



***Cortaro Farms Road/Magee Road:
Thornycastle Road to Oracle Road
Improvement Project***



Construction Kick-Off Meeting Summary
April 5, 2011

Pima County Department of Transportation, in conjunction with the Regional Transportation Authority, held a construction kick-off meeting for the Cortaro Farms Road/Magee Road: Thornycastle Road to Oracle Road Improvement Project, Phase I, on Tuesday, April 5, 2011. The meeting was held from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Pima Community College Northwest Campus, Room A-207.

About 120 people attended the meeting and one comment form was received.

The meeting began in an open house format at 6 p.m. At 6:15 p.m., Paul Bennett, Pima County Department of Transportation, introduced Pima County Supervisor Ann Day. Supervisor Day gave an introduction to the project, with an overview of phases, construction timing and the bid estimate for Phase I. She directed the attendees' attention to the art display, noting that one of the three choices would be placed in the middle of the jughandle at Magee Road and La Cholla Boulevard. She also gave an overview of other construction projects in the area. Supervisor Day asked for patience during construction and directed attendees to discuss specific questions with team members at the displays after the presentation. She thanked the members of the Community Advisory Committee for their efforts and encouraged attendees to get to know the CAC members. Supervisor Day thanked team members and those who attended previous meetings for their participation during the project design and encouraged attendees to visit the project website for more information.

Paul introduced the project team and reviewed the meeting agenda. He also gave an overview of the displays and information stations available for viewing.

Marc Dotseth, Ashton Contractors and Engineering, gave an overview of Phase I construction, which extends along Magee Road from Mona Lisa Road to La Cañada Drive. He discussed the cost estimate for the project. He talked about two important parts of the project: traffic control and drainage. He gave an overview of the drainage issues and explained how the intersection reconstruction at Magee Road and La Cholla Boulevard is the critical path to the schedule. Marc said Ashton's approach was to do the construction in five phases as identified below:

1. Carmack Wash, working from the southwest corner to the northeast corner. This will take a lot of work and there are 404 permit restrictions.
2. Construction on west side of La Cholla Boulevard at its intersection with Magee Road. Traffic will be on the east side of La Cholla Boulevard. The goal is to have phases 1 and 2 of construction done at the same time.
3. East end of Magee Road, from La Cholla Boulevard to La Cañada Drive.
4. West end of Magee Road, from Mona Lisa Road to La Cholla Boulevard.
5. Construction of the jughandle and the old Magee Road alignment.

Ashton phased the project in this manner to build the job in a safe manner while moving traffic through as best as possible.

Q: How much time do you estimate each phase will take?

A: This is a rough schedule that may change, based on utilities. The total time is expected to be 22 months, but we hope to get it done sooner. We estimate each phase will take about six months.

Q: There are currently two entrances at the Sonoran Terrace Apartments. How will we get in and out of the parking lot? How will we go north?

A: We haven't identified a problem at that location. We will submit a number of traffic control plans to PCDOT and discuss with them to ensure everyone maintains access. We spend a lot of time thinking and reviewing layouts to make sure it'll be okay. I can't get you specifics yet. But we have to give you access.

Q: How will we get across La Cholla Boulevard to go west?

A: There may be times where you can't, from a safety standpoint.

Q: The south access point for Sonoran Terraces is directly across from the jughandle. How will that work?

A: That is a question for the designers. It's like getting off the highway at an exit. The road will be wider by an entire lane at that location.

Q: Where else has the jughandle been used so we can see how it works?

A (Bill Schlesinger): Nowhere in Tucson, but it has been used in Phoenix and elsewhere around the county.

Paul reminded the group to give PCDOT email addresses so they can stay informed about construction and receive traffic alerts.

Q: What is the estimated date for breaking ground?

A: May 1, 2011.

Q: Who is the Phase III designer?

A: EPS Group.

Q: Will the signal on the east segment of Magee Road at La Cholla Boulevard remain operational through construction?

