



SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION
& LAND USE INTEGRATION STUDY

Stakeholders Group Meeting #3 Meeting Notes

Date: May 12, 2011, 1:30 pm – 3:05pm.
Location: MAG Saguaro Room
Attendees: 35

1. Welcome, Introductions and Agenda

Mr. Kevin Wallace of MAG initiated the meeting by welcoming back the attendees and reviewing the agenda. He noted that the stakeholder's process would be informal and that questions were welcomed throughout the meeting. He then asked for the Stakeholders to introduce themselves, and introduced Ms. Ellen Greenberg and Mr. Mark Shorett of Arup, the consultant project management team.

Mr. Wallace proceeded to review the previous meetings and process so far with a 'Project Refresh'. He referred to the visual presentation and reviewed expected project outcomes, the definition and framework for sustainable regional transportation, enhanced land use and transit integration, transit corridor "upgrade" recommendations, as well as local planning tools and project evaluation tools. He also reviewed what had been accomplished so far. Specifically, the stakeholders group meeting #1, working paper #1: 'Regional Transportation Framework' and issues, Stakeholders group meeting #2, had all been completed to date. He summarized upcoming deliverables, namely working paper #2: 'Moving toward Sustainable Transportation', as well as upcoming project work such as refining strategies and definitions, a regional market study, initial transportation and regional development scenarios, and the working paper #3 Draft update. He reminded the attendees that they are encouraged to attend an upcoming event: the ULI (Urban Land Institute) Forum on Thursday, June 2, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the A.E. England Building on 424 N. Central Avenue.

2. Meeting #2 Recap

Ms. Ellen Greenberg welcomed everyone to the meeting and referred to the first slide in the presentation. The first was 'Themes, Tools, Opportunities': She reviewed the topic of setting priorities and summarized the top themes culled from the second meeting's dotting exercise boards. She noted that the following categories received a variety of dots: Walkable Communities (25 Green), Multi-Modal Mobility (24 Green), Access to Destinations (15 Green), Equitable Access (11 Green), Energy Efficiency (10 Green), Top Tools, Commuter Rail (15 Green), Light Rail (11 Green), Congestion Pricing (11 Green), Parking Management (10 Green). She also explained that additional themes and tools were also added at the request of the participants: Bicycle/Pedestrian Network (10 Green), High Density Corridors (6 Green), Bicycle Facilities (6 Green), Local Bus Service (2 Green), Lower Priority Themes and Tools, Congestion reduction (10 red/2 green), High Speed Rail (5 Red/1 Green), Clean Vehicles (3 Green), and GHG Emissions Reduction (3 Red/1 Green).

Councilman Ron Aames of Peoria commented and cautioned on focusing too exclusively on walk-pedestrian access, as it might leave out and ignore the need to address auto access to transit nodes. He added that many passengers use autos to access bus and light rail service.

Mr. Ken Galica of Avondale suggested that it might be premature in labeling 'Selected' high capacity transit corridors, as it may show unintended early bias by pre-selecting transit corridors before they have been properly vetted or studied.

Ms. Maureen DeCindis of MAG mentioned the importance and need to continue focusing the study walkable and bikeable needs, as automobile needs are the default baseline criteria of all roadway studies. She added pedestrian and bike access have traditionally been afterthoughts. Robert Yabes of Tempe also added that the title 'Multimodal Corridors' assumes that all modes will be covered.

Mr. Curt Upton of Phoenix concurred that the Valley is already 'drive-able' by design and that the lack of emphasis on the needs of the pedestrian and cycling community should be addressed at the forefront of the study.

Mr. Wallace responded that the term 'Multimodal' does include all modes. He inquired with the group if they believed that the mode priorities may change and vary from node to node. Everyone concurred. Stuart Boggs of RPTA requested a clearer description of the relationship between transit and land use. Ms. Greenberg concluded her segment of the presentation.

Mr. John Ruggieri of Avondale discussed place types and modalities and additional commentary on 'select' versus 'warranted' corridors. Discussion followed.

Councilman Ames mentioned his experience with Philadelphia, PA and their walkable cities. He also explained that the Phoenix METRO light rail has many Park & Rides.

Ms. Greenberg replied though that walkability does not necessarily translate into success. She cited that many urban areas are very pedestrian friendly; but that other issues have contributed to those areas overall decline in population, etc.

