



FLAGSTAFF METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION
CITY OF FLAGSTAFF ♦ COCONINO COUNTY ♦ ARIZONA DOT
Office: 100 West Birch Avenue ♦ Flagstaff, Arizona 86001
Mail: 211 West Aspen Avenue ♦ Flagstaff, Arizona 86001
Phone: (928) 226-4849 ♦ Fax: (928) 213-4825
www.flagstaffmpo.org

Approved Minutes

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, December 5, 2007

Arizona Department of Transportation, 1801 South Milton Road, Flagstaff, AZ 86001

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Montoya called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL

On roll call, the following were present:

Bob Montoya, Chair
Joe Donaldson, Vice-chair
Deb Hill
Scott Overton
Karen Cooper
Liz Archuleta (excused absent)
Carl Taylor (designated alternate for Liz Archuleta)

The following FMPO staff was present:

David Wessel, FMPO Manager
Meg Roederer, Administrative Specialist

Others present:

Rick Barrett
Audra Merrick
Larry Dannenfeldt
John Holmes
Bill Towler
Ron Knights
Virginia Turner
Sandra Gilbert (ADOT)
Mark J Poppe (Stanley Consultants)
Stephen Martin (HDR)

III. PRELIMINARY GENERAL BUSINESS

A. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public participation.

B. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introductions made around the room of people attending meeting. There were no other announcements.

C. APPROVAL of MINUTES.

Ms. Cooper made a correction to the Minutes of October 24, 2007 - *Council member Cooper stated a concern regarding land bridges **maintained free of local traffic through** the community.*

Vice Mayor Overton made a motion to approve the Minutes October 24, 2007 with the correction and Ms. Cooper seconded, which passed unanimously.

I. OLD BUSINESS

1. Chair Montoya read the Proclamation of appreciation for John Holmes in recognition of service to the MPO. Mr. Holmes accepted a small gift of thanks on behalf of the Board, committees and staff.

II. NEW BUSINESS

2. **Charter Amendments**

Mr. Wessel explained the Charter amendments to the Board. He stated that based on the last meeting and Retreat steps were taken to update the Charter to reflect a vision as an organization as well as focus on partnerships and stakeholders. The Board made comments, suggested language changes and discussed the vision statement.

Ms. Cooper was concerned with the statement to *correct or expand upon the Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan* and questioned whether it should be the role of the Board to correct or expand upon it. Ms. Cooper suggested, "call upon" as more specific rather than "correct or expand." Chairman Montoya and Vice Mayor Overton agreed. Mr. Wessel requested to strike the wording of "correct or expand upon." Chairman Montoya and Ms. Cooper agreed and were comfortable with the change. Mr. Wessel will update the draft to reflect the change.

Ms. Hill commented that she disliked the organizational vision "Every trip confirms our character" and stated that she did not recall the Board writing this vision statement at the Retreat. Mr. Wessel explained the Board did not write it and he did as the FMPO Manager. Vice Mayor Overton stated it was a catchy phrase and did not interpret it as a negative. The Board agreed "Every trip confirms our character" should be utilized as a slogan or marketing device not as an organizational vision. Ms. Hill suggested striking the Organization Vision from the Charter and added the Charter's Purpose Statement was more appropriate as an Organizational Vision. Ms. Hill was agreeable with the remaining Charter changes as presented in the packet. Chairman Montoya recommended a new vision statement be drafted and Ms. Hill stated the Executive Board should be involved with the exercise of setting a vision.

Mayor Donaldson made a motion to adopt the Charter with the proposed changes and Ms. Hill seconded, which carried unanimously.

3. I-17 Studies Presentations

Mr. Wessel stated I-17 remains a critical issue for the region as a safe and viable mode of transportation to connect with the Valley (Phoenix). ADOT has several studies, one is the Alternative Route Study and the other is the I-17 Design Concept Report - one at the south end and one on the north end.

