

CARSON CITY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

## Minutes of the February 8, 1995, Meeting

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A special evening session of the Carson City Regional Transportation Commission was held on Wednesday, February 8, 1995, at the Community Center Sierra Room, 851 East William Street, Carson City, Nevada, beginning at 6 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairperson Greg Smith and Commissioners Kay Bennett and Marie Wolf

STAFF PRESENT: John Berkich City Manager  
Walter Sullivan Community Development Director  
Jay Aldean Public Works Director  
Paul Lipparelli Deputy District Attorney  
Tim Homann City Engineer  
Harvey Brotzman RTC Engineer  
Katherine McLaughlin Recording Secretary  
Rory Hogan Engineering Technician  
(R.T.C. 2/8/95 Tape 1-0060)

Chairperson Smith called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. by welcoming the audience and explaining the agenda. Commissioner Wolf lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call was taken. The entire Commission was present constituting a quorum.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (1-0088)** - Commissioner Wolf corrected Page 2 to indicate Midge Breedan. Commissioner Bennett moved to approve the Minutes of the January 4, 1995, meeting as corrected. Commissioner Wolf seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

**2. CITIZEN COMMENTS (1-0112)** - Duana Lompa questioned the appraisal conducted on two small parcels of land at Fairview and Saliman which had cost \$4,000. Her property had been appraised at \$6,212. As a realtor she could and had obtained appraisals for \$300. She felt that the appraisal was out of line. She also noted the plans to install stoplights at Fifth and Saliman and Saliman and Fairview. She questioned the reasons Edmonds and Fifth was not included in the list of stoplight projects particularly in view of the two new subdivisions under construction in that area. Chairperson Smith explained that responses could not be given under this topic. He expressed a desire to meet with Ms. Lompa and discuss her questions. If necessary, the items would then be agendized for consideration by the Commission. Additional comments were solicited but none made.

### **3. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON FUNDING THE STREET PORTION OF THE UPDATE TO THE CARSON CITY MASTER PLAN (1-0191)** - Community Development Director Walter Sullivan explained the proposal to update the Master Plan and elaborated on the need and cost to update the street portion. Comments were solicited but none made. Commissioner Bennett moved that the Regional Transportation Commission approve funding in the amount of \$6,400 for the street portion of the update of the Land Use Element of the City's Master Plan. Commissioner Wolf seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

**4. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON RTC SHARE OF FUNDING FOR CARSON CITY DRAINAGE STUDY AND DRAINAGE DESIGN OF ELEVATED FREEWAY (1-0275)** - Public Works Director Jay Aldean explained the need for a storm drain study of the valley and a drainage design for the elevated freeway/expressway. His comments stressed the economic advantage of doing a joint project with the Utilities Department and Nevada Department of Transportation. He also noted the NDOT letter indicating the City's cost was \$7300. This figure has since been revised and the City's share is now \$7470. (1-0405) Chairperson Smith explained for Bert Weldon that if the Bypass is not constructed, the study would not be done. The Commission was considering a request for conceptual approval. Mr. Weldon continued to stress his desire that the funds not be spent until a final decision is made on the Bypass. Mr. Aldean pointed out that the funding would be used to assist the Utilities Department with completion of a drainage study and not be wasted. Commissioner Bennett then moved that the Regional Transportation Commission approve in concept a Drainage Study for Carson City to be done jointly with the NDOT Freeway Drainage Design and establish it as a priority project and recommend that the Board of Supervisors authorize an amount not to exceed \$10,000 for the City's share for accelerating the mapping

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phase of the study; fiscal impact: Decrease in the RTC Construction Account in the amount of \$10,000; funding for this project is not identified separately in the construction account and this study would be accomplished in lieu of current prioritized projects. Commissioner Wolf seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

