



IRON COUNTY RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION

ICRTEC CHAIR—MAYOR CONNIE ROBINSON • ICRTAC CHAIR—TOM STRATTON • PLANNING MANAGER—CURT HUTCHINGS

MINUTES

Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC)

March 4, 2015, 1:30 p.m.

Parowan City Library

16 S. Main Street, Parowan UT

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Rob Dotson
Mr. Steve Platt
Mr. Kit Wareham

REPRESENTING:

Enoch City Manager
Iron County
Cedar City

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE BY PHONE

Mr. Shayne Scott
Mr. Monte Aldridge

REPRESENTING

Parowan City
Utah Dept. of Transportation

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Mayor Connie Robinson
Mr. Tom Stratton
Mr. Stoney Shugart

REPRESENTING:

Paragonah Town
Brian Head Town
Kanarraville Town

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Dave Demas
Mr. Curt Hutchings
Mr. Reed Erickson

REPRESENTING:

Five County Assoc. of Governments
Five County Assoc. of Governments
Iron County

I. Quorum Declaration

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Kit Wareham in the absence of Mr. Tom Stratton. Mr. Wareham welcomed all present and declared there was a quorum present.



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II. Approve Minutes for February 4, 2015

A motion was made by Mr. Steve Platt, seconded by Mr. Rob Dotson, to approve the February 4, 2015 Minutes of the Iron County Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (ICRTAC).

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

III. 2015 Meeting Schedule Revision

Mr. Demas passed out a copy of the revised schedule and stated that he would e-mail the schedule to those members on the phone. He reported that the schedule is being adjusted in order to accommodate the Iron County Coordinating Council (ICCC) meetings. The next ICCC meeting is scheduled for April 1, 2015. Mr. Wareham noted that, per the revised schedule, the RTAC meetings would be held every other month through November. The meeting time would remain at 1:30 p.m. and the next meeting location would be determined at the end of each meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Shayne Scott, seconded by Mr. Steve Platt, to approve the revised meeting schedule of the Iron County Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (ICRTAC).

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

IV. Revised Project Priority List

Mr. Demas noted that he had previously e-mailed the revised project priority list to all the committee members for their review. The list is essentially the same as approved at the last RTAC meeting subject to the changes that were discussed. The only exception is the dollar amount for the South Leg of the Belt Route which was changed to the actual dollar amount of \$1,870,000 after a discussion with Mr. Platt. Mr. Demas remarked that since the Iron County Rural Transportation Executive Committee (ICRTEC) meeting is now a month away he felt that this revised list should come back to this committee for formal approval.

Mr. Wareham provided a short clarification for Mr. Platt regarding the Coal Creek Road project.

A motion was made by Mr. Shayne Scott, seconded by Mr. Steve Platt to approve the Project Priority List as presented via e-mail by Mr. Dave Demas.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY



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V. RPO Funding *(This agenda item was moved in order to discuss while a quorum was still present.)*

Mr. Hutchings noted that during the last RTAC meeting the continuation of the RPO funding was discussed and received the approval of the committee and a signature from the Chairman, Mr. Tom Stratton. However they did not have work plan developed at that time. He and Mr. Demas have now developed the work plan. Although the work plan is similar to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the tasks of the work plan will remain the same even if the language in the MOU changes. They have not yet determined which direction to go with the MOU. Mr. Hutchings briefly reviewed the list of tasks on the proposed work plan for fiscal year 2016. He felt that the work plan and the letter that was signed by Mr. Stratton should be presented to the RTEC at the same time. Mr. Demas noted that the existing contract would remain mostly the same but the new work plan would be added.

A motion was made by Mr. Rob Dotson, seconded by Mr. Steve Platt to send the recommendation to the Iron County Rural Transportation Executive Committee (ICRTEC) to approve the work plan presented by Mr. Hutchings.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

VI. Discussion – Belt Route Alignment

Mr. Reed Erickson, Iron County Planner, began by thanking the committee for the opportunity to meet and discuss the alignment of the belt route for the county and communities. He felt it was important to meet with this committee to get input on the alignment of the route in order to have a corridor established. As projects move forward it will be necessary to let people know the location of the belt route.

