



## **Transportation Advisory Committee Minutes**

Wednesday, June 13, 2013 6:30–8:30 p.m.

Municipal Services Building – San Tan Conference Room

### **Committee Members:**

Ryan Nichols, Chairman	Present
Vice Chairman Clark, Vice-Chairman	Present
Robin Benning, Vice-Mayor	Absent
David Bond	Present
Steve Conklin	Present
Nichelle Williams	Present
Richard Turman	Present
Alan Turley	Present
Kenn Burnell (non-voting)	Present

### **Public:**

Edd Hennerley, QCUSD Director of Transportation  
Amy Moran, T.E., Wilson & Company  
Dan Marum, Wilson & Company

### **Town Staff Members:**

Troy White, Public Works Division Manager	Present
Chris Dovel, Town Engineer	Present
Laura Moats, Development Services Assistant	Present

### **1. Call to Order:**

Chairman Nichols called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

### **2. Introductions:**

Round table introductions were done.

### **3. Public Comment: None.**

### **4. Items for Discussion and possible action**

**Item A: Consideration and possible approval of May 9, 2013 minutes Chairman Nichols Motion by Nichelle Williams, to approve the May 9, 2013 minutes, as presented, seconded by Alan Turley. All ayes. Motion carried 7-0.**

## **Item B: Presentation and Discussion on School Bus Stop Locations**

**Troy White**

At the request of Committee members, Mr. Ed Hennerley, Queen Creek Unified School District Transportation Director, was present to talk about school bus stop locations. He stated bus stop locations are determined according to mandates set forth by Arizona State Statutes (ARS) and include the following legal parameters:

- Bus stops cannot be any closer than 50 feet from a stop sign;
- Bus stops must be placed a minimum of 100 ft from stop lights and railroad crossings;
- Bus stops must be placed at least 600 feet apart from each other on school bus routes

Mr. Hennerley described the method for keeping up with the growth that has occurred in the last eight years. There are currently four types of schools in the Queen Creek District:

- Elementary - *parents want the bus stops as close as possible to their homes;*
- Middle School - located @ Ellsworth & Queen Creek roads -5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Graders - *parents are not as concerned as long as the bus stop is in the neighborhood;*
- Junior High - Newell Barney located @ Riggs/Sossaman roads - *parents have no preference;*
- High School – *parents do not have many concerns*

The size of the bus stop (number of students at each stop) is determined by the age groups of students in the area. According to ARS, students in Grades K-8 can walk up to a mile to a bus stop, while High School students can walk up to 1.5 miles. Mr. Hennerley feels this does not provide an acceptable Level of Service. The other concern relates to which school the students attend and potentially having a long route from their home to the school. This happens for Junior High students who live farther away and are on a 45-minute route. The Transportation Department tries to keep routes as short as possible and still service an adequate number of students. Mr. Hennerley explained a performance audit is conducted every 10 years. His department was called out on not running heavy enough loads. This is due to the District being in a relatively rural area, with a few dense pockets. The auditors want the busses filled to at least 75% capacity. The Transportation Dept. is working on getting more students on busses, thereby eliminating some of the bus stops; however, they are currently making a lot of stops in rural areas where there are only two-three students at each stop. The Department also tries as much as possible to not put bus stops on main corridors, and to keep traffic flowing. Mr. Hennerley stated bus stops sometimes take three to five minutes, which becomes dangerous if traffic does not stop. Therefore, they try to take the stops off main roads like Riggs, Cloud, Ellsworth, and Sossaman. They do try to put bus stops in established communities, and at areas that are as safe as possible. The District uses a routing program and Google Earth to place bus stops, as well as physically going out to areas. The District looks at all these factors and works with the public as much as possible. Mr. Hennerley provided examples of bus stops that work well, such as the Remington Heights park, which takes kids off properties. He also talked about problem areas, such as the Queen Creek Villages turnabouts (four directions of traffic with no one stopping by design, which creates a challenge). The District is concerned about these issues and looks at them very carefully. They also spend time putting the right drivers into those situations. Bus stop locations can be found on the District's website at [www.qcusd.org](http://www.qcusd.org).

