



Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) MEETING SUMMARY

June 12, 2009

TO:

- Charlene FitzGerald, Project Manager, Multimodal Planning Division, Arizona Department of Transportation
- Karen Lamberton, Transportation Planner, Cochise County
- Brad Hamilton, Public Works Director, City of Benson
- Members, TAC
- File

FROM: Ronald Ross, Project Manger, URS Corporation
Sunny Bush, Public Participation, URS Corporation

SUBJECT: SUMMARY MEETING MINUTES FOR MAY 21, 2009 TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ATTENDEES:

Charlene FitzGerald, ADOT
Karen Lamberton, Cochise County
Brad Hamilton, City of Benson
Reza Karimvand, Traffic Engineering ITD, ADOT
Tom Engel, Safford District Office, ADOT
Linda Ritter, CCP, ADOT, Tucson Office
Sunny Bush, URS Corporation
Ronald Ross, URS Corporation

LOCATION: Ironwood Grill, San Pedro Golf Course, Benson, Arizona

The meeting agenda is attached to these minutes for reference.

Actions Taken:

- Transit planning for the study area is to be coordinated through SEAGO and the ADOT Transit Office. SEAGO will provide the contractor a copy of the regional transit plan. It was notes that the current transit provider is having financial problems and the service may go away.
- A question was raised regarding the milepost on SR 90 for the southern boundary of the study area. The consultant will research the number and provide it to Reza and TAC members.

- The consultant is to contact the Arizona UP representative as part of the stakeholder interview process. Issues include future traffic volumes on the Sunset Limited line and possible use of the mainline for future commuter rail facility.
- It was suggested that the consultant contact Scott Parkinson, general manager of the San Pedro and Southwestern Railroad Company, to discuss the rail line from the UP mainline south of the Apache Nitrogen (Powder) plant.
- The City of Benson and Cochise County members volunteered to assist the consultant acquire the Cochise College economic data for 2007, 2020 and 2040.

Discussion:

Objectives of the Study and General Timeframes

- This is not just a transportation study like the Small Area Transportation Studies were, but the process is to present to the County Board of Supervisors and the Benson City Council a long-range transportation plan for the study area. That plan is to include recommended transportation improvements for 2020 and 2040.
- The following objectives were discussed for the Long-Range Transportation Plan:
 - Prepare a long-range transportation plan which considers the recommendations of the four existing transportation plans: Northwest Cochise County Transportation Plan, the City of Benson General Plan and Circulation Plan, the Benson Small Area Transportation Study, the Cochise County Comprehensive Plan.
 - Identify solutions to current and projected congestion and transportation system access problems identified on SR 80 and 90, the interchanges on I-10 with SR 80, 90 and J-Six/Mescal Road, and on the regional, county, and city roadway systems.
 - Identify potential alternative transportation facilities, including demand responsive transit, and bike/pedestrian systems for addressing future alternative transportation needs.
 - Evaluate up to three alternative transportation scenarios and prepare a transportation improvement plan, including cost estimates for the preferred alternative.
 - Address special area problems including railroad/highway crossings, access ramps to I-10 and potential financing resources including impact fees for completing the preferred alternative.
- The plan will be managed by the Arizona Department of Transportation, Multimodal Planning Division who is responsible for the plan and the contractor preparing the plan (URS Corporation).
- The plan is to be completed in June 2010.

Role and Membership of the Technical Advisory Committee

- The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members represent the public and quasi-public agencies responsible for transportation and development planning for the study area.
 - ADOT- Multimodal Planning Division (MPD) – Charlene FitzGerald
 - ADOT- Safford District – Bill Harmon/Tom Engel
 - ADOT- Tucson District – Reza Karimvand, Tucson Traffic Section
 - City of Benson – Brad Hamilton
 - Cochise County – Karen Lamberton
 - South Eastern Arizona Governments Organization (SEAGO) – Susan Mitchel
 - ADOT-CCP – Linda Ritter
 - URS Corporation – Ronald Ross/Sunny Bush
 - ADOT- MPD, Transit – Mark Hoffman
 - St. David – Open
 - US Forest Service - Open
 - Arizona State Lands – Tim Bolton
 - Arizona State Parks - Open
 - Arizona Department of Game and Fish – John Windes
 - Cochise Trails Association – Mary McCool
 - Economic Development Sector – Steve Saway
- There maybe up to six TAC meetings during the course of the planning process. One meeting may be focused wholly on the review of the costs estimates, financing alternatives and analysis of implementing impact fees.
- The TAC is to advise and assist ADOT and URS identify and secure study area specific information, provide technical feedback on draft reports and findings, interpret opinions received through the stakeholder and public participation processes, provide input to strategic decisions and review project outcomes.
- Additional members for the TAC may be named by ADOT to provide assistance and input on topics such as hiking and biking trails.

