



Tanque Verde Road:
Catalina Highway to Houghton Road
Community Advisory Committee Meeting



Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
Thursday, Feb. 7, 2008
6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
Kirk Bear Canyon Library

CAC Members Present at Meeting:

- Clifford Fortunato
- Margaret Fowler
- Fred Fruchthendler
- Robert Garvin
- Mike Sturgis

CAC Members Not in Attendance:

- Ronald Robinette
- Mel Silverman
- Suzanna Startt

Attending from Project Team:

- Pima County Department of Transportation (PCDOT): Carol Brichta, Nancy Cole, Priscilla Cornelio, Rick Ellis, Greg Foster, Bob Lutgendorf
- PinnacleOne: Tony Bowler, Steve Playford
- CMG Drainage Engineering: Jerry Curless
- DMJM Harris: Charlene Robinson
- Projects International, Inc.: Jim Portner
- Regional Transportation Authority (RTA): Britton Dornquast
- RS Engineering: Greg Vega, Mike Holder, Jerry Pelland, Bob Suarez
- Wheat Scharf Associates: Rick Green
- Westland Resources: Michelle Mraz, Kim Otero
- Gordley Design Group: Barb Alley, Jan Gordley

Attending from the public:

- David P. Smith

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- CAC member books
- Meeting Schedule
- RTA Booklets

Steve Playford, PinnacleOne, introduced himself as the Pima County Project Manager and welcomed the CAC members to the meeting and informed them that tonight's purpose was to give an overview of the project and review the CAC members' roles and responsibilities. He introduced Rick Ellis, PCDOT Engineering Manager, to give the opening remarks.

Rick introduced Priscilla Cornelio, PCDOT Director, who welcomed the group back after a five-year break in the project and thanked them for agreeing to again be a part of the CAC. Priscilla stated that previously there was some controversy about the project, but the main reason this project was put on hold was the loss of funding. The County has received RTA funds that have allowed this improvement project to move forward again. The plan is to resurrect the project from where it stopped and move forward from there. Priscilla thanked everyone again for getting involved a second time and turned the floor back over to Rick.

Rick stated that it is important for the CAC members to feel valued in the meetings and he has found that there are three goals that need to be achieved. They are as follows:

- 1) Feedback – the team knows the technical aspects of the project, but it is the citizens that reside in the area being improved that can add valuable feedback to the team that only someone who frequents an area would know.
- 2) Representing the Community – the team is looking for the CAC members to get out into the community and get feedback from neighbors, neighborhood associations, business owners and others that will be affected by the improvement project, then share that feedback at the CAC meetings.
- 3) Educate and Advocate – the team is counting on the CAC members to go back out into the community and inform the above-mentioned groups on what is going on with the project. The more informed the community is about the project, the easier it will be to stay on schedule and move it forward.

Rick thanked the CAC members again for the willingness to again sit on the committee, indicated more information would follow, and turned the meeting back over to Steve.

Steve introduced a few members of the team and asked the CAC members to introduce themselves to the group. Steve introduced Jim Portner, Projects International, Inc., and explained that Jim will serve as the facilitator for the first few CAC meetings, with responsibility for managing the agenda and keeping the discussion on track. This will allow the project team to focus on the issues being discussed.

Jim stated he would serve as a conduit during the discussions so everyone has a clear understanding of what is being said whether it be from the technical team to the members or vice versa. As the design phase moves forward, the members will be able to voice their concerns along the way and those concerns will be documented so they can be addressed by the appropriate team member. In the end it will be the CAC members' responsibility to review all the data provided by the technical team, and with feedback from friends, neighbors and neighborhood associations, draft a letter to present to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) so they can make a decision.

Steve stated that every good and successful project has to have a plan and the team has taken the time to put in place a timeline to help keep everyone on track and the project moving forward. The first item on the schedule was having the CAC meetings on the first Wednesday of each month through June 2008. Steve asked the members to check their schedules to see if that would work for the committee. That would be discussed later in the evening. The second item was a layout of when the technical information would be completed and brought to the table to discuss with the CAC members. Again, Steve stated, this was just a preliminary outline subject to change depending on the discussions needed from the committee members or the team. The plan is have the documents approved by the BOS by September or October of 2008 so that the team can have the final design completed in the fall of 2009. Contractor bids will be taken after final design is complete and construction would start sometime thereafter.

