



La Cholla Boulevard:
Ruthrauff Road to River Road
Community Advisory Committee Meeting



Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
Tuesday, Oct. 2, 2007, 6 to 7:30 p.m.

CAC Members Present at Meeting:

- Humbert Arce
- Fred Bass
- Ellen Clark
- Ann Girvin
- Andy Hernandez
- Norma Metz
- Wayne Metz
- Robert Schwartz
- Ellie Towne

CAC Members Not in Attendance:

- Carol Gawrychowski
- William Mattausch
- Gretchen Ochoa
- Kaye Swinford
- Ian Stewart

Attending from Project Team:

- Pima County Department of Transportation (PCDOT): Carol Brichta, Rick Ellis, John McManus, Dean Papajohn
- HDR Engineering: Larry Barela, Bob Brittain, Ted Buell, René Tanner
- Pima County District 3 Representative: Kiki Navarro
- Regional Transportation Authority (RTA): Britton Dornquast
- Gordley Design Group: Barb Alley, Jan Gordley

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- La Cholla Boulevard Project contact information bookmark
- Map of Alternative E
- CAC Member individual contact sheet
- Binder for CAC members:
 - Welcome Letter
 - Project Features
 - Project Area Maps
 - Pima County Community Participation and Mitigation Ordinance

Dean Papajohn, Project Manager, PCDOT, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the second CAC meeting. Dean made a brief statement about what was discussed at the previous CAC meeting and again stated to the group that this project is being done to “enhance life in Pima County.” The purpose of this meeting was to focus on the alignment and potential configuration of the roadway. Dean pointed out the rough draft of Alternative E that Bob Brittain, Design Engineer, HDR Engineering, would be presenting to the group.

Dean asked everyone to introduce themselves to the group. He started with the design team, consultants, then CAC members.

The first speaker was Carol Brichta, Community Relations Department, PCDOT. Carol briefly touched on the roles and responsibilities of the CAC members, and again, asked for someone to step forward to be chairperson. She stated that the chairperson or chairpersons would be the point of contact when it came time to write the letter summarizing their opinions regarding the Environmental Assessment and Mitigation Report (EAMR). Carol stated that it is helpful to have one person as the point of contact in this process and she would offer her assistance. Her presentation ended with no one volunteering for the open position.

Dean gave a brief overview of the project. He stated there are many disciplines in the design of a roadway including but not limited to, traffic, landscaping, art and bridge design. Dean went on to talk about the five key criteria of this project. They are: 1) safety, 2) function, 3) right-of-way, 4) aesthetics, and 5) budget and schedule. They are described as follows:

Safety: This includes drivers, pedestrians, buses and cyclists.

- a. Adequate timing for traffic flow and pedestrian crossings
- b. Sidewalks – safe passage for pedestrians
- c. Paved shoulder – safe riding for cyclists
- d. Driveway access – safe entrance and exit

Options include:

1. Dedicated lane for entrance and exit into driveways
 2. Frontage roads: Two-way frontage road on one side or one-way frontage roads on both sides
- e. Medians
 - f. Bus pullouts
 - g. Storage lanes – cueing up for turns
 - h. Adequate sight distance
 - i. Bridge safety

Function: The operations of the project.

- a. Looking at traffic needs – current and future traffic patterns
- b. Turn movements off of La Cholla Boulevard onto cross streets
- c. Adequate lane width
- d. Accommodation of multiple users
- e. Median openings to access cross streets
- f. Frontage roads – reducing friction of vehicles entering the mainline
- g. Utilities – maintaining access to them
- h. Drainage

Right-of-Way

- a. Limit property easements
- b. Limit property acquisitions – leave property owners where they are

Aesthetics

- a. Landscape design (currently limited from River Road to Ruthrauff Road)
- b. Urban design/public art (will go into detail at future meeting)
- c. Bridge – modern design, clean lines
- d. Roadway profile– smooth design (rubberized asphalt – for noise control)

Budget and Schedule – funded by the RTA and Pima County

- a. The public voted for the RTA La Cholla Boulevard project and its budget
- b. Limit acquisitions due to budget constraints
- c. Bridge – careful where placed – keep away from utilities

Dean commented that the main goal of this meeting was to discuss alignment, roadway and planning. All the options need to be researched so that a balance can be found and the team can move forward according to the schedule. This is important in order for this project to stay on course and on its projected time line.

Questions:

Ellen Clark: With the occasional high water in the Rillito, is there a way to deepen the riverbed or elevate the bridge?

