Kolb/Sabino Canyon Road Connection
Meeting Summary
City of Tucson Department of Transportation
Task Force Kick-Off Meeting
November 19, 2009, 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Morris K. Udall Regional Center; 7200 E. Tanque Verde Road

ATTENDEES: Quorum was met
Task Force Members
Grant Bennett
Gene Brown
Diana Dessy
Arthur Hall
Kathy Hebb
Laura Newsom
Michael Tone

NOT IN ATTENDANCE:
John Carlson, Sr.

City of Tucson Department of Transportation (TDOT) Staff and Consultants
Michael Graham, TDOT, Project Manager/Public Information Officer
Kevin Thornton, Psomas, Project Manager
Scott Stapp, HDR, Environmental Planner
Tim Ahrens, HDR, Consultant
Britton Dornquast, Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Mainstreet Assistance Program
Jim DeGrood, RTA, Transportation Services Director
Katie Maass, Ward 2, Council Administrative Assistant
Barb Alley, Gordley Design Group, Public Involvement
Jan Gordley, Gordley Design Group, Public Involvement

MATERIALS PROVIDED:
- Welcome letter
- Agenda
- Project fact sheet
- Open Meeting Law
- Public meeting summary
- Public meeting comment summary
- Member notebooks

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:
Michael Graham, TDOT, Project Manager/Public Information Officer, welcomed the Task Force members and introduced himself explaining he was playing a dual role on this project as Project Manager and Public Information Officer. The project team followed with introductions. Michael had Task Force members each introduce themselves and state with whom they are affiliated.

- Diana Dessy – Business Representative – Anthem Equity Group, Inc.
- Kathy Hebb – Neighborhood Representative – Pantano II
- Arthur Hall – Parks Representative – Pantano Ridge Estates
- Michael Tone – Regional Representative
- Bob McDaniel – Neighborhood Representative – Dorado Country Club Estates
- Grant Bennett – Business Representative – Eclectic Café
- Laura Newsom – Neighborhood Representative – Indian Ridge Estates
- Gene Brown – Neighborhood Representative – Colonia Verde

Michael informed the group that the original name of the committee was Citizens Oversight Committee (COC); however, Mayor and Council adopted the name Kolb/Sabino Canyon Road Connection Task Force. On August 5, 2009, Mayor and Council approved the seven-member committee. In October of 2009, Mayor and Council approved an additional two members in response to public requests to provide a more diverse and balanced group of participants. Michael reviewed the agenda and the meeting format.

TASK FORCE PURPOSE AND PROCESS

Jan Gordley, Gordley Design Group, Public Involvement, discussed the purpose of the Task Force. The purpose of any public participation effort is generally defined as reaching better decisions by improving connections and understanding between a project team and the public. For this committee the purpose has been described as providing feedback on issues such as landscape design, access, public art, neighborhood and visual impacts and mitigation methods. Jan explained that a Task Force is not defined or required under the guidelines associated with the federal funding included in this project; however, the City is dedicated to being inclusive and responsive to public concerns on this project.

Jan described the role of the Task Force as representing community views, listening to others in the community and improving connections and understanding. Jan explained that within the public participation process there are levels of participation that could range anywhere from solely informing the public regarding aspects of a project that cannot be affected, to completely empowering the public to make specific decisions. This committee will fill the role of advising and collaborating that are in the middle of that participation range. The project team will work with Task Force members along the way to clarify the parts of the project they can affect, and the parts that they can't because they are within mandated constraints and requirements the technical team must follow.

One of the responsibilities of each task force member will be to help achieve the required forum of five members present in order to hold the meeting and conduct business.

REVIEW, FORMATION, AND SELECTION OF THE TASK FORCE:

Michael stated approximately 76 applications were sent in by residents and businesses interested in sitting on the committee. The applications were reviewed

and the City looked for potential members who had experience with area neighborhood associations or business groups, as well as the area in which they lived or worked. The goal was to choose representatives from different areas within approximately two miles of the project area.

Neither the City Attorney, nor the City Clerk, was available to attend the meeting in order to review the Open Meeting Law and answer questions. Michael will arrange to have them at the next committee meeting. Task Force members were requested to read the Open Meeting Law document included in their notebooks in order to be aware of the requirements.

