

Meeting Summary

City of Tucson
Ward 4 Citizen Design Review Committee (CDRC)
January 22, 2009, 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Clements Center, 8155 E. Poinciana Drive

ATTENDEES:

Ward 4 CDRC Members

Shirley Bila, South Harrison Neighborhood Association (NA)
Rudy Lopez, Rita Ranch NA
Ken Moyes, Rita Ranch NA
Bob Small, Civano Neighbors NA
Scott Lantz, Civano Neighbors NA
Al Wiruth, Rita Ranch NA
Moon Joe Yee, Harrison East South NA

Ward 4

Max Torres, Aide to Council Member Shirley Scott

Guests

Britton Dornquast, Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Mainstreet Assistance
Dempsey Helms, Arizona State Land Department (ASLD)
Stephen Judy, ASLD

City of Tucson Department of Transportation (TDOT) Staff, Consultants and Contractor

M.J. Dillard, TDOT Project Manager, Northern (Tanque Verde Road to 22nd Street),
Central (22nd Street to Valencia Road) and Southern (Valencia Road to Interstate
10) segments
Alejandro Angel, Psomas Project Manager, Central Segment
R. Craig Allison, Engineering and Environmental Consultants, Inc. (EEC) Project
Manager, Old Vail Road (OVR) intersection
Andy North, Borderland Construction
Melissa Benton, Gordley Design Group, Public Involvement
Jan Gordley, Gordley Design Group, Public Involvement
Arizeder Urreiztieta, Gordley Design Group, Public Involvement

MATERIALS:

- Agenda
- September 17, 2008, CDRC Meeting Summary
- RTA brochures
- Houghton Road Implementation Plan 2009-2019 graphic (included here)

INFORMATION:

Arizeder opened the meeting by asking those present to introduce themselves. He reviewed the agenda items and reminded the committee that members of the project team would be available after the meeting for individual questions, but that this would need to happen at an earlier time than usual due to the new building hours and earlier closing time of 7:30.

M.J. gave a Houghton Corridor overview beginning with the Northern Segment. The design consultant, P.B., is working on 30 percent plans for the new extension of the segment, from Tanque Verde Road to Speedway Boulevard. The design consultant is wrapping up 30 percent plans for the previously existing, older section – Speedway Boulevard to 22nd Street. Arizeder mentioned that a public open house focusing on the Northern segment was being planned for March.

Alejandro Angel reported that 30 percent plans were completed and have been submitted for the Central Segment, and that currently some potholing, or geotechnical soil testing, is taking place between the Civano area and the Pantano Wash. M.J. added that shoulder work is being done with FEMA money to repair areas damaged in a 2006 storm. The CDRC asked whether repair work now could be delayed until it coincides with other planned improvements to the Houghton Road area. M.J. reiterated that this was with federal funding, and that drainage was an important safety maintenance consideration because the road shoulder at the edge of the pavement would otherwise be prone to deterioration.

M.J. introduced discussion of the Southern Segment by reporting that TDOT may go out for a new design consultant for some or all of this segment in the spring. However, in the meantime, work on OVR intersection will proceed utilizing EEC under its on-call contract with TDOT and construction-manager-at-risk (CM@R). Construction is expected to begin within a few months of the date of this meeting. M.J. added that contractor, Andy North of Borderland Construction, was in attendance at this meeting, and tonight's agenda had time built in for the CDRC to interact with him.

The committee asked why OVR was selected to be first on the Implementation Plan and M.J. explained that private developments going in at that intersection would bear some of the cost of the improvement features.

It is anticipated that the second item on the Implementation Plan, the nearly four-mile stretch between Irvington Road and Valencia Road, will go to construction in 2010 or 2011. M.J. added that Houghton Road as a whole is slightly ahead of schedule because of an accumulation in RTA funds, which may allow certain elements of the improvement to proceed faster than originally planned. A committee member voiced encouragement about the optimism of this observation.

M.J. offered updates on public art for the Houghton Road Corridor in general and added that about \$1 million will be budgeted for public art. This is not a discretionary amount but represents approximately 1 percent of the total budget, as is required on TDOT projects. She referenced an upcoming meeting with the Tucson Pima Arts Council (TPAC) concerning individual artists from the community. The CDRC will have input on artist selection. She added that it might be possible to bring a TPAC representative to the next CDRC meeting and, in answer to a question from the committee about where the art will go, mentioned median openings and railings. Other possibilities exist as well. The theme of the art is another parameter for which input will be sought from the CDRC.

A map of the Implementation Plan was distributed that showed construction-start sequencing for 11 items, or subsegments or –projects, between 2009 and 2019. M.J. acknowledged that there had been a previous CDRC request to reorder some of the items, and said this was still under consideration. A concern was voiced about how it would work if Houghton Road was necked down from six lanes to two lanes as it approached the bridge at I-10. M.J. responded that the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) would be involved in this area, since the I-10 bridge itself is not part of the Houghton Road project, but that agencies would work together to make the process efficient and to minimize impacts.

