

Meeting Summary
City of Tucson
Ward 4 Citizen Design Review Committee (CDRC)
Feb. 27, 2008
Clements Center, 8155 E. Poinciana Drive

ATTENDEES:

Ward 4 CDRC Members

Max Torres, Aide to Council Member Shirley Scott
Shirley Bila, South Harrison Neighborhood Association (NA)
Moon Joe Yee, Harrison East South NA
Randall Pierce, Mesquite Ranch NA
Al Wiruth, Rita Ranch NA
Ken Moyes, Rita Ranch NA
Mike Tone, Rita Ranch NA
Bob Small, Civano NA

Guests

Scott Lantz, Civano Neighbors NA Commercial Areas Working Group

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

M.J. Dillard, TDOT Project Manager, Central (22nd Street to Valencia Road)
and Northern (Speedway Boulevard to 22nd Street) Segments
Craig Saltzman, TDOT Project Manager, Southern Segment (Valencia Road
to Interstate 10)
Diahn Swartz, TDOT Traffic Engineering Project Manager
John Litteer, Castro Engineering Corp. Project Manager, Southern Segment
Melanie Rice, Psomas Project Engineer
Jan Gordley, Gordley Design Group, Public Involvement
Arizeder Urreiztieta, Gordley Design Group, Public Involvement

MATERIALS:

- Agenda
- Jan. 23, 2008, CDRC Meeting Summary
- Jan. 30, 2008, summary of field meeting at Valencia Road intersection
- Scope of Review for Transportation Advisory Committees
- Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) handout with project list and funding schedule
- Handout on speed limits by Diahn Swartz/TDOT

SUMMARY:

Arizeder Urreiztieta welcomed CDRC members and project team members, and requested that attendees give their name and affiliation. An overview of the agenda followed, including the introduction of Diahn Swartz, TDOT Traffic Engineering Project Manager. Jan Gordley clarified

the CDRC's scope of review as an advisory committee, based on City of Tucson ordinances, and expressed regret that this was not provided earlier. A point of information was provided to the effect that the Regional Transportation Authority's (RTA) Britton Dornquist is responsible for working with businesses affected by the Houghton Road widening, partnering during construction.

Melanie Rice read from a list of items representing Central Segment design changes that have come about as a result of public and CDRC input:

- Skip the four-lane interim section and go directly to six lanes
- Signalization at Poorman Road and Drexel Road with Florida T configurations.
- Directional median opening at McGraw's Cantina / Boulderfield Drive for Highland Trails neighborhood
- Reconfiguration of the circulation at Secrist Middle School to avoid safety problems on Houghton Road and reduce neighborhood cut-through traffic. This includes a pedestrian signal, modified parking, and new bus and private vehicle circulation.
- Rearrangement of the median openings between Golf Links and Escalante roads to address access concerns at Austin Point
- Realignment of the entrance to the fire station and design of an emergency signal at Seven Generations Way
- Directional median opening at Forest Glen
- Revision of the drainage concept at Poorman Road to avoid ponding at the southeast corner of the intersection
- Bus pullouts for future transit

John Litter read from a list of items representing Southern Segment design topics, given rise as a result of public input, which will be identified and addressed during the Design Concept Report (DCR) or final design phase:

- Skip the four-lane interim section and go directly to six lanes
- Consideration for future public transit – carpool lots, park-and-ride, bus pullouts
- Sign walls at Rita Ranch – maintain
- Roadway profile in vicinity of Rita Ranch neighborhood
- Median opening at Desert Willow neighborhood
- Traffic counts in neighborhood

Follow-up discussion revolved around the roadway profile near Rita Ranch. John explained that the area was reviewed with committee members at the project site. The profile design will be evaluated at the design phase to minimize impacts to the neighborhood and existing geography.

The median opening on the west leg of Valencia Road was reviewed with TDOT traffic engineers, and will be located at Dusky Willow Drive. The median opening will provide an eastbound u-turn movement as shown in the minutes from the field meeting held with committee members.

Discussion was held regarding safety considerations for children and pedestrians crossing Houghton Road near Secrist Middle School. Secrist-related topics included a HAWK crossing (a beacon-fitted crossing with a safe harbor on the median), a bridge, and, short of a HAWK crossing, an area in the median protected by a railing.

A CDRC member asked why there were items on the agenda that, according to the scope of review, represented design attributes that cannot be submitted for CDRC review. Team members responded that the items represented informational data that had been requested by the CDRC at the previous meeting.

A request was made by the CDRC to receive future meeting materials in advance, in order to review prior to the meeting.

Discussion was held regarding the Rita Road intersection. The design will include two eastbound through lanes as shown in the preliminary plans.

M.J. Dillard summarized practices for traffic- and speed-limit derivation – collecting data; analysis modeling; adjustments based on projections; recommendations included in traffic report; review of the report; revisions to the report – and described the process as iterative. Diahn Swartz was reintroduced, and the committee reminded, that her presentation on traffic was a follow-up to discussion at the previous meeting.

Diahn articulated a guiding principle of traffic engineers, which was to balance mobility with safety. She walked the committee through each page of the speed-limit handout, defining selected terms and explaining their applicability. The design speed for the Central Segment is 50 mph, with a posted speed limit of 45 mph; for the Southern Segment the design speed is 55 mph, with a posted speed limit of 45 or 50 mph.

