



Planning Commission Work Session

MINUTES

FEBRUARY 15, 2011

6:20 PM – 8:51 PM

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

FACILITATOR	Vice Chair Tyler Bordrero
NOTE TAKER	Judy Merrill
ATTENDEES	Gary Pratt, T.J. Jensen, Dale Rackham, Gregory Day, Curt McCuistion, Robert Rice, and Michael Eggett

ITEM 1: COMMITTEE REPORTS

T.J. reported on the Transportation Committee. Based on Kenneth's directive, they created a list of pros and cons regarding some of the routes for UDOT's consideration. He distributed those to commissioners. T.J. then stated that, since Kenneth asked them to hold off on formulating anything new on the corridor, they hoped to see interchanges for the West Davis Corridor at the proposed locations in support of the City's current Master Transportation Plan. With Robert Whiteley's help, his Committee prepared their purpose and needs statement. In analyzing the corridor, which would affect how people traveled in and out of Syracuse, they were looking at future widenings, where they would need changes, and the best place to route traffic through new subdivisions. Because UDOT placed these alternate routes on a fast track, they bypassed discussion of the alternatives his Committee planned to propose. He then asked to attend the 200 South Committee meetings so he could be aware of any plans that might impact trails. Mike advised him that he did not mind as long as there were no more than three Commissioners present in order to avoid any legal issues. He directed him to discuss his request with Chairman Hellewell, though, to make sure he did not have any issues. Tyler instructed Judy to state in the minutes that committee members needed to copy all committee chairs in emails regarding information applicable to their planning efforts.

Gary reported on the Antelope City Center Corridor. During the last City Council meeting, the Mayor stated that the City had not yet taken a position on the West Davis corridor, as announced in some of UDOT's meetings. They planned to discuss pros and cons identified by the Transportation Committee and other information investigated by City Council before deciding on a well thought-out policy as to where the City thought the Corridor should run in order to realize the best results for Syracuse. His Committee had also been looking at transportation issues regarding the Corridor as far as Alternatives A, B, and C feeding into Antelope Drive. They drew a 5-mile circle around their City Center to see how it would impact transportation and to determine what kind of draw a main retail center would have within that radius. The City needed to open the General Plan and change potential zoning to accommodate major retailers. Antelope Drive was currently planned for PO, but his Committee would be proposing a change to GC. They believed there was enough depth on those frontage lots for minor retailers who could survive nicely with lower rents, because the buildings would not be as sophisticated. The parking would also be smaller. Moving towards 2000 West, the lots became substantially deeper, allowing for a bigger business that would take up more space, e.g. transmission store, etc. They started putting together a list of ideas by flipping through a phone book of businesses and writing down the ones that seemed to make sense for Syracuse. They would also be proposing a reduction in the 500-foot distance, between retailers selling liquor and City parks and buildings, to 300 feet. They would be meeting again the following week and planned to meet on the same day and time in the future.

Tyler reported on the 200 South Committee. They completed their revised draft of the new business park zone with specific requirements to accommodate some of the needs and growth anticipated in the City, specifically along 200 South. Those were broken up into permitted and conditional, a development theme, and a development plan with design standards, distances between buildings and signs, and functions of the architectural review committee. They put together this zone with a more broad-brush approach as to how it would look and feel in general and then planned to apply an overlay zone dictating locations of zones with a more dense and overriding City Center that would have more specifics as to setbacks, parking, etc. of the area business park. They received a lot of input from committee members. With another review, he believed they could present it to the Commission. Gary asked if they would be planning the area next to the high school as a learning center for students of the high school and junior high as well as an aquatic center for training. It could provide easy access for on-the-job training opportunities without the need for transportation. Tyler explained how their plans included a regional-type facility to attract surrounding communities and be able to host final regions for aquatic events. They had yet to decide whether it would include a learning campus, but they hoped to develop a City park at which to relocate City events from Founders Park. There would be a lot in their business park zone as far as landscaping, etc., to facilitate businesses and retailers. They were making a conscientious effort to tie the business park into SR193 for the Davis-Weber campus and office space for ATK, Boeing, aerospace, etc. Gary pointed out that Adobe was buying Omniture, which would provide high-tech growth. Syracuse needed jobs other than Hill Field, such as medical, physician assistance, or dental.

Mike advised them that Kenneth would be assigning the new commissioners to these committees based on backgrounds and interests. SR193 would be coming quickly. UDOT would be awarding the contract this March and completing the work some time next year. He added that City Council unanimously approved their recommended changes to Titles 8 and 10.

ITEM 2: DEPARTMENT BUSINESS

T.J. reported on the last City Council meeting.

