



Cortaro Road/Magee Road:
Thornydale Road to Oracle Road
Community Advisory Committee Meeting



Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting
Monday, Aug. 4, 2008
6 – 7:30 p.m.
St. Mark's United Methodist Church

CAC Members Present at Meeting:

- George Ballesteros
- Robert Barr
- Carol Wagoner-Cook
- Kathryn Culver
- Molly Frazer
- Dennis Hansen
- Steven Kresal
- William Scott
- Tom Unger
- Bernie Wiegandt
- David Williams

CAC Members Not in Attendance:

- Kathy Gatto
- David Jacobs
- Steve Sisson
- Louise and/or John Whitehill-Ward

Attending from Project Team:

- EcoPlan: Mike Dawson, Jonathan Rigg
- DMJM Harris: Fred Hartshorn, Bill Schlesinger
- Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Mainstreet Program – Britton Dornquast
- Gordley Design Group: Barb Alley, Angie Brown, Jan Gordley

Attending from the Public:

See attached sign-in sheets

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- CAC member notebooks
- RTA booklets

Bernie Wiegandt, CAC co-chairperson, welcomed everyone to the CAC meeting. He asked for everyone to take a few minutes to introduce themselves at the CAC table and whom they were representing on behalf of the committee. Bernie asked if any of the members had any questions on the May 5, 2008, meeting minutes. There were no comments or questions; therefore, the floor was turned over to Bill Schlesinger, DMJM Harris Project Manager.

Bill started his presentation by introducing the project team. He informed everyone on how the meeting would be structured. Bill stated that the meeting was for the CAC members to receive the information presented at the meeting. After the conclusion of the CAC business, Bill would take questions from the audience. He reminded everyone that the meeting was from 6 – 7:30 p.m., and said he would be willing to stay and answer additional questions after 7:30 p.m.

Bill stated that there were several presentation boards. He offered the public to come up after the meeting if anyone was unable to see the detail on the boards.

Bill started the presentation by letting everyone know what the goals and expectations are of the project. This project is being partially funded by the one-half cent sales tax approved by voters as part of the RTA road improvement program. This particular project spans a five-mile corridor of roadway that encompasses two sections, Cortaro Farms Road/Magee Road from Thornydale Road to La Cholla Boulevard and Magee Road from La Cholla Boulevard to Oracle Road. Bill said the team has come up with the preliminary options that he would be sharing with the group. Phase One of the construction will be the intersection of La Cholla Boulevard and Magee Road.

At the last meeting, Bill brought a flow chart outlining the schedule of the corridor study. He stated the flow chart was on the project Web site, www.roadprojects.pima.gov/CortaroMagee, so he didn't bring it his evening, but he took a few minutes to go over the chart verbally.

In Phase One, the team will be doing the following:

- Follow federal guidelines (already have received federal funding)
- Environmental surveys (approved by Pima County Department of Transportation (PCDOT))
- Drainage reports
- Surveys and mapping
- Roadway alignment:
 - Median openings
 - Roadway alignment alternatives
 - Intersection of La Cholla Boulevard and Magee Road
 - Traffic signals
 - Frontage roads

Bill stated that what he would be presenting tonight would be presented at the public open house on Aug. 14, 2008. The team would use the input from the CAC and the public to come up with the team's recommended alternative for this improvement project. Once that information has been gathered and the recommended alternative has been designed, there will be another public open house (November or December 2008) to present the alternative with the public's comments and concerns taken into consideration.

Bill told the group that in the November/December 2008 time frame, the Environmental Assessment and Mitigation Report (EAMR) and the Design Concept Report (DCR) would be drafted. These documents control the outcome of the design of this project. The EAMR and the DCR will be sent to the Pima County Board of Supervisors (BOS) for their approval. Once the

BOS approves the design, it will be sent on to the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), who is the contact for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Once all of the approvals are in place, the team will move into final design followed by the start of construction. The team is on schedule to attain approval on the EAMR and DCR by the end of 2009.

Bill took a minute to remind the group that the team is designing the roadway to the standards and guidelines they must follow as set forth by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the Pima County 2003 Roadway Design Manual. These guidelines and standards cannot be changed.

Bill showed the CAC the typical cross-section of the roadway. He stated that Cortaro Farms Road/Magee Road would become a four-lane roadway. This improvement meets the needs of the traffic counts the team has received from the traffic model out to the year 2030.

Q: Will the roadway need to be widened after the year 2030?

Bill said the counts show a need for a roadway consisting of four lanes to the year 2030, and that it would be sufficient for the projected growth rates in the area beyond 2030.