Mr. Ben Limmer of METRO noted that the current light rail system has 3700 parking spaces. The original plan was for 5000 spaces, but was scaled back after review. He added that the current 3700 spaces are currently only 70% full on a daily basis.

Mr. Galica inquired as to the definition of 'Equitable Access'. Ms. Greenberg explained that it is 'providing transportation to people of different means'.

3. Sustainable Transportation: A Preliminary Definition for the MAG Region

Mr. Mark Shorett noted that this was a corridor based analysis. He explained that the charge was to find the right strategies. He added that the correct balance was peer review evidence versus best practices in helping to draft a definition for Sustainable Transportation in the MAG Region.

Mr. Shorett mentioned that working paper #2 was being prepared. He mentioned that the goal of the paper was to: 'establish transportation system that supports prosperity in Maricopa County by providing a variety of mobility options, offering walkable communities throughout the region and locating high capacity transit that will be chosen by households and businesses seeking excellent access to local and regional destinations.'

He noted that in planning, funding and operating the system, there was a great need was to place priority on initiatives that promote the following: land use and community design measures to increase walkability and bicycle use throughout the region and transit productivity in high capacity transit corridors, equitable access to services and to destinations, safety for all users, transit connectivity between employment districts and population centers, and lastly energy efficiency.

Mr. Shorett referred to the presentation and emphasized 'definition take-aways' namely: multi-modal system, walkable communities throughout, high capacity transit (HCT) in select corridors, equitable access, and market-responsive tools for supply and demand.

4. Strategies for Sustainable Transportation

Mr. Shorett discussed 'Draft Strategies for Walkable Streets', and the analysis of where strategies will work. He also cited components of the MAG Complete Streets report. He then began to review the strategy slides in the presentation, spending time on each topics merits and contents.

The first strategy was 'Definition + Priorities'; this included a strategy menu, 'toolbox to Implementation' and 'Corridor Analysis (upcoming).' The second slide focused on 'Finding the Right Strategies'; with emphasis on criteria and content: Criteria: concrete, "Moves the Needle", and the implementable; with Contents: impacts, tools, locations, and case studies.

Mr. Shorett and Ms. Greenberg asked 'Where will Strategies Work?': specifically in transit oriented places and walkable places. Within the presentation were a two series of draft strategies for the stakeholders to consider. The first was 'Place-Based Strategies': walkable streets, mixed-use communities, transit-supportive densities, Sustainable Development Districts, affordable TOD housing and fast/convenient transit. The second of the series was 'Support Strategies', which focused on Transit Demand Management (TDM), technical assistance and funding criteria.

He continued with the presentation and focused on the topic 'Walkable Streets: What? and How?' The purpose is to improve walkability, provide safe and convenient access to transit and local destinations, and ensure that people without vehicles or with disabilities can comfortably reach destinations. The How? focused on: tools, maximum block sizes, complete street standards, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle prioritization.

In regards to 'Mixed-Use Communities: What? How?', the purpose is bring daily amenities within convenient walking distance of residents and employees, and create a variety of activities along major streets throughout the day and early evening, increasing "eyes on the street" and community safety. The How?: focused on tools, neighborhood use mix thresholds and convenient access standards. Regarding 'Transit-Supportive-Densities: What?' The purpose is to ensure that existing and future development around HCT stations and along HCT corridors takes place at densities necessary to support high ridership, cost-effective service.

Mr. Shorett explained that under 'Transit Supportive Densities: Why? How?', the net cost per passenger mile with jobs and population per gross/acre were factored. 'Transit-Supportive Densities: How?' included: tools, corridor HCT housing and employment thresholds, station area HCT housing and employment thresholds, and station area overlay zones. Mr. Stuart Boggs of RPTA observed that Phoenix has neighborhoods that are dense, but essentially cut-off from the adjacent neighborhoods and streets due to walls and fences common in housing subdivisions. This limitation cuts off walkability and impacts potential transit ridership.

Mr. Gallica inquired why density was not listed. Ms. Greenberg responded that it was an oversight to not originally include 'density', so it has been added back into the list. Ms. DeCindis wanted to know if travel time could also be factored.