Mr. Poppe from Stanley Group addressed the Board with an I-17 Design Concept PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Poppe referred to the studies as the southern project from milepost 232 (New River) to SR69 (Cordes Junction) approximately 30 miles and the northern project approximately 40 miles from 179 (Sedona) extending to I-40 (Flagstaff). The purpose of both studies is to add capacity and improve overall operations of the corridor. It is the first step in obtaining funding, and scheduling. It is a 24-month process and thus far has completed scoping and alternative development. Currently underway is to draft the initial design concept and then the final design concept report. It will receive internal review from a small ADOT group and they anticipate being done in late 2008.

Primarily traffic recommendations being proposed for the southern portion are the following.

- Adding two lanes for a total of four lanes in each direction
- Additional Northbound uphill climbing lane (Black Canyon Hill area)

Primarily traffic recommendations being proposed for the northern portion are the following.

- Three lanes in each direction
- Additional uphill climbing lane (approx. 12 miles from Sedona TI)

Ms. Hill inquired about capacity as it relates to accidents. Mr. Poppe replied there are alternatives being discussed but in cases of fatalities a highway closure may still be necessary.

Mr. Poppe stated the project constraints for the Southern project as Aqua Fria National Monument, existing grade, historic sites as well as gas and power lines. Mr. Wessel inquired about widening the existing lanes. Mr. Poppe stated in some areas it would be a possible alternative but for example widening in the Black Canyon area was concluded to not be a practical solution. Mr. Poppe continued to explain the PowerPoint slides of alternative alignments A through G.

Mr. Taylor inquired about the Aqua Fria National Monument as an alternative area and he stated it was established to protect cultural resources. Mr. Poppe responded that it would not be affected because it was eliminated as an alternative in the alternative selection report.

Vice Mayor Overton requested clarification on alternative scenarios if the ones that change the alignment are in addition to existing alignment as they are completed or as amended. Mr. Poppe replied there are different combinations but most are to maintain existing for lanes and building four new lanes for an eight-lane roadway (alternative E).

Mr. Taylor commented on the expense and inquired if different modes of transportation were being considered and costs compared. Mr. Poppe stated that it is not part of this study by Stanley Group, such as rail options, and the focus is on the type of improvements that need to be made to I-17 based on travel projections; however, ADOT and planning organizations may be looking at rail options statewide.

Mr. Poppe stated the improvements such as the Sedona TI grade, bridges with substandard clearance, and modifications to sharp curves such as Munds Canyon Bridge and Kelly Canyon. Other issues are terrain and roadway capacity, widening inside or outside as well as looking at accident history, wildlife crossings, truck escape ramps, additional chain up areas, drainage and grading issues. A separate study will be conducted specifically on wildlife crossing areas such as active warning areas or enhancing bridges.

Mr. Wessel followed up on Ms. Hill's inquiry on accident safety regarding status of utilizing cross over points and message boards. Mr. Poppe said it would be incorporated into the recommendation of the Design Concept Report such as deicing systems and the geometric changes that will help safety. Additionally, alternative routes are being examined and they are developing a detailed matrix to address the issues that will include factors such as costs and options. Ms. Hill encouraged the use of cross over points and alternate routes due to lengthy delays and no option or alternative for the traveler but to wait in order to continue. There is a direct impact to the commuter and business. Mr. Poppe referred to ADOT planning and that it is not part of the I-17 Design Concept Report.

Mr. Montoya commented on accident causes as driver speed and that driver education as necessary and adding lanes, changing alignments, improvements, etc. will not eliminate accidents. Mr. Taylor inquired if roadway design sections differ in the southern and northern ends as well as clarifying roadway markings. Mr. Poppe addressed the Board stating the grade changes and new alignments will be at 5%, which is a significant change in the southern portion and recapped the recommended improvements. Ms. Cooper commented that speed limit changes might be necessary to slow down drivers.

Mr. Poppe stated there would be opportunity for the Executive Board to address the I-17 issue at public meetings and more discussions will be announced and referred Mr. Wessel to contact Jackie Noblitt at Stanley Consultants (602-333-2401) for more information.

Mr. Dannenfeldt mentioned the difficulty of the on and off ramps at Cordes Junction. Mr. Poppe stated there is a concept for roundabouts in that area. Mr. Martin added there is possible construction scheduled in about a year.

Mayor Donaldson recommended the presentation go in front of City Council at the work session and the public get an opportunity to comment.