**5. WORKSHOP ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN EXPRESSWAY TYPE ROAD BYPASS AROUND CARSON CITY (1-0508)** - Chairperson Smith stressed that there would be no action taken this evening as the session was agendized as a workshop. He requested the audience maintain a professional decorum and indicated if more meetings were necessary, they would be conducted. He also asked that the speakers stay focused and not repeat themselves. NDOT Principal Design Engineer Susan Martinovich reviewed NDOT's history of the project commencing in 1972, including the different alignments evaluated originally and the revisions. A color coded map was used to explain the properties which had been acquired, those owned by federal agencies, and the sections which have not been acquired. It was felt that 60 percent of the right-a-way had been acquired. Mr. Berkich then explained the City's reasons for exploring other options to the freeway, the decision to have an at-grade expressway, and the State requirement for the City to participate in the funding of the expressway which would reprioritize the project, and Interwest Development's contact with the City on a proposal to joint venture the project, which NDOT had accepted and authorized \$8 million in funding. He also indicated that copies of all the documents were available through either his office or at NDOT. Ms. Martinovich then outlined the estimate discrepancies which had been indicated in the press and were related to the north interchange design. She felt that a majority of its design issues have now been resolved and outlined the estimated costs for the Arrowhead to Fairview expressway which total \$34 million. At this time there is \$18 million in City funding and \$8 million in State funding. The proposal to approach the State Transportation Board for additional funding was outlined. Discussion among the Commission, Ms. Martinovich, and Mr. Berkich included reasons for the increased costs and whether funding would be available for a \$34 million project.

(1-1195) Bert Weldon expressed his feeling that the figures being provided were "plus or minus" 40 percent. They do not include the final design, the actual construction bid, and contingencies. He questioned Ms. Martinovich about the "plus or minus" percentage. Ms. Martinovich responded by explaining that there is a preliminary design for the project. She acknowledged that the final design would provide a better cost estimate. She then explained her reasons for feeling that the estimates for construction costs were valid. A contingency factor had been included and the figures were conservative. Chairperson Smith stressed that the City's participation was based on a five cent fuel tax and would be restricted to its ability to bond which is estimated to be in the amount of \$18 million.

(1-1315) Ken Dorr from Lumos and Associates explained the plan to use the freeway right-of-way for a temporary expressway. He reviewed the preliminary designs and costs for the combination facility at Arrowhead and 395. Clarification elaborated on the two options for this intersection. He then used an aerial photograph and drawings to explain the entire project including the different intersection designs and the four and five lane options for Fairview. All intersections will have signals. Carmine, Fifth, Northgate, and Emerson Streets will have grade separations and go over the freeway. The decision to terminate the expressway at Fairview had been based on the desire to keep the traffic out of the residential area along Colorado. Also, Fairview had been designated as a major arterial in the City's streets and highways master plan.

Chairperson Smith then requested the speakers give their questions and for staff to respond after they finish. Commissioner Bennett polled the audience to determine the number who were or had been NDOT employees.

(1-1785) Reed Dofp expressed his feeling that the City needed a freeway and not an expressway. If the City does not have the money for an expressway, he questioned whether there would ever be funds for a freeway. He encouraged the Board to analyze the problems with McCarran in Reno which is a street which goes around Reno rather than an expressway. The stop and go traffic on such a street would be detrimental to the City.

(1-1910) Duana Lompa questioned who was Interwest Management. Mr. Berkich indicated it is a private firm from Phoenix, Arizona, which specializes in private-public joint ventures. Ms. Lompa stressed her feeling that the proposal would negatively impact the master plan currently being developed for her ranch. She felt the entire project would be over \$40 million for a temporary facility and would neither get the traffic out of the valley nor solve its problems. She encouraged the Commission to analyze the problem carefully and avoid a political pitfall.

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Clarification indicated she opposed a temporary, at-grade expressway. She supported the elevated freeway. She felt that until the southern portion is constructed the problem would remain as traffic would use other residential streets rather than the proposed Fairview Drive. The proposed expressway would create a negative impact on the residential area to the south, increase air pollution problems, not be used by the trucks, had not addressed the drainage problem found at her ranch nor the need for a sound barrier, would reduce the number of homes which could be constructed on the ranch in the vicinity of the expressway, and would eliminate the use of portions of the ranch as they would not be accessible for livestock or irrigation. She felt that the costs had not taken into account any of the damages created by the expressway which would have been included in the freeway costs such as the elimination of portions of the ranch from being able to have homes constructed on it due to the flooding created by the roadway. She encouraged the Commission to put the gas tax questions on a ballot. She also encouraged the Commission to construct the southern portion of the freeway as it would be shorter, cheaper, and depressed. College Parkway could be used for the northern portion as it is almost fully constructed to Fifth Street. The southern corridor would then move traffic out of the valley. She reiterated her points stressing the need to proceed slowly and analyze the options more fully.

