



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



Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
Thursday, Dec. 6, 2007
6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
Ellie Towne Flowing Wells Community Center

CAC Members Present at Meeting:

- Fred Bass
- Ellen Currey
- Ann Girvin
- Norma Metz
- Wayne Metz
- Ellie Towne

CAC Members Not in Attendance:

- Carol Gawrychowski
- Andy Hernandez
- Jason Kai
- William Mattausch
- Gretchen Ochoa
- Kaye Swinford
- Ian Stewart
- Robert Schwartz

Attending from Project Team:

- Pima County Department of Transportation (PCDOT): Carol Brichta, Dean Papajohn
- HDR Engineering: Larry Barela, Ted Buell, Bethy McGehee, Scott Stapp, René Tanner
- Gordley Design Group: Barb Alley, Jan Gordley

Attending from the public:

- Timothy & Jamie Barrett
- Bonny Bass
- Marsha Brendlinger
- James Brendlinger
- Bill Erickson
- Norman Franzen
- Robert Gaona
- Marvin Horn
- Steve Schweska

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- Fact Sheet
- Travel Demand Volume Data for the project area
- Meeting Minutes from 10/09/07 CAC Meeting

Dean Papajohn, Project Manager, PCDOT, welcomed the CAC members and the public to the meeting. All who attended made introductions and Dean stated that the purpose of this CAC meeting was for the committee members to focus on the aspects of the project and the tasks that the CAC is charged with and responsible for. Dean told the group that the team members would stay after the meeting was adjourned in order to answer individual questions including those from members of the audience. Dean turned the meeting over to Jan Gordley, Gordley Design Group, to review the agenda and facilitate the meeting.

Jan stated the purpose of her facilitating the meeting was so that Dean and the rest of the team could really focus on what the members were saying about the issues and concerns. Prior to the meeting, Jan had checked with Dean and Fred Bass, chair of the CAC, to see what their goals were for the meeting.

In Jan's discussion with Fred, she found that he had three concerns. Those concerns were traffic, noise and drainage. The team was prepared to give an update on those three areas, and to address other concerns the members had.

Jan took this time to go over an exercise that would allow individuals, including the public, to participate and voice their concerns. Categories of concerns were written on white paper and taped to the wall. The categories chosen were based on discussion at the previous CAC meeting, namely: Safety, Noise, Access, Parking, Visual and Other. Each CAC member was given pink paper while the public received blue paper. Each person was given the opportunity to write down their major concerns and tape them on the relevant white concerns paper. After that exercise was complete, the group was given three dots to put on the issues that were most important to the individual. Once this exercise was over, everyone took their seats and Jan went over the results.

Jan asked Ted to speak a few minutes on lane width, which was a concern under safety. Ted Buell, Project Manager, HDR Engineering, stated that the width of the lanes met the requirements of the American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials (AASHTO), which governs the design of the roadway. The lane width acceptable by AASHTO's standards is 10-12 feet. In this project, the projected lane width would be 11 feet, which is within the guidelines. Fred's issue with the 11-foot lane width relates to the large number of semi tractor-trailers that travel La Cholla Boulevard and Fred feels the 11-foot lanes will be a safety issue. Fred stated that he is aware of the budget constraints and voiced that this stretch of road needed to be built with the safety of drivers and pedestrians in mind. Fred also stated that this area should be widened to match what had been done farther north on La Cholla Boulevard in another widening project. Dean stated that the traffic projections for the year 2030 suggested a pavement cross-section between four and six lanes. Because of this, a six-lane section provides extra space for vehicles resulting in less benefit for 12-foot lanes. La Cholla Boulevard north of River Road has 10-foot wide paved shoulders for bikes. However, the County has learned that vehicles start driving in the shoulders or using it for turn lanes if the shoulders are that wide, which introduces conflicts between bicycle use and motorized vehicle use. The new bike lanes would be limited to five to six feet in order to avoid that problem in the future. At that point, Jan asked to move forward with some other concerns.