Chairman Nichols thanked Mr. Hennerley. He initiated discussion about Queen Creek Villages. Nichelle Williams stated she has concerns a turnabout at Brandon Pickett for Middle School and Jr. High. The Middle School is on the west and the Junior High School is on the east side. She stated the kids sit at the curb. Residents are rushing and she is concerned with the large number of kids

coupled with the drivers who are rushing, someone may get hurt. Mr. Hennerley brought attention to the fact that drivers need to be cognizant of busses slowing down at schools and bus stops in residential areas; drivers need to slow down since school busses are slowing to 10-15 mph in these areas. Mr. Hennerley explained another issue, which is the national movement to provide at least two meals per day; in addition to the fact that at least 55% of students are eligible for free and reduced lunches. Students who eat at school need to be on campus by 7 am. He stated students on the Mountain Road corridor are on the bus close to 30 minutes because of traffic on Ellsworth Road at that time of day. The first stop on that route is just south of Warner at 6:10 a.m.

Mr. Hennerley stated the Queen Creek School District Transportation Department was chosen by School Bus Fleet Magazine (a national trade magazine) as one of the Top 10 Transportation Departments in America in 2010. This magazine will feature QC again in the future. The QCUSD is has been on the front edge of technology. They have worked with TransFinder software in NY State, which has modified their software based on QCUSD's suggestions. Mr. Hennerley pointed out another issue is the transporting of special needs students. In the past 10-15% of students were special needs. That has changed to 40% special needs and 60% mainstream students. A student in a wheelchair takes 10 minutes to load. When QCUSD saw this trend, they bought the smallest equipment they could that would allow them not to have to pick up 10-20 students at a time, and instead pick up four-six students. The other advantage of having small busses is that they can get into driveways and not hold up traffic. The Transportation Department was recognized in 2007 for moving in this direction.

Mr. Hennerley provided the following contact information for the School District's Transportation Department: [www.qcusd.org](http://www.qcusd.org). There is a pull down menu for Bus Stops. Questions can be directed to 480-987-5982.

### **Item C. Discussion and Possible Action on Germann Road Corridor Study      Troy White**

Amy Moran and Dan Marum from Wilson & Company, Inc. (engineers and architects) were in attendance to give a presentation. Public Works Manager Troy White provided background information on the Corridor Study. He stated staff would like to get the Committee's perspective on whether or not further analysis is required at the Sossaman/Germann/UPRR intersection. Mr. White noted there is further public input and vetting that will need to happen before preservation of right-of-way. He suggested the Committee take action to recommend proceeding with a Design Concept Report (DCR) for this intersection when funding is available.

The Germann Road Corridor Study area extends from just west of Power road to just east of Ironwood Road in Pinal County and half-mile north and south of the current Germann Rd corridor alignment. The key objectives of the study include: Based on future travel demands, confirm what type of road needs to be planned in this corridor. Currently, six lanes are proposed, with right-of-way (140 feet for six-lane arterial with median); and alignment of corridor.

Referring to the "Long-Range" versus "Build-out" slides, Chairman Nichols questioned why the volume of traffic traveling east-west switched from Rittenhouse to the Germann Road corridor. Ms. Moran responded by explaining the build-out activity versus long-range. She explained the five preliminary alternatives, options A-E, noting Alternatives "B", "C" and "D" were not supported by Mesa or Queen Creek; they were deemed fatally flawed, meaning they would not progress in further review.

Ms. Moran explained the concepts of Options A through E, as follows:

- Option A: Grade separation of Germann and Sossaman roads
- Option B: Grade separation of Sossaman Road and rerouting of Germann Road (no connectivity)
- Option C: Grade separation of Germann Road and rerouting of Sossaman Road (no continuity)
- Option D: Grade separation of Sossaman Road and rerouting of Germann Road to Pecos Road alignment
- Option E: Grade separation of Germann Road; Sossaman Road remains an at-grade crossing

Ms. Moran explained the East Mesa Area Drainage Master Plan (EADMP) Coordination, which brought attention to the large drainage channel that would require as much as up to 130 feet of right-of-way. After many months, the conclusion was that in order to avoid eminent domain of several residential homes/lots, the ADMP would no longer evaluate any alternatives showing a drainage channel along Germann Road. It was concluded it would make sense to follow the section line as much as possible with minor deviations. The Town of Queen Creek and City of Mesa agreed that a formal Design Concept Report should be conducted to develop the preferred alternative.

Mr. White stated it is staff's perspective to move as expeditiously as possible with an IGA or partnership with City of Mesa to do a DCR in this area.

Kenn Burnell asked at what point estimated cost would be determined. Ms. Moran responded they are already at point in the study where they are looking at cost. The cost is determined per lane mile for a standard six-mile lane section. Option A will cost one and a half to two times as much as Options B or C, because it includes multiple bridges over the existing UPRR track.

Vice Chairman Clark asked how tall the bridges will be and the impact that will have on the houses in Cortina.