Dean Papajohn: Those issues will be researched and addressed when the design is being done on the new bridge

Ted Buell: The girders are one foot above the 100-year flood level currently; however, they will be looking into options when reconstructing the bridge.

Ellen: There is a lot of debris in the riverbed. What can be done about that?

Carol Brichta: That is a separate issue and an order can be placed with the county to have that area cleaned up.

Ellen Clark: Is there anything planned for Curtis Road like bike lanes?

Dean: Curtis Road is not a part of this project.

Bob Brittain talked about Alternative E, which is the leading option for La Cholla Boulevard. He distributed a small version of the display map. Ann Girvin asked whether the traffic study had been done prior to the closing of the exit and entrance ramps on Interstate 10. Bob stated that the study is done mostly on projected traffic patterns into the year 2030. [Note: current traffic volumes were collected in Spring 2007 before school was out for the summer.] While current traffic patterns are observed, the overall study is over a 23-year period. Bob went into detail on what the map showed and the points are as follows:

- a. Lanes would be narrowed one foot from 12 feet to 11 feet – this still meets lane width standards
- b. The median has been reduced two feet from 20 feet to 18 feet from the County standard detail.
- c. There will be double left turn lanes at Ruthrauff Road – they would be as long as possible
- d. There will be left turn median openings at Jay Avenue and northbound Calle Narcisco
- e. Ruthrauff Road will need to be widened at the intersection

- f. South of Ruthrauff Road the lanes would be narrowed down to tie back in with the three lane section heading south
- g. Sidewalks would be included on both sides of the road through the entire project at a width of five feet

A study will be done, if the time comes that cars cannot turn through traffic from the left turn bays onto cross streets, to see if a light is warranted.

Fred Bass: What about the bus stops? Will there be pullouts in order to get the buses out of traffic?

Bob: Stated that it was not shown in these preliminary drawings to have pullouts; however he felt there was enough room to put them in.

There was some discussion about just how close the sidewalks would come to resident's front doors.

[Note: There is approximately 25' from the back of sidewalk to most front doors on the west side.]

There was also discussion about the single, one-way frontage road. Residents would have to U-turn in order to get back to their homes. There was concern about the lack of visitor parking on La Cholla Boulevard on the frontage road, and there was also a comment about enhancing everyone's life by this improvement project except the people who live along the project area.

Dean stated that they will try to balance all the elements and that maybe a stake survey should be done for each resident to show the right-of-way so each resident can see where their property lines are and where the project would begin. [Note: pink whiskers were placed in the ground on the east and west side right-of-way lines on Oct. 8.]

Ellie: Where will the center line of the roadway be?

Bob: The center line will not change. The improvements will be added out from the original roadway's center.

Fred: What will happen to the noise level as the road moves closer to the houses?

Rick Ellis: The roadway paving material will be rubberized asphalt to help reduce the noise in the area.

Dean asked the CAC members to go around the table and make any comments they wanted so that each member had a chance to voice their concerns.

Andy Hernandez: It sounds like a sound plan – some issues, but we are in the planning stage. There will need to be more discussions and there will be time to keep talking.

Ellen: Since there will be two years prior to construction, there is time to discuss other options.

Dean: They can study the alignment; however, the more time the process takes with the public, the further the project is pushed out, leading to increased costs.

Norma: There is a two-year time frame before construction will begin on the roadway.

Fred: I would like to see all the affected properties taken by the county so that the construction can take place without impacting anyone as described; however, I understand budget concerns.

Ann: She has concerns about the current condition of the bridge.

Fred: Asked about the total cost of the project.

Dean: The total cost of construction is approximately 17 million dollars. The bridge will be made mainly of concrete, which is very expensive and has gone up in price since the original estimates. In order to

purchase property in the project area, several million dollars would be needed around the order of magnitude of three to five million dollars.

Humbert Arce: What is going in on the corner of La Cholla Boulevard and Ruthrauff Road?

Dean: There is a WalMart Market store going in at that corner.

Dean went over briefly what he heard the CAC members saying about the proposed Alternative E: positive reaction to additional lanes, wider bridge, turn lanes and lighting at intersections, sidewalk and bike lanes; concerns over proximity of residences that front La Cholla Boulevard. He stated that it was important for everyone to be on the same page during this process; the process is a collaboration between the County, consultants, and citizens. He thought it would be best for the members to meet back in a week or two. This would give the team a chance to discuss some possible changes and the CAC members will get a chance to see what their neighbors have to say about the proposed improvements.

A meeting date of October 9, 2007 was agreed upon and Carol stated she would check on the availability of the room and notify everyone to confirm the date.