Questions were asked regarding the availability and use of meeting summaries. It was stated that the summaries would be e-mailed to each member and would also be posted on the project Web site. The members can forward the summary on to neighborhood and business contacts.

Michael stated that the Task Force meetings were for the Task Force committee. If members of the general public attend, they will be able to comment at the end of the meetings during the call to the audience. Michael told the members that the City and the project team value their time and their commitment to the project; therefore, the team would be respectful of the members and conduct committee business before making a call to the audience.

A member asked when it would be appropriate for members to ask questions. The team stated that if a member had a question, ask it, and if it is productive to address at that time, it will be addressed. If the information is already planned to be provided later in the meeting, the question would be deferred until then.

Finally, Michael asked for feedback on the location of future meetings. All members were in favor of holding their committee meetings at the Morris K. Udall Regional Center.

TASK FORCE GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

Jan defined the overall goal of the Task Force as helping the project team provide the best project possible within the constraints of the project.

The expectations for the committee include a total of six Task Force meetings between now and next fall. Some of the anticipated topics include the following:

- “Noise 101” – presented by Scott Stapp, Environmental Planner, providing basic information on noise and mitigation measures
- Traffic access – including connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists
- Landscape and hardscape
- Public artist selection
- Drainage
- Landfill
- Public process

Jan explained to the members that in the fall of 2010, the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) document is anticipated to be complete and will be presented to the committee for review and comment.

Jan also suggested some "rules of engagement" for Task Force meetings. Some of these rules include:

- Respect
- No side conversations
- All ideas are welcome
- Questions are encouraged

Task Force member, Mike Tone, requested a list of the other committee members' contact information – Barb Alley, Gordley Design Group, Public Involvement, would provide that information to the members. Mike also requested that the project team to be clear on what the committee could affect on the project.

PROJECT OVERVIEW:

Design Team Roles and Responsibilities

Kevin Thornton, Psomas, Project Manager, read a list of the project team members to the Task Force. The following consultants, chosen because of their specific expertise, which will be working on this project are:

- Psomas – Project Management, Roadway Design and Traffic Engineering
- HDR – Environmental Planning
- Structural Concepts – Bridge Design
- SCS Engineers – Landfill Engineering Specialists
- Norris Design – Landscape and Hardscape
- Terracon – Geotechnical Engineering

Project and Engineering Scope

This project is very early in the process. This is Phase Two and is called Conceptual Design. Kevin stated this is the phase when the Design Concept Report (DCR) will be prepared and the design will be taken to 30 percent plans.

The DCR is expected to be completed in approximately three to four months, at which time the project will move into final design. This project is scheduled for construction to begin in the first period of the RTA program. That means project construction needs to be under way by the spring of 2011. Although the schedule is challenging, Kevin told the members the team would be working very hard to meet their deadlines. Kevin reminded the members that a public meeting was held in September. Barb would be giving an overview of the meeting in her presentation.

Current activity:

- Environmental investigation is beginning
- Topographic survey is complete
- Preliminary investigation on the landfill is complete
- Initial traffic modeling is complete

- Initial hydrology/hydraulics investigation is complete

It is anticipated that approximately 21,000 cars will use this roadway in the year 2030 per the traffic modeling.

This roadway will be extended from the intersection of Tanque Verde Road and Sabino Canyon Road to Kolb Road approximately one-quarter mile north of Speedway Boulevard for a total of approximately eight-tenths of a mile. This is a RTA-approved project that was voted on in 2006 and approved by the voters. This roadway was approved as a four-lane divided roadway with bike lanes and sidewalks. This project will include RTA funds along with federal funds.

There are no major improvements at the Tanque Verde Road and Sabino Canyon Road intersection anticipated. The storage capacity on Tanque Verde Road will be increased for left turns (southbound) onto Sabino Canyon Road, along with an additional through lane added. Further improvements may be warranted as design progresses.

A member asked if there would be a signal at Kolb Road. Kevin stated that there would be a signal where the new Sabino Canyon Road would meet Kolb Road; however, heading north on Kolb Road, if turning right onto Sabino Canyon Road, there would be a continuous right-hand turn lane.