Chairman Montoya addressed the issue of installing rumble strips in the middle lanes as a safety feature.

Mayor Donaldson inquired if the deicing system is a visual or electronic system. Mr. Poppe stated it is an electronic sensor that is used in other states and ADOT is experimenting with the system and it is under development. Mayor Donaldson stated cameras are used by other states as a safety device and relayed a comment made by the Governor that transportation in the state is constipated and the solution is a laxative.

Next Mr. Martin from HDR explained the I-17 Alternatives Study. Ms. Gilbert supplied the Board a handout of the PowerPoint to the Board due to technical difficulties with the equipment and explained the information is available online at the ADOT website www.azdot.gov.

Mr. Martin stated the study addressed three primary public concerns.

- 1) Increased traffic congestion
- 2) Decreasing reliability of I-17 between Flagstaff and Phoenix
- 3) Long-term safety

Mr. Martin reviewed the material page by page with the Board and received comment and feedback.

- Explain organizational acronyms for the public.
- It is lacking a Coconino County Representative as a Project TAC member.
- An Economic Development Analysis was not conducted and built into this study because it is primarily through public lands.
- Alternative modes of transportation and economic feasibility should be addressed. Mr. Dannenfeldt commented on the economic impacts both positive and negative and the consequences of the alternatives. Mr. Wessel addressed the economic concerns of the Board and referred to the Building a Quality Arizona process. ADOT has DJM Harris under contract to look at managing the next round of framework studies and part of the process is alternate modes, an environmental scan and an economic component as well as the Regional Transportation Plan.
- Importance of keeping public involved in process.
- Comment on using the term "soon" is too subjective.
- Importance of conducting face-to-face presentations.
- Consider hierarchy of evaluation regarding economy.
- Integrate alternative modes of transportation.
- Concerned study lacking economic component.
- Drafting of the RFP criteria for the consultant a concern.
- Suggested overview of how all the studies fit together and relate.
- Address the disconnect between the studies.
- Suggest joint meetings to bring studies together and present clearly to the public.
- Utilize Sally Stewart (CCP) for communication.
- The process needs to be productive and transparent to the public.
- Address the perception the government is not reliable to sustain long-term effort.

- Address succession planning.
- Include an education component.

Ms. Turner weighed in on the topic and stated that it is part of the larger framework study and it is not siloed and the governor is emphasizing the multi-modal transportation component with a focus on growth and infrastructure as the main driver. The consultants are not directly engaged in overall ongoing efforts. Ms. Turner made note of the comments and integration in overall process. Ms. Turner also addressed that there needs to be a comfort level of understanding the process and it is communicated well to the public.

Mr. Wessel summarized the discussion as a need to have a public involvement strategy folded into the overall process. Additionally, Chairman Montoya recommended a letter be drafted on behalf of the MPO to address the issues. Ms. Hill made a motion to draft a letter to Sally Stewart (CCP) and Ms. Cooper seconded, which passed unanimously.

4. Website Presentation

Ms. Roederer presented to the Board a preview of the draft FMPO website (www.flagstaffmpo.org) scheduled for release in 2008 and received feedback from the Board.

- Replace trail photo in banner
- Re-title tab of My Transportation
- Include Board and Committee email links
- Add links to NAU, NACOG and City of Flagstaff

5. FMPO Calendar

There was discussion regarding upcoming agenda items, BQ AZ, I-17, Rural Transportation Summit and requested Executive Board receive TAC and Management Committee agendas. In addition, note on the TAC agenda, a quorum of the executive board may be present due to Open Meeting Law. Ms. Hill stated she is the next Chair of the Board of Supervisors and may no longer be available to serve as a representative on the FMPO Executive Board.

III. CONCLUDING GENERAL BUSINESS

D. REPORTS

- 1) Management Committee Report:
Provided and no discussion on the minutes from November 8, 2007.
- 2) Technical Advisory Committee Report:
Provided and no discussion on the action summary from November 1, 2007
- 3) Staff Reports:
Report provided and there was a brief discussion with the Board.

E. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Hill noted the next meeting is January 23 not January 28, 2008 as stated on the agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Montoya adjourned the meeting at 10:22 a.m.