Tyler had each of the new commissioners introduce themselves and mention some of their background.

Training by Community Development Director Mike Eggett:

Mike summarized the document, *The Planning Process and the General Plan*. He encouraged commissioners to review it again on their own so that they would be better prepared to address the City's General Plan this year as they opened and amended each region.

Discussion of the West Davis Corridor:

Since the Commission's last meeting, UDOT held several open houses and received a lot of community feedback. City staff also gathered feedback from all City Department Heads on the various options, relative to their impacts, and created a pros and cons analysis regarding the corridor and UDOT's findings. Four Department Heads ultimately recommended Alternative C subject to some variations per UDOT's willingness to be flexible—possibly up to a half a mile along selected options. The City Engineer recommended Alternative B with some movement in key locations. Mike advised commissioners of the need for them to consider these options during this work session and form a recommendation of the majority for Kenneth to present to City Council the following week in work session.

Tyler questioned the reasons why UDOT narrowed down the alternatives to only three once they reached the Syracuse boundaries while leaving more options throughout other cities. He referred to the different alternatives presented to the Commission by the Transportation Committee last month. The crux of that presentation was the route along Bluff Road and the advantages there. Based on the limited options before them, he recommended Alternative C, because it provided a more centrally-located access and avoided the golf course.

Gregory asked to know the ultimate driving force behind eliminating the option along Bluff Road. Gary advised him it went through a \$4 million City park. TJ added that it also impacted a lot of wetland areas and that UDOT's top two priorities were avoiding wetlands and city parks. Tyler reminded them of the roundabout as well. Gregory pointed out how Alternative C affected him as well as his neighbors in Miller Springs. TJ referred to other property owners, two of whom were in attendance, Charlie Black and Brent Cook, and stated that UDOT's Alternative C was a concern for them by affecting over 900 acres of farmland. It would have a significant agricultural impact.

Mike referred to a chart Troy Moyes created outlining the impacts of each alternative based upon criteria established by the Planning Commission and asked them to look at each category that identified the least and most impacts for each one. He encouraged them to analyze the data and recommend one that provided the most balance.

TJ informed commissioners that UDOT hired biologists to identify wetlands. They did not conduct any tests via potholes to arrive at his conclusions and identified too much property as wetlands based on unofficial determinations and bad science. Even though these areas were wet last spring, the Army Corps of Engineers did not consider them wetlands. He voiced frustration in having to make a recommendation on routes proposed by UDOT that he believed did not provide accurate information and given without accomplishing their due diligence by acquiring opinions of the Army Corp of Engineers. He preferred advising City Council that Syracuse needed better information before recommending a route.

Gary pointed out that any route running near the North Davis Sewer District (NDS) would meet with a lot of resistance. The NDS purchased a lot of land as a necessary buffer and did not want people building or driving nearby. They would make it a major issue from a legal and legislative standpoint. TJ agreed, stating that the NDS was opposed to both options that took the corridor near their property due to potential liability in the event of a chemical spill. That buffer zone was critical for the dissipation of such chemicals. Also, the main sewer line was there with the potential for development hooking into it. UDOT would not want trenching up this corridor for the installation of laterals underneath if the freeway blocked access for development. At the very least, UDOT should move that alignment a little to the south. Pushing it across Gentile would be better for Syracuse, although there would still be other issues to address such as cutting through Jensen Park. Once it reached below 2000 West, the sewer would not be so much of a consideration; however, above 2000 West, it would still be a major obstacle. Commissioners needed to consider that area towards build out. Once UDOT covered the land with a road, the City would no longer have the option of collecting taxes from it for commercial or residential development. He expressed the importance of preserving all developable land in the City.

Mike informed the Commission that the City Engineer supported Alternative A, which would run south along Gentile, and believed the wetland study was in order and alleviated some crossings. UDOT had to build either over- or under-passes for all major arterials in order to provide full circulation. The Gentile alignment accomplished that goal.

Tyler expressed understanding for the importance of the NDS's buffer but countered with his belief of the importance this corridor provided the City in attracting businesses. Alternatives A and A/B included an interchange off of Antelope Drive that might not be advantageous if Syracuse only had 2 or 3 of the 4 quadrants available for development because of the NDS's required buffer that restricted or hampered access.

