

Meeting Summary
City of Tucson Department of Transportation
Ward 4 Citizen Design Review Committee
May 23, 2007
Clements Center, 8155 E. Poinciana Drive

ATTENDEES:

Ward 4 CDRC Members

Andrew Squire, Aide to Vice Mayor Shirley Scott
Moon J. Yee, Harrison South East Neighborhood Association (NA)
Betty Nash, Falcon Point Subdivision
Shirley Bila, South Harrison NA
Rick Hanson, Civano NA
Bob Small, Civano NA
Ken Moyes, Rita Ranch NA
Mike Tone, Rita Ranch NA

Staff and Consultants

Andy McGovern, TDOT Engineering Manager
Craig Saltzman, TDOT Project Manager Southern Segment
John Litteer, Castro Engineering Corp., Project Manager Southern Segment
M.J. Dillard, TDOT Project Manager, Central and Northern Segments
Alejandro Angel, Psomas Project Manager, Central Segment
Melanie Rice, Psomas Assistant Project Manager, Central Segment
Rick Pargas, PB Project Manager, Northern Segment
Arizeder Urreiztieta, Public Relations Director, Gordley Design Group, Inc.
Jan Gordley, President, Gordley Design Group, Inc.
Bob Peterson, TDOT project art coordinator

Handouts Provided

Southern Segment:

- Schedule for 30% design
- Oct. 2006 aerial with photos of areas of interest
- Existing Traffic data
- Proposed roadway cross sections
- Oct. 2006 aerial showing the current right of way and profile of the existing elevations.

Central Segment:

- Schedule for 30% design
- 2005 aerial with photos of areas of interest
- Existing Traffic data
- Proposed roadway cross sections

Information

Meetings

The Ward 4 CDRC will meet monthly starting in July 2007. Open house comments will be made available at this meeting.

There are several upcoming open houses scheduled to introduce the project and gather project ideas and concerns from the public. The public comments from the open houses will be collected and made available in time for the July meeting of W4CDRC. The maps and charts presented in the handouts will be the same ones utilized at the open houses.

Central Segment June 6, 2007
 June 13, 2007

Southern Segment June 20, 2007

Information on these meetings is being disseminated by a variety of methods including postcards and paid newspaper ads.

Project Information and discussion

Design progress: Design work is in progress for the widening of Houghton Road between I-10 and Speedway. This project will widen the roadway to four or six lanes with an option to increase the entire roadway to six lanes in the future. Three consultant teams were selected to design one of the three segments of the roadway.

Southern Segment: I-10 to Valencia Road – Castro Engineering

Central Segment: Valencia Road to Old Spanish Trail – Psomas

Northern Segment: Old Spanish Trail to Speedway Boulevard – PB

It should be noted that the consultants for each of the project segments started work at different times, and their progress will be slightly different as the project moves along.

Access Information: Access information (intersection striping, driveway locations, median openings, frontage roads, pedestrian crossings, etc.) will be provided at the next Ward 4 CDRC meeting. It is the intent to follow the Houghton Area Master Plan recommendations to have median openings at half-mile intervals.

Additionally, new developments are being given restrictions on their access plans to accommodate the Houghton Road improvements.

Intersections: The Regional Transportation Authority plan requires that intersections be designed as at-grade intersections. The Houghton Road Corridor Study identified a grade-separated intersection at Valencia Road, but the HAMP identified longer-term projections. A grade-separated intersection will not be a part of the current design.

Additionally, the project will include improvements to I-10 westbound exit and entrance ramps to accommodate Houghton Road, but will not include a full traffic interchange design. The City is working with the State on this project.

Dual Path System: It is the City's understanding that the dual path system was placed on the east side of the road, as opposed to some of the pathway on the west side of the road, during the State's Houghton Road Corridor Study. The City will revisit this issue, but it is unlikely there would be enough space to build such a system on both sides of the road. The dual path system is Pima County's current standard, with both a paved and decomposed granite path adjacent to each other and on the same side of the road. This path was also planned for the east side to link to other planned paths.

Secrist Middle School: The City will be evaluating overall traffic issues at Secrist Middle School, and will be working on solutions to allow traffic to flow better through the area, and to prevent traffic from winding through the adjacent neighborhoods instead of using Houghton Road.

Emergency access during construction: The City understands that during construction there are very limited alternate routes, and this could only be complicated if there were an emergency such as a traffic accident in the area during construction. As such the City will be working with emergency services to find solutions to address these issues. It was suggested that a temporary helipad be added to the project area for emergency responses. It was also suggested that there be coordination with the Tucson Police Department to provide additional public-safety monitoring during construction to enforce a safe commute through the area.

Project Web Site: The initial Web site for this project is now available at www.houghtonroad.info. The expanded Web site will be operational by June 15. Meeting minutes and comments from the open houses will be posted on this site. This will be a working site, and things can be added as requested.

Environmental Studies: An environmental report will be prepared for each segment, and this will include noise studies and mitigation. These studies will also be needed to determine the impact of 404 permitting procedures.

Railroad Bridge: The Union Pacific Rail Road bridge design and construction is Federally funded and will require a longer development process that will take more time than the rest of the roadway. However, its replacement is necessary to the proper functionality of the improved Houghton Road.

Project Art: Art funds are being made available for this project. While the City does not intend to impose decisions on public art for the corridor, there is an established process whereby the Tucson Pima Arts Council and the City Manager's office give final approval to the public's recommendations. More information about the art selection process will be made available in future meetings.

Bus Access: Transit features such as bus access were included in the Regional Transportation Authority plan for the corridor. The City will be working with Sun Tran on future routes, bus shelters, and bus pullout needs.

Right of Way: The southern segment will have the official right of way boundaries designated on the plans at the first open house.

Utilities: Relocating overhead power lines is very expensive, and is often avoided due to cost. These options will be evaluated as design advances.

Construction Phasing: As part of the 30% design effort, phasing of construction will be considered. The public comments will also help in prioritizing project construction. If some intersections are constructed first, it is the intent of the City to construct the ultimate six-lane configuration now to avoid reconstructing the intersections again in the future. The City is considering retaining a contractor under a Construction-Manager-at-Risk contract to help prioritize the construction phasing and with this type of contract, some construction, such as utility relocations and preparation work, could start in 2008.

Design Speeds: The existing road is posted 50 mph. The design speeds will be evaluated for the project and may vary in different locations, but currently the intent is to start with a design speed of 50 mph, which would have a posted speed of 45 mph. The number of adjacent access points has an impact on the design speeds.