



*La Cañada Drive: River Road to Ina Road
Improvement Project
(4LCRRI - South Segment)*



Meeting Summary

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting
Tuesday, May 27, 2008, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Tucson Chinese Cultural Center
1288 W. River Road
Tucson, AZ 85704

CAC Members Present at Meeting:

Dan Barch
Lori Franz
Gail Gault
Constance Hammond
Noel Robinson
Steve Sedor

CAC Members Not in Attendance:

Maria Duarte
John Kaur
Linda Kelly
Jim McElhiney
Denise O'Hagin
Joseph O'Hagin
Ryan Olson
Sam Ray
Ruben Sibayan
Mary Sibayan
Kirk Strang
Roland Wadsworth

Attending from Project Team:

Pima County Department of Transportation (PCDOT): Rick Ellis, Annabelle Quihuis
HDR Engineering: Mike Bertram, Christine Jacobs-Donoghue, Scott Stapp
Gordley Design Group: Paki Rico, Barb Alley

Materials Distributed:

Agenda
Aerial Maps

Summary

Mike Bertram, HDR Engineering Project Manager, began the meeting at 5:30 p.m. Mike reviewed the agenda and materials distributed to the CAC and the public as they entered the meeting facility. He gave an overview of the meeting's format, and then discussed the noise mitigation report along with an update of the project. For the La Cañada Drive: River Road to Ina Road segment, the design year is 2030 and the purposes of construction are: 1) the roadway is at or near capacity at peak hours and it needs to be widened; 2) an all-weather surface needs to be provided for emergency service providers; 3) the roadway needs to be safer for vehicles, equestrians and pedestrians; and 4) the roadway needs to be environmentally friendly.

The draft Environmental Assessment and Mitigation Report (EAMR) will go to Pima County for approval in mid-to-late October. It will then be presented to the CAC so that they can write their letter of recommendation to the Pima County Board of Supervisors. In the fall, a public open house will be scheduled and shortly thereafter, in January 2009, the CAC's letter will go to the Board of Supervisors. In the spring/early summer of 2011, construction is scheduled to start.

The north segment (Ina Road to Calle Concordia) was scheduled to go into construction in June 2003, but the project was shelved due to a lack of funding. After voters approved the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) plan and funding in May of 2006, the project recommenced and plans and reports were scheduled to be updated and presented to the CAC and the public a second time.

For the south segment, Pima County Real Properties will be working with affected parties to discuss right-of-way (ROW) and acquisition procedures and timing. Mike added that while ROW issues are unavoidable, at this point in the project there are no planned slope easements. There may be temporary construction easements (where the construction firm temporarily uses property and then returns it), drainage easements (such as at Citrus Wash) and ROW acquisitions. Drainage easements are attained when an existing channel or wash needs to be improved and maintained. Regarding partial acquisitions, there are 12 properties on the corridor. Most are for right-turn lanes at Orange Grove Road. There are two full property acquisitions and those owners have been notified. There are 28 drainage ways within the corridor. If our improvements fall within five feet of the property line, we will ask for a 10-foot temporary construction easement to cover personnel or material that may fall onto the property.

Christine Jacobs-Donoghue came forward to discuss the environmental process, the technical reports and the agencies with provisions that must be satisfied. Jurisdictions that are involved include the County, Federal Highway Administration, the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The biological evaluation is in progress and it focuses on impacts to federal and state species. The Pygmy Owl is evaluated along with vegetative species such as the Saguaro. An environmental report is also provided to the County that lists the impacts to vegetation and other sensitive species.

The draft cultural resources report has been submitted. No significant cultural sites were found. The County will review and submit the report to federal agencies for their review. Once it is approved, it is sent to the State Historic Preservation Office. The 404 Permit (Clean Water Act) will be attained from the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Jurisdictional Delineation report has just been submitted for approval. There are no archaeological sites at this time, but there are still areas that are being surveyed for potential drainage improvements.

Mike stepped forward to mention the two workshops being held on June 23 and 25, 2008. They will be open to members of the public from both the north and the south segments. The workshops will focus on noise, noise barriers and other types of barriers. The workshops will help the public understand the intent of the barriers that the County is considering. The workshops will be at the Tucson Chinese Cultural Center from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on both June 23 and 25, 2008. The County will be mailing out a notification to residences and businesses within 1/2 mile of the corridor.

Mike introduced Scott Stapp, HDR Engineering, to discuss noise barriers and the noise analysis that was recently completed. Readings were taken on January 17 and 24, 2008, at four different locations at the edge of the ROW, which is usually within 30 to 50 feet of the roadway edge. The project team measured 66 to 72 decibels (dBA). The data that was collected is used so that a federally-approved computer noise model can be tested against what was found in the field. This is the only time these values are used. While in the field, the team also collected data on traffic, weather, number of trucks and other variables. Based on these, a computer model is built. The variables and readings were run through the model and the model predicted everything correctly. Everything from this point forward is based on the model because it is not possible to take measurements at every point on the corridor and because we cannot measure 20 years in the future.

Existing conditions were then modeled. One hundred and fourteen different locations were modeled along the roadway with the result of 53 to 65 dBA levels. The model is used to measure existing conditions because the time and personnel requirements for field measurements can be prohibitive, and the model will then help when establishing data for future conditions.

