

Meeting Summary

City of Tucson Department of Transportation
Ward 4 Citizen Design Review Committee (CDRC)

Oct. 13, 2009, 5:30 – 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

Keith Miller, Mesquite Ranch NA

Al Wiruth, Rita Ranch NA

Moon Joe Yee, South Harrison NA

Ward 4

Max Torres, Aide to Council Member Shirley Scott

Guests

John Litterer, Citizen

Tom Willard, Rita Ranch NA

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

M.J. Dillard, TDOT Project Manager

Diahn Swartz, TDOT Traffic Engineer

Alejandro Angel, Psomas Project Manager, Central Segment

Britton Dornquist, Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Mainstreet Assistance
Program

Steve Hagedorn, Landscape Architect, Logan Simpson Design, Central Segment

Craig Allison, Engineering and Environmental Consultants, Inc. (EEC) Project Manager, Old
Vail Road/Mary Ann Cleveland Way intersection improvements

Melissa Benton, Gordley Design Group, Public Involvement

Jan Gordley, Gordley Design Group, Public Involvement

Alice Templeton, Gordley Design Group, Public Involvement

MATERIALS

- Agenda
- Implementation Plan schedule
- 2009 Speed Limit Adjustments map
- Aug. 26, 2009, Houghton Road: Irvington Road to Valencia Road public meeting comment summary
- CDRC representation map

INTRODUCTIONS

- The CDRC representation map was introduced. Attendees introduced themselves, referencing the location of their homes on the CDRC map.
- Issues to be discussed later will be recorded on the list known as the “parking lot.”

PROJECT UPDATES

- M.J. Dillard: The entire corridor project is at 30 percent plan completion, and the design concept report is completed. The Irvington Road to Valencia Road segment is going from 75 percent to 95 percent. The 75 percent plans were brought to the last open house.
- The Broadway Boulevard intersection 75 percent plan is due in November.
- An art planner was selected for the entire corridor. The art planner starts in the next month or two and will be setting up meetings. An artist for the Irvington Road segment is being sought.
- Qualifications for the Castro Engineering segment will be requested. Ken Moyes is on selection committee.
- Construction continues on Old Vail Road/Mary Ann Cleveland Way intersection.
- Pima County Department of Transportation is working on the Houghton Road bridge over the railroad. Permission for federal funding for the 30 percent plan is approved, which when finished will be presented to the CDRC.
- Alejandro Angel: There have been changes in the Arizona State Land Department personnel.
- Praise was given to Borderland Construction Company for communication with Vail School District.

Open house comments:

Alice Templeton reviewed the open house question-and-answer session and comments, which are on Web site.

- The session comments included thanks for the information; a request for inclusion of jojoba plants for the landscape design; comment on the greenway path; and concern was expressed about placement of metal power poles near the road.
Alejandro Angel: The majority of metal power poles are north of Irvington Road.
M.J.: Tucson Electric Power (TEP) is in charge of power pole placement. Utilities try to stay within right of way because asking for easements on State Land is costly, takes more time, and is more complicated.
- A comment expressed concern about the walkway path and wanted coordination to take place with Supervisor Ray Carroll. M.J. said meetings to discuss the walkway are being coordinated. Attendee says County appears to be rigid about where the walkway is. M.J.: The County concern is about sticking to greenway path rules, but meetings will be scheduled to discuss this issue and pursue flexibility.
- One open house comment expressed concern about road noise; another commenter changed mind and thought the rubberized road would mitigate the road noise.
- Open house comments described the information presented as useful and that the engineers were thorough.

Landscape design:

- In the segment from Irvington Road to Valencia Road, rows of trees adjacent to walls will be kept whenever possible. Some trees will be salvaged and replaced. Some trees will be tagged and removed, but these will be replaced with more trees than are removed.
- Landscaping brought in on north side of intersection. West side will exist as a buffer.
- Eastside of roadway is all State Land, so only limited landscaping is going there now. Additional landscaping will be provided when it is developed.
- Water harvesting will be done throughout the corridor. Support irrigation system will be in place for two years to establish trees. Smaller tree survival rate is higher than larger tree.
- Several hundred trees would not survive the salvage and replanting process, so they will likely be replaced with new trees.
- Rudy Lopez would like to see tree plan for the Valencia Road to I-10 segment when 75 percent design is finished.
- Valencia Road to Interstate 10 segment design was at 15 percent to 30 percent plans before Castro Engineering went out of business. New consultant is coming on board to start where Castro left off. No landscaping design has been done for that segment, but native plant ordinance will be followed.

