

CARSON CITY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
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A special evening session of the Carson City Regional Transportation Commission was held on Wednesday, March 1, 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: City Manager John Berkich, Public Works Director Jay Aldean, Deputy District Attorney Paul Lipparelli, RTC Engineer Harvey Brotzman, Recording Secretary Katherine McLaughlin, and Engineer Technician Rory Hogan

OTHERS PRESENT: NDOT Deputy Director of Engineering Mike McFall, NDOT Design Division Engineer Susan Martinovich, Lumos and Associates Representatives Paul Lumos, Ken Dorr, and Kelly Garcia (S.R.T.C. 3/1/95 Tape 1-0001)

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL (1-0001) - Chairperson Smith called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Roll call was taken. The entire Commission was present constituting a quorum.

1. CITIZENS COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDIZED ITEMS (1-0230) - None.

2. WORKSHOP ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN EXPRESSWAY TYPE ROAD BYPASS AROUND CARSON CITY (1-0015) - Chairperson Smith welcomed the public and explained the forum's procedure. He encouraged citizen participation in the procedure.

Mr. Berkich explained the result of a meeting with NDOT staff which had pulled the project from the NDOT Transportation Board agenda. For that reason Carson City will not meet with the NDOT Transportation Board on March 13. Milestones for the project were described and would be the time when the decisions would be made to continue/discontinue the project. The gas tax implementation date had not been finalized and would not be until all of these milestones/questions have been passed/answered successfully.

Chairperson Smith thanked the public for its participation to date including the letters. He then explained that comments would be restricted to a discussion between the staff member responding to the questions asked at the last meeting and the originator of those questions and would only clarify the original question. He stressed that this would not be the final meeting on the proposal. Public comments would not be allowed until all of the questions have been answered.

Mr. Berkich then read each of the questions and staff, NDOT or Lumos and Associates Representatives read the response. (A copy of this document is included in the file for this meeting. Copies of this document were distributed to the audience prior to the meeting.) Mr. McFall stressed during his explanation of the reasons a freeway was not being constructed at this time that the options and alternatives will be carefully analyzed including the environmental impact before the ByPass is constructed. He also felt that the earliest the State could start construction of the southern leg of the Freeway would be 1999, if then. Discussion between Commissioner Bennett and Ms. Martinovich indicated the environmental impact study would be conducted on both the estimated future traffic impact on the present roadways and routes as well as the impact which would be created at any new intersections.

(1-0986) Duana Lompa expressed her feeling that the southern section should be constructed to Graves Lane first and that it would transfer traffic from the downtown sector. She also expressed her concern that the flooding and drainage issues had not been resolved. (1-1100) Bob Maiden stressed his feeling that there would be an additional traffic volume on Edmonds. Mr. Aldean indicated the master plan recommends converting Edmonds to a four lane road and that staff is attempting to implement the master plan recommendations.

(1-1255) Ms. Martinovich explained the terms "AASHTO" - American Association of State Highway

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Transportation Officials and (1-1980) "NEPA" - National Environmental Policy Act. (1-1562) Commissioner Bennett requested landscaping be included in the project including infrastructure improvements for stubbing irrigation systems. Discussion among NDOT, Ken Dorr and Commissioner Bennett included flood mitigation procedures utilized to address the drainage in Washoe Valley. Mr. Dorr also noted that the sound walls for the at-grade facility would not be usable for the freeway. Any sound walls constructed in an area having the full-freeway design would remain. (1-2120) Mr. McFall stressed the importance of the Origin and Destination Study and its role in determining the feasibility of the project. (1-2258) Mr. Aldean explained for an unidentified individual that design contracts are not bid. The selection procedures, as established by Statutes, were outlined. Mr. Lumos further defined these procedures and stressed that these procedures had been used to select his firm for its contract.

(1-2590) Howard Riedl questioned whether a raised median would prohibit pedestrians from crossing the at-grade facility. Mr. McFall felt that if an individual wished to cross badly enough, there is no structure that will stop him/her. Discussion continued on the freeway crossings for pedestrians which would be found only at intersections and the improvements constructed on streets bisected by the at-grade facility. Mr. Aldean felt that if RTC wished to do so it could establish as its priorities improving these streets so that they would have curbs and gutters. Discussion between Mr. Riedl and NDOT Representatives indicated landscaping is not normally included in the freeway construction program. ISTEA funds may be utilized for infrastructure construction. Mr. Dorr indicated the proposed earth berm sound walls had been removed from the preliminary design. Ms. Martinovich indicated a cost benefit ratio was being performed on both the freeway and at-grade facilities. Mr. Riedl encouraged them to be sure to factor all pertinent items as enough small figures can balance a project one way or the other. He also questioned whether a hazardous spill into a casino would be worse than one in a residential area. He also pointed out that, until the entire right-of-way is obtained, even the proposed at-grade facility could not be constructed. He then thanked the Commission and Representatives for answering his questions.