The text of the above-mentioned speed-limit handout is appended to the summary of this meeting.

CDRC members asked whether Houghton Road would have lower nighttime speed limits. The City will evaluate the nighttime speed limit. However there are currently no plans to lower the future Houghton Road speed limit for nighttime use. Other discussion during the Q&A period

touched on signal density – current plans call for half-mile intervals – stopping distance, sight distance, lighting at intersections, minimum use of curbs, and access points.

A concern was voiced that as growth and development continue on Houghton Road, decisions now being formulated on access will later be revised in order to provide businesses greater access. M.J. Dillard indicated the City would continue to respect designations of the Houghton Area Master Plan (HAMP), and that future businesses would be encouraged and required to use shared access points wherever possible. This led to the question on how to address development that has already begun on Houghton Road. M.J. indicated that if permitting for development predates Houghton Road improvements, provisions of the original permit would be adhered to so long as that development does not conflict with designs and plans for Houghton Road. New permitting for building and development in the area will be considered against the backdrop of current plans for Houghton Road.

Additional points or questions discussed include:

- A request for the City of Tucson to provide a list of existing approved development plans in the project area. M.J. said such a list is being compiled and will be disseminated when complete.
- Discussion about leading left turns vs. lagging left turns. City of Tucson typically uses lagging left turn arrows, but will use leading left turn arrows in areas where traffic volumes warrant. The CDRC identified that Rita currently uses leading left turns. John stated the future signal phasing will be included in the final design of the intersection.
- Will narrowing down approaching expanded intersections create traffic cut-through in the neighborhood areas? M.J. suggested that in a future CDRC meeting, TDOT share modeling that will show that proposed Houghton Road improvements would deal effectively with future traffic issues.
- Max Torres indicated that as growth in the area proceeds, Houghton Road will become more urban, and some increase in signalization and controls will be necessary to maintain safety standards.
- Ramifications of a 60 mph speed limit. The design speed will remain as stated above.
- Access at McGraw's Cantina complicated by the adjacent steep grade.

At 7:30, Arizeder asked the committee whether, due to the late hour, they wished to rearrange the final agenda items so as to set the next meeting date. The committee agreed, and after discussion about the estimated point in time at which the Implementation Plan would be reviewed by the City Manager's office, an April 9, 2008, date was set, with the understanding that it might need to be rescheduled if the Implementation Plan is not yet finalized by that time.

It was also the view of the committee that in light of all the information the project engineers had shared during the course of the evening, it was not necessary to hear the project status reports for each of the segments.

A short video on noise mitigation from the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) was screened (and is available for viewing on the ADOT Web site, after which there was a request from the committee for information on the metrics used to gauge the efficacy of rubberized asphalt at the next open house meeting. The CDRC asked if noise studies are included in the design. Noise studies are not currently included in the DCR phase. TDOT will check whether noise studies will be included in the design phase. TDOT has previously stated that rubberized asphalt will be utilized as noise mitigation).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

The next meeting of the CDRC will be held Wednesday, April 9, 2008, at 6 p.m. in the Clements Center. A reminder e-mail will be sent ahead of the date.

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Text of speed-limit presentation:

Speed Limits

Presented by: Diahn L. Swartz, P.E., PTOE
Traffic Engineering Project Manager
City of Tucson Department of Transportation

Purpose of Speed Limits

- Enhance safety by reducing the risks imposed by drivers' speed choices.
- Reduce severity of crashes
- Reduce dispersion in speeds
- Establish a reasonable balance between risk (safety) and travel time (mobility)

Legal Framework

For streets in residential or business districts, state law establishes a speed limit of 25 mph, unless otherwise designated by the local jurisdiction (28-701).
State Law permits local jurisdictions to establish speed limits (28-703)
State Law adopts the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (28-641)

Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

Standard: After an engineering study has been made in accordance with established traffic engineering practices, the Speed Limit sign shall display the limit established by law, ordinance, regulation, or as adopted by the authorized agency. The speed limits shown shall be in multiples of 5 mph.

Guidance: At least once every 5 years, States and local agencies should reevaluate non-statutory speed limits on segments of their roadways that have undergone a significant change in roadway characteristics or surrounding land use since the last review

Guidance: When a speed limit is to be posted, it should be within 5 mph of the 85th-percentile speed of free-flowing traffic.

Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

Option: Other factors that may be considered when establishing speed limits are the following:

1. Road characteristics, shoulder condition, grade, alignment, and sight distance;
2. The pace speed;
3. Roadside development and environment;
4. Parking practices and pedestrian activity; and
5. Reported crash experience for at least a 12-month period.

Speed Zoning Practices

“Always” or “Usually” considered by the Agency surveyed*:

- 85th Percentile Speed
- Accident Experience
- Roadside Development
- Pedestrian Activity
- Functional Class
- Traffic Volumes
- Pavement Width
- Lane Width
- Unexpected Conditions

Design Speed

- Public Input
- Presence of Parking
- Presence of Shoulders

Design Speed

Posted Speed Limit at 5 to 10 mph lower than the design speed.

Other Considerations

- Signal density and signal progression
- Pedestrian facilities adjacent to the road edge
- Urbanization and increasing access density
- Street lighting

Houghton Road Corridor

- Travel time will improve
- Additional through travel lanes
- Reduced delay at intersections

*By 50% to 100% of the agencies surveyed. Source: "Survey of Speed Zoning Practices," ITE 2001.