Bill stated the roadway would have:

- Two 12-foot medians
- A 13-foot travel lane on each side of the median (PCDOT has found that it is safer for the lane to have an extra foot or two when it is next to a curb)
- A 12-foot outside travel lane
- A 6-foot paved bike lane/shoulder
- Storm drains and culverts, but those locations have not yet been determined
- Pedestrian paths and/or sidewalks

Q: Will there be a barrier between the travel lanes and the bike lanes?

Bill said that the team has found that the biking community does not want to be separated from the roadway. Also, it has been determined that with pedestrian paths, it is not desirable to have both bikes and pedestrians on the same path. The team is in the process of talking with Pima County Parks and Recreation in order to come up with something that all residents can use.

Q: What will the width of the paved shoulder be?

Bill stated that the lane must be a clear zone, meaning there can be no telephone poles or obstacles in the paved area and it must be a relatively flat slope. The clear zone must have approximately 18-20 feet of clearance, and must be wide enough for a car to recover from an incident. The roadway is designed at 50 miles per hour (mph) with a posting of 45 mph.

Q: What will the cost would be to increase this project from a four-lane roadway to a six-lane roadway?

Bill said he was not sure, but anticipated it could be anywhere from a 25- to 50-percent increase over the current budget. He also stated that adding the additional lane on each side of the roadway would bring up other issues; for example, no room for the needed ditches as well as moving close to the right-of-way, which would incur additional costs.

Q: Should there be a separation of the curb from the sidewalk?

Bill said that there would be some separation built into the design.

Q: What is the total width of the roadway?

It is a total of 150 feet.

Bill's next item in the presentation was on traffic signals. He stated that the location of the traffic signals meet the national standards and the team has placed them, using the traffic counts out to the year 2030, where the studies have shown a need. Traffic signals put in the wrong location would cause more problems than not having one. Traffic signals would stay in the current locations with one additional signal added at Jensen Drive, due to the traffic counts for the year 2030. There were a few intersections that were close, but did not quite meet the requirements needed to add a light. Therefore, at locations such as Mona Lisa Road where lights may be added in the future, the contractor will add conduit and pole boxes so a light could be installed easily at a later date.

Q: Will there be a light at Club Drive due to the development that is going in at that location?

Pima County has requirements for developers; they will have to install lights and whatever else Pima County will require in order to ensure that the roadway in that location will meet those requirements.

There was more discussion regarding a light at Club Drive, as some residents believe it is warranted; however, Bill stated that a light at that location was not warranted. According to Bill, there will be a median opening at that location, which will be discussed later in the presentation.

Comment: Those who live in the neighborhood off of Club Drive only have one way in and out of their neighborhood. A development is going in across the street, which will increase traffic, and would make it difficult to get in and out of the neighborhood.

The traffic counts out to the year 2030 do not warrant a light at that location. The contractor can add conduit and polls at Club Drive under the assumption that a light may be added there at a later date.

Q: Will the lights be timed so that those turning in or out of the side streets without a traffic light would have an opportunity to get on to Cortaro Farms Road or Magee Road?

Bill stated that the lights would be timed to provide for safe egress and ingress.

Comment: There will still be the opportunity to come out of a side street and turn right, then U-turn in order to head in the opposite direction. This would be a safer option than trying to turn left across two lanes of traffic.

Q: How far apart are Shannon Road and Jensen Drive? And what are the Pima County requirements for the spacing of traffic lights?

Bill stated he thought the distance between Shannon Road and Jensen Drive was between 500-600 feet. The minimum numbers of feet between lights or median openings are, by Pima County standards, 660 feet.

Q: Will there be deceleration lanes?

Bill stated that the only deceleration lanes would be located at the intersections.

Q: Will there be bus pullouts along the corridor?

Bill stated that they would be working with SunTran to decide where bus pullouts would be located.

Q: On page four of the meeting minutes from the last meeting, a question was asked regarding the actual traffic counts as a result of the traffic study, and how the traffic count was determined. Did the team bring that information?

Bill said he did not have that information with him, but he would get that information out to the members.

Bill introduced the graphic that showed the median openings along the west end of La Cholla Boulevard. Median openings are proposed as follows:

- Bashas' grocery store
- Paseo del Rancho Escondido
- Club Drive
- Moondance
- Cortina Place
- Jensen Drive
- Royal Sunset
- Mona Lisa Road
- Paseo Luna

Q: What will the minimum storage be for cars stacking up to make a left turn?

Bill stated that the Pima County standard was 100 feet. Some median openings will have storage bays longer than that depending on the room available. A minimum of 100 feet holds approximately four or five cars.

Bill said one of the requirements for a median opening is if that was the only entrance for a neighborhood and all egress and ingress was at one location.