(1-3018) Bert Willman questioned the reasons proponents of the project were not present. Chairperson Smith expressed his feeling that there is a group of individuals who had suggested it as an alternative based on the need for the traffic problems to be solved. The reason for this forum had been an attempt to address some of the concerns he had perceived on the project. Mr. Willman felt that the proposal should be placed on a ballot and that the electorate should establish its need. He voiced his opposition to the forum as it did not allow one individual to both present the project and defend it. He claimed that the City's master plan does not allow for the proposed ByPass nor does it contain a freeway in the vicinity of the proposed location. Chairperson Smith explained the purpose of the master plan and its ability to change as time marches forward. Mr. Willman felt that the proposal should be deferred until the master plan has been updated. Mr. Berkich indicated alternatives would be studied as part of the environment assessment studies. Mr. Willman felt that the traffic counts had been taken of locals traveling to and from the stores, casinos, etc., and that the need was not for a bypass. He also felt that unkind statements had been made about the opponents who had attended the last meeting. He stressed that a majority of those individuals were not residents along the proposed freeway route. He also felt that the bypass was being supported by only the Chamber of Commerce. In this vein, it was apparent to him that the more stop lights and stop signs found along the route, the more business activity would occur. Chairperson Smith again requested he return to the discussion and format outlined at the beginning of the meeting. Mr. Willman then questioned whether the contracts could be bid by non-union employers. Both Mr. Berkich and Chairperson Smith indicated any firm could bid if he follows the statutes and that NDOT would be handling this part of the project. Mr. Willman then questioned when the gas tax would be implemented and the rate of growth allowed. Chairperson Smith stressed that the gas tax issue had been removed from the table at this time. If the City can find the \$18 million for the project, the tax would have to have been implemented 12 to 18 months prior to the time the bonds are issued and construction commences. Mr. Willman stressed his belief that the next master plan would be very developer friendly and the City would experience a population explosion. This would result in a population which would completely build the City out and the residents would find that the "boulevard" would not be the best answer to its traffic problems.

(2-0175) Harold Jacobson, former Carson City Mayor, urged the Commission to discuss the funding. He suggested the funds saved by building the at-grade facility be used to improve/construct arterials. He also expressed his feeling that there were lots of proponents of the project and had been even when he was Mayor. He also expressed his feeling that there are a lot of people afraid of having a hazardous spill/accident in the downtown area. He felt that Carson City is the only capital with two major highways crossing through its middle. Discussion ensued

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between Commissioner Bennett and Mr. Jacobson on the proposals to construct a freeway considered several years ago and the funding which had purportedly been rejected. Mr. Jacobson explained the original route and that the funds had never been committed by the State.

(2-0295) Chamber of Commerce Executive Vice President Larry Osborne agreed that the Chamber is a proponent and active supporter of the proposed ByPass. It was not representing the interest of the Convention and Visitors Bureau. The Chamber had been an active participant in evaluating all of the alternatives. Its study had indicated that if nothing is done to address the traffic problems presently encountered throughout the City, it will only worsen. The Chamber's only interest is to be sure that the City continues to thrive and grow as an area in which we all wish to live.

(2-0348) Fran McLain questioned the need for sound barriers specifically as she is over a mile from Carson Street and is impacted by the noise. She also questioned how the vehicle pollution would be addressed and the speed limit. Chairperson Smith noted that there were plans for six stoplights along the proposed route. He felt that this would be a major improvement over the current 15 or 16 found on Carson Street. He also indicated that the proposed freeway planned for the southern section of the City would be depressed which would act as a sound barrier. Mr. McFall reiterated his intent to perform an environmental impact which would include noise levels. Ms. McLain felt that the City would not repair the streets unless threatened. The Bypass would close streets currently used by the residents. She questioned whether the City would repair the streets which were being impacted by the closures. Mr. Berkich indicated that it is the City's ongoing goal to repair and maintain the roads. Additional impact would be addressed. He briefly outlined the current pavement management program. Ms. McLain indicated Fairview and Koontz have become truck routes and questioned when they would be signed prohibiting this use. Mr. Aldean requested she discuss this situation with him after the meeting and that he would look into the situation and correct it if possible. He also indicated his intent to analyze the maintenance program and determine whether improvements could be made to it. He pointed out that as the population grows, the traffic volumes would increase and impact the streets regardless of whether there is a ByPass.