Future conditions are based on the year 2030. The 2030 traffic conditions are placed into the model along with the new proposed roadway design and any other changes, including increases in the height of the roadway. Traffic is projected to double in most areas. One hundred and fourteen locations were modeled again. The system showed 56 to 70 dBA for the future conditions. Based on these future levels, the team evaluates if mitigation should be considered. There are two requirements to assist with the decision of mitigation:

- 1) Will the dBA reach 66 or higher? According to Pima County Noise Abatement Criteria, mitigation must be considered when levels are at or approaching 67 dBA.
- 2) Is there a minimum of a 15 dBA difference between current and future conditions? This is very rare.

Based on these two questions, there were 53 residences where mitigation must be considered. Once the locations are pin pointed, there are two factors that must be met for mitigation: the mitigation must be feasible and reasonable.

In order to meet the factor of feasibility: 1) engineering factors, such as topography, drainage and safety, must be considered; and 2) the noise wall only works if it is continuous. Driveways and similar gaps will often deteriorate the purpose of the wall. The wall must cause a meaningful reduction of noise (a decrease in 5 dBA in Pima County).

The walls must also be reasonable: 1) Do they protect more than one residence? If they do not, they are not reasonable. 2) Do they meet the cost-per-benefited receiver ratio requirement? This is the total cost of the wall divided by the number of benefited receivers (homes) behind it. It must be less than \$35,000 per receiver to be considered reasonable. The wall locations must also be wanted by a majority of

property owners behind the wall. Based on these the factors of feasibility and reasonability, six locations warrant some type of mitigation (23 homes).

The floor was opened for a question-and-answer session:

Q. What is the linear cost per foot of the wall?

A. \$250 per foot for an 8-foot tall wall.

Q. Where are the walls mostly located?

A. Walls are primarily located along the east side.

Q. Do you take the noise at different times of day and average them?

A. It is based on the worst-case scenario.

Q. Do you project for truck noise?

A. Five percent is the projected truck traffic.

Q. Has the County changed noise criteria?

A. In 2003, Pima County adopted the noise abatement criteria as it exists today. The south project is receiving federal money and the County applies their standards between River Road and Ina Road; however, the County will claim a 3-dBA credit only on the north project which is figured into the mitigation scheme. For us to consider mitigation on the south, it must be 66 dBA. For the north, it must be 69 dBA.

Q. Would you remodel in a situation where one side of the road met the criteria and one did not?

A. No. The model doesn't address reflected sound very well.

Q. Will we have rubberized pavement?

A. Yes. Rubberized asphalt is the County standard and will be applied to both the north and the south projects.

Q. Why doesn't the doubling of traffic result in a doubling of decibels?

A. Decibels are on a logarithmic scale. An increase in 10 is equal to the doubling of perceived noise. A doubling of the noise energy (traffic) would produce an increase in noise levels of approximately three dBA.

Q. Can the County Board of Supervisors override the recommendations on the walls?

A. If they do, they are not noise walls that are being added.

Q. Are there situations where the decibel level is reached but it is not feasible? What is done?

A. If a wall is not feasible and it cannot be engineered, no wall will be constructed.

Q. What other forms of mitigation exist beside walls?

A. There are three main factors that increase noise levels: Tire-pavement interaction, engine noise and exhaust noise. Rubberized asphalt is effective with treating the tire-pavement interaction. Berms can also help, but they require more space and ROW.

Q. I live three lots away from La Cañada Drive and I can hear radios. Any suggestions?

A. These types of noise are not considered for noise mitigation.

Q. Can residents build walls themselves?

A. Yes, but please let the team know so they can give you the data for your property. Also, there may be code restrictions.

Q. What about vegetation? Does it help?

A. The vegetation would have to be 100-feet thick to get a 5-dBA decrease in noise. It may help with how you perceive the noise, though.

Q. Did you check the noise levels from the sirens at the Northwest Fire District?

A. There isn't a type of mitigation available that could help lessen the noise from the sirens.

Q. Will the rubberized asphalt release additional fumes?

A. Not that the team is aware. The material is made from recycled tires.

Q. What type of materials can the walls be?

A. Wooden walls have been designed in the past in rural areas. Concrete is the normal material of choice.

Q. Are the Board of Supervisors receptive to other mitigation ideas?

A. The Board wants to make sure the walls are maintainable and cost effective. The block cement wall performs well at a good cost.

Q. Back to the drainage at the southwest corner of La Cañada Drive and Orange Grove Road?

A. The existing and future flows will be identical.

Q. How can you justify putting water onto a property?

A. We are keeping the water in the same place it currently flows. We can look into channeling the water differently if needed.

Q. Will the north and south CACs work together for the public art?

A. Members of each segment should be attending the other segment's meeting to gain input on their project and art. The public artist who was selected is Carolyn Braaksma.

Q. What do the tags on the plants mean?

A. They are for inventory purposes only.

Q. Is there a Web site we can go to for information?

A. Visit the PCDOT Web site (<http://roadprojects.pima.gov/>).

General discussions continued and the CAC meeting was adjourned.