



MEETING SUMMARY NOTES

Date Produced:	March 3, 2009
Meeting:	Sustainable Planning Professionals Common Interest Group Workshop
Date:	March 2, 2009; 1 PM – 3 PM
Location:	Radisson Phoenix City Center; 3600 N. 2 nd Avenue, Phoenix
Purpose:	Gather input from the sustainable planning professionals on the three transportation scenarios.

Participants

See attached roster

The following meeting summary notes are intended to be a summary of the discussions at the meeting. Any changes or corrections to the meeting summary notes must be received by the author within ten days. After that date, they will be final.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

John McNamara, ADOT Planning Division Management Consultant, called the meeting together at approximately 1 p.m., thanked the participants for attending, and gave a brief presentation.

Overview of Scenarios

Scenario A - Personal Vehicle Mobility

This scenario assumes a continuation of the existing approach of focusing on transportation solutions (primarily roadways) that assume people will continue to choose to drive their cars as their primary mode of transportation. However, the scenario assumes that automobile technology will continue to advance and that more high-fuel-efficiency vehicles such as hybrids, etc. will be more prominent than today. This scenario also includes significantly more transit than is currently available today.

Scenario B - Transit Mobility

This scenario shifts the focus from personal vehicles to a heavier emphasis on public transit, walking, and bicycling for regular daily trips in response to increased cost of owning and operating personal vehicles (fuel, insurance, and vehicle maintenance costs) and socioeconomic trends such as an aging population, environmental considerations, and a desire for a wider range of transportation choices.

Scenario C – Focused Growth

This scenario envisions a change in community development patterns toward more compact instead of spread-out development. It shifts the focus from personal vehicles only to transportation improvements emphasize local travel using transit, bicycling, and walking. This scenario responds to a growing trend toward a non-auto-dependent lifestyle that encourages a mix of land uses close to one another.

Small Group Discussion

Following the presentation the participants were asked discuss the three scenarios. Peggy Fiandaca, Public Involvement Management Consultant, led the group in their discussion. The following is a summary of the group's discussion.

Scenario A:

- How much will this protect growth versus driving additional growth? Scenario A seems like it would drive more growth in outlying areas. Transportation facilities will be built and land use will change and develop near the transportation facilities.
- Scenario A appears to be "business as usual", this is viewed by this group as a negative aspect. However, this scenario does include regional interconnectivity which is important.
- There are serious issues with the "business as usual" scenario A. Population projections will not play out, developers do understand and support smart growth, and developers are not developing.
- If lines are drawn on maps, they need to connect activity centers or have a good economic reason for the connection.
- The idea of people giving up their cars is unrealistic, unless we stop building them roads to drive on.
- Development of alternative/enhanced vehicle technologies appears to be unrealistic soon or in the near future.



- You need to have good transit connections in destinations/activity centers. Without good transit within these areas people are less likely to use transit to travel to the destination area.
- If there is going to be change in Arizona, we have to go with Scenarios B or C.
- Scenario A is not very visionary.
- This affects much more than transportation, you really can't look at transportation by itself.
- Scenario A not sustainable.
- Statewide vision should not just blindly incorporate local plans. The state needs to take a leadership role in development statewide.
- Questioned who provided the input for the Navajo Nation and why there were so many bus routes in the area. Questioned its accuracy.

Scenario B:

- This scenario is much more realistic than C. Private property rights are likely to prevail in Arizona.
- Any sort of transit is unrealistic. There is already too much sprawling in the state.
- Maybe we should try to limit growth and maximize density.
- A point was made that we should be using entitled land not just municipal or county land as a base for planning. The MAG region and Pinal County Comprehensive Plan used entitlements as a foundation for their planning.
- Entitlements can change throughout the years. We work with the best information that is available at the time.
- The connectivity between Phoenix, Tucson, and the GRIC was questioned. There are tradeoffs between widening I-10 (through GRIC) and allowing high capacity rail.
- Instead of adding more lanes to the existing roadways, have you thought of building rail lines alongside these roads?
- Scenario B is a true mobility model.
- Are GRIC and Ak-Chin supportive of the Spur Rail Line in Maricopa?
- GRIC is discussing improvements to SR 364, building Arizona Parkways and interested in discussing tradeoffs of rail versus roadways.
- Passenger rail is unrealistic and too much is shown on Scenario B. How many people will use this? Is it at all financially feasible? Rail is expensive. No one will use it, and who is going to build it. Rail lines are reducing their services today.
- There is a problem with fiscally unconstrained planning, it is not realistic.
- There is an ongoing change in demographics. Many people are moving here from the east coast who are used to transit.



