



Minutes Tempe South Corridor Study – Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee September 15, 2010

Minutes of the Tempe South Corridor Study Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee held on Wednesday, September 15, 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

Members Absent: Karyn Gitlis, Maple Ash

Guests: John Farry, METRO; Hillary Foose, METRO; Wulf Grote, METRO; Catherine Mayorga; Steven Saiz; Howard Steere, METRO; and Marc Soronson, HDR/METRO

City Staff Present: Dawn M. Coomer, Carlos de Leon, Jyme Sue McLaren, and Amanda Nelson

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

Agenda Item A1 – Consideration of August 4, 2010 meeting minutes

Ms. Roach moved to approve the August 4, 2010 meeting minutes. Ms. Hormann seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item A2 – Consideration of August 18, 2010 meeting minutes

Ms. Roach moved to approve the August 18, 2010 meeting minutes. Ms. Hormann seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item B1 – Frequently asked questions document

After recognition from Chair Huellmantel, Hillary Foose addressed the committee, noting that a draft frequently asked questions document was available at committee member's places. She noted that the draft document would be summarized for distribution at the September 23, 2010 public meeting. After asking for committee guidance on how to review the document, Ms. Foose provided a high-level overview of the document and committee members asked questions during the presentation.

Chair Huellmantel asked if committee members could be provided with the abbreviated version as soon as possible, and Ms. Foose noted that it would be placed on the METRO website and also provided at the public meeting.

Ms. Foose stated that the document was the result of questions asked at recent public meetings. Questions are categorized into general aspects of the project, funding, design and construction issues, and operations.

Mr. Kent stated that he has heard concerns about the cost of the project, and some feel that the cost per passenger is unreasonable. Mr. Kent added that he addresses these concerns by responding that modern streetcar is less costly than light rail and this first phase is a start based on available funding. The committee and METRO staff discussed how to best address project funding using information in the document. Mr. Kent stated that it is important to communicate overall community benefit and vision of the project beyond project cost. Mr. Grote mentioned the results of the benefit cost report reviewed by committee members at a prior meeting. Ms. McLaren added that the issue of carrying capacity of modern streetcar vehicles and Orbit vehicles could be added to the document. Mr. Huellmantel added that buses have shorter life spans than rail vehicles, and that many people who

ride rail do not use a bus. Ms. Foose responded that a recent intercept survey revealed that 40 percent of light rail riders are new to transit and have never ridden a bus, 68 percent have a car, and just under half are using light rail for non-work trips.

Mr. Kent asked how the issue of bicyclists using modern streetcar or riding across the tracks will be addressed. Ms. Foose noted that the issue of bicycle lanes is addressed on page 5, but the issue of bicyclist safety has not yet been addressed in the document. Mr. Soronson noted that this issue can be addressed further in design as bicyclist safety and mobility is a priority for METRO and Tempe. Mr. Kent added that many other cities have substantial bicycling populations, such as Portland and San Francisco, and they seem to be able to address this issue to ensure bicyclist safety. Mr. Kent suggested enhancing the document to address this issue.

Ms. McLaren noted that bicyclists will have access to the modern streetcar due to level boarding. Chair Huellmantel asked for a Tempe staff contact for project questions, and Ms. McLaren stated that METRO is the project contact for all public involvement as the modern streetcar is ultimately a METRO project.

Agenda Item B3 – Utilities on Ash Avenue

Chair Huellmantel noted that this issue did not need to be addressed as the questions from Mr. Lee had already been resolved. Mr. Soronson noted that METRO staff has been meeting with Tempe staff from the water department to obtain the most accurate utility information. Mr. Soronson noted that there were no conflicts in the downtown area but there were some areas of concern where utilities are older south of Broadway Road.

Agenda Item B4 – Future agenda items

Chair Huellmantel asked Mr. Lee for future agenda items. Ms. McLaren noted that Agenda Item B2 had been skipped and METRO had additional information to present.

Agenda Item B2 – Public involvement process and meeting update

After recognition from Chair Huellmantel, Howard Steere addressed the committee. Mr. Steere stated that the public involvement process initiated in late 2007 has resulted in 47 meetings and approximately 12 events. Mr. Steere discussed how public meetings are advertised and the format of the upcoming public meeting on September 23, 2010. Mr. Steere briefly discussed upcoming council meetings and added that neighborhood outreach would also continue as a way to engage the community. Mr. Steere added that on-line surveys would be available through METRO's website.

Agenda Item B4 – Future agenda items

Mr. Lee asked for future discussion of possible extensions along Hardy. He noted that he had recently read an article in the newspaper about funding for railroads and streets, and asked how Tempe can obtain some of this transportation funding for local projects. Ms. McLaren stated that the Obama Administration had recently announced surface and aviation transportation earmarks over the next six years. Ms. McLaren stated that the project has not yet been at the stage to be eligible for recent federal stimulus funding. Mr. Lee added that the economy will improve and continuing to plan for the future is important. An extension along Hardy would benefit mature neighborhoods. Mr. Grote added the recent announcement was very general and no guidance has yet been released. METRO routinely monitors federal grant programs and is working to position the Tempe South project competitively for these applications.

Mr. Huellmantel asked if Mr. Lee wanted to address landscaping. Ms. McLaren noted that the level of investment with modern streetcar will not match the light rail project due to the need to obtain cost effectiveness. Pedestrian improvements are expected to be limited to stop areas.

Mr. Huellmantel stated that the issue of shade to encourage pedestrian use should be addressed at a future meeting.

Agenda Item C1 – Call to the public

There were no public appearances.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Prepared by: Dawn M. Coomer

Reviewed by: Jyme Sue McLaren