Mr. Erickson explained that there are currently two projects pushing the discussion of the belt route. The first project is a utility size solar power plant located on the west side of Minersville Highway between 6400 North and 8000 North. This project will be going to the Planning Commission tomorrow night. The main power corridor going through that area is 6800 North which would run through the south end of the power plant. The plant is a 100 megawatt power plant; the application property covers approximately 1200 acres. Mr. Erickson has been reviewing where the facilities are located and how they can accommodate a belt route going through the middle of the area. The applicant is ready to go to design and they are looking for a commitment as to where the route will be located. The conditional use permit will probably be approved tomorrow night and the language in the draft is specifically stating 6400 North for the alignment of the belt route. However, Mr. Erickson believes that 6800 North would be a better choice on the south side of that corridor.



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Mr. Erickson circulated a land ownership map and a project map for the committee to review. He asked Mr. Scott and Mr. Aldridge to contact him if they would like him to e-mail copies of the maps to them to discuss at a later time. Mr. Erickson explained that although we are not ready to build the north leg (phase 3) of the Belt Route there is also another power plant being proposed north of Port 15 which goes right up 5700 West. These two power plant projects encompass approximately two miles along the corridor. It is difficult to tell the developers that a corridor needs to be preserved but not have a specific location. Mr. Erickson and Mr. Platt walked the site on the north leg of the route earlier in the day and determined that, because of where the project is located, using 6800 North may be the better choice rather than 6400 North. Mr. Erickson noted that going east to west from 6400 North presents a challenge with the housing in that area.

Mr. Erickson pointed out that one question in determining where the alignment should occur is to know where we are going on the north end of the route – up to Summit or to a new interchange north of Enoch. That decision will influence where the alignment should go through the middle of the valley.

Mr. Erickson identified several possibilities of the route alignment. He noted that the belt route alignment has been discussed in the past but nothing has been happening recently. However, the two power plant projects are now pushing the need to identify where the alignment should occur. As projects develop we can begin acquiring the right-of-way.

Mr. Erickson informed the committee that they have a meeting in the afternoon with Mr. Spencer Jones, who is the major property owner in the area being discussed and is also the chairman of the Enoch Planning Commission. Mr. Erickson stated they would also like to have a meeting with Mr. Dotson, Mayor Rasmussen and possibly Mr. Jones after the County Commission meeting on Monday afternoon if they are available.

In conclusion, Mr. Erickson asked the committee members to provide input on the destination point of the route alignment on I-15 – whether to go up to Summit or to come down to the proposed interchange in Enoch. He also asked about the possibility of this new Enoch interchange alignment connecting to the Summit alignment. He questioned if a new interchange is possible within the realm of planning and if it is an option that should be considered. Those are the questions that will drive the alignment on the north leg of the belt route.



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Mr. Platt asked Mr. Aldridge about the possibility of an interchange at Enoch. Mr. Aldridge responded that currently a new interchange in Enoch is proposed at milepost 67 which would be approximately 3-4 miles south of Summit. Mr. Demas asked if that distance met the UDOT spacing requirements. Mr. Aldridge confirmed that the spacing requirements should be adequate. Mr. Aldridge added that the biggest challenge is that an interchange project that is not being driven by capacity is typically expected to be a 50/50 split. Currently there is no driver for an Enoch interchange in Phase 1 in the Long Range Plan; he believes that it is in Phase 3. Mr. Erickson asked Mr. Aldridge for an estimate of the current costs for a new interchange. Mr. Aldridge stated he would review the STIP to determine the cost.

