



MEETING MINUTES

Sverdrup Civil, Inc.

October 29, 2001

Location and Time: Tuesday, October 2, 2001 – 1:00 p.m.
Hassayampa River Preserve Conference Room

Participants:

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Representative</u>	<u>Participating Alternate</u>
ADOT	Grant Wills	
Sverdrup Civil	Larry Lindner Bert Bertleson Don Smith Berwyn Wilbrink	
Bureau of Land Management	Mike Taylor (absent)	MarLynn Spears, Angela Mogel
Maricopa County	Mike Sabatini (absent)	
Yavapai County	Richard Straub (absent)	
State Land Department	Sheila McCafferty (absent)	
Town of Wickenburg – Elected	Lon McDermott	
Town of Wickenburg – Staff	Fred Carpenter	
Wickenburg School District #9	Doug Price	
Chamber of Commerce – Business	Royce Kardinal	
Chamber of Commerce – Transportation Committee	Bill Green	
Homeowners – Northeast	Jim Liggett	
Homeowners – Southwest	Andy Anderson (absent)	
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 6/13/01 Meeting Minutes:** No comments provided. Minutes received group approval after motion to accept from Bill Green and second from Royce Kardinal.



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2. Open Comments:

Jim Liggott: Sverdrup noted they would have both a public meeting and a public hearing. When?

Bert: Details will be provided in greater detail during the meeting. Bert added that the next Public Information meeting was scheduled for November 7, 2001. (Note: This date was later postponed to December 5, 2001). No date had been scheduled for the public hearing yet.

Jim Liggott: Bert had stated that both the interim and the ultimate bypass studies would go on simultaneously. Is that still true?

Bert: Sverdrup had concluded that the interim project could not handle the full traffic in the design year. As such, ADOT would have to begin working on the ultimate bypass even though an interim was constructed. **Jim:** We interpreted that to mean that ADOT would purchase R/W for the bypass soon. **Bert:** ADOT cannot purchase R/W until after the actual bypass design begins. Advance R/W purchases of private land at this time are also not likely. It may be possible to designate a highway corridor on portions of public lands, but those BLM lands are also on hold until there is resolution on the raptor areas. State Lands cannot be designated either as those lands need to be purchased by the DOT, similar to private properties.

3. Study Update: Interim Improvements: Bert again reiterated why there was a need for an interim improvement project. While it is understood by the State that there are several who would prefer construction begin on the ultimate bypass outside the limits of town immediately rather than constructing any interim project, there is not enough funding available to build a completed, viable project before the existing roadway system through the town fails. ADOT is obligated to provide a safe transportation facility as part of the US highway network that can handle the regional traffic from Phoenix, through the Wickenburg area, and ultimately to Kingman and points beyond.

Sverdrup had reviewed several ways to improve the traffic through the Wickenburg area. Through our agency and steering committee meetings, those alternatives were reduced to 7, 13, & 14. The outcome of our last SC meeting in June suggested that two more hybrid alternatives be considered, Alternatives 15 and 16. Several versions of each alignment were again investigated, with minor tweaks applied to optimize criteria/desires presented in past meetings/sessions. Upon completion of this analysis, we have essentially looked at every conceivable, rational way to improve traffic through Wickenburg that meets the traffic demands and State/Federal design standards.

Bert passed out revised exhibits for Alternatives 7, 13, 14, and new exhibits prepared for Alternatives 15 & 16. Using a large wall exhibit, he described in detail the features included in the new alternatives.



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Alternative 15: This alternative is similar to Alternative 14 on its southern half, with the same intersection proposed at the southern end, and the same approach to crossing the Hassayampa River. To reduce the impacts to the residential subdivision north of Coffinger Park and east of Tegner that resulted from Alternative 14, the improvements were shifted slightly east and were continued further north before returning the existing Tegner alignment. The resultant alignment reduces the number of homes that must be purchased and increases the distance between the improvements and the existing subdivision. The alignment returns to the existing US 93 corridor traversing up a drainage ravine that is located between Rose Lane and Braillar Street. The resulting improvements still avoid the ADEQ WQARF consolidation site, but go through the Motel 8 property. Access to the cross streets of Rose Lane and Braillar Street, as well as a tie to Tegner Street is still maintained.