(1-2425) Bob Maiden felt that the traffic volume on Edmonds would increase as people would utilize it rather than Fairview and 395. The need for traffic enforcement was indicated by his comments. He also suggested that Assemblyman Dini take the \$5 million he had requested the legislature use for the V&T Railroad and put it in the freeway.

(1-2555) Scott Heaton expressed his concerns related to the use of the gravel pit at Imus and 395. This would force all the gravel pit truck traffic through the residential area rather than provide appropriate access to 395. His comments stressed the negative issues which this traffic would create including noise, dust, pollution, and traffic volumes.

(1-2710) James Parker expressed his feeling that the expressway would put hazardous materials being transported by the trucks into residential areas. He also pointed out the earthquake problems encountered by elevated freeways and that the proposed route parallels two faults. The at-grade proposal would not meet the City's needs but would destroy 48 homes and several retail outlets, create an eyesore for the eastside as well as a barrier for children, utilize hundreds of acres of prime property, and be in a flood zone. He encouraged the City and State to sell the current route and use the money to acquire a new route along the hillsides in undeveloped areas.

(1-2878) Howard Riedl questioned the lack of adequate plans to get the children to Mark Twain specifically as Phase II does not include a crossing at Carmine. He encouraged the Commission to include fully developed structures for all bridges, sound barriers, and drainage. He questioned the control mechanism planned at Highway 50 and Lompa and if the cost was part of the estimate. He suggested residential streets not be used to handle the traffic from Lompa and that the residents in such areas be notified of this potential traffic impact. He felt the proposal for rural fencing and development of cross streets to rural standards were inappropriate. The earth berms proposed for sound barriers should be landscaped and included in the estimates. He also felt that the project would increase emission pollutants and questioned reasons traffic models had not be used to determine if this would occur. He also suggested traffic models be used to determine if traffic would use the expressway as it is two times the distance and would have the same number of traffic signals as Carson Street. He questioned whether the route would be used by trucks. The environmental impact study had not been reviewed for an expressway. If it is done with the design, it could increase the costs. He stressed the need for a drainage study and noted the impact these requirements could have on the project. He questioned the Lumos study statement indicating that the cost to convert the expressway to a freeway would be minimal, however, there is a lack of supporting documents showing how this statement was reached. He felt the adverse would be true. He then questioned the procedures used to obtain professional services for the project, if those procedures complied with procurement policies, the innovative financing proposal(s), if the project was considered an alternative bidding process, and if it is a "design built" project, would it meet the cost estimates. He also questioned who "NIIC" is and whether it must meet Federal, State, and City highway rules and regulations. He urged the Commission to better educate the public on this new innovative financing process. He then questioned the liability to Lumos and Associates if the project is not approved and who the principals are to Interwest Management. Chairperson Smith explained who Interwest Management and NIIC are. Mr. Riedl then clarified that he was for the "NDOT bypass".

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(2-0085) Elwood Davis opposed the project as it would come within 12 feet of his patio and have a stop sign within 100 feet of his property. This will create a negative impact on his privacy and peaceful enjoyment of his property and neighborhood. It would also create air pollution, decrease his property values, and eliminate his access to his garage by closing off the alleyway to his backyard. He suggested the freeway/expressway be "moved to Virginia City". He suggested the temporary expressway not be constructed and that the funds be used to develop alternate routes to handle the traffic. This development or expansion could be phased to reduce the impact on residents and businesses. One potential north-south alternate could be behind the new Super K. As the freeway may be constructed in 15 to 20 years, he was sure these alternative routes could handle the traffic volumes for that period. He would support an elevated freeway with sound barriers.

BREAK: A ten minute recess was declared at 7:40 p.m. When the meeting reconvened at 7:50 p.m., the entire Commission was present constituting a quorum.

