming months to help chart the direction and set the foundation for the next "NexGen" regional transportation plan, (initially targeted for 2015.) It was acknowledged that communities would need to begin their own discussions quickly in order to contribute to the regional visioning dialogue.

Over the course of the past year, Mr. Hazlett indicated that the CPHX study team focused efforts on surface network improvements to the central core that would feed into this next generation regional transportation plan.

3. Phase I Summary Report and Executive Summary

Dan Marum, project manager, Audra Koester Thomas, project team member, and Mr. Hazlett provided a review of Phase I efforts, including a review of the transportation improvements and strategies that were “big ideas” identified as part of Phase I.

Scott Omer inquired how the “big ideas” would be implemented. Mr. Hazlett responded that many of the “big ideas” were further investigated in technical memorandums produced by the study team. The memorandums, including those that were distributed in draft form prior to the meeting, explore potential applications of the ideas.

Discussion ensued whether transit opportunities should be featured more prominently in the list of “big ideas”. Mr. Hazlett responded that, based on feedback from Phase I, there had been direction to deliberately focus on surface street improvements and that the team wanted to honor the concerns regarding specific inclusion of transit ideas prior to more detailed study into prioritizing and assigning high capacity transit corridors. Mr. Marum acknowledged that several transit concepts were identified, although the study has remained silent on specific modal recommendations. Based on the discussion, Mr. Hazlett suggested the study team revisit the list of “big ideas” and distribute for purposes of receiving feedback from participants.

4. Assessment of Improvement Strategies

As noted previously, hundreds of ideas and concepts for addressing future travel demand in central Phoenix were identified as part of outreach efforts in Phase I of the study. A few of these strategies that were highlighted include:

- Diverging diamond interchange (DDI) conversions: Mr. Hazlett noted that several locations were identified as potential applications, but further study would evaluate the best performing locations. Mike Falini, project team member, noted that levels of service have been improved by two- or even three-fold when intersections have been converted to DDI. With several potential DDI locations identified on I-10 West, it was recommended that its compatibility with potential future light rail applications be evaluated. It was also recommended the potential DDI locations identified at 7th Avenue and 7th Street be eliminated.
- Direct high occupancy vehicle (DHOV) ramps: Mr. Hazlett noted that Phoenix is already the largest DHOV network in the country and that study on additional DHOV locations would be evaluated, in particular to serving park-and-ride facilities. It was acknowledged that, while out of the central Phoenix core, many park-and-ride facilities exist outside of the study area, but directly influence the system as a whole. Reed Kempton, City of Scottsdale, noted that several potential DHOV locations were on collector streets and expressed concern that increased traffic would pour into a local system not prepared for the levels of service. Mr. Hazlett acknowledged that such constraints would be addressed in the technical memorandum while Mr. Marum acknowledged that solutions, including one-sided park-and-ride connections would be reviewed. To gain a better understanding of the system as a whole, Mr. Hazlett requested that future graphics include existing DHOV locations.

- Half-mile freeway/arterial over/under-crossings: Mr. Hazlett reviewed the potential half-mile crossing locations identified as part of Phase I and acknowledged that further study would likely eliminate several for potential application. Connie Randall, City of Phoenix, noted that they would like to see a half-mile crossing at 79th Avenue to connect down to Van Buren. It was also recommended that analysis of half-mile crossings and DHOVs should not be done in isolation. Finally, it was noted that a potential for a half-mile crossing at Galveston/L-101 is not longer feasible and should be eliminated from further study.
- “Choice”/double-lane exit ramps: Mr. Falini noted that the low-cost solution is very effective in eliminating last-minute weaving and that its application can be low-impact when utilizing existing infrastructure, including gore points.

5. Interstates 10 & 17 “Spine Corridor” Workshop

Mr. Hazlett reviewed the outcomes from the October 31, 2012 “spine corridor” workshop held by MAG, ADOT and FHWA to formulate direction for future efforts to address travel demands along this important corridor. To address a long-term vision for the corridor, the possibility of a programmatic (or “Tier 1”) environmental impact statement (EIS) process was identified, whereby improvements would be isolated and then phased. This application might allow several spot improvements to occur as categorical exclusions or environmental assessments, instead of necessitating a full EIS, thereby speeding project implementation and facilitating cost reduction. Mr. Hazlett noted that Seattle’s I-405 could serve as a potential case study. Also as part of this discussion was the potential application of active traffic management. Its application could be a way to extend pavement life and eliminate traffic flow “shock waves” (extreme increases and decreases in traffic speed), although Mr. Hazlett acknowledged its application in the Valley would necessitate considerable contributions at the local level to manage and service system data inputs. A pilot project along the Papago Freeway could assess whether integrated corridor management could be a viable application.

6. Freeway System Plan

As a result of the spine corridor dialogue, consideration was given to “capping” the system footprint, realizing continued expansion would be challenging—costs for right of way acquisition alone could render potential improvements unviable. As such, the project team performed a right of way analysis to evaluate existing ranges within the central core system. The draft technical memorandum, provided in advance of the meeting, presents the findings including alternative cross section for each right of way range. Discussion ensued as to whether Grand Avenue should be included as part of the system evaluation, as specific study for that corridor (“US-60/COMPASS”) is ongoing and recommendations will occur subsequent to delivery of CPHX findings.

7. SR-30 Corridor Alternatives Study

A product of the 2012 CPHX Charrette was the recommendation for extending the SR-30 corridor to Interstate 17 in the vicinity of the Durango Curve. Separate from future, more detailed analysis ADOT would conduct, the study team performed a high-level analysis for

potential feasible corridor alternatives. The findings will be presented in a technical memorandum that will be distributed for review.

8. Upcoming Work Efforts

Mr. Hazlett reviewed upcoming work topics, including analysis on DHOV locations and system compatibility, park-and-ride connectivity, roadway system preservation and maintenance, DDI strategies and ATMS strategies. As with previous framework efforts, the team will be presenting the key study findings in a “poster”.

9. Next Steps

Mr. Hazlett reminded participants of the final scheduled meetings, including May 23 and June 25. Participants were reminded that feedback and comments on the following draft documents were due to Amy Moran (amy.moran@wilsonco.com) by May 14, 2013:

- Interstate 10 and Interstate 17 Spine Corridor Summary
- Phase I Process Summary Report
- Technical Memorandum: Assessment of Alternative Improvement Strategies
- Technical Memorandum: Draft Freeway System Plan

Meeting adjourned at approximately 3:30 p.m.