



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



Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting
Thursday, July 24, 2008
6 to 7:30 p.m.
Ellie Towne Flowing Wells Community Center

CAC Members Present at Meeting:

- Ann Girvin
- Norma Metz
- Wayne Metz
- Ellie Towne

CAC Members Not in Attendance:

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

Attending from Project Team:

- Pima County Department of Transportation (PCDOT): Carol Brichta, Rick Ellis, Dean Papajohn
- Representative for Supervisor Sharon Bronson's office: Kiki Navarro
- HDR Engineering: Larry Barela, Ted Buell, Christine Jacobs-Donoghue, Scott Stapp
- Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) – Mainstreet Program: Britton Dornquast
- Gordley Design Group: Barb Alley, Arizeder Urreiztieta

Attending from the Public:

- Timothy Barrett
- Marvin Horn
- Jerry Jones

Materials Distributed/Presented:

- Agenda
- Comment forms
- RTA booklets
- Cross-section map and noise wall layout
- Noise report
- Rendering of a 10-foot wall

Dean Papajohn, PCDOT Project Manager, welcomed the group to its fifth CAC meeting. Dean stated that the purpose of the meeting was to present the noise report for La Cholla Boulevard: Ruthrauff Road to River Road. Dean also reminded everyone that Barb Alley, Gordley Design Group, would be recording the meeting, and asked members to please speak clearly when addressing the group.

Dean briefly went over the agenda and asked everyone to introduce themselves, who they are affiliated with and their role as a part of the meeting. After the introductions, Dean referred back to the agenda pointing out that Ted Buell, HDR Project Manager, would give a project update. He also stated that there had been a public meeting in March and that there had been a lot of project activities. Ted would update the CAC members on those activities. After the project update, Scott Stapp, HDR, would present the noise study to the CAC along with the recommendations that resulted from the study. Dean stated that noise walls would be recommended in some locations along the project area, and Scott would go into further detail in his presentation. Dean also stated that the CAC wanted their concerns, regarding the roadway alignment, taken to upper levels of management within PCDOT and Pima County Supervisor Sharon Bronson's office. The project team has fulfilled that commitment and the CAC concerns have been shared as requested. Dean assured the members that all comments and concerns regarding the recommended alignment would be a part of the Environmental Assessment and Mitigation Report (EAMR). Dean jumped ahead on the agenda and asked the members to note some upcoming dates. Again, he stated that the purpose of the meeting was to present the noise study, and added that the team would like to meet again in approximately two weeks in order to distribute the draft EAMR and the draft Design Concept Report (DCR) to the CAC members. Dean asked if Aug. 7 would be a good date for the CAC to meet. He also stated that they would be scheduling a public meeting for possibly Sept. 9 or 11. Dean again asked that the CAC communicate available dates to the team.

The floor was turned over to Ted for the project update. Ted started out by stating that the partnering kick-off meeting was approximately one year ago and a lot of progress has been made to date. He mentioned that most likely the residents had been aware of some activity in the area. Some of the fieldwork consisted of environmental surveys, geotechnical reports, archaeological surveys, noise-level monitoring, native plant surveys, utility assessments, cultural resource surveys, land surveys, trenches for artifacts and the testing of soil for hazardous materials. The design team gathered necessary data on traffic, drainage and the bridge: whether the existing bridge should remain or be replaced. The traffic report stated the estimated vehicles per day on La Cholla Boulevard: Ruthrauff Road to River Road would be approximately 44,000 in the year 2030, and it was determined that a new bridge would need to be constructed.

Ted reported that the Environmental studies indicated that there were a few items that would need to be monitored: Biological Review (burrowing owls, birds, etc.) would need to be monitored during construction; Cultural Resources Survey – items will be monitored during construction. There were no hazardous materials noted except a very small amount of lead paint that was in such small quantities that no action would be required.

The biggest reports are the EAMR and DCR, which the team hopes to hand out to the CAC members at the next CAC meeting. The draft noise report is what Scott would be discussing, and a copy of the noise report would be handed out to the members at that time.

Currently, the team is working on the stage-two drainage report, which is at 30-percent design; approximately the same place the design team is on the roadway. The team is working on the final

structure selection report, final geotechnical report and the public art and landscape design. Ted turned the floor over to Dean who then introduced Scott.

Scott started his presentation by informing the CAC members that on Oct. 4 and Oct. 10, 2007, noise levels were taken in the morning from 7 - 8:30 a.m. and in the evening from 4:45 - 6:15 p.m. The monitoring was done approximately 40-70 feet off the roadway. The existing results of the levels taken during those time periods were 65-69 dBAs. The point where mitigation comes into play would be when the level is 66 dBA or higher. When the actual noise is gathered, those numbers are put into a computer model, and the noise levels generated from the computer should be the same as the actual readings. The reason actual readings are taken is to ensure the computer model reading is accurate. At that point, they plug the new roadway and the projected increase of traffic out to the year 2030 into the model and generate numbers based on those future conditions. The readings ranged from 56-72 dBAs; however, a three dBA reduction is given for the use of rubberized asphalt bringing that new figure to 53-69 dBAs. As a result of the study, there were 32 locations where mitigation, in this case sound walls, could be warranted.