Mr. Demas asked if the decision regarding the interchange on the north leg of the route would have an effect on the power plant project. Mr. Erickson responded that it would have a bearing on the project depending on which direction the alignment will take - if going south to Enoch it would be best to use 6400 North, if going north to Summit the alignment would use 6800 North and follow the power line. The decision depends on when to start dropping south around the bottom of the hill closer to Enoch; whether it is done on the east side of Minersville Highway after the power plant or earlier (west of Minersville Highway).

Mr. Erickson added that the best place to get around the Three Peaks Substation and to cross Lund Highway is between 6600-6800 North. It would be difficult to get through anywhere south of 6600 North due to the number of homes and subdivisions in that area. He continued that as we go further east it makes sense to follow the power line corridor and stay on the south side on 6800 North. The question is should we stay at 6800 North or 6600 North as we come all the way across and drop to 6400 North when we get to the power plant. If the decisions regarding the alignment are made now, they will provide the right-of-way through the property. If we wait, we will not be able to get through that area. A short discussion ensued regarding the topography of the area.

Mr. Platt mentioned that if the alignment is along 6800 North, going through the middle of the proposed solar farm, we could get a 100 foot right-a-way. If it is on 6400 North, on the south edge and kept on the section line instead of the road, we would only get a 50 foot right-a-way. While Mr. Aldridge was reviewing the visual imagery on Google Earth and there was a short discussion regarding some of the challenges in the topography as the proposed route heads east to connect with I-15.

After reviewing the STIP, Mr. Aldridge reported that the proposed Enoch interchange is listed in the non-funded phase of the draft Long Range Plan with an estimated cost



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of \$40 million. Mr. Platt asked Mr. Aldridge to confirm on visual imagery that 6800 North was the utility corridor. Mr. Aldridge confirmed that the corridor was located just slightly south of 6800 North. Mr. Platt remarked that it may be more politically palatable to put the belt route within a utility corridor rather than trying to acquire multiple pieces of property. Mr. Erickson added that one thing they will hear is that people moved out in the middle of nowhere because they didn't want to be disturbed. With the alignment along 6800 North it would avoid most of the homes because of the utility corridor.

Mr. Dotson felt there would be challenges with some of the property owners in getting the route alignment established. Mr. Platt asked Mr. Dotson if he and Mayor Rasmussen would be able to meet with himself and Mr. Erickson on site to identify their red line. They agreed to meet on Friday. Mr. Wareham remarked that one of the problems of aligning next to the utility corridor is that the county will end up developing and putting in the improvements in the common line between the road and the corridor.

At this point, Mr. Aldridge announced that he had identified on the visual imagery that the utility corridor turns approximately 50 degrees northeast about 1.54 miles before I-15. However, as he extends 6800 North to the east towards I-15, it would intersect right at the center of the Summit interchange. Mr. Platt thanked him for this new and very helpful information. He noted that 6800 North would allow the route to get through the flat land in the valley. However, as the route continues east there may need to be adjustments to the alignment in order to get through the hills the best way possible.

Mr. Erickson recapped the benefits of the two route connection options. Going to Summit would cost less because it would not require the construction of a new interchange and it fulfills the purpose of the belt route to get traffic more efficiently around the west side of valley. Going to Enoch would put the route closer to the majority of the population and would provide more economic opportunity for Enoch to take advantage of the infrastructure and development around an interchange. One down side to the Enoch connection is the cost of a new interchange and how that would affect the timing of completing the project.

He noted that one other driver worth mentioning is the Alton Coal Mine project. The project may provide possible funding options which would argue for the Summit interchange connection. There may also be available funding through CIB because of the mineral severance tie to help build the road. Economically this would add another advantage to choosing the Summit connection. However, the disadvantage



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to the Summit connection would be trying to get the population on the east side of Enoch up onto the belt route. Mr. Erickson noted that there are pros and cons to both choices and would appreciate any input from the committee.