Speed limit information – Diahn Swartz, TDOT Traffic Engineer:

- There is an ordinance for all speed limit increments, from 15 mph and up.
- Adjustments will go before mayor and council in November and will likely be implemented immediately upon presentation and approval.
- Speed limit adjustment proposals:
 - Houghton Road, from Irvington Road to Mary Ann Cleveland Way (5.1 miles), speed limit reduced from 55 mph to 50 mph.
 - Old Vail Road, one-quarter mile west of Houghton Road to Houghton Road (0.25 mile), 50 mph to 40 mph.
 - Rita Road, from Union Pacific Railroad to I-10 Frontage Road (1.2 miles), from 50 to 45 mph.
 - Old Vail Road, from Valencia Road to one-quarter mile west of Houghton Road (3.25 miles), from 50 mph to 45 mph.
 - Los Reales Road, from Canterbury Tale Drive to Wilmot Road (0.4 miles), from 50 mph/25 mph to 35 mph.
- With more development, higher speeds are inappropriate.
- Traffic engineers use an 85th percentile tool to assess speed limits. Traffic engineers take samples of free-flowing speed with a radar device. They then establish at what speed 85 percent of motorists are driving. This is what they use as a gauge to set speed limits and it results in a speed limit close to this 85th percentile.
- The samples were taken May 6, 2009, and indicated that the 85th percentile was 47 mph, which led the City to the current recommendations.
- Old Vail Road: Curb on road translates to lower speed limit from 55 mph due to safety concerns.
- Al Wiruth questioned why a lower speed limit is necessary on such a big road.

- The City has safety and liability concerns to consider.
- Concern expressed that the speed limit will continue to be decreased over time.
- Rita Road speed limit is being decreased due to development going on there, including the Target Center, which added some access points.
- The spacing of median openings conforms to lower speed limits.
- Question: How many accidents on Houghton Road in past year?
- Question: Can the lowering of speed limits be delayed until more construction is actually happening?
- Diahn Swartz: 55 mph is an artifact from when this location was rural. Eighty-fifth percentile studies show people are driving slower on this road.

General questions and answers:

- Once a week construction updates are sent out.
- M.J.: During construction, problems with the existing arch culverts under Mary Ann Cleveland Way were discovered. To assure the desired life span of the corridor projects, these are being removed and replaced with box culverts.
- Request made to move up Item 9 (22nd Street to Escalante Road, due in 2016) on implementation plan and perhaps swap it with Item 7 (Speedway Boulevard to Broadway Boulevard due in 2014).
- A Walmart is being built behind CVS Pharmacy. Minor change to development plan is happening.
- Some CDRC members want asphalt path farther from road and decomposed granite path closer to road. They believe more pedestrians would use asphalt and that it would be safer.
- Is it possible to put trees between edge of road and footpath? Clear zone and sight triangle safety requirement limit the size and location of vegetation that can be placed near roadways. We will be including vegetation between the road and the footpath for a buffer, but it will be necessary to avoid trees that will develop large trunks, dense vegetation near cross roads or vegetation with thorns that might hurt pedestrians.
- Feedback was solicited on the usefulness and flexibility of the meeting. Attendees expressed satisfaction with the conduct and pace of the meeting.

Parking lot:

- Greenway location: Request was made to swap the location of the multiuse paths (place the asphalt path away from the roadway, with the decomposed granite path closer to the roadway).
- Salvaging trees for neighborhoods.
- Maintaining amount of large trees.
- Make plans for southern segment available.
- Speed limit on Old Vail Road and Rita Road – concern about multiple changes in speed limits and bicycle paths.
- Implementation of plan schedule.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.