The next graphic showed the median openings east of La Cholla Boulevard. Median openings are proposed in the following areas:

- Zarragoza Drive
- Camino de Maximillian
- Sendero Uno
- The church
- Leonardo da Vince Way
- Cool Drive
- La Oesta Avenue
- Paseo del Norte
- Placita Feliz
- The shopping plaza

The next item Bill presented were the alternatives for the frontage roads:

- Two-way frontage road separated from the bike lane with a nine-foot median. Most likely, this alternative would require right-of-way takes to construct as designed.
- One-way frontage road separated from the bike lane by a nine-foot median. This alternative would most likely not require any right-of-way acquisitions, and since most of the homes have circular drives, backing out of the residences would not be dangerous. The team would work with those residences that do not currently have circular drives. This alternative would also require residents to make U-turns because this is a one-way frontage road.
- Acceleration and deceleration lanes. This would entail widening the roadway by 12 feet. It would be a one-way lane and people would have to U-turn in order to head west. This option would be less expensive, but not as flexible.

Bill moved on to the Magee Road/La Cholla Boulevard intersection, of which there are four out of approximately 15 original ideas that the team had prepared to show the CAC members. The team looked at traffic counts, which show there have to be improvements to this roadway, and in addition, the team looked only at bringing alternatives that would work and meet the standards. The major issue is with the northbound La Cholla Boulevard to westbound Magee Road left-turn movement, as that is the most traveled route. That was the driving force in coming up with the alternatives that were chosen to show the CAC members, and those alternatives are as follows:

1. Traffic circle/roundabout. They are highly successful in other areas of the country; however, this traffic circle would need to have three lanes instead of the standard two. There would be no traffic signal. As you approach the roundabout, you would slow down, merge with the existing traffic already in the circle and make your way to the area you would want to exit the circle by merging to the outside lane and then exiting to the right.

Comment: Feels it would not be a safe option.

Q: Would there be less pollution because there would be no stopping required?

That most likely would be the case.

Q: What accident studies have been done?

No studies have been done because this would be the first three-lane roundabout.

2. S-curve. Engineers feel a 90-degree left-turn is ideal at an intersection. With this intersection, a 90-degree turn with a 50 mph design speed would require taking property, and that is not a viable option. With the S-curve, the roadway would resemble the letter "S". The turning degree would be 110 degrees with a skew of 20 degrees. The lowest speed that Pima County would allow on an arterial roadway is 45 mph, so the speed limit would have to be lowered at that location due to the turning angle. It would be a dual-left turn, making those turns very slow moving.

Q: Would a fire truck be able to make that turn?

Bill stated that turns are design so that a WB50 truck could make the turn. That is the length of a double tractor-trailer; therefore, a fire truck should be able to turn at that location.

Q: Could the speed go below 45 mph?

Bill stated he could not drop below the Pima County standards; however, the members could take that issue up with the BOS.

3. Jug handle. This option would remove the left turn from northbound La Cholla Boulevard to westbound Magee Road and would be constructed at grade. Vehicles heading north on La Cholla Boulevard would travel through the intersection and exit to the right on a loop that would bring the vehicles back to the intersection and then head onto westbound Magee Road. The road configuration would look like the handle of a jug. This option has not been used in Tucson, but it has been used successfully in other parts of the country.

Q: What would this traffic configuration do in respect to other RTA projects in the area?

Bill stated that when they do their analyses of the alternatives, the information they receive from Pima Association of Governments (PAG) takes into consideration all other projects when providing model information.

Q: How would traffic merge back on to Magee Road after coming out of the jug handle?

Bill said that the jug handle would add a third lane east of the La Cholla Boulevard intersection, and once through the intersection, the three lanes would be reduced back into two lanes heading west on Magee Road. Bill said this option was slightly better than the S-curve alternative.

Q: Would this option have any impact on the businesses in the area?

Bill stated he did not believe there would be any negative impact to the businesses.

Comment: This configuration will not work. Over time, people would understand how to maneuver this intersection heading north and wanting to turn west; however, this was counter-intuitive to continue northbound then end up eastbound in order to eventually head westbound. A lot of land would have to be used in order to implement this alternative.

Bill appreciated the comments and said that was the purpose of presenting several alternatives so the CAC and the public can weigh in on their preferences. Bill also stated there would be sufficient signage to help guide those unfamiliar with this configuration through the jug handle.

There were more discussions between the team and the CAC on this matter. The consensus was that there would be issues no matter which option would be chosen.

4. Flyover. This is the final alternative being presented for this location. The northbound traffic would exit to the right prior to the intersection and drive over two bridges built above the existing roadway and enter eastbound Magee Road west of the intersection, merging into existing traffic flows. This is the most efficient alternative in terms of traffic movement; however, it is the most costly option, it makes access to properties a challenge and it builds a road that spans 30 feet into the air possibly blocking some residents' views of the mountains.