Chairperson Smith commended the audience on its input, the quality, and the number of questions. Due to the desire to respond appropriately, he indicated the Commission would continue to take comments. Staff would be given time to research them. Responses would be provided at a second meeting in two weeks. Written comments were also solicited and could be submitted to the City Manager's office after the meeting. Forms were in the back of the room if anyone wished to fill out one during the hearing or after the meeting. There were copies of a booklet available or could be obtained from the City Manager's office. Ms. Lompa urged staff to put the answers in the paper.

(2-0367) Sherry Loncar, representing the Silver Sage P.T.A., expressed its concern about pedestrian safety at the Carmine intersection and particularly for children. She also noted that the map being used did not have many of the elementary schools on it. She urged the Commission to have accurate maps in the future. She quoted from a Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Administrator's letter relaying similar safety concerns for bicyclist/pedestrians as well as for students attempting to cross the expressway. Carmine would be a dangerous intersection. The four foot shoulders were considered inadequate for pedestrian use. She urged the Commission to hold public hearings at the schools.

(2-0488) Dale Ryan expressed his feeling that gas taxes could not be used for an interstate highway. They were purportedly for local collector and arterial streets only. He also requested the National Pony Express Trails which cross the expressway in two locations be maintained open.

(2-0535) Lawrence Meeker felt that the proposal would not work as a bypass around the City either temporarily or permanently. It is neither convenient nor expeditious. A freeway is needed and should be developed.

(2-0592) Bob Hilderbrandt questioned whether it would ever become a freeway particularly after the expressway is constructed and the plans for senior citizens to get across Fairview from the Southgate Complex. (2-0875) He also questioned the reasons the public was being asked if there were NDOT employees or former employees present. Chairperson Smith asked him to discuss this issue with the individual who had posed the question.

(2-0691) Harold Jacobsen reviewed the history of a truck bypass, which never occurred, and expressed his feeling that the general public did not want an at-grade expressway. As the City and surrounding areas continue to grow, additional traffic demands will be placed upon the City's streets and highways.

(2-0816) Ron Anderson felt that the snow received in this area and its removal had not been considered in the costs.

(2-0910) Dorothy Rink expressed her concern about the current volume of traffic on Silver Sage and the impact the expressway would have on Silver Sage if terminated at Fairview. She did not feel that the proposed Fairview route to 395 (Carson) would be used. She also questioned when the final southern portion of the bypass would be completed. She and Craig Mullet (2-1035) questioned the proposed traffic control modifications planned for the intersection of Roop and Fairview. They both supported a full blown freeway. Mr. Mullet explained the present traffic volumes at the Roop and Fairview intersection to support his concerns and urge the widening of Roop Street to provide a truck route.

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(2-1142) Bert Weldon briefly reviewed the financial figures used to indicate that the five cent gas tax could support a \$14 million bond. He then expressed his feeling that the taxpayers would not be receiving the best project for their money if the expressway is constructed. He urged the Commission to have a second meeting to discuss the traffic flows after a model has been developed. Other alternatives should be completely analyzed before the expressway is approved. He also questioned the competence of the engineering firm and urged the environmental study be awarded to a new contractor after the job is rebid. He stressed his feeling that "the Supervisors were on trial by the town on how they handle future actions on this expensive road project". There are street improvements under construction or planned which will ease some of the traffic problems. The situation is not a crisis and there is time to properly analyze alternatives and proceed soundly. He pointed to the Downtown Beautification Project to illustrate the need to analyze projects carefully and stress his hope that the new NDOT management would rethink the "boulevard". The Downtown Beautification Project had caused the residents to question the Supervisors objectivity on traffic matters. He urged the Board to correct this perception by: bidding the environmental analysis which would include alternatives to the "boulevard"; publicize the results of this environmental study at meetings similar to this meeting and by paying for newspaper advertisements; and, give the City an advisory election question as this would be \$20,000 well spent when compared to the \$34 million estimated cost of the expressway. He also requested the District Attorney "screen votes on this project to identify any conflicts of interest among the Supervisors". This would eliminate anyone or their immediate family who would gain financially from voting on the project. He questioned the need to have a consultant who had been employed as a Federal highway administrator. He urged the Board to define this need and bid the job. He then thanked Commission for taking the time and allowing the public to have its say. He felt that the public wants NDOT's project and was willing to wait for it even though Las Vegas has more urgent needs. He urged NDOT to publish its criteria for road work so that people will understand why it is not a top priority. He felt that with these reports and a new master plan, a priority could be established. He questioned where other expressways had been constructed in such a fashion. Chairperson Smith expressed his personal knowledge of Lumos and Associates and its reputation. He felt the comments against this firm had been unwarranted. Mr. Weldon felt that, as the firm had received the project without bidding, its reputation had been placed in jeopardy.