The committee asked whether there had been design changes on the Implementation Plan items being discussed; there had not been. Items 1 and 2, the OVR intersection and the Irvington Road to Valencia Road subsegment, came up again in discussion when it was asked if they would be torn up at the same time. Alejandro gave assurance that access would be open for both areas.

The committee mentioned the February 2008 Valencia Road intersection site visit with John Litteer and Craig Saltzman, and asked if the information and outcomes of that visit involving members of the CDRC and the design team would be incorporated in the final design. M.J. assured the committee that John Litteer, then-project manager for Castro Engineering, had been very diligent in documenting notes from the meeting and that all concerns and issues will be carefully considered. Alejandro added that he would be happy to return to the field with members of the CDRC once the design of the Valencia Road intersection is ready to begin.

Questions followed about the disposition of previous issues, including access to Tucson McGraw's Cantina. Alejandro said the project team had met with the owner and

issues had been resolved to the satisfaction of all parties. Also, Poorman Road will have a Florida T traffic signal that will allow access to Mesquite Ranch while minimizing disruptions to Houghton Road traffic.

Another question addressed a possible shortage of construction-equipment workspace on Houghton Road near Rita Road, which touches on a State Land issue. The committee asked whether it would be possible to move the roadway 20 to 30 feet away from houses in the area due to noise considerations. Dempsey said this would not be possible unless the City of Tucson (COT) purchased right-of-way. M.J. added that this was not a preferred option, but that COT was looking into the possibility. Discussion turned to sound walls, and a committee member recalled an ADOT video shown at a previous meeting, which showed that in order to effectively mitigate noise, sound walls must be very long and very tall – more so than residents are usually willing to accept, in addition to which their cost often proves prohibitive.

Arizerder mentioned the OVR intersection open house scheduled for Feb. 24, 2009, at Empire High School, and invited CDRC members to attend the open house as team partners in order to help the public get more effectively acquainted with project plans. The meeting is from 6 to 7:30 p.m., with a brief presentation at 6:15 p.m.

A committee member expressed concern that the public might not have sufficient time to comment between the open house and start of construction on the OVR intersection. M.J. clarified that previous public meetings have covered all of Houghton Road design concepts reflected in the current design. Jan asked for and received clarification from the project team that current plans for OVR are not different but simply more detailed than previous plans discussed and shown to the public. Materials presented at the open house will include information on construction and traffic.

M.J. then added that the team had just arrived at 75 percent plans, which will be sufficient to begin construction in a CM@R scenario, and that some remaining issues, such as utility relocation and a temporary water basin, were being worked out.

M.J. introduced Andy North of Borderland Construction and there followed a question-and-answer period with the CDRC. Andy first indicated that his team would maintain traffic flow during construction. Questions included:

- Will the road location change? No; the road location will remain the same, but the elevation might change by four to six feet.
- How will construction be started? Portions that exercise the smallest impact on traffic will be carried out during normal hours; portions with greater impacts will be sequenced on weekends in order to minimize impacts to area residents and traveling public.
- Will the Vail Unified School District need to adjust its schedule for bus routes and pickups? The Vail district has been contacted. Andy added that the Vail

district is on the quarterly system, as a result allowing the periodic two- to three-week windows to complete more involved portions of the work.

- When does the landscaping come in? When the project is extended from the intersection to the north and to the south.
- What will be the project end date? Completion is anticipated by summer or early fall of 2009.
- Who will monitor traffic? The City turns construction over to the contractor, but the City sets the criteria, e.g., the number of lanes that must be kept open.
- How will the City be kept apprised of any traffic problems that may arise as a result of high volumes? There are two high schools in the area. The contractor will interface with a City representative in the field.
- Has Borderland done an extensive study of traffic in the area? Borderland does not perform formal traffic counts, but Andy has been driving through the area on a regular basis to gauge traffic patterns.
- On account of Houghton Road's designation as a Scenic Corridor, will landscaping use native plants? Yes, and the landscaper knows what works.
- Will the landscaper give the CDRC advance notice of what is planned? Once the 75 percent design has been reviewed by the City, the team will be ready to share specific concepts. The team expects to have more specific information about plants in the summer.
- When will the public begin to note changes? Utility relocation work will be noticed early on.
- Will wood or metal utility poles be used? The team is currently working with Tucson Electric Power (TEP) to make this determination.

Arizeder and M.J. gave a brief update on plans for public involvement. Another CDRC meeting is possible in late March, or sooner, if there is sufficient new data to share. In response to a question as to the geographical reach of public notification for the Feb. 24 open house, Arizeder said he would check on whether it was a mailing list customized to the OVR intersection itself, or the larger, existing mailing list for the entire Southern Segment. M.J. also called the committee's attention to the presence of Britton Dornquist of the RTA Mainstreet Assistance Program, which will offer useful information and expert advice to area businesses on best ways to cope with any construction impacts.

The meeting ended at 7:13 p.m.