



# **MEETING MINUTES**

**Sverdrup Civil, Inc.**

January 18, 2001

**Location and Time:** Wednesday, June 13, 2001 – 1:00 p.m.  
Hassayampa River Preserve Conference Room

**Participants:**

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Representative</u>	<u>Participating Alternate</u>
ADOT	Grant Wills (absent)	
Sverdrup Civil	Larry Lindner Bert Bertleson Don Smith Berwyn Wilbrink	
Bureau of Land Management	Mike Taylor (absent)	
Maricopa County	Mike Sabatini (absent)	
Yavapai County	Richard Straub	Gay Hendin
State Land Department	Sheila McCafferty (absent)	
Town of Wickenburg – Elected	Lon McDermott	
Town of Wickenburg – Staff	Fred Carpenter	
Wickenburg School District #9	Doug Price (absent)	
Chamber of Commerce – Business	Royce Kardinal	
Chamber of Commerce – Transportation Committee	Bill Green	
Homeowners – Northeast	Jim Liggett	
Homeowners – Southwest	Andy Anderson	
Homeowners – Morristown	Walter Kadle	
B.O.O.T.	Jim Dickinson	
Recreation Groups	Richard Wertz	
Hassayampa River Preserve	Mike Rigney	

**Subject: US 93, Wickenburg to Santa Maria River  
Location/Design Concept Study  
TRACS No. 093 YV 161 H4871 01 L  
Steering Committee Meeting**

**MEETING SUMMARY:**

1. **Review/Approval of 12/19/00 Meeting Minutes:** Jim Liggett's name was misspelled on Page 4 of the minutes. There were no additional changes to the minutes.
2. **Open Comments:**



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**B. Bertleson:** Bert introduced Larry Lindner as the new ADOT Environmental Planning representative for the US 93 corridor. Larry replaces Karim Dada. The change was a result in a re-organization of the corridor responsibilities within the Environmental Planning Department.

Bert also introduced Walter Kadle to the committee as the Morristown representative.

**L. McDermott:** What is the projected end date of the study? Bert responded that study documents should be completed within 6 months.

**R. Wertz:** Dick made the following comments:

- We need to discuss the raptor area and how it impacts this study.
- The location of the bypass is not just a Town of Wickenburg issue. The opinions of those that live outside the town limits should be given the same attention as those that live within them.
- We should update the committee with the status of Alternative 10.
- The study does not appear to be addressing the safety issues associated with improving US 93 outside the town limits. Only the portions within the town near the proposed interim improvements are getting the attention.
- The PB study raised several issues that are not being addressed in the current study with respect to safety.

**J. Dickenson:** Jim made the following comments:

- The lapse of time between committee meetings promotes paranoia in the community, as rumors are not cleared up quickly.
- It appears that there are two tracks for getting input into the study: the public route and private/political route. Issues appear to be resolved behind the scenes in private meetings. For example, Rusty as a transportation board member was quoted in the paper as noting the bypass is not going to happen. There is also a lot of development in Morristown that is directly in conflict with the proposed improvement route of the bypass. How can building permits be issued if the route will pass through these sites at some future date? With these developments, we can only conclude that other meetings are being held where these issues are being decided.

Bert responded that there is only one public involvement process. Both the public and private comments are taken and included in the evaluation of the alternatives. Bert reminded



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the Committee that the study process is a discovery process. As information is received, we need to change our design concepts to reflect/incorporate the new information. With respect to development within the corridor, there is no way to prevent development until the improvements are defined and the lands are purchased. Until then, the private property can be sold/purchased by the land owners (as is done on other portions of US 93 and the South Mountain corridors).

Rusty responded that his comments were not properly quoted. He had commented that due to a lack of funding in the MAG and statewide transportation programs, the bypass improvements were not going to happen quickly enough to benefit the town in the next 15-20 years.

Dick Wertz asked why the Wickenburg improvements received such a low priority within the US 93 corridor improvement program. Everything north of Wickenburg appears to have a higher priority. Fred explained that a study by Gannet Flemming produced in 1993 prioritized the corridor improvements. The Wickenburg to Santa Maria River study limits was the third of three corridor segments to be improved between SR 74 and I-40. Similar study processes were completed for the other two segments.

**3. Study Update: Interim Improvements:** Bert distributed exhibits showing the interim improvements that had been considered, and detailed exhibits of those being studied in greater detail.

**Alternative 10:** The Project Assessment (PA) is complete. No action will be taken on this alternative unless traffic circumstances mandate that something be done if no other improvements in the area occur. This is unlikely as the interim improvements will remove the need to change conditions at the intersection of Wickenburg Way and Tegner Street. At the request of committee members, copies of the PA document will be distributed.

**L. McDermott:** Made statement reiterating that the Town strongly opposes Alternative #10 under any circumstances and that the Town is relying on ADOT's promise that Alt #10 will not be implemented without concurrence by the Town of Wickenburg.