Alternative 16: This alternative is a combination of Alternatives 13 and 14, matching the Hassayampa River crossing and connection to US 60 on the south end of Alternative 14, and following the river to the north and east of the ADEQ WQARF consolidation site before returning to the existing US 93 corridor just north of the APS substation site, similar to Alternative 13. The highway improvements are maintained as far as possible from the established residential neighborhoods, avoids splitting the existing business community by being extended north of the current development, and avoids the long-term responsibilities of crossing through the ADEQ site.

Bert then described the improvements/benefits/differences of each alternative in detail. In addition, he distributed a summary matrix that compares these alternatives. Bert added that all of these documents would be included in the final study documents. The factors used to make the comparisons were those agreed to at the beginning of the study process, and agreed to by the agency representatives as well as the steering committee representatives.

Bert will recommend at the public meeting a "preferred" alternative. Should there be general acceptance of the preferred option, Sverdrup will complete the study documents, provide them for public review, and hold a public hearing, which is the last opportunity for local residents as well as the various agencies to formally comment on the improvements. After that meeting, we will provide the "Selected" alternative to the ADOT management for programming into the construction budget.

Sverdrup will identify Alternative 16 as the preferred alternative as part of the interim improvements. It provides the following benefits:

- Impacts the fewest residences & businesses
- Least impacts on larger, adjacent neighborhoods
- Least impacts to existing commercial zones by avoiding the need to cut through the middle of the commercial districts and dividing them.
- Incorporates the most cost efficient bridge crossing of the Hassayampa River
- Provides a single, signalized intersection on both ends of the realignment with efficient traffic operations.
- Reasonable project cost, when including the cost of construction, private and commercial properties, and maintenance.
- A connection to Kerkes Street is maintained, however the access to Apache Street from US 60



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will be terminated.

- The old Hassayampa river bridge abutment and the immediate area can be used by the Town as a park / open area.
- The perceived congestion from tying the improvements near the hospital and schools is eliminated.
- While the roadway is constructed on a grade that keeps the roadway out of the 50-year storm event, drainage will be designed to pass under the new embankment. With these improvements, it is unlikely that the delineation of existing flood zones will be changed.

In addition to the aerial photographs with the alternatives superimposed, Bert distributed plan/profile sheets of Alternative 16. Following his presentation, he requested that all committee members provide comments to Sverdrup by October 12. These comments could be on any of the alternatives, but should focus on addressing the intent of implementing Alternative 16 as the preferred alignment.

Following his presentation, the following open comments were made by the study team:

Royce: Will there be any future access to the new highway?

Bert: None are perceived at this time. As the drainage channel will be located on the west side through most of the alignment, combined with the higher profile of the roadway, an additional access point is unlikely due to costs.

Fred: At the new northern intersection, can the Town request that a slip ramp be constructed to allow SB US 93 traffic to continue unimpeded onto Tegner Street?

Bert: Not likely. ADOT is removing slip ramps across the state as they tend to result in accidents where the merge occurs between SB and left-turning NB to Tegner traffic would combine.

4. Study Update – Bypass Concepts: Bert provided a summary of the progress since our last meeting. The project from the southern end of the bypass north to the Santa Maria River will be broken into two projects; the northern portion to the River, and the bypass around Vulture Peak. As there are issues that cannot be resolved within the bypass limits for the next two years or so, FHWA and ADOT has agreed to allow Sverdrup to complete the portion from SR 89a to the north separately.

