



Minutes
Tempe South Corridor Study – Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee
October 13, 2010

Minutes of the Tempe South Corridor Study Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee held on Wednesday, October 13, 2010 at 5:00 p.m. at the City of Tempe Harry E. Mitchell Government Center, City Council Chambers, Tempe City Hall, 31 East 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

Members Present: Charles Huellmantel, Chair; Nancy Hormann, Downtown Tempe Community; Paul Kent, University Park; Charles Lee, resident; Lisa Roach, Clark Park; Karyn Gitlis, Maple-Ash.

Members Absent: None

Guests: Carla Kahn, METRO; Wulf Grote, METRO; Howard Steere, METRO; and Marc Soronson, HDR/METRO, Stephanie Shipp, METRO

City Staff Present: Jyme Sue McLaren, Shelley Hearn and Shauna Warner

Chair Huellmantel called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Agenda Item A1 – Consideration of September 15, 2010 meeting minutes

Mr. Kent moved to approve the September 15, 2010 meeting minutes. Ms. Hormann seconded the motion, Ms. Gitlis abstained, motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item B1 – Public Input Summary

Howard Steere provided an update on the progress for public input to the study recommendations. He stated that over 120 attendees participated in the public meetings. In addition, we received 92 questions, comments or emails regarding the recommendation. We received letters of support from 19 organizations and businesses and we received some additional comments opposing the project were received. The Ad Hoc committee has received a copy of the public input summary to date with their packet. Howard stated that if the committee members had any questions he would be happy to answer them at this time. Chairman Huellmantel thanked Mr. Steere and his staff for all the hard work he and his staff have done over the past two months getting input from the community, and that it was a very thorough outreach effort.

Agenda Item B2 – Alternatives Analysis (AA) recommendations

Chairman Huellmantel invited Marc Soronson to address the next item on the agenda. Marc Soronson stated that we would like to cover recommendations that are being advanced for consideration of the study findings. Mr. Soronson stated the study recommendations are for a 2.6-mile Modern Streetcar along Mill Avenue and along Rio Salado and Ash within the downtown area. This project is within the Regional Transportation Plan and is funded as part of this plan. In addition, there is a phase I program recommended for MAG to adopt as an illustrative project between Mill and Rural along Southern Avenue. Also included in the recommendation is the endorsement of a high capacity investment along Rio Salado to the east and west.

Mr. Soronson went on to explain that the Mill Avenue Streetcar recommendation is preferred because it helps define the downtown area, expands development and redevelopment opportunities within the downtown area, has the least impact to utilities, minimizes the impacts to parking, provides special event flexibility and is the lowest capital cost of all the options analyzed in the downtown area.

Mr. Soronson stated that in addition to the streetcar, the study recommends the advancing the Bus Rapid Transit along the Rural Road corridor as an unfunded project, allowing the project to be in a position for advancing should

additional funding becomes available. Mr. Soronson stated that this alternative includes a curb lane dedicated to bus and right turn use exclusively from Guadalupe to University along Rural Road.

Lastly, Mr. Soronson stated there has been considerable discussion regarding Commuter Rail opportunities in the region. Therefore, staff is recommending that MAG continue to evaluate commuter rail opportunities in the corridor. Mr. Soronson summarized the next steps and upcoming meetings for the adoption of the study recommendations.

Mr. Soronson stated this concluded the study recommendations and he would be happy to answer any questions that committee members had.

Karyn Gitlis asked if it was possible to implement a “Y” track design at Rio Salado and Mill and what the “Y” at Mill and University will accomplish. Mr. Soronson stated that the “Y” at University provides ultimate future flexibility for system expansion. In addition, it provides operational flexibility during special events. Lastly, it also offers flexibility in more frequent serving in the downtown area by looping around the downtown and not continuing south the Southern.

Nancy Hormann asked about the approval process and whether there will be a point where the project could be stopped. Wulf Grote stated that for the MAG process there are several committees that the project must go through for ultimate adoption at the Regional Council. Some committees may choose to not recommend advancing the project. Jyme Sue McLaren stated that ultimately the MAG Regional Council must adopt the project study to be included in the Regional Transportation Plan and to get federal funds.

Charles Lee asked why we haven’t considered Hardy or other future extensions. Mr. Soronson stated that there is a process to go through for identifying future extensions. The 2-mile corridor we are currently studying is included in the Regional Transportation Plan and that is why we are evaluating it. A future Hardy corridor could be considered in the future. Mr. Grote stated that while we might want future corridors identified, there is a regional planning process necessary for the identification of future extensions. We have included the extensions to Rural Road as a future extension. That is the only corridor identified as a future corridor. Chairman Huellmantel stated that his hope is that we continue to plan for Tempe’s future by evaluating some of these opportunities as we move forward.

Paul Kent stated that the Mill Avenue Streetscape plan focuses on Mill Avenue specifically and he would hope that in looking at streetscape along the corridor we would not focus only on Mill Avenue. Ms. McLaren stated we will consider all streets when evaluating appropriate streetscape design. Chairman Huellmantel stated that during the next phase of project refinement, we need to look at the streetscape issue. Nancy Hormann stated that the streetscape plan for Mill Avenue is not complete and additional work needs to be done to complete the project.

Lisa Roach asked whether additional utility impacts are expected south of Broadway, as she recalled a significant water line in the area. Mr. Soronson stated that additional work needs to be done during the next phase of the project to further refine the location of the track, and then assess the impacts to utilities.

Lisa Roach stated that she has learned a lot about the project, having served on the Ad Hoc and been active in following the project over the past three years. She stated that in the long-term, the positive aspects of the project will outweigh the negative comments expressed by the community. She stated that it is very important to keep the community informed as we move forward in the design of the system and it is critical for neighborhoods to be heard in the process.

Nancy Hormann stated that the DTC Board endorsed the proposed alignment and that the loop option will be very beneficial for special events. Furthermore, the most significant impact will be the expansion of economic development opportunities with the loop option. Paul Kent stated that he believes the project is great and fully supports the proposal. Karyn Gitlis stated that she was in complete support of the study recommendations and the loop option.

Chairman Huellmantel stated that this project offers tremendous opportunity for the city of Tempe’s future. He stated the project will bring significant cultural benefit to the community, it will create reinvestment in the surrounding neighborhoods, it will provide enhanced mobility to support special events in the downtown area, and it is a tremendous opportunity for our community. For these reasons, he stated that he strongly supported advancing the study recommendations for adoption through the regional process.

Agenda Item B3 – Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) recommendation

Chairman Huellmantel asked if the group was prepared to make a recommendation. Karyn Gitlis moved to endorse the LPA recommendation; it was seconded by Lisa Roach and passed unanimously by the Ad Hoc Committee.

Agenda Item B4 – Future agenda items

Chairman Huellmantel asked the committee if there were any future agenda items to be addressed. No agenda items were identified. Chairman Huellmantel stated that he expected the Ad Hoc Committee would continue to be involved in the future design of the system.

Agenda Item C1 – Call to the public

Chairman Huellmantel called to the public, there were no public appearances.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Prepared by: Jyme Sue McLaren

Jyme Sue McLaren
Community Development
Redevelopment Manager