Town Engineer Chris Dovel responded there is a 23.5 foot separation from the top of the tracks to the bottom of the bridge deck. The height is mandated by the railroad.

Dan Marum noted the study looked at overcrossings due to the complexity with drainage. He stated it is possible the DCR could lead to further options in addition to the options presented tonight.

In response to a question from the Committee, Ms. Moran stated public outreach will occur when the DCR is started. She noted most of this area is zoned Industrial. All property owners will be receiving public hearing notices.

Ms. Moran finished the presentation by showing the Pinal County interim plans extending Germann to Ironwood Road. Germann Road currently dead-ends at Meridian Road. She stated Pinal County gave their preliminary concept alignment. Ms. Moran stated Pinal County has independently conducted an assessment and come up with a virtually identical recommended solution for the long term.

Ms. Moran stated the draft final report will be submitted to the transportation advisory committee on June 14. A public meeting will be held on June 18. Public comment from this meeting will be documented in the final report.

Alan Turley commended the efforts to get east-west connectivity through or near Queen Creek, stating Germann Road currently stops at both ends a mile and a half apart with no connectivity in either direction, and Queen Creek Road is the same. He suggested a motion to recommend to Council approval of the study, with the DCR forthcoming that would explore the feasibility of Option "B".

Chairman Nichols clarified the DCR would not focus on any one of these alternatives presented, but analyze variations of these options to determine if a DCR should be conducted.

Chairman Nichols explained the purpose of a DCR is to analyze cost, look at right-of-way impacts to property owners, and review other engineering feasibility issues such as drainage and right-of-way. He stated the DCR will categorize these areas and tabulate them.

Mr. Turley stated Alternative A seems not to have much support in terms of any preferred solution. The remaining two could work, but not be very feasible due to the elevated crossing. He thinks it seems like Alternative B could proceed and be close to where the final recommendation would be.

Mr. White stated five to six alternatives are typically proposed in a DCR, which would need to be vetted with business and property owners. There could ultimately be many reasons why one or several alternatives would not move forward. The suggested DCR for this intersection would be very similar to the Meridian/Combs/Rittenhouse/Riggs DCR.

At this level, these Options are only concepts about what can work. The DCR will look at these and use these ideas to come up with five to six alternatives that will need to be reviewed with property owners and businesses.

Further discussion took place on the concepts shown in Alternatives "A" and "B" and connectivity.

Ms. Moran stated the DCR will include a more detailed cost-benefit analysis and provide additional detail of benefits; assigning costs to safety/vehicles stopping for trains/development opportunities, etc. All the benefits will be assigned a value to weigh against the actual cost to construct the facilities.

**Vice Chairman Clark made a motion to recommend to proceed with a Design Concept Report for the intersection of Sossaman/Germann/UPRR once funding is identified. Seconded: Nichelle Williams Vote: All ayes. Richard Turman abstained. Not Voting: Kenn Burnell.**

**Motion carried 6-0.**

Vice Chairman Clark asked about who has received public outreach in the area. Ms. Moran responded the public outreach for this level of study is a half mile north and south of the corridor alignment. There is an advertisement in the newspaper; however, direct mailings go to property owners within the study area only.

**Item D. Request for future agenda items**

**Vice-Chair Clark**

Alan Turley requested staff provide a map indicating discontinuous arterial roads going either north-south or east-west. He would like this relatively soon so TAC knows where to focus their discussions.

Vice Chairman Clark stated he had received an email from Bill Birdwell saying his last day with the Town would be August 1. He suggested TAC do something for him at the next meeting. Mr. White responded this had not been announced and was not yet official.

**5. Announcements**

Vice Chairman Clark informed everyone the Arizona League of Cities has dropped its opposition to the Transaction Privilege Sales Tax.

Mr. White stated the extension of Ocotillo Road between Power and Recker roads is progressing.

Chairman Nichols announced that Boards, Committees and Commissions training was held recently. The Committee provided positive feedback. Mr. Turley applauded the quality of the presenters, stating he thought they were well-prepared, knew their material and presented it well. He thought they were well versed on both State and municipal codes. Chairman Nichols asked everyone to complete the surveys sent by facilitator Gretchen Maynard.

**6. Adjournment**

**Alan Turley made a motion, seconded by Richard Turman, to adjourn. All ayes. Motion carried 7-0.**

**The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.**

PREPARED BY:

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Laura Moats, Development Services Assistant

PASSED AND APPROVED ON: \_\_\_\_August 8, 2013\_\_\_\_

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**Ryan Nichols, Transportation Advisory Committee Chairman**