A feasibility report will be prepared for the bypass segment, documenting all of the progress, input and alternatives considered to date. While two corridors were being considered, one alternative (the Far West alternative, goes through a protection zone established nearly 20-years ago. As there was so much support for the Far West alternative, the feasibility study will document and present a compelling reason to consider a route through the Raptor Protection Area. MarLynn of the BLM explained that while the 2-mile buffer that currently is defined around the raptor area could be



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reduced to a 0.5-mile buffer, the BLM would need to go back to the public review process before they could modify the land use plan and allow the construction of a transportation facility through this area. This process of obtaining public acceptance would typically require development of an EIS and take at least 2-years.

Jim Liggott: Couldn't ADOT continue with the Far West route and with the R/W acquisition while BLM completes their study?

Bert: R/W cannot be purchased until a decision is made and all of the agency documents are completed. We considered a far-far west alternative, but it is too long and costly, and is not likely to be considered. As such, we cannot complete the study process, and therefore cannot purchase R/W.

Sverdrup will present this information to the public at the information meeting. Therefore, we will complete a feasibility study and cease working on the bypass alternatives until the BLM completes their study to get approval to build a transportation facility through the raptor protection area.. If however, the reason for changing the raptor zone is not viewed by the BLM as being compelling enough to change the protection limits, we would need to likely proceed with the study and only evaluate the southwest alternative.

As far as the status of the steering committee, Bert noted that we would again meet after the upcoming public information meeting to discuss the comments received. At this time, we propose to hold a public hearing in January to present the preferred alternative for the interim, and the preferred solution for the northern improvements. We will likely meet prior to that meeting as well.

5. Public Meeting:

Our next public information meeting will be held on November 7, 2001 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Wickenburg Community Center (later rescheduled to December 5). The focus of the meeting will be to discuss the interim improvements, and the bypass feasibility study.



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

Dick Wertz: Why are you studying the northern portion starting from the intersection with SR 89a, instead of starting at the intersection with SR 71 and going north? We are concerned that any improvements to US 93 south of 89a intersection will lead to a 4-lane roadway through the residential areas between the interim and SR 89a.

Bert: Those are the study limits due to the FHWA requirement that all studies end at logical termini. SR 71 is not a significant traffic generator on this corridor, while 89a is near the limits of Wickenburg, at a tie to Prescott, and near the terminus of the bypass. While the bypass may tie in to existing US 93 slightly north of the SR 89a intersection, the study limits are not necessarily the construction limits.

Dick Wertz: There is a perception that you have only listened to the Town representatives. The study team needs to address the public perception that you are not listening to the area residents outside of town. As it stands, you are building an up-the-river improvement just as the town had initially requested.

Bert: We had stated strongly at the last public meeting that an interim improvement would be constructed. We also noted that a bypass is necessary. We have stated all along that the study process is a discovery process, and that the discovery of the Raptor Protection Area must be resolved before the bypass documents can be completed.

Jim Dickenson: Are you building the interim to interstate standards?

Bert: The roadway is being built to State highway standards crossing through a rural developed area.

Fred: Will the portions to the north of SR 89a be built to interstate standards?

Bert: North of town, the roadway will be designed to State highway standards as a divided rural highway. It will be designed like the rest of US 93 till it hits Interstate 40, as an access controlled highway (providing limited access where necessary). The highway is being built with the possibility of being converted to a fully access controlled facility in the future (with all access using grade separated interchanges similar to an interstate).

Jim Dickenson: With the fall of the economy, what is to restrict further reduction in funds, and an attempt by ADOT to convert this interim through town ultimately to an interstate standard?

Bert: The ultimate roadway for an access controlled facility would use the bypass alignment. It is not cost effective to build such a facility through town.



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Bill Green: While you may have answered these questions to the committee and town several times, these questions are consistent with the comments of the community. Sverdrup must clearly explain why these changes in the study are taking effect. You must clearly state why the bypass is being delayed, and what the interim includes, and why it is necessary. For example, explain why this alternative could not be the ultimate bypass.

Richard Wertz: I no longer have a fax machine and therefore don't get the meeting notices. Remove my fax number from the lists.

The meeting concluded at 4:00 pm.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Committee members are to provide comments of the interim plans to Sverdrup by October 12, 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

Distribution: All committee members
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AMB/ DCS /014164-7B