Dean commented on safety and asked Ted to talk about a High-intensity Activated crossWalk (HAWK) crossing. This is a crossing signal that is activated when there is a pedestrian present. They push a button that begins a yellow flashing light that turns to a red light so that a pedestrian can cross at the specified location. One of the guidelines for installing a HAWK crossing is 20 pedestrians per hour crossing the street during a peak time of day. Ted stated that to install a HAWK crossing is approximately \$100,000 and if the volume of pedestrians is not what was anticipated, drivers will learn to ignore the crossing, causing another safety issue. Ellie Towne asked when a decision would be made about the crossing and Dean stated that would be determined after the roadway was built. Ellie wondered how pedestrians would cross the street to get to the southbound bus stop. A study would be done to determine what would be best for that area; however, the team could also recommend what they feel would work best. Dean stated that no matter which roadway alignment is chosen for this project, pedestrians would have a safe place to cross the street at the signalized intersections.

Scott Stapp, Environmental Manager, HDR, gave a brief overview of noise and how it is measured. He reviewed some basic noise concepts including dBA – decibels within the range of human hearing, Leq – average sound level and NAC – Noise Abatement Criteria. Scott stated that to require consideration of mitigation with sound barriers, the sound level must be above 66 dBA. Scott explained that up to 66 dBA, people could hold a normal conversation without having to raise their voices. Once above that number, mitigation is generally sought to help reduce the noise level. There are three places where roadway noise comes from: tires hitting the pavement, engine noise and exhaust. Criteria for assessing noise mitigation includes whether it is Feasible in terms of topography, geometry, drainage and safety, whether it is Reasonable in terms of cost per benefited receiver and if it is wanted by the affected property owners.

In Scott's presentation, he stated that landscaping was not enough to substantially lessen noise levels and noise walls only work where drainage, safety (sight distances) and continuous walls are provided. When a wall is not continuous (i.e. breaks in a wall to allow people access to their driveways), the noise will enter through the opening and render the wall ineffective. The best method of lowering noise in this situation is through rubberized asphalt. The increase in noise that may occur through year 2030 due to the increased traffic should not amount to more than three-dBA. A three-dBA reduction is generally allowed when using rubberized asphalt. Scott also let the group know that monitoring of existing noise levels had already been done and a report will be prepared projecting the noise levels to the year 2030. All of the data will be analyzed and a recommendation will be made based on the information that was determined by the noise study. Scott stated that he couldn't move forward with his study until the final alignment and roadway profile are determined.

Ted stated that the traffic report was in draft form and would be completed shortly. He passed out the travel demand numbers so that the committee could see where the volume is now and what the projected numbers would be for 2030. On this section of La Cholla Boulevard, traffic volumes currently range from 23,000-28,000 vehicles per day, with traffic volumes for 2030 predicted at 41,000-44,000 vehicles per day.

Ted and Dean reported on the status of the drainage study letting the members know that drainage goes hand in hand with the design, so that process is on hold until they are able to move forward in the design process.

Jan suggested the members each take a turn to go over their main concerns, one more time, for the team.

Norma Metz: No more comments at that time.

Wayne Metz: Voiced displeasure with Alternative E and wanted the County to look at some of the other alternatives that he feels are a better fit for this improvement project. Wayne feels the county should pick the best option for this project, and if the money isn't available, they should wait until more funds could be allocated.

Fred Bass: The road should be built with the best option for the project.

Ellie Towne: She voiced some concerns about where the residents would have to U-turn safely in order to get on the frontage road to access their homes. Ellie also had a question about the bridge and its height and width.

Ann Girvin: Her comment was to restate that she was not a homeowner and would not be directly affected by the project. However, she voiced her concern for the residents that will be directly affected by the widening of La Cholla Boulevard and stated she would support the decision they felt was right.

Ellen Currey: She stated that she had lived in Pima County since 1969 and wanted to see this project done correctly.

Ted stated that they would take specific questions from the public following the CAC portion of the meeting.

Jan discussed what the CAC's role was in moving this process forward. She reiterated that it was extremely important for anyone who had a concern to write a letter to Pima County so that the County was aware of specific

concerns that either the group or individuals had. Jan let the members know that the public process was important and the County had made a commitment to this project.

Carol Brichta, Community Relations, PCDOT, wrote the contact information for PCDOT's management on a flip chart for members and the public at the meeting to write their letters to Priscilla Cornelio, Transportation Director, PCDOT, 201 N. Stone Ave., Tucson, AZ, 85701, so that she could see their concerns and issues in writing.

Jan indicated the project was ready for a public meeting and that one would be scheduled after the first of the year.

Dean distributed a project fact sheet and the meeting was adjourned.

The team stayed for individual questions and comments from the public as well as CAC members.