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Regional Transportation Authority Wildlife Linkages Working Group

Legal Action Items of 9:02 a.m., August 13, 2010, Meeting

Committee Members

Carolyn Campbell, CSDP
Mike Demlong, AZGFD
Debra Einweck, Town of Sahuarita
Rick Ellis, PCDOT, Chair
Kathleen Kennedy, CSDP (Alt.)
Jessica Lamberton, Sky Island Alliance
Janine Spencer, Town of Marana (Alt.)
Phil Trenary, Town of Oro Valley

Public/Agencies

David Grandmaison, AZGFD
Shawn Lowery, AZGFD
Julie Mikolajczyk, AZGFD
Ray Schweinsburg, PhD, AZGFD

Staff

Jim DeGrood
Steve Matthews
Joan Reedy
Teresa Ruiz

Item 2 - Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting – May 14, 2010

Motion was made by Mike Demlong to approve the minutes of the May 14, 2010, meeting, seconded by Janine Spencer, and unanimously approved.

Item 4 - Proposal Review

Mike Demlong, Habitat Specialist, Arizona Game and Fish Department, presented proposal revisions to the Pima County Wildlife Connectivity Assessment Regional Workshop proposal. The primary goal of this project is to identify wildlife corridors throughout Pima County and evaluate which roadways may need crossing structures or other mitigation efforts to facilitate wildlife movement. These efforts will parallel what the Arizona Wildlife Linkages Workgroup (AWLW) has successfully coordinated in Pinal, Maricopa, Yavapai, Coconino, and Navajo/Apache counties. A diversity of partners and stakeholders will be invited to participate in the two-phase workshop process. A "Pima County Detailed Wildlife Corridor Design" reports are expected to be completed in 12 to 18 months.

Motion was made by Jessica Lamberton to approve the Pima County Wildlife Connectivity Assessment Regional Workshop Proposal, to include a Fact Sheet requested by Jim DeGrood, and send it on through the RTA process for funding approval, seconded by Carolyn Campbell, and unanimously approved.

Item 3 – RTA Board Update

Jim DeGrood, Director of Transportation Services, provided an update of the two sets of jurisdictional project reviews undertaken over the summer. Mr. DeGrood said “everything is being looked at in great detail; the purpose being to address concerns, to identify reoccurring issues and find ways to address them or proactively avoid them in the future.”

The second part of this update included a summary of the regionalization of transit dialogue which has occurred over the last 18 months. Mr. DeGrood explained that transit costs are a big burden on local governments. Transit is not eligible for funding under HURF dollars, it is constitutionally segregated; the monies come from jurisdictional general funds and are in competition with all other city services. Decisions are made on the basis of hierarchy of importance and urgency.

At present, talks have focused on whether the RTA should be reimbursing fully loaded the City of Tucson Transit costs or incremental costs. Should RTA be sharing the overhead costs that existed within Sun Tran prior to the RTA or only the incremental costs of putting those additional buses on the road. The RTA Board voted to pay now for incremental costs and is leaving open the opportunity to discuss further increases. Mr. DeGrood said this total issue will be reviewed by the staff, Technical Management Committee and the Citizens Accountability for Regional Transportation Committee and a report will be presented at the September RTA Board meeting if there is reason to move forward with additional costs.

Item 6 – Announcements and Updates

Mr. DeGrood presented an update on discussions about the SR 77 Wildlife Crossing Structures Under and Overpasses proposal status. Mr. DeGrood reminded the Working Group that when this proposal was approved, the RTA made it very clear that this was a request from the State and that the RTA reimbursement policy for funding would be observed. Mr. DeGrood said there are issues at this point concerning this. ADOT is commencing the design phase of SR 77 and has offered the RTA a joint powers agreement. RTA has not agreed to this arrangement in the past. Mr. DeGrood said the issue is, “When an organization seeks a grant from someone else they adhere to the grantors rules. ADOT is asking us for funds for furthering their mission or a mutual mission. ...It may need to go to the ADOT Board. Mr. DeGrood said he feels this will come to a head, but how it gets resolved he doesn’t know.

Item 8 - Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m. by Chair Rick Ellis, seconded by Phil Trenary.