Q: Are there funds available to build this option?

Bill stated that funds to build this option were not currently in the budget and the team would have to find additional funding to build this option.

Q: Could the road be built under the existing road?

There is approximately 4,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water is generated from the Carmack Wash, which flows through the intersection area. Pumps would need to be installed in order to remove the water from the underpass during a rain event.

Q: Would this option have a negative impact at the intersection on traffic at the light?

There would not be negative impacts at the intersection with this alternative because the merge would happen approximately one mile from the light.

Comment: Don't want the residential area to resemble an interstate.

Comment: The roadway would have to merge from three lanes down to two.

Comment: How to sign the area so people would know how to maneuver the area.

Q: What would the environmental impacts be on this design?

Mike Dawson, EcoPlan, said that there would be some impacts, one being the shadowing of noise. Those homes closer to the flyover would experience less noise than those homes farther away.

Q: Can you just enlarge the intersection?

Bill stated that enlarging the intersection would be less efficient because it would take longer to turn and the sharp angle would still be the same; however, it would give the driver more room to make the turn.

Bill announced the public meeting that would be held on Aug. 14, 2008, from 6 to 8 p.m. at St. Mark's United Methodist Church. Bill stated the open house is where the team encourages the public to give them their written comments. The public has two weeks to complete their comments and return them to the team in order to be documented.

A CAC member had drawn up plans (attached to this summary) and wanted to discuss his plan with the committee. Bill left that decision up to the committee, and they agreed to have a short discussion of the plans, and they were as follows:

- *No stoplights as the intersection would no longer exist.*
- *Similar to the flyover, except all roads would either be elevated or put underground.*

Q: How much additional cost would be involved in the CAC member's plan, and could this plan be constructed?

Bill stated that it most likely could be done at double or triple the cost of the flyover plan that was presented. Bill offered to take the plan and look more closely at the idea. Bill asked how the CAC wanted him to move forward.

A CAC member did not feel the plan was viable and would prefer the team not look further into this option. Some other issues addressed were access to the businesses as well as this area would look like an interstate exchange, and that was not why people moved to the area.

Bill stated that the next CAC meeting would be late September at the earliest. He said that he would be out of town for two weeks after the public meeting, but that aside, there had to be sufficient time to gather the comments and put them in a document to provide to the CAC members. Bill stated that he felt mid-October would be sufficient. It was decided that we would check on room availability at St. Mark's United Methodist Church for either Oct. 13 or Oct. 20, 2008.

Bill adjourned the CAC portion of the meeting at 7:45 p.m. and opened the floor to the public for questions.

Some concerns from the public:

- Flyover issues with residential areas and mall traffic.
- A desire for six lanes.
 - Traffic volumes only warrant four lanes.
- Why did the team apply for federal funding?
 - Pima County decided they wanted to make sure there was enough money to build this roadway, so FHWA guidelines were followed and approved for funding.
- The area should stay similar to what it is today; this is not Phoenix, we appreciate the efforts being made, but it is important to keep the area residential.
- We are not convinced these improvements are needed at this location.
- There is a petition to make sure the open space at the La Cholla Boulevard and Magee Road intersection stays.
 - The team is aware of the petition and they have been in talks with Pima County – possibly to enhance the open space – will continue to look at moving forward and informing the CAC.
- I am concerned about the one-way frontage road and the speed limit of 50 mph.
 - Bill encouraged everyone to attend the public meeting in order to have their comments heard.
- Will you use rainwater harvesting?
 - Bill stated that is being looked at. In most locations, that is happening where it is feasible.
- There needs to be a safe place for pedestrians to cross the road.
- Why are so many people heading north on La Cholla Boulevard?
 - Not sure – traffic engineer may have answers.
- Please take into consideration the four schools in the area.
 - School safety would be taken into consideration.

Angie Brown, Gordley Design Group, reminded people to write their comments down at the public open house so that their comments would be documented.

Bill concluded by announcing he would be around for any individual questions and that he could also be reached at his office for specific questions.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.



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Initial Name	Agency and Address	E-mail	
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David Williams	1421 W. Chapala Drive Tucson, AZ 85704	Phone _____ Fax _____	



**Cortaro Farms Road/Magee Road:
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Sign-In Sheet**

Monday, Aug. 4, 2008



Completion of this sign-in sheet is completely voluntary and helps the project team keep an accurate record of meeting attendees. Under state law, any identifying information provided below will become part of the public record, and as such, must be released to any individual upon request. **Please print clearly.**

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