(2-0601) Sue Newberry indicated for the record that she does not live near the proposed ByPass, does not own property near it, does not own a business in Carson City, does not work for a firm that will be effected by the project, and neither does any of her relatives. She then indicated she had counted eight signals in 6.4 miles between the intersection at 395 North to Fairview and 395 South. There are 11 signals in that area on Carson Street. Chairperson Smith indicated he had included several proposed signals which will be installed shortly on 395. Ms. Newberry commended him on the format and for having staff present to answer questions. She was disappointed in staff's inability to provide written responses before this evening. She felt that many of the questions were basic and should have been answered long before this date. She questioned whether the City had put as much effort into examining other options as has been spent on the proposal. She felt that the project should be phased as former NDOT Director Garth Dull had indicated would occur. She felt that the \$140,000,000 cost for a freeway was not being compared fairly and equally to the \$30 to \$40 million cost of the ByPass. For example, the \$30 to \$40 million cost would only get the road to Fairview. She urged staff to include in the cost benefit analysis the fact that this section could not be salvaged. The freeway should have a 50 year life. She questioned whether the project was temporary or permanent. Chairperson Smith indicated it is a temporary roadway with derivable benefits until the time the freeway can be constructed. Ms. Newberry urged the Commission to present it as a permanent structure if this is the case. This would allow the public to examine it as a permanent facility rather than a short-term temporary facility for which the cost benefit factor was too high. She also felt that studies had not been conducted which would establish whether traffic could be successfully diverted onto the ByPass. Also, she questioned the pedestrian and bicyclists safety along the ByPass specifically when compared to an elevated freeway. She encouraged the Commission to stop and carefully analyze all of the options rather than to continue bandaging a problem with a high speed roadway which should be a freeway. The \$30 to \$40 million would provide one leg of the freeway. She felt that the City had adequate support to approach the NDOT Transportation Board and appeal its priorities. The cost analysis could be used to support this proposal. Commissioner Bennett expressed her surprise at Ms. Newberry's inability to accept the Transportation Board's position that the full blown freeway is unrealistic in the next 20 years specifically in view of her employment. Commissioner Bennett questioned how she would justify waiting for 15 years and how the present bicycle and pedestrian safety issues on Carson Street in view of the impacts which will occur as the traffic volume and gridlock grow. She would prefer to

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have the \$200 million full-blown freeway. She urged Ms. Newberry to persuade the Governor and the other Transportation Board members to change their minds and make it the first priority. Ms. Newberry felt that the cost benefit ratio would analyze the gridlock situation. Mr. McFall responded by explaining that the cost benefit factor is the delay created for the motorist. Relieving the delay would create a benefit. Accidents also figure into the benefits. At this time the freeway has a favorable cost benefit ratio. The costs incurred to date including that spent to acquire the right-of-way were noted. The Federal funds used to acquire the right-of-way must be repaid when freeway construction occurs or by 2006, whichever comes first. Extension have been given to this mandate. Ms. Newberry also noted that the slower the traffic, the safer the crossings are for bicyclists and pedestrians. The proposed ByPass would have higher speeds and would pose a greater threat to bicyclists and pedestrians. In her job she analyzes accidents of this nature. (2-1105) She offered to use her expertise to assist in an evaluation of the proposal. She was opposed to construction of a high speed boulevard for those safety reasons. Commissioner Bennett stressed her concern about the eventual gridlock situation Carson City is facing. Ms. Newberry offered to meet with her in an effort to attempt to gain NDOT support for the freeway.

(2-1210) John Biale felt that if anything is constructed in the corridor it would be lost to a future freeway corridor. It was unrealistic to plan to construct a freeway over the boulevard specifically in view of the problems created by such construction at the traffic volumes anticipated. Mr. McFall agreed that construction would be done in segments and that the traffic would have to be rerouted. The corridor would not be lost. Mr. Biale expressed his feeling that the estimated \$40 million ByPass would be a lot higher due to the construction problems which will be encountered in the flood plain. This is an expensive temporary solution which would not provide an adequate means of handling the traffic volume during construction of the full freeway. While he was willing to acknowledge the inconveniences experienced with today's traffic volume, he felt it did not warrant a boulevard. He suggested the City analyze using the Graves Lane extension as a truck route and traffic control devices needed to be synchronized. The freeway should be constructed in the corridor a segment at a time. If the freeway cannot be constructed in the corridor once the ByPass is constructed, the City will be facing additional costs for a new freeway location and environmental studies. Cross traffic routes, such as Graves Lane, will handle the traffic until the freeway can be constructed in the corridor. Also, the freeway construction should start from the south and the dirt removed in its depressed areas should be used as fill on the Lompa property. Mr. Berkich indicated that the proposed ByPass would not require repayment of the Federal right-of-way funds before the year 2006. Mr. McFall indicated this \$60 million obligation would have to be met regardless of the type of construction. Mr. Dorr noted that the at-grade portion of the ByPass is estimated at \$15 million which will not be completely lost when freeway construction occurs.