TJ stated that, no matter which alignment was chosen, it was critical for Syracuse to have an interchange around Antelope Drive, be it west or east of 3000 West, where there were some commercial properties set aside for potential development. It was close enough to the Town Center that people might travel up the road and shop. Even with an interchange on 3000 West, a lot of people going to Antelope Island would hop off and go due west out to the Island. Unless there were businesses west of that interchange, the City would lose a lot of potential revenue. Some might go to Wal-Mart but, obviously, if the inter-change were at 4000 or 4500 West, there was very little property available for commercial development, and the NDS owned all the property to the south. Consequently, Syracuse needed an interchange in the 3000 West area since those other two would not help. As for the Bridgeway Island Subdivision, it was one thing to take out a house or two; it was quite another to cut a development in half.

Tyler suggested that mirroring the development from 1000 West to the proposed Antelope Drive interchange at 3000 West was proportionately viable with the Alternative C alignment being the center of what ultimately could and would sprawl all the way to Antelope as a main thoroughfare. He could easily see the Bridgeway Subdivision to Antelope Island alignment, over time, developing just as it had from 3000 West up to 1000 West and from 3000 West to the City boundaries.

Mike then explained UDOT's hierarchy of priorities, with the first being city infrastructures and facilities, which was why the park became such an issue. There was a dollar for dollar trade off. UDOT had to determine real values and pay back cities for anything they removed by either paying an equitable amount or replacing the facilities somewhere else. Therefore, UDOT would be passing along more burden and costs onto taxpayers or using more money from the fund instead of spending it elsewhere. UDOT always looked at these priorities as well when planning corridors.

Gregory asked if Bridgeway Island had an HOA and, if so, how the corridor would affect it if dissected by one of these alignments. Mike explained how it would be up to the HOA to determine their legal options. Cities did not administer or oversee HOAs. They acted independently in figuring out how they operated. Gregory believed the social impact on Bridgeway Island would be great. Tyler suggested proposing a pedestrian underpass to keep the Subdivision connected.

Gary stated that the Commission should support the plan that put the interchanges closest to the City's center in order to bookend them with I-15's interchange and really develop that corridor, because nothing would happen west of that intersection for quite some time. Syracuse had 600 building lots open and vacant already, and the majority was on one side of the interchange, so the west side of that corridor would remain farmland except for the few existing developments. The main problem to that option was cutting through the HOA. The same thing happened in Salt Lake with Bangerter. They had to take houses and subdivisions, which created a huge uproar; however, it got done and people adjusted. One of the problems this corridor created was leaving the fire station on the wrong side of the City. Without easy access for fire trucks to the majority of homes, homeowners' insurance rates and property taxes would increase due to the additional time it took for firefighters to maneuver through that corridor. This, however, would be an issue no matter where the corridor was built, unless it went west of the fire station.

TJ pointed out that it did go west of the fire station. When the City Council decided to move the fire station from 2000 West to 3000 West, they recognized that Legacy was along Bluff Road, which put the fire station to the west of the alignment. Their reasoning was that, in the event of an emergency where they couldn't get through or under the viaduct to the east side of the City, they would build another fire station on 1000 West. By moving the fire station to 3000 West, a lot of homeowners around the 1000 West area, speaking specifically from personal experience, had to pay higher insurance rates because the response time to their homes increased. Obviously, the City was not in a position to build another fire station at this time, but the Council planned to build a satellite fire station on 1000 West, possibly on the Thurgood Park property, when the City's population grew closer to build out, based on the BYU study. He talked with different municipalities, including Layton. Layton preferred the original Bluff Road alignment, because it did not overtake developable land in their City. Their recommendation showed the Layton Parkway connecting into Bluff Road. The County Commissioners recognized the issues relative to each proposed option and were encouraging everyone to submit comments. Commissioner Petroff told him that Randy Jeffries, one of UDOT's engineers, admitted that they were still open to changes based on valid reasons that might only be brought out by public comment in order to sway them from the current proposed alignments. He then proposed asking for more time to consider alignments prior to sending a recommendation to City Council.

Gary referred to the fire chief's report when he drove the proposed routes and found plenty of inaccuracies on the map. His conclusion was that these were designated areas unseen. They drew general designations and made conclusions about wetlands that were manmade due to drainage. TJ pointed to a study by the Army Corps of Engineers regarding supposed wetlands along Bluff Road for the Outwest development, which stated they had a finding of no jurisdiction in that area. This statement was important because they were verifying that this area had no wetlands, and that was just one development he had Judy research. Maybe some other development had wetlands, but this report was recent. If the Army Corps did not have jurisdiction, UDOT should not have a concern with these potential areas designated as wetlands. Planners needed to work off of good information, even though they were trying to get this done as quickly as possible.