A: Yes. Two temporary signals will also be going in to help with traffic flow during construction.

Q: Why is the elevation on Magee Road at La Cholla Boulevard changing?

A (Bill Schlesinger): In general, the existing intersection is a dip section. We've raised the road to get closer to the surrounding elevations and to make room under the intersection for the big culvert for Carmack Wash.

Q: Can you walk us through traffic flow at the new intersection?

A (Bill Schlesinger): The reason we have a jughandle here is due to the angle of the intersection. Traffic going from northbound La Cholla Boulevard to westbound Magee Road has an undesirable angle. We determined the best way to fix that, without taking many homes and businesses, was to create a jughandle. Northbound La Cholla Boulevard traffic wanting to go west on Magee Road will go through the intersection, around the jughandle and back through the intersection onto Magee Road. Southbound La Cholla Boulevard traffic going east on Magee Road will make a left turn on the old Magee Road alignment, then another left turn shortly after that onto Magee Road. There will be no northbound or southbound left turns at the intersection. All other movements will remain the same.

Q: What about congestion for eastbound motorists on Magee Road?

A (Bill Schlesinger): We used computer modeling to predict what would happen. We used traffic projections for the year 2025 and found no problems on eastbound Magee Road for most of a typical day.

Q: Will there be signals at other locations?

A: No.

Q: What is the ultimate destination of the drainage through the intersection?

A: The destination will remain, flowing into the channel that is around Walmart.

Q: Will the existing traffic signal be removed?

A: Yes. The intersection will be shifted to the north; there will be a traffic signal at the new intersection.

C: I go through this intersection three times a day. I'd like to thank the construction company for their safety and way of handling traffic so far. [applause]

A: We must give credit where it's due. Ashton hasn't begun construction yet; the utility companies are currently out there.

Q: How many unemployed people are you putting on the job site?

A: Up to 300 to 400, including our subcontractors.

Q: Will the section of roadway that Magee and Shannon roads share be raised?

A: That's part of Phase II; please check with that design team for specifics.

Paul encouraged attendees to check in at the RTA table to get more information regarding business assistance. He gave an update on Phase II, which is at 100 percent design and will go out to bid for construction in the next few months. That project will involve a new bridge and a four-lane section of roadway. Some noise walls and a retaining wall will be included. Proposed designs for those walls are included at an information display. Paul encouraged attendees to review and provide feedback. He said the team had been working with a new charter school on Cortaro Farms Road,

along with a developer on the northeast corner of Cortaro Farms Road and Thornydale Road, to help with access. He anticipates construction will take two years. There are many utilities in the area the team must work with, including Tucson Electric Power, Metro Water and Southwest Gas.

Q: What about noise abatement?

A: There are three walls, based on the study. For specifics, please talk to the project team.

Q: Is Phase I between Shannon Road and La Cholla Boulevard?

A: Yes, the Shannon Road at the YMCA to La Cholla Boulevard.

Paul continued with information about the third phase, which is at 60 percent design. There are about five to six more months to go before this segment is ready to go to bid for construction. This phase still has right-of-way and utility issues to work out. Pima County is working with the state, due to changes at the Oracle Road intersection. Pima County is also working closely with Oro Valley. Two fire stations are in that stretch of Magee Road, and the team is working with both by designing cuts in the medians so the fire trucks can go both east and west. There is also a retirement home on Magee Road the team is working with to move its entrance further east and line up with church access, which will improve the emergency access to the facility.

Paul said two artists have been identified for Phase III, with the direction to stay in keeping with the overall art concept. Paul suggested the attendees speak with the artists after the presentation. He noted that Kevin Box, the artist for Phase I, had brought three mock-ups of concepts for the art in the jughandle. Paul encouraged attendees to view the art concepts and provide feedback.

Paul concluded the presentation by thanking everyone for coming. He said the next meeting would likely be a kick-off meeting for Phase II construction and, like this meeting, will include updates on all phases.

The meeting continued in an open house format until 7:30 p.m.