**Alternative 7:** Bert distributed updated exhibits of the proposed improvements. Major features of the design include the following:

- A new Hassayampa River bridge crossing. The existing bridge will be removed and a new structure constructed as the existing bridges do restrict the design year storm event. If the bridge were simply widened, the backwater surface elevation would rise causing flooding on the east and west banks upstream of the bridge. By raising the bridge elevation and reducing the number of piers in the river, we could actually reduce the water surface elevation upstream.



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- Sols Wash will be designed as a bridge crossing, not a multiple cell box culvert. While the Town would like a clear span bridge, the size of the opening will require that piers be used. With the recent flooding and a history of flooding within Sols Wash, we recommend that the homes around the Sols Wash outlet into the Hassayampa River be purchased as part of the drainage improvements. Perhaps a joint purchase by ADOT, the Town, and Corps could acquire the land as a flood control feature. Once the homes are removed, the area could be converted into park land, which would be an amenity to the community by expanding the park. In addition to the Sols Wash Bridge, a swale will be added along the south side of the roadway to drain the area between the new roadway and Tegner Street (Existing US 93). The design of the Sols Wash improvements will be completed in cooperation with the Corps of Engineers study already underway for the area and scheduled to be complete in October 2001.
- The relocated US 93 roadway would be kept out of the Hassayampa floodplain. The roadway will be designed to keep the pavement above the 50-year storm event. The river side of the embankment will be protected from the storm waters by a riprap lining. If a 100-year storm event should occur, the water may overtop the roadway, requiring some repairs from erosion. The goal is to keep the roadway as low as possible. Outside the floodplain, the embankment is minimal with the final surface only 2-5 feet above the existing ground.
- The Wickenburg Way/Kerkes Street intersection is designed to handle turning traffic, including truck traffic. It is anticipated that the intersection could adequately support the anticipated traffic volumes for 15 years.
- We are developing a detailed cost estimate including the acquisition of the land/homes, and the associated mitigation costs. The additional drainage and river protection has added approximately \$2 million to the cost of the project.
- Two intersections will be signalized; i.e. the Wickenburg Way/Kerkes Street and the US 93/Tegner Street intersections.
- The Design Speed of the roadway is 45 mph through most of the project limits. The final posted speed will be dependant on several factors determined by ADOT Traffic.
- Property Takes: Depending on the embankment limits and the limits of the drainage improvements, somewhere between 5 and 14 residences will be acquired. As the roadway is closer to some homes, noise abatement will be provided to those homes where mitigation is warranted, per ADOT's Noise Policy. Mitigation is usually only applied to sound sensitive land uses such as residences, parks, and hospitals. It would not apply to the businesses and churches already adjacent to US 93.



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**Alternative 14:** This alternative is nearly identical to Alternative 7 north of Sols Wash. However, it has a different connection to Wickenburg Way. Exhibits of the proposed improvements were distributed. Major features of the design include the following:

- A new bridge crossing would be constructed over the Hassayampa River, just north of the existing bridge structure. Unlike Alternative 7 where US 60 is the through movement, this alternative has US 93 as the through movement. US 60 connects to the new roadway via an intersection on the west bank of the river, just beyond the southeastern corner of the community center building. Once completed, the existing river crossing would be removed.
- Similar to Alternative 7, the new bridge would be designed to convey the design storm flow without raising the upstream water elevation.
- Constructability of this alternative is much easier than Alternative 7 as the new bridge can be constructed without interference to the existing traffic. Only the new connections to Wickenburg Way and Tegner Street would require any traffic control, and only for a short duration.
- The construction of the new roadway adjacent to the Hassayampa riverbank has resulted in constructing some of the new roadway improvements through the parking lot of the community center. Some of the parking can be expanded into the vacant land north of Apache Street and east of Kerkes Street.
- While there will be a connection to Kerkes Street from the re-aligned Wickenburg Way, there will not be a connection to Apache Street.

**Alternative 13:** This alternative was discussed in detail in previous meetings. Bert distributed exhibits showing the proposed improvements for the committee members' information. While developed for consideration, this alternative will most likely not be carried forward for the following reasons:

- It requires two new bridge structures over the Hassayampa River.
- The three signalized intersections with US 60 and US 93 do not operate as efficiently as Alternatives 7 or 14. In addition, the skewed intersections are very undesirable for some of the turning movements.
- The improvements go through an ADEQ Super Fund site. While the ADEQ may be conducting cleaning operations prior to the roadway construction, ADOT is not willing to accept the liability of the potentially contaminated soils for the future. Lon McDermott had spoken with representatives of the ADEQ concerning the future liabilities of the site, and disagreed with the understanding from ADOT of the future liability. A letter from the ADEQ clarifying their position on future liability was requested by the committee.