The next stage of the study consisted of finding out whether sound walls would be feasible and reasonable. There is a set of criteria that must be met in order to justify the use of sound walls and they are as follows:

- Feasible: must work with existing drainage systems, provide adequate sight distance, provide adequate access to existing driveways and need to produce a reduction in sound of five dBA.
- Reasonable: more than one house must benefit from a sound wall and there must be an appropriate cost per benefited receiver. To find the cost per benefited receiver; the cost per square foot of the wall being constructed is multiplied by the square feet needed for the wall (height X length) divided by how many people a particular wall will protect. The dollar amount PCDOT is looking for is no greater than \$35,000 per benefited receiver to be considered reasonable.

In this analysis, the final number of walls that were warranted was five. Out of the five that were deemed necessary, only three fell into the feasible and reasonable category. Two of the walls only protected one house, and a wall must protect more than one dwelling. The last criterion that is considered would be whether the residents want walls (51 percent must be in agreement), and in this case, a 10-foot wall was found to be necessary in order to allow for the required five dBA reduction in sound.

A CAC member asked what the total cost would be to construct the walls that are being recommended.

Scott stated the estimated amount was roughly \$400,000.

Where would the walls be constructed?

The walls would be located in the right-of-way and on top of the raised medians that would be separating the frontage road from the actual roadway. Ted was able to show the CAC what the walls would look like from the cross-section that was handed out to the members at the beginning of the meeting.

What would the walls be made out of?

They can be constructed out of a variety of materials; however, the team is recommending eight-inch masonry block. The walls in front of the frontage road would be constructed on top of a 32-inch tall concrete traffic barrier. Ted let the members know that a similar wall was constructed at River Road and Flowing Wells Road if anyone was interested in seeing what a wall in their area would look like.

Would the walls be painted?

It was stated that those kinds of decisions would be answered at a later date. If walls were to be constructed, there would be a meeting in order to discuss how the residents would like the sounds walls to look.

Since the walls on the east and west side of the street are not across the street from each other, wouldn't the sound bounce to the other side of the street off the sound wall?

Yes; it was stated that would be a small issue.

Are the instruments used to gather sound calibrated?

Scott stated that the machines are sent out yearly to be calibrated for accuracy. Scott did inform the group that the monitoring equipment is only used for a small portion of the study. A majority of the report is computer-generated using proposed guidelines.

A member of the public commented on the amount of pollutants that come from the idling cars.

Dean mentioned that the amount of pollutants coming from idling cars and trucks would be reduced due to the road being widened, thus reducing congestion and idling that is currently occurring.

A comment was made by a CAC member stating that the congestion would be alleviated somewhat when the construction was completed on Interstate 10. There has been an influx of traffic through the area due to the ramp closures on I-10.

Dean suggested that the members read through the report and bring any questions they may have before the next meeting. He said it was unfortunate that there would be some homes that would not be as protected as others in relation to sound; however, Dean said they were tied to the geometry of that segment of roadway. There is a desirability factor: some people will want noise walls, and others will think they hide their property, or may not be good for a business in the area. All factors need to be taken into consideration when reviewing this study. Dean also stated that this version of the alignment still shows frontage roads on both sides of La Cholla Boulevard. However, the alignment with two frontage roads as well as the alignment with one frontage road will be presented in the EAMR, which will be reviewed by the Board of Supervisors (BOS).

A CAC member asked whether this would be the information that would be presented to the BOS.

Dean stated that the BOS wanted PCDOT's recommendation and the CAC's recommendation to be complete. They do not want bits of information along the way. They prefer to have the information from both the CAC and PCDOT at one time. As an exception to that preference, Dean did state that as promised, the team did take the CAC's concerns to the County Administration and the Supervisor.

PCDOT was not directed to change their approach, but to continue with developing the DCR and the EAMR. At the time the recommendations go before the BOS, they would like all the information presented at one time.

A CAC member asked about the noise study and whether the CAC's recommended option was taken into consideration during this study.

Scott stated that they did determine what the sound level would be at the second row of houses if the first row of houses were removed. He said if the CAC's option were to be chosen, acquisitions would be made and the need for sound walls would no longer be an issue since the homes in question would either be gone, or far enough away from the roadway as to not warrant walls.

Were sound walls figured into the budget?

Yes, they were accounted for in the budget.

What is the date this will go to the BOS?

Dean stated that there was not a date set as of yet. The EAMR and DCR still have to be presented to the CAC members and there has to be one more public meeting to present all documents to the public, then the information gathered from the CAC and the public has to be integrated into the report and has to be publicly posted for a one month period prior to going before the BOS; Dean stated that a meeting with the BOS is not anticipated before December 2008 or January 2009.

A member asked for clarification on whether the CAC's option would still be able to be presented.

Dean stated that yes, the recommendation of the CAC would be considered.

What will happen to the Tucson Water well if sound walls are installed? There would not be enough room for the City to get their equipment into the narrow space in order to service the well.

Dean stated that there have been discussions with Tucson Water. Tucson Water has a number of options such as using smaller equipment, buy adjacent property, relocate the well or replace the well. The final decision on what will happen to the well will solely rest with the City of Tucson.

Dean brought the focus back to the issue of noise, which was the purpose of the meeting. Dean asked if anyone had any further questions and comments. There was some discussion on the noise walls with the understanding that the members would read over the report and bring any additional questions and comments to the next CAC meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.