Curt asked if West Point City had a preferred alignment. TJ advised him that their City Council was actually discussing it that evening as well and asked him to attend because of his comments regarding wetlands. The alignments they had before them went through their golf course to the east, a century-old farm, and some other important land or went out to the west. The council was waiting for Syracuse to choose an alignment, because our pick would affect them. However, they were leaning towards the westerly alignment to avoid their golf course. If Syracuse could get it back on the original Bluff Road alignment, that would be their first choice.

Mike assured commissioners that the Mayor and City Manager were fully committed to talking to property owners and working out an equitable solution that best served everyone involved. Gregory asked about the weight of the City's recommendation. Robert explained that the City would forward a recommendation to UDOT, but they would not necessarily choose it. The City did not get a vote on which option UDOT built. The City's recommendation would simply become a part of the decision process with all other comments. Gary disagreed. The mayor impressed the importance of the City having all their ducks in a row, like going to court. They wanted to go over every inch of that road and be able to say this was where UDOT should build it and why, with all the pros and cons identified. By presenting that to UDOT with documentation from public comment and planning commission, UDOT would not have much strength to deviate from the City's recommendation. That comment, dialogue, and supporting evidence had to all go into the structure of how they determined where they would build the road. So it did carry significant weight, because UDOT had to consider it from the citizenry's standpoint and the City's as well, regarding commercial, residential, and financial impacts. If it cut through someone's farmland and livelihood, or through an HOA, how would they mitigate those? They had to address every single issue. If Syracuse had them ironed out with options, ideas, and criteria, we would take a lot off of UDOT. City Councils were the eyes, ears, and mouthpieces of their communities, and ours needed to make a case. That was the purpose of this process.

TJ asked about the direction from WFRC having the City set aside that land along Bluff Road for the corridor and telling developers not to build there. By supporting that original alignment, resulting in lost development opportunities, he wondered about the potential for lawsuits against the City if the Council now recommended a different alignment. He suggested acquiring an opinion from the City Attorney regarding this issue for the Council's consideration at their next work session. Gary explained that the City could still maintain and use rights-of-way and buffer zones for other purposes, such as bike paths, green belts, etc. Choosing a different alternate would not be abandoning the preserved corridor. It actually benefited property owners more as a greenbelt than a road as far as property values. Cities routinely changed general plans, which affected land owners, and it did not leave them vulnerable to lawsuits.

Craig Johnson came forward stating that, conceptually, he preferred Alternative C with deviations as needed to protect the park and roundabout by going further west before hitting the currently proposed Alternative C to still preserve the golf course. The reason he preferred Alternative C over A or B was because of the valid concerns with Bridgeway Island and the

NDS. It could avoid some agricultural areas and still preserve that main alignment. The benefit for the City would be the fire station location for access. That area for an interchange at Antelope Drive made more sense due to its central location in benefiting commercial development as well as minimizing the impact on residential development.

Dorothy Law came forward next, explaining that all three proposed routes would greatly impact her family's farm. They supported the original Bluff Road alignment or an alternate more west. They, the Nature Conservancy, Department of Agriculture, and other farm-land owners were a part of the Utah Protection Farm Act. That meant that UDOT could not use eminent domain to take their land if there was another viable route. She argued that there was an alternate route that avoided their farm land. She understood that any route would be hard on someone but pointed out that wetlands could be mitigated, whereas UDOT could not bring back farm land once they took it away. Their property supported the City greatly in different ways, such as the Pumpkin Walk and Heritage Days, etc., and wanted the City to support them by working to protect farm land rather than low-level wetlands. They had been farming for over 50 years, through four generations. Although they were a part of the County's unincorporated area, they had the largest corn maze and over 40,000 visitors over a six-week period, and their recommended route was down Antelope Drive to encourage people through the City. TJ added that, by pushing the alignment below the second Bluff Road, where it angled towards 3000 West, the alignment would definitely be in a flood plain because the lake actually reached that level back in 1983.

Charlie Black voiced his concern with UDOT's time restrictions on the City for a recommendation. This was a big decision that impacted the entire City. In 1997, WFRC fought this battle for over a year and finally decided that the alignment along Bluff made the most sense, which was what land owners had been working around all this time. Part of the property had even been purchased. He asked commissioners to take a look at the original route again. It was the shortest, most direct route with the Layton Canal's 110-foot right-of-way running along it. When the Bureau of Reclamation did their last study, they gave permission for UDOT to build on it. The wetlands along the Bluff had a road on the east side and houses on the west side. The land where Trillside was built had been one of the wettest places along the entire road. The City's pump station was also on wetlands and yet both got built, so UDOT could mitigate wetlands. The wetlands along the Bluff would be surrounded by houses and the road, which would make them neither productive nor valuable. The Nature Conservancy Shoreland preserve, from Farmington Bay down to Syracuse Road, had 3,500 acres that his land bordered on a half a mile. He sold an easement to the Department of Agriculture to preserve agricultural land and then to the Nature Conservancy to preserve open space. It was 'upland,' which was much more valuable for protecting plants and animals when it met up with wetlands. Trapper Joe still trapped muskrats, fox, coyotes, and deer there, so that entire area was serving its intended purpose. The wetlands along Bluff would only grow invasive weeds, mosquitoes, and rodents while crowding out all the cattails. He advised them that they had a choice between those two, and he had not heard many people say that agriculture was not very valuable. He asked them to invest more thought into their decision and consider choosing the route along Bluff Road, with modifications to go around the City shops, rather than down through good farm land and open space and adjacent to the Nature Conservancy. He invited commissioners to drive their vehicles down there and look at it, because there were not many places like that left.