BREAK: A 12 minute recess was declared at 8:18 p.m. When the meeting reconvened at 8:30 p.m., the entire Commission was present constituting a quorum.

Chairperson Smith thanked the audience for its attention and expressed his desire to maintain good rapport and communication. He then explained his intent to terminate the meeting at 9 p.m. and have a second meeting which would complete the responses to questions asked at the last meeting. As the decision had been made to not consider the issue at the next Transportation Board hearing, the Commission was no longer in a time crunch. He then asked for each of the individuals who had made comments at the previous meeting to indicate his/her presence and indicated the other individuals' comments would be considered at the next meeting. (2-1711) The procedure outlined in the beginning was then used for the balance of the meeting, e.g., Mr. Berkich read the question with staff/NDOT/Lumos and Associates Representatives responding and the individual who had posed the question was given an opportunity to comment.

(2-1795) Elwood Davis urged the Commission to redesign the entire project. (2-1865) Dale Ryan requested the Commission be cognizant of the locations where the Pony Express Trail cross the ByPass and to perpetuate those crossings. Mr. McFall indicated he would have to check into this issue. Mr. Jacobson explained the original alternatives analyzed by the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Jacobson pointed out that the temporary ByPass would eventually be removed for the freeway. Mr. Berkich explained that one-third of the ByPass would be retained and incorporated into the freeway. Mr. Jacobson also stated that there had originally been an understanding that Roop and Silver Sage were to be truck routes. He urged the Commission to use the funds for alternate routes. He then explained how the Federal funds are allocated and expressed his feeling that they should recognize the impact tourism has on the local streets. He supported Mr. Biale in his attempt to have it done right in the beginning rather

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than be "short sighted". Freeway construction should begin at Arrowhead and go south.

(2-2147) Bert Willman explained his question concerning having the work bid with alternates. Mr. Berkich and Mr. McFall indicated that the project would be bid. Mr. Willman stressed the need for the environmental impact study and requested a second meeting after that study has been completed. Chairperson Smith agreed. Mr. Berkich clarified his statement on the bidding requirement to indicate that NDOT would be handling that part of the project. He also indicated that NDOT is required to hold a meeting on the environmental impact study. Chairperson Smith elaborated on the 1994 Board of Supervisors decision to not place the tax on a ballot. This does not mean that it will never be on the ballot.

(2-2487) Mr. Berkich thanked the team for its hard work in compiling the information. He reiterated his comments that the City would not be at the March 13 Transportation Board hearing. There are several milestones in the project. If any of these points present a severe impediment to the project, it will be abandoned. Chairperson Smith directed staff to establish a meeting date and thanked the panel for its assistance and the audience for its attendance, attention, and participation.

(2-2645) Don Storey expressed his feeling that the project was a bandaid for a serious problem. He was afraid that once the bandaid is in place, the problem would not be solved. He questioned the period of time between construction of the ByPass and the freeway. He then suggested that the Chamber of Commerce develop a committee to meet with NDOT's Transportation Board and "pack it" including sitting in the Governor's front room at the mansion. He felt that if 200 people work at it the priority could be changed. Chairperson Smith expressed his feeling that this was the intent of Ms. Newberry's comments.

4. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS (2-2737) - Commissioner Bennett stated for the record her support for the project. As an elected official, she felt that she represented many more proponents. She stressed the feeling that the continued impact on 395 and 50 needed to be resolved. She also felt that the questions were valid and needed to be answered. The need for additional studies was apparent and prudent. She thanked NDOT for its patience and assistance. She noted the fine working relationship between NDOT and the City staff and Lumos. She would not have supported the project without the studies on the environmental impact, alternatives, and the modeling. She looked forward to continuing the process. She again stated for the record that she is a advocate of finding an alternative method around the City. Chairperson Smith then reminded the audience that there were questionnaires in the back of the room and encouraged the audience to use them. They could be returned to the City Manager's office. He reiterated his comments concerning the audience's conduct.

5. STAFF COMMENTS (2-2975) - Mr. Berkich invited anyone watching on television who wished to have a copy of the questions and answers to contact his office.

6. ADJOURNMENT (2-2986) - Commissioner Bennett moved to adjourn. Commissioner Wolf seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. Chairperson Smith adjourned the meeting at 9 p.m.

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The Minutes of the March 1, 1995, Special Regional Transportation Commission workshop

ARE SO APPROVED ON April 20, 1995.

/s/

Greg Smith, Chairperson