Mr. Demas asked if there was an alignment that could accommodate both choices, a new Enoch interchange as well as tying into the Summit interchange, whichever comes first. Mr. Dotson felt that would be answered by natural time and growth. The proposal to use 6800 North for the Summit connection could be accomplished sooner because of the financial aspect. However, 40-60 years from now, if the population increases as projected, an interchange in Enoch with access to the belt route may be possible through commercial development. Mr. Demas agreed and used the Southern Parkway in St. George as an example. The interchanges that have been built are spurring development along the Parkway.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the ultimate purpose of the belt route, the pros and cons of the Summit and Enoch connections and the future development of the county and cities. Mr. Demas mentioned that an updated CUBE model that could be populated with the roads and area information would be very helpful to forecast and help make these types of decisions. This type of model has been very helpful in the St. George area. He hoped that UDOT would be able to help with the costs associated with updating the model for Iron County. Mr. Aldridge asked if the master transportation plans have been completed in order to have a meaningful model. Mr. Demas responded that they are very close if not already completed.

Mr. Erickson confirmed that there will be a meeting on Monday to discuss the belt route alignment with the Commissioners at 1:30 p.m. at the Parowan Courthouse. He noted that there will be a series of meetings to continue the discussion. That is specifically why he asked to be placed on the agenda today; it is critical to make this issue a priority so that decisions can be made. He would also like to discuss the issue at the next RTEC meeting. Mr. Demas suggested making the belt route alignment an on-going agenda item for this committee so there will be continual discussion and updates. Mr. Hutchings noted that we want to be as involved as possible in the planning perspective of the belt route.

A short discussion ensued regarding the topography of the land of the north end of the belt route and the possibility of a 50 foot right-a-way at 6400 North versus a 100 foot right-a-way at 6800 North. Mr. Erickson noted that currently the master plan shows the belt route at 6400 North. He reiterated that 6800 North appears to be the better choice due to fewer conflicts along the utility corridor.



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Mr. Platt asked Mr. Demas if the interchanges in St. George he previously mentioned were driven by traffic need. Mr. Demas replied that on the new belt route the interchanges were driven by projected traffic need. The developers and property owners came forward with funding or traded right-a-ways with UDOT.

Mr. Erickson thanked the committee for their time and the opportunity for continued discussion.

Mr. Wareham asked about the construction schedule of the power plant project. Mr. Erickson replied that they would like to start construction in August or September 2015. He noted that there are 14 solar plant projects to be constructed in the county by the end of December 2016 in order to take advantage of the federal tax credits. They must be online at that time in order to get the tax credit. Seven of the projects are large plants in the 80-120 megawatt range and the other projects are 3 megawatt plants. The largest plant (120 megawatts) is north of the Three Peaks Station and will have underground storage to produce during the day and load onto the system during the night. Mr. Erickson briefly reviewed the locations of the projects that are currently under construction.

Mr. Hutchings asked about employment requirements for all of the projects. Mr. Erickson explained that during the construction phase there will be approximately 300-400 employees needed per project. However, after the plants are operational the larger plants will only require 2 employees for each plant and fewer employees for the smaller plants. He went on to explain that the companies are working together to utilize the same workforce and move them between the projects as needed. There are concerns about housing and the other issues involved with the impact of such a large workforce.

Mr. Wareham asked if the majority of the power will be sent out of state. Mr. Erickson replied that the power purchase agreements are with Rocky Mountain Power. The power will go into the grid and will most likely go where the demand is located - possibly northern Utah.

Mr. Hutchings spoke briefly about the possible opportunities for van pools for the employees working at the power plants. It was determined that there are currently not enough employees to justify a van pool program. However, it may be a possibility in the future.



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VII. Other Discussion Items

A. Next meeting will be held on May 6, 2015 at 1:30 p.m. in Enoch

VIII. Adjourn

A motion was made by Mr. Steve Platt, seconded by Mr. Rob Dotson, to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY