



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



Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting  
Tuesday, March 11, 2008  
6:00 to 7:30 p.m.  
Ascension Lutheran Church

CAC Members Present at Meeting:

- George Ballesteros
- Robert Barr
- Carol Wagoner-Cook
- Kathryn Culver
- Molly Frazer
- Kathy Gatto
- Dennis Hansen
- Steven Kresal
- William Scott
- Steve Sisson
- Tom Unger
- Bernie Wiegandt

CAC Members Not in Attendance:

- David Jacobs
- David Williams

Attending from Project Team:

- Pima County Department of Transportation (PCDOT): Rick Ellis, John McManus, Ana Olivares, Annabelle Quihuis
- DMJM Harris: Fred Hartshorn, Bill Schlesinger
- Gordley Design Group: Barb Alley, Angie Brown

Attending from the Public:

See attached sign-in sheets

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- CAC member notebooks
- Project maps

Rick Ellis, PCDOT, welcomed the group to the Cortaro Road/Magee Road: Thornydale Road to Oracle Road initial kick-off CAC meeting. Rick thanked the CAC members for volunteering their time to sit on the committee. Rick let the group know that this evening's meeting would consist of introductions from the team and an overview of the project. PCDOT Community Relations would review the CAC members' roles and responsibilities, including what their role

would be in the Environmental Assessment and Mitigation Report (EAMR) and the Design Concept Report (DCR). Rick introduced Ana Olivares, PCDOT Deputy Director of Transportation, and asked her to say a few words to the group.

Ana welcomed everyone to the Cortaro Road/Magee Road: Thornydale Road to Oracle Road Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) sponsored project. The voters approved this RTA project in 2006, and the team is ready to get started moving forward on improvements. Ana thanked all the CAC members for volunteering their time to sit on this committee to see this project through to construction and is looking forward to their input and support of this project. Ana turned the floor back to Rick.

Rick stated that the committee members would get the opportunity to meet and talk with team members throughout the course of the project. The most important aspect of the CAC is for the group to get to know each other. Rick asked the members to introduce themselves and whom they represent to the group.

Rick thanked the group for their introductions and the chance to hear that everyone has similar concerns. The team's goal is to work with the committee and to help educate them on the specifics of the project so the team can come up with best design overall. This is one of the bigger RTA projects getting underway, and in order for this process and the project to be successful, there are three common themes:

1. Feedback – a lot of information will be brought to the table and it is the CAC member's role to take that information back to their business, neighborhood association and/or their friends and in turn, let the team members know what the issues and concerns are. The team will have all the reports and models to show traffic volumes and noise levels; however, the team needs feedback on driving patterns only known by those using this corridor, etc. The goal is to make sure the roadway design meets the needs of this particular area.
2. Representative of the Community – with a small group, it is important that the CAC members help in getting the word about the project back out into the community; each member is the spokesperson for the group he or she is representing.
3. Educate and Advocate – each member will learn a lot more of the specifics of this project that the public most likely won't be interested in. Some of the information will be laws and regulations that must be followed along with design features that may have some flexibility. The team is counting on the committee to take that information back to the public to explain the particulars of the project and why things have to be done a certain way. This is the best way to get accurate information out to the public in the most efficient way.

Rick introduced Annabelle Quihuis, PCDOT Community Relations Manager, to explain the CAC members' roles and responsibilities. Annabelle welcomed the CAC members and interested parties to the kick-off meeting and introduced Angie Brown, Public Involvement Specialist, and Barb Alley, Public Involvement Coordinator with Gordley Design Group, who would be assisting PCDOT in the public involvement process.

Annabelle stressed that the responsibilities of the committee, as Rick mentioned earlier, were to provide input and feedback to the team and be the representatives of the community. In addition to those roles, the CAC is responsible for providing the main recommendation on all the mitigation features, which will be discussed later, as part of the EAMR.

Annabelle explained to the group how the CAC members were chosen. PCDOT mailed out a few thousand letters to residents who live within one-half mile of the project limits. An advertisement was also placed in the newspaper. The County received approximately 160 applications. Those applicants were plotted on a map to visually see their locations and whom they represented, i.e., business, neighborhood associations, etc. Annabelle stated that PCDOT had to follow the guidelines put in place by the Pima County Community Participation and Mitigation Ordinance on choosing the committee. The ordinance states that there can be anywhere from five to 15 people on a committee. Because of the overwhelming response the County received, they chose the maximum number of members to sit on this CAC.

Annabelle asked the members to turn to page seven of ordinance located in their binders and pointed them to section 10.56, which outlines the CAC functions and duties, permitted scope of review and matters not be reviewed for change. Annabelle stated that the County will plan on holding six CAC meetings, but could meet up to 10 times if necessary. She informed the group that they are welcome to meet on their own; County staff would be available to assist with those meetings if necessary. The ordinance also states that the members must be notified at least two weeks prior to the meeting, and Annabelle was hoping the CAC members would choose a night that would work for the members. The project team will be responsible for providing all the material that the committee will need throughout the process, starting with the member notebooks the CAC members received that evening. Annabelle told the group that it is a good idea to choose a chairperson or co-chairpersons, and they would be the liaison between the County and the committee. Annabelle stated that she would be happy to help in the selection of that person or persons, and she would also be providing guidance throughout the CAC process.

Annabelle stated that some responsibilities of the CAC members would include reading through the reports provided to them on the various studies that will be done throughout the design phase of this project. She also stated that the committee would be receiving the comments, recommendations and concerns from the community at the public meetings and would bring those items to the table at the CAC meetings. When the planning stage has been completed, the team will provide the members with the EAMR. Once the CAC members have received all the information on the project and the CAC members have presented all concerns and items needing to be addressed by the team, the CAC members will be responsible for writing a recommendation letter to be presented to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) for approval. Annabelle outlined the schedule and timeline for the CAC members.

Annabelle said that those who were not selected to be on the CAC are considered interested stakeholders on this project, and will be invited to future CAC meetings. Annabelle assured the stakeholders that their concerns would be heard through the CAC members who will be their voice during this process. Annabelle opened the floor for questions.

Questions and Answers:

*How long will this process last?*

Approximately 18 months. Bill Schlesinger, DMJM Harris Project Manager, will go over the timeline in his presentation.

*I submitted an application to be on the committee but I never heard back.*

Annabelle asked to speak with the gentleman after the meeting to get his information in order to ensure he will receive all further correspondence.

*A member of the public thought there was language in some of the public information materials about this project that indicated there would be room for discussion on the number of lanes, medians, etc.*

The RTA plan accepted by the voters specified the approximate number of lanes, sidewalks and medians, etc. What the CAC members and the public will be working on is noise mitigation, public art, drainage issues, etc.

*A member of the public stated that this project had already been started some time ago with a CAC and plans for the improved roadway. Will this project pick up where it left off?*

What this person is referring to was from the 1997 bond election, and those improvements were proposed from La Cañada Drive to Oracle Road. With the voter-approved funding in 2006 from the RTA, the entire corridor from Thornydale Road to Oracle Road will be studied. The current plans from the previous work are estimated to be at about 30-percent complete. DMJM Harris, the engineering firm that was involved in the earlier plans, will be looking at current regulations and codes in order to tie the entire segment together.

*Is there a chance this project will run out of money like in 1997?*

We have committed funding through the RTA and we legally have to move forward. This project is scheduled for RTA Period One and Period Two. Most likely, design will occur in Period One, taking it into the year 2011. Construction would then occur in Period Two after the year 2011.

*Does the CAC recommendation letter to the BOS come before or after the EAMR?*

The letter comes after the EAMR. The County can amend the EAMR after the recommendation letter from the CAC if necessary.

Annabelle turned the floor over to Bill Schlesinger, DMJM Harris Project Manager. Bill introduced Fred Hartshorn, DMJM Harris Lead Planner, and stated that Rick and Annabelle did a great job going over the roles and responsibilities of the CAC, and Bill restated the importance of the CAC process and the need for feedback from the CAC and the public.

This project is just getting started and nothing has been decided at this point. The project team has the RTA vote and wants to keep an open mind moving forward. The scope of work that DMJM Harris will perform over the next year-and-a-half will include looking at the entire corridor, and will end with plans that will be about 30-percent completed. This will be a very preliminary plan, but at this stage, there will be enough information to know what the impacts will be to come up with mitigation measures. After that stage, the project will move into the first

phase of final design. There will be some extra steps taken in order to meet federal regulations in case the team would see the need to apply for federal funding on this project.

The first phase of this project, as mentioned earlier, will take approximately 18 months to complete. The second phase, which will last anywhere from 12-18 months, will be final design. The team will start with the big picture first, and then break the corridor up in sections and fit the pieces all together to come up with the final design.

Bill stated that each CAC member has about 19 sheets of aerial photos to put in their notebooks for reference. Bill let the interested stakeholders know they would be able to have access to the maps and additional information from the Web site. Bill said some surveying of the area has begun. Some area residents might have seen some of the utility companies, environmental agencies or other agencies within the project area. The data retrieved by these agencies will help to understand existing conditions, which is critical in moving forward with the project.

Bill opened up the floor to questions as his presentation came to an end.

Questions and Answers:

*There is some work being done at the Magee Road and La Cholla Boulevard intersection along this corridor. Are those improvements a part of this project?*

No. Even though the County was doing the work at the above-mentioned intersection, it was being done in conjunction with a new development that is going in near that particular intersection. There may be some interim improvements along the corridor, but they will not solve the traffic issues. The permanent improvements will come during construction after the year 2011.

*Why aren't the improvements happening from Interstate 10 to Oracle Road?*

There have already been some improvements from I-10 to Camino de Oeste. The improvements that will happen from Camino de Oeste to Thornydale Road are a separate project. That segment should be moving into construction sometime in 2009.

*Are these improvements just on Magee Road, not in conjunction with the side streets?*

The cross streets will be looked at, such as Shannon Road. Some additional interim improvements along the corridor would be going on while this project is moving forward.

*What kinds of projects has DMJM Harris been involved in?*

DMJM Harris has been involved in numerous projects on I-19 and I-10, along with work on Magee Road, and many projects with the County. Bill stated he would be happy to go into more detail after the meeting.

*When will this construction start?*

It is unclear at this time. The RTA has this project in Period One and Period Two. Period One runs through the year 2011, and Period Two runs through year 2016. Since this project is in early design, it has not been determined which period this construction will begin.

*Do you have any traffic volume information on the increase of traffic on open roads when other roads are closed due to flooding of the Cañada Del Oro (CDO) Wash?*

We don't have the capability to monitor that type of information, but this would be looked into. The work that has been done so far does not have that information in the modeling. There may be some numbers on that scenario. PCDOT would do research to see what information could be found.

*Since our job is to go back to the public and tell them about the information that is presented in these meetings, what information can we take from tonight's meeting? We know the first period will run through the year 2011. Is there a schedule we can take back into the community?*

The team was planning on bringing the schedule to the next meeting when the CAC members would be starting their work. The purpose of this meeting was to welcome and thank the committee for their participation and to learn a little about the overall goals of the project. The project team suggested letting the public know that this is a long process that begins with design and then construction. The schedule of the steps moving this project forward will be presented at the next meeting.

*The end of this project will be in the town of Oro Valley. Who will be responsible for completing this project in their town?*

Representatives from Oro Valley have been attending the meetings on this project. The intent at this time will be to carry the improvements to the Oro Valley section of Oracle Road with the Town's approval. The plan is for the County to take the lead through Oro Valley's jurisdiction to complete the project.

*Is the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) a part of this project?*

No, this is a County project. ADOT will be consulted in respect to any improvements that may happen at the Oracle Road intersection since that is the state's jurisdiction, but that will be their only involvement in this project.

*What is the Web site address?*

The County Web site for all road improvement projects is: <http://www.roadprojects.pima.gov>. This address will take the public to all Pima County projects currently underway. It will be a couple of weeks until this project is up and running with information to view. Angie Brown, Gordley Design Group, pointed the CAC members to their welcome letter in the front of their notebooks that included contact information. She stated that the committee could call any of the team members listed if they had any questions.

*Are there predetermined qualifications for noise? If so, how do we get a copy of this information?*

That information is in the 2003 Roadway Design Manual and can be found online. Those studies will be started towards the end of the year; however, before the analysis is started, there will a presentation explaining the how noise levels are determined.

*Personal request: I would like to be notified at least a couple of weeks prior to a meeting date.*  
Annabelle apologized that this notice went out a little later than normal. She will make sure the notifications are mailed at least two weeks prior to each meeting.

*Why are the barriers still in place on La Cholla Boulevard near the Foothills Mall?*  
The County stated they would look into the situation and report back the findings on this issue.

Annabelle asked the CAC members to pick a meeting day that would work for the group. Monday nights were determined by the CAC members to be the best day of the week to meet. Bernie Wiegandt and Steve Sisson agreed to be co-chairmen of the CAC. Annabelle ended the meeting by informing the group that the next meeting would be in mid-to-late April.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.