(2-1462) Sue Newberry distributed a copy of her remarks to the Clerk and explained her employment as a Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Administrator. She stressed that she was present as a concerned resident and not in her official capacity. Due to her desire for the City to have safe and efficient highways, she could agree with the need to address the City's traffic problems. Chairperson Smith expressed his intent to have answers to all questions by the next meeting to her first question. Ms. Newberry then questioned the need for an expressway and its safety, specifically regarding children's access/egress routes to schools; sidewalks; bikeways including appropriate loop detectors; impacts on residential neighborhoods, streets, and businesses; and stressed the need for additional neighborhood meetings to explain these impacts. She suggested travel time comparisons be developed and dispersed to the public. She then questioned the air quality impacts of a freeway versus that of the proposed expressway; whether this would implement the emission control requirements mandated in other areas; impact on businesses and neighborhoods when the expressway is reconstructed to freeway standards; if the cost of upgrading is included in the \$34 million; is the annual cost of \$2 million for the 15 year life of the expressway a reasonable figure when compared to the life costs of a freeway; when will the design standards be modified to address public comments; will the public have an opportunity to review the comments and solutions; will there be additional hearings; will the design proceed without addressing these concerns; and who are the stockholders and Board Members of NIIC and Interwest Management. She urged the Commission to hold back on requesting additional funding from the Department of Transportation Board until all of the questions have been answered.

(2-1777) Hardy Mathiesen expressed his feeling that the truck traffic problem would not be solved with an expressway as the majority of the truck traffic was making local deliveries. The studies on hazardous materials included such items as compressed gases or flammable gases, which he felt should not be considered hazardous. He urged the Commission to undertake origin destination studies. He did not feel that "half of the Bypass" would do the job. He supported the freeway. He questioned development plans at the intersections which had not been included in the studies. The five cent tax should be used to make other street improvements. Arrowhead Drive was purportedly planned as the truck route to Goni, and later extended to Highway 50. This route is now used as a bypass for individuals travelling from Fallon to Reno. Edmonds Drive is used in the same fashion for traveling south.

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(2-2065) Carl Hastie stressed the need for the expressway to move traffic. He questioned whether the master plan would suppress strip development and control access points along the expressway.

(2-2161) Francis Brooks expressed her feeling that the electorate wanted the elected officials to be responsive to "our needs". This meeting was the first step along that line. She then quoted Thomas Jefferson's first inaugural speech emphasizing the need for a wise and frugal government.

(2-2231) Allen Christianson, a member of the Regional Planning Commission but appearing as a private citizen, stressed the need to address Carson Street but with proper planning. He felt the expressway was a "Mickey Mouse" response to the situation. He asked for the cost to remove the expressway when the freeway is ultimately constructed and the impact on the freeway's priority if the expressway is constructed. He felt that, as the Legislators are in town now, "the Ormsby House should remain closed until the funding is approved".