Mr. Jim Dickey of AzTA commented that the service speed column was misleading. Discussion followed. Mr. Wulf Grote of METRO commented on whether parking costs or parking supply was addressed. Mr. Shorett also noted that a ridership increase equaled a positive 10% change within the formula. Mr. Shorett also discussed the topic 'What Impacts Ridership?: Change in Transit Ridership as a result of Doubling Key Factors'.

Mr. Shorett continued with review of 'Affordable TOD Housing: What? How?' and the purpose is to provide housing opportunities for a full range of incomes in locations with convenient access to regional destinations by rapid transit. 'How?' includes: tools, density bonuses, TOD housing fund, expedited permitting and waivers, and parking standards. Ms. DeCindis noted a tool used by mortgage companies in Chicago area. Financial credit is given to those residents who live near transit... aka Location Mortgages. Councilman Aames commented that property values near transit are traditionally higher, so subsidies are common in order to keep housing costs affordable.

Mr. Shorett explained the following slide 'Sustainable Development Districts: What? And How?': the purpose is to leverage transportation investments to support economic development, innovation, sustainability, and community livability, Impacts, and support effectiveness of other strategies; and provides economic benefits. 'Sustainable Development Districts: How?' includes: tools, infrastructure and housing funding partnerships, energy and resource efficiency measures, and tax increment financing. One cited example was the Phoenix Green Rail Corridor Demonstration Project, which leverages LRT investment, transit, energy, innovation, economic development, and partnership with ASU and APS. Stage One had received \$25 Million in federal funding for residential retrofit program, track performance and results.

Mr. Shorett also noted 'Fast and Convenient Transit Service: What? How?' and its purpose was to provide transit service that is competitive with automobile travel to reach key regional destinations, that can be accessed with minimal difficulty, and that arrives at reliable frequencies. 'Fast and Convenient Transit Service: How?' includes tools, headway and service thresholds, station area amenity guidelines, and is market-based.

The 'Transportation Demand Management: What? And How?' category was explained and its purpose is to increase the availability and affordability of sustainable transportation options through workplace, community, and regional incentives and programs. 'Transportation Demand Management: Why?' includes tools, parking management, guaranteed ride home, real time transit information, congestion pricing, ride-sharing and matching.

Mr. Shorett noted the 'Sustainable Transportation Technical Assistance: What? How?' purpose is to increase the capacity of local agencies to plan and implement sustainable transportation facilities and programs. The 'Sustainable Transportation Technical Assistance: How?' includes tools, model codes, communication tools, planning and facilities grants, transit-oriented, walkable, and TOD acquisition funds.

Mr. Shorett referred to the last two slides and defined the 'Regional Sustainable Transportation Funding Criteria: What? How?' purpose is to set commonly accepted standards for sustainable transportation plans and facilities seeking technical and financial assistance. The 'Regional Transportation Funding Criteria: How?' included tools, HCT corridor planning and density criteria, community pedestrian and bicycle facilities criteria, HCT station area planning criteria, and prepare to prioritize with an example such as 'Walkable Streets'. Mr. Yabes suggested that regulations and standards, not just density, should also be addressed.

5. Discussion

Ms. Greenberg and Mr. Shorett then encouraged the attendees to spend the next 10-15 minutes at the 'Dotting Exercise' board in order to share their ideas and offer input for each category. Ms. DeCindis suggested that there should be a separate 'bikeable' category. Mr. Gallica also suggested that a new category be added for 'a moratorium on all new road building' aka 'road diet'. A general discussion followed about how growth management initiatives are prohibited within some state statutes. Mr. Yabes also mentioned that 'Transferring of Development Rights' could be included.

6. Other Issues and Next Steps

Mr. Shorett closed the meeting by reminding the attendees that a special Urban Land Institute (ULI) Public and Business Forum would occur on June 2 in Phoenix. He introduced Deb Sydenham of the Urban Land Institute. She encouraged those present to attend the event and mentioned that it would feature many noted speakers. Mr. Pearsall added that it would occur on Thursday June 2 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the A.E. England Building Auditorium, located at 424 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85003, and those who drive are permitted to park and seek validation at the MAG office.

Mr. Shorett reminded the attendees of the upcoming project work schedule, which would include the working paper #3 draft update. He also noted that the next Stakeholders meeting would occur in late summer.