One area that will be looked at in the traffic report will be whether a signal will be warranted at Crestline Drive. If a signal is not warranted, there would be a pedestrian crossing south of where Crestline Drive will meet Sabino Canyon Road. That crossing will most likely be a Pedestrian Light Controlled Crossing (PELICAN). Kevin told the members there are PELICAN crossings at Campbell Avenue and Speedway Boulevard/Elm Street for further clarification on what a PELICAN is and how it functions.

- The design team will pull the road as far away from the townhomes as possible while still staying in the right-of-way.
- The team will look in to water harvesting to use for the landscaping.
- No major utility issues are anticipated at this time.

Environmental Overview

Scott Stapp, HDR, Environmental Planner, explained to the members that this project includes federal funding. Federally funded projects must follow the NEPA requirements through the FHWA. Because of the federal funding on this project, there is a higher level of documentation that is required, and the process must include the following three components:

- Environmental analysis
- Federal and local agency coordination
- Public participation, including public meetings. In this case, a task force has been formed, which is above and beyond the requirements.

There are also three levels of environmental analysis within NEPA:

- Categorical Exclusion (CE) – projects that are found to have no environmental effects, for example, re-striping a roadway.
- Environmental Assessment (EA) – projects where significant impacts are unknown, but doubtful.
- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – projects that will have significant environmental impacts, such as the construction of a new highway.

FHWA has agreed this project will use the EA process. The project must follow FHWA's interpretation of, and rules, regarding NEPA. The EA will be completed during the preliminary design phase. As the project moves into final design, there will be additional work to ensure the original environmental findings will not be affected by any final changes in design.

An EA must establish a purpose and need, such as improved traffic circulation and access. It must also look at project alternatives. There are two alternatives, which are the build and no-build alternative. A build option would need to establish what impacts would result with building the roadway. A no-build option also has impacts. The EA has to explain the impacts of both alternatives.

To do that, an assessment of existing conditions is done. From that, the team looks to the future to determine impacts of alternatives to the area. Then mitigation measures are analyzed. Much of mitigation is done as a part of design, not as a part of the environmental process.

Other environmental issues and impacts to be studied include the following:

- Socioeconomic
- Archaeology
- Traffic Noise
- Visual Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Relocations/Acquisitions
- Threatened/Endangered Species
- Clean Water Act section 404 Permit from the Army Corps of Engineers

Currently, the team has looked at biological resources and drainage. Those findings may require permitting under the Clean Water Act section 404 with the Army Corps of Engineers. There are also cultural sites within the project area that will need further review.

The EA is on schedule to be completed in the fall of 2010. The EA document will be posted on the project Web site and in public libraries for the public to view. A comment period of 30 days will be provided for the draft EA. If warranted, a formal public hearing may be held in order to further document the public's concerns.

Two things may occur as an outcome of the EA:

- Finding of significant impact, which would trigger an EIS
- Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

A FONSI is likely in this process. Once we reach that, the federal funding can begin and the project can continue to move forward.

Scott will go into more detail on the environmental process during the “Noise 101” presentation at the next meeting of the Task Force.

Public Meeting Overview
Barb stated there was a great turnout at the public meeting on Thursday, September 10, 2009 that was held at the Morris K. Udall Regional Center. Barb pointed members to their notebooks where they would find the public meeting summary and the comment summary. Both documents are on the project Web site as well.

One hundred thirty-six people attended the public meeting and 32 comments in total were received. Barb briefly stated the general themes of the comments, which included:

- People would use the new roadway
- Safety concerns
- Sound walls
- Safe access to the park

A total of up to three public meetings and a public hearing are planned over the next 12 months. The next public meeting is anticipated to be held towards the end of January or first part of February.

FUTURE TASK FORCE MEETINGS:
There was a discussion regarding dates, times and location to hold future meetings. It was decided the next meeting would be held on a Tuesday from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

QUESTIONS/OPEN DISCUSSION:
There was a request for further clarification on roles and responsibilities. Jan responded with more detail.

The question was raised about a chair for the committee. It was stated that the public involvement team would act as facilitators and write meeting minutes.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.