- Some rural areas are using school buses and community vehicles to provide senior citizens with transit options.
- Transit is heavily used by the Hispanic population.
- Scenario B would work in urban areas but not in rural.

Scenario C:

- There needs to be integration of a transit system into this scenario. What if this scenario looked at a series of well connected activity centers? The only way for an activity centers to work is to have an integrated transit system.
- A rail line along SR 95 would be nice but seems unfeasible.
- This scenario seems like a challenge given our current reality with Proposition 207.
- The state will not be able to dictate local growth and land use decisions.
- We do not see cities giving up local control. They want to grow. There really is no way to implement Scenario C other than top down.
- Scenario C has less transit in rural areas which is bad.
- Scenario C also would need more integrated planning, a lot more than transportation, and would involve lots of politics. A total shift in political mindset.
- Scenario C would be best. There are a lot of barriers, but its time to get over it.

Closing Comments:

- Is the same level of service for the year 2050 achieved with each scenario? Scenario A performs a bit better than the other scenarios, but the purpose at this stage in the process is not to compare the three.
- It would be interesting to compare ourselves to Denver, where the light rail is working.
- It is encouraging that ADOT is building a statewide plan.
- AARP would really be most interested in the neighborhood level.



Additional comment received after workshop:

I wanted to provide a little more feedback on the discussion while it is fresh in my head. In my opinion, the transportation network of the State needs to continue economic development. Unfortunately, a lot of planners want to go "green" when natural economic pressures prevent such options.

Although miles driven per person has declined in the last two years, this is only a financial fluctuation and lack of alternatives to transportation. If vehicles are reinvented in 20 years that run on a more sustainable power supply, cars and sprawl are likely to continue. Hence, Scenario A would be most likely to benefit the economy of the State to encourage growth that allows for uninterrupted personal transportation (time is money). I think too many planners assume that this is bad planning because it encourages low density building. But if this is the demand of people that ultimately live here and create a tax base for the State, then transportation must accommodate this very likely situation.

From an environmental perspective, Scenario B encourages greater use of mass transit, including areas not traditionally serviced by such. Some may argue that by limiting the transit options that focus less on individual transit and more on mass transit encourages (forces) more efficient land use planning. If the political will was to encourage such development, then this would work. But again, cities that rely on less dense building to encourage greater number of new residences and businesses as a tax base will ultimately shy away from this scenario (Buckeye will have a developed area 200 sq. miles larger than Phoenix). There is a city outside of Stockholm, Sweden, that was designed to run without automobiles (I can not remember the name). Within 20 years, the city still had suburban sprawl because of the demand to live in a house, detached from neighbors. Now there is a discontinuation of the non-vehicular core and the vehicular suburb. This hurts the economic bottom line of the City. Another example, If I take a train to Las Vegas from Tucson, I will get on the train and only get off when I reach my destination. If I am in a vehicle, I make several stops along the way and spend money in various locations. Smaller communities may in fact take a financial loss, which leads to more politics.

Scenario C is a good blend of the first two extremes. Although, it was obvious that this is what objectively is the ideal scenario. It was introduced and referred as "smart growth" on several occasions. Some people have no problems using mass transit, while others will push back that it is a waste of money when compared to the cost versus number of users. This scenario accommodates both demands.

In the end, I think that it is important to develop all three scenarios. Even if people drive less, there will be 14 million people driving less per person than what 6 million drive per person today; which will still equal more cars on the road and greater commute times. I think it is important to plan for millions of more people driving more. It is also important to plan for millions of people driving less than net miles driven by the existing population today. And the result will be in between. The plan needs to be able to have fluctuation depending on unknown future factors.

Robert Hults
City of Scottsdale



"Building a Quality Arizona"

Statewide Transportation
Planning Framework

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