



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



Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting
Monday, March 15, 2010
6 to 7:30 p.m.
St. Mark's United Methodist Church

CAC Members Present at Meeting:

- Robert Barr
- Kathryn Culver
- Molly Frazer
- Kathy Gatto
- Steven Kresal
- Steve Sisson
- Tom Unger
- Bernie Wiegandt
- David Williams

CAC Members Not in Attendance:

- George Ballesteros
- Dennis Hansen
- David Jacobs
- William Scott
- John Whitehill-Ward

Attending from Project Team:

- Pima County Department of Transportation (PCDOT): Paul Bennett, Rick Ellis, Annabelle Valenzuela
- Regional Transportation Authority/Pima Association of Governments, Main Street: Britton Dornquast
- Pima County: Jacqui Andrade
- AECOM: Bill Schlesinger
- Gordley Design Group: B.J. Bartlett, Angie Brown, Adriana Prieto

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda

Bill Schlesinger, AECOM, welcomed and thanked everyone for coming to the CAC meeting. Bill stated that the purpose of this meeting was for the CAC members and asked the public to hold their questions until the CAC part of the meeting was adjourned. Bernie Wiegandt started the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves and whom they represent.

Bill said the meeting was called to update the CAC on the status of the project, and that not much had changed in the plan except for a few more Phase I details. He had no milestone events to report. He updated the status of the Environmental Assessment (EA), which is required by federal regulations. The EA had gone to ADOT once and was back to ADOT again after their first review and changes were incorporated. He said he had heard the second round of comments from ADOT were minor, and that the EA would be returned to ADOT and then sent to the Federal Highway Administration for confirmation.

He said a public hearing about the EA should be held in late April or early May. The public hearing will address the entire corridor project. If everything goes smoothly, which he expects, the project should become eligible for federal funding within months.

He said the Design Concept Report was finalized and submitted to Pima County. Phase I plans are being worked on from La Cañada to La Cholla, and those plans are being taken to final design. The plans will then be sent to the utility companies so they can plan relocations. The plans should be ready for bid this fall and could go to construction after Jan. 1, 2011.

He introduced Paul Bennett, who will be the Phase II and III project manager and who has been involved in Phase I. Paul announced that one significant change is a flip in project order: The western section of the project will be designed and built first, followed by the eastern section. The western section is from Thornydale to Mona Lisa. The eastern section is from La Cañada to Oracle. The reason for the switch is that they believe in the current economic climate they can get better value on the higher-dollar western section project if they do it now. The western section will likely go out to bid in 12 to 14 months, by next spring or summer. Concurrently, design bids will be solicited for the eastern section.

Bernie said there was a strong component about the western section in Pima County's EA letter. Bernie asked would there be any change to the county's approach to the section given the switch in time frame. Bill said no, but that it should highlight how important that section is.

Paul Bennett said the western section will be under design in the next 60 days and will go out for construction bids May 2011. Construction could begin in fall 2011.

A CAC member asked what the time frame is for the section from Mona Lisa to La Cañada. Paul said 18 months to two years. We can finish design in 2011; construction could begin in spring or summer 2012. Bill said that doesn't really change the schedule or time frame for the eastern section.

Bob Barr asked when the Magee/La Cholla intersection construction would begin. Bill said plans should be ready this summer; utilities need nine months to redesign their

lines. They will likely be seen in the area in the fall surveying and relocating. Construction likely won't start until after the holiday season of 2010.

Metro Water was looking at a reclaimed line between the two Shannon roads. The goal would be to put in new utility lines once and not have to move them again after construction.

Bill moved on to Phase I details and said they are starting what is called the ultimate design, or final design, on Phase I. The design will taper back west of Mona Lisa, will go east and tie in to La Cañada, and go north through Magee and south on La Cholla to the Wal-Mart. La Cholla design from Magee north is moving quickly and could be out to construction soon. Profile of the intersection hasn't changed.

Bill said not much has changed with the drainage portion. Design calls for protecting and channeling flows to vegetation within the jughandle turn area. The project is in Pima County floodplain, so a permit is needed. Bill is working with the Corps of Engineers on their regulations. Mitigation areas (he pointed to areas within jughandle on map) were identified to transplant plants or plant new trees in that area. The Corps of Engineers likes that idea.

Storm drains and pavement drainage is based on a 10-year storm. Pavement won't pond up based on a storm volume that occurs every 10 years.

In the next month or so, utilities will be "potholing," in which their large vacuum trucks will be looking beneath the pavement to find the utility lines. Discussion is occurring about right-of-way, temporary construction easements and permanent drainage easements. County appraisals are being performed.

Bernie asked whether there would be an opportunity to discuss the no right turn onto La Cholla from the realigned Magee Road before it's finalized. Bill said he would bring the animation of traffic flow at that intersection. He said it would come down to being a safety issue. Bill said they don't see a lot of improvement in circulation with allowing a right turn. With cyclists and traffic traveling west, and traffic trying to head north and making a left into the apartments off La Cholla, it is a safety concern.

Steven Kresal asked whether the bicycle curve within the jughandle could be made into a complete circle, which would allow cyclists to get onto La Cholla. Bill said he could consider that change.

Bernie mentioned that Tucson-Pima Arts Council (TPAC) was seeking involvement on the artist selection committee. TPAC is soliciting bids from artists. The committee would help select artists/contractors for the walls and environmental art along the corridor. Steven Kresal said he was interested.

Bernie also noted that the CAC initially started as a larger group, but attendance had fallen off. He asked whether new members could be appointed. Annabelle responded

that it could be looked into. She also said that the standard was to make sure enough representation existed to meet the environmental ordinance. She thought the CAC had enough representation currently, but said she would look into it.

Bill asked if there were questions from the general public:

Q. Will there be stoplights on La Cholla at northern Magee?

A. No, there will be a left-turn lane south on La Cholla. Analysis showed not a lot of delay traveling southbound.

Q. Will there be a stoplight at Mona Lisa?

A. No. Profile will be adjusted to the west, opening up more lanes and a median, which should create gaps in traffic flow. The team went through a federal process called the "signal warrant." These intersections did not warrant traffic signals based on analysis. A signal put in at the wrong location can cause more accidents.

Q. Where will there be signals on that map?

A. Where they exist – the two Shannons, La Cholla, La Cañada and Northern.

Q. If you are driving north on La Cholla, is the idea to take the loop, since there will be no left turn at Magee?

A. Yes.

Q. I live near Magee. Where can I find wall and drainage plans?

A. Bill invited him to come to his office and see the plans.

Q. Are there plans for art other than walls?

A. The master plan shows walls for an opportunity for art. Art will go on it, but the actual art will be decided with the TPAC artists and art process.

Q. Will landscaping be part of the art plan?

A. Concept calls for environmental arts for this corridor. The meshing of landscape and art will occur in this project. It should be a good thing financially, as well.

Q. The map doesn't show the noise walls?

A. It doesn't. You can see them on the Web site or you can call me and view the maps.

Q. Will they be 7-foot walls?

A. Walls will be of varying heights.

Q. Will the artwork be visible on the roadside of the walls?

A. Yes, but I hope there will be something on the backside as well. That hasn't been decided yet.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.