(2-2338) John Biale, an ex-NDOT employee, supported the freeway but not the at-grade Bypass. The funding for an expressway was considered a waste and the proposal to construct a freeway over the expressway was unrealistic. Traffic problems which would be created at the time the freeway is constructed were explained. He felt that the freeway should be constructed in phases starting with the north section. The second section would be from Spooner to Fairview. The dirt from the depressed section of this segment could then be used as fill for the Fairview area/Lompa property. Edmonds Drive would serve as an interim route until the final section is constructed. This proposal would have to include mitigation measures for the school crossing and the Fifth Street signal. He felt the public wanted the freeway over the expressway. A concerted effort by the public may be able to get the Department of Transportation Board's attention and some funding for a freeway. He did not feel that a hazardous spill would not be any worse in the middle of a residential or school area than in the heart of the City. He felt that former NDOT Director Garth Dull had indicated the freeway may be under construction in four or five years. He felt that the Board of Supervisors had indicated the five cent gasoline tax would be on the ballot. This has not occurred. He was not opposed to paying the extra five cents if a good facility is constructed. Anything else should be voter approved. He then explained his feelings that the proposed expressway reconstruction project was infeasible. He urged the Commission to not build a temporary facility only because it may be constructed sooner. He also thanked the Commission for holding the hearing and encouraged them to ask the public experts to help analyze the alternatives.

(2-2855) Chamber of Commerce President Shelly Turner explained the Chamber's support for the expressway and thanked the Commission for having the hearing. Ms. Martinovich explained that current projections indicate the freeway would not be constructed for at least ten or more years. Realistically she felt this could be in the 15 to 20 year range. Ms. Turner then elaborated on the Chamber's support as a means to resolve a bad situation. She, too, felt it would be a permanent solution as funding may never occur for the freeway. She felt that it was a desperate response to a precipitous situation. She noted other attempts to get the trucks off of Carson Street which had failed. She acknowledged that there would be individuals impacted regardless of the final action. She paraphrased President Lincoln's comments to noted that this could be one of the situations where there would be individuals who would not be satisfied. She felt that the Commission would study the issues and make the most intelligent and practical decision possible. Commissioner Bennett requested the impact of traffic on Carson Street now and in ten to fifteen years if nothing is done be analyzed as the population in and around Carson City would be in the neighborhood of 200,000 people at that time. Ms. Turner then explained that the Chamber had used the studies which had been performed for other agencies to reach its conclusion. One study projects that there will be two times the number of vehicles now on Carson Street by 2010. She then expressed her concerns related to the downtown corridor and the impact this traffic volume would have on the redevelopment efforts. She also explained that Robert Ferris is involved with the project due to his expertise and the Federal mandate requiring repayment of the "Q Funds". He had been able to convince the authorities to waive repayment of \$40 million of these funds if the expressway is built instead of the elevated project. She was also acquainted with a number of the individuals serving on the Nevada Infrastructure Improvement Corporation. They are serving as volunteers and attempting to find a feasible solution. The comments questioning their integrity was inappropriate. Chairperson Smith then expressed his feeling that the next meeting should include a review of the road blocks which the City faces. He agreed that the freeway was the preferred choice, however, without adequate funding the expressway is feasible resolution of the problem. The truck traffic on Carson Street is no longer acceptable. He, again, commended the public on its participation and questions.

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(3-0011) Chuck Malone questioned the amount of "true, thorough" traffic on Carson Street and the amount which could be rerouted to the expressway. He suggested that the locals "concede Carson Street to the foreigners" and other routes be used for local traffic.

(3-0062) Frank Sauer stressed the need to address the drainage particularly through the Lompa property. He felt that there would need to be at least eight feet of fill rather than the proposed two-and-a-half feet. Money could be saved by realigning that portion. He indicated that the second meeting could not be held in two weeks as a sewer meeting was planned for that night. Chairperson Smith and Commissioner Wolf again commended the audience for its attendance and participation.

**6. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS; AND, 7. STAFF COMMENTS (NON-ACTION ITEMS) (3-0145)**  
- None.

**8. ACTION ON FUTURE MEETING DATE AND TIME (3-0158)** - Discussion ensued between staff and the Commission on a potential date. Chairperson Smith ruled that he would meet with staff and attempt to find an acceptable date.

**9. ADJOURNMENT (3-0210)** - Commissioner Bennett moved to adjourn. Commissioner Wolf seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0 and Chairperson Smith adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

The Minutes of the Special February 8, 1995, Regional Transportation Commission meeting

ARE SO APPROVED ON March 1, 1995.

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Greg Smith, Chairperson