Review of the Work Plan and Schedule

- The planning process work plan and schedule were discussed (illustrations from the ADOT webpage were presented).
- A discussion followed related to the following transportation needs that have been identified by TAC members and/or their agencies.
 - Transit in the study area is coordinated through SEAGO and the ADOT Transit Office. SEAGO will provide a copy of the regional transit plan.

- The City of Benson is interested in implementing a “complete streets” type of planning project for the downtown area along 4th Street. This would require addressing the differing objectives and priorities between ADOT and the City over the operation of 4th Street (B-10) – including signal placement, operation and maintenance, and the encroachment of business activities onto the sidewalk (out door cafés, signs and flower planters).
- Past planning and modeling processes have used historic and current growth rates which have proven too high. ADOT indicated that they are aware of the problem have adopted a more conservative growth factor – in the 2 to 2.5% per year range. The TAC referenced Page 65 in the 2007 SATS as an example of a too optimistic growth rate.
- The City of Benson and Cochise County members volunteered to assist the consultant acquire the Cochise College economic data for 2007 (base year), 2020 and 2040.
- The TAC wanted a short presentation on the coordination of this planning process with the County traffic demand modeling effort. It was explained that the two projects would use the same inputs for the study area and the two consultants have agreed to use the QRS II model. Additional information would be presented at the next TAC meeting.
- ADOT instructed the consultant to use the 2006 HPMS data for determining the current functional level of the roadway system.
- The base year for the current conditions report (Working Paper 1) is 2007. This means that population, employment, roadway performance, etc. would be estimated for this year and the model calibrated to 2007.
- The study area map was reviewed and Lonesome Road is not correctly shown. It does not connect 4th Street from Sybil Road.
- A question was raised regarding the milepost on SR 90 for the southern boundary of the study area. The consultant will research the number and provide it to Reza and TAC.

Special Studies

- Railroad issues:
 - The Union Pacific Sunset Line is of concern to the County who would like to investigate the opportunities for preserving right-of-way along the main line for future use as a commuter line between SR90 and Tucson.
 - The County is concerned that much of the railroad rights-of-way in this part of the County have been abandoned and the land is not being reserved for future rail use. The consultant stated that the Arizona UP representative will be contacted as part of the stakeholder interview process.

- It was suggested that the consultant contact Scott Parkinson, general manager of the San Pedro and Southwestern Railroad Company, to discuss the rail line from the UP mainline to south of Apache Nitrogen (Powder) plant.
- Access Management:
 - The issue of controlling access from large residential developments along SR90 was discussed. The public would like to see the route retain its high speeds and they are afraid that as development along the route will decrease the speeds and diminish the safety along the route. It was stated that the State Engineer has the power to control access along state highways and that he is working on a process to be able to uniformly apply that control.

Public Participation Process

- An open house public meeting is planned for either June 30 or July 9th at the Senior Center or the Cochise College facility on SR90.
- The City of Benson and Cochise County were asked to assist in preparing a list of individuals to be notified within the study area. Additionally, a notice will be stuffed into City of Benson water bills and a paid announcement would be published in the San Pedro Valley News-Sun.
- Additional outlets for the announcement were discussed, including fliers at City Hall and Senior Center.

Next Steps

- Meetings with the stakeholders are to be scheduled for June 16, 17 and 18. The City of Benson and Cochise County were asked to review the initial lists and to provide additional stakeholders as appropriate.
- The consultant is preparing Working Paper 1, Current Conditions, which will be emailed to the TAC for comment in July.
- The consultant is working with the City, County and the modeling consultant for Cochise County to agree on population estimated for the base year and to complete model calibration. The TAC will be given the opportunity to review the TAZ system and base year population and employment distributions.

Next TAC meeting:

- After Working Paper 1 is available, the modeling process approved by ADOT and the public open house would be the next best time to hold a TAC meeting. The best estimate is September.

The meeting was adjourned.

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