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Lon inquired if an additional alternative could be considered; one that combines the southern improvements of Alternative 14 with the northern improvements of Alternative 13. Bert requested that all committee members provide their comments on the three alternatives, or any combination of them as they felt necessary to meet the interim transportation needs. It was agreed that two weeks would be enough time to provide these comments to Sverdrup Civil (June 29, 2001). Committee members are reminded that comments are to be provided to our new office address of:

Sverdrup Civil Inc.  
875 West Elliot Road, Suite 201  
Tempe, Arizona 85284.

**4. Study Update – Bypass Concepts:** Bert provided a summary of the progress since our last meeting. The Far West and Southwest alternatives continued to be developed.

As the development of the alternatives progressed, we learned from the BLM that there is a Raptor Protection Area around the cliffs/ledges of the Vulture Mountains. This area was defined in a BLM land use plan developed in 1981. In this document, four bird species are specifically protected within this zone. The Far West alternative passes through the middle of the protection area, which is delineated as a 2-mile area around Vulture Peak and the Cabellaros Mountains. The Southwest alternative traverses the NE corner of the protection area. The protection zone specifically restricts ground disturbing activities such as roadway construction. The BLM has indicated that it can reduce the size of the protection area to a 0.5-mile buffer around the cliffs of Vulture Peak and the Cabelleros Mountains. However, BLM has indicated it would have to re-open their public process, prepare an EIS, and follow their own NEPA process in order to permit road construction through the existing protection area. As their public involvement process has an appeal action included within it, final resolution could take an additional 3-5 years to complete.

Sverdrup and Arizona Game & Fish have surveyed the area by helicopter, and observed Prairie Falcon nests with eggs, young, and several birds. They also observed red tail hawks and red tail hawks nests with eggs. We will be meeting with ADOT, BLM, and FHWA representatives to review the information about the impacts of this protected site on the project. While it may not be a fatal flaw, it will prevent us from making a recommendation at this time.

With respect to the Canamex, MAG has recommended that Vulture Mine Road be designated as the preferred route. While not endorsed by ADOT or McDOT, this action by MAG does introduce a potential connection to the ultimate bypass. While connecting the Vulture Mine /Canamex Road with the Far West alternative is relatively easy, connecting to the Southwest alternative would be difficult through the Vulture Mountain pass area.

Sverdrup is working with ADOT to determine what options are available to continue the study from this point forward. Both the Canamex connection and Raptor Protection Area offer significant challenges to either alternative. As a result, we have unknowns that make a recommendation of a single route premature at this time.



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5. **Future Public Meetings:** We will be scheduling meetings for the following events:
- We will be meeting with Morristown to present the alternatives considered for connections to SR 74 and US 60.
  - We will conduct the next public information meeting for Wickenburg in August to present a recommendation on the interim improvement. No bypass recommendation is likely as a result of the above outstanding issues.

6. **Steering Committee Questions:** The following general questions were raised:

Jim: Why not just scrap the bypass and use the interim as the long-term solution?

*Bert Response: It would not meet the criteria established in the beginning of the study process. In addition, it is projected that the interim solutions only have the traffic volume capacity for 15 years.*

Dick: When is the noise study done?

*Bert Response: Our subconsultant is nearly complete with their investigation, but the results have not been submitted to SvC or ADOT for review.*

Jim D: Do we know where all of the trucks are coming from that are entering the Wickenburg area?

*Bert Response: An origin/destination study was prepared early in the study process, with copies distributed to the committee members. Most of the trucks were from the Phoenix area. No additional studies are anticipated at this time.*

Fred: Sverdrup requested comments from the committee members on the two interim projects within two weeks. If we have changes to the proposed concepts, or perhaps a request to combine certain aspects of one concept with another, can we still submit them?

*Bert Response: Please submit any changes/revisions that you have. All comments are appreciated.*

Walter: What about US 93 improvements north of the interim project but south of the bypass connection?

*Bert Response: The portion between the interim and the US 93/SR 89 intersection is not currently part of this study. However, some form of study would be required before any improvements are constructed.*



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The meeting concluded at 4:45 pm.

## **ACTION ITEMS:**

- Sverdrup to distribute copies of the Alternative 10 PA to the committee members
- Committee members are to provide comments of the three interim plans to Sverdrup by June 29, 2001.
- If any of the above is contrary to the recollection of the participants, they are to contact Sverdrup Civil Inc. to note the discrepancy within two weeks of distribution.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Berwyn S. Wilbrink, PE  
Deputy Project Manager

Attachments: Alternative 10 PA

Distribution: Participants  
Sheila McCafferty, Arizona State Land Development  
Mike Taylor, Bureau of Land Management  
George Wallace, ADOT Predesign Studies Section  
Grant Wills, ADOT Predesign Studies Section  
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AMB/ DCS /014164-7B