Brent Cook stood up next and voiced opposition to Alternative C that went through the middle of his farm. He visited the City on two different occasions when they had opportunities to sell, but the City found no reason to allow houses down there. He argued that the City needed homes in order to increase revenue for local businesses. If UDOT put that road through his farm, which his family had owned for 75-80 years, the City would be telling him that farming was a thing of the past. He asked what the City expected him to do with the ground. If he had to try and keep farming, this corridor would destroy the better part of the land. His vote was to bring the alignment next to Gentile or the south side of Gentile. When the current alignments reached the other end of the City, they also took out his home. He could possibly live without one, but the alignments impacted both his farm and home. He asked the Commission to recommend an option where it stayed down to the south and did not go through the middle of his farm land. He had 128 acres. The back part was pasture and the front part was farm.

When asked to make final recommendations, TJ told Tyler that he believed Option C was best, out of all three, because it did not affect the NDS and Bridgeway Island; however, he highly encouraged UDOT to consider the original alignment.

Gary told him he believed the Commission needed to present something that made more sense, by following some of the historical areas set aside and dedicated for this corridor. The identified wetlands UDOT set aside were nonsense. He walked some of the area and did not believe they were actual wetlands. Surrounding them with road and residential eliminated any valuable purpose, even if they were wetlands. UDOT was simply afraid to face the same lawsuits resulting from the Legacy Highway and must have decided to avoid anything that remotely resembled wetlands. Syracuse made a big mistake by building Jensen Park within the preserved corridor. He believed the alignment should go down Gentile, cut around the park, head down 2000 West, follow Bluff Road, and weave to miss the golf course. Syracuse needed to argue as to UDOT's definition of wetlands. He had never seen wetlands that were square or oblong as shown on UDOT's map and did not believe it was accurate in the least. He disagreed with all three alternative routes from the aspect that they were too far from Syracuse and did not benefit the residents, because traffic would not come down to the City Center. He recommended putting it back where it made more sense, preserved access to the park, and tied into the roundabout, which needed to be torn out. He believed UDOT could make it a lot better.

Dale chose Alternative C until he noticed the school. Watching traffic, he was not sure the City would want a freeway entrance right there. He then chose Alternative A/B but suggested proposing a much better route.

Gregory felt as though they were being forced to choose between three bad options and worried about looking back 20 years later and saying they should have kept it along Bluff Road. He, therefore, could not recommend any of the options presented. It bothered him that Syracuse would change their position on the route from Bluff Road, because he considered consistency and the General Plan as being very important.

Curt first thought the Bluff Road was a good idea, but Syracuse built municipal assets there based on decisions from the Planning Commission and City Council. He did not believe those decisions were made haphazardly. He had concerns about

the location of the fire station and recommended pushing the proposed alignment west. He could see how the alignment would affect the park, trail system, and school but did not believe there was really a good option due to the impacts from each alignment. He recommended Alternative A/B, even if it was further out, since it seemed to have the least impact.

Tyler stated that he was not excited about having the roadway further west due to the impact on the NDS. He liked the idea of a proposed interchange closer to the City Center and keeping it as much as possible with the original alignment along Bluff Road. He agreed with comments made about wetlands, which could be mitigated, and that much could be done regarding the flood plane issues by working with other governmental agencies. He did not believe there would be a detriment to wetlands at the magnitude shown on the map and proposed recommending Alternative C with the following proposed changes: bend the roadway coming north earlier, along Gentile, whether it be just north or south, and follow the corridor and overlay. As it turns north, head it back to the northwest alignment as early as possible and not go further west than necessary. At least in some fashion, meet up with the years of planning along that preserved corridor.

Gary closed by submitting an Alternative E, out of the 13 different options UDOT was considering. He believed that route would cost the least without consideration for anything other than preserving wetlands.