Fred Fruchthendler, CAC member, asked if they would be using the original plans. Steve stated that a lot of time and effort went into the original plans and they will be used to the extent possible to avoid duplication of effort. However, he also pointed out that the project team would take a fresh look at the project and community issues, and seek solutions to those issues.

Carol Brichta, PCOT Community Relations, made a brief presentation on the CAC members' roles and responsibilities. She went over the member notebook and what was currently in it. She stated that the members would need to bring their books with them to each meeting so that they would have a place to keep any handouts they may be receiving along the way. At each phase of the process, the members will be given information from the reports to review and comment on. Even though the CAC members had written a recommendation letter during the last set of CAC meetings, Carol informed the committee that a new letter would need to be written reflecting the new information that will be gathered along the way. Carol mentioned that the members could get information from the Web site. The site is not set up yet for the Tanque Verde project, but should be operational the week of February 11. Carol thanked the members for agreeing to serve on the committee again and reiterated the importance of attendance at the CAC meetings and getting the information given at the meetings out to the community.

A question was asked about the last rounds of paperwork – reports and minutes. Carol stated that they would be happy to post the old information they had to the Web site so that the members could look over the old material prior to moving forward with the new material.

Steve talked a little more about the meeting dates and there were some conflicts with the first Wednesday of every month. The date of Thursday, March 6, 2008, was agreed upon for the next CAC meeting and Steve asked the members to check their schedules and e-mail him with their available dates for future meetings as it is important to have as many participants present at the meetings as possible.

Steve then introduced Bob Suarez, RS Engineering Project Principal, to give the overview of the project. Bob informed the group that this was a nine-month process, and then took a few minutes to introduce the sub-consultants present. He stated that RS Engineering was on the project when it began back in 2000 but there are a few changes the committee must be aware of. The City was in charge of this project in the beginning, but the County is now managing it with input from the City, and there is a slightly different design team. The areas that will be revisited with new reports are as follows: traffic, drainage, environmental, land use and noise. There is a new Pima County roadway design manual that had been put in place since this project was halted in 2003, so the members will be receiving all new and updated reports on this project. There is new methodology that will be used in the environmental and noise studies.

A question was brought up regarding the new FEMA floodplain studies in the area and it was noted that those studies would not affect this project in its current state.

Bob went through some of the history of the project. He stated that in 2000 bond money was allocated for the widening of Tanque Verde Road between Catalina Highway and Houghton Road. The project was halted in mid-2002 at approximately seventy-five percent completion. There had been five CAC meetings and one public meeting. As stated earlier, the information from those meetings is expected to be available at the County's Web site. The CAC members were in general opposition to the design of the medians and response to equestrian issues. There had been a public survey done prior to the halt of this project, which stated that those members of the public participating in the survey wanted medians and the CAC members did not, and that will be back on the table for consideration. The 1998 roadway design manual was originally used for the studies; however for this phase the updated 2003 roadway

design manual will be followed. This area is now referred to as an environmentally sensitive roadway, so there will be a higher level of work to be done on the environmental study. Westland Resources is the sub-contractor working on that study for this project.

The traffic volumes in 2002 were between 11,000-14,000 vehicles per day with an increase projected to 20,000 by the year 2020. The posted speed limit on that stretch of road is 45 mph with vehicles traveling speeds in excess of 50-60 mph.

The original plan was for a four-lane divided roadway with a median, drainage improvements, sidewalks, equestrian improvements, multi-use lanes and landscaping. A question was brought up about using rubberized asphalt. Bob stated that noise issues were a concern last time. There were several options that were brought up at that time, but rubberized asphalt was not a standard practice at that time. Rick let the members know that it is now standard practice for Pima County to use rubberized asphalt on all roadway projects.

Questions, concerns and comments that were brought up from CAC members:

Some members felt the last survey was 'slanted.' What assurances are there about the next survey?

The County prepares the survey and they will do their best to make sure questions are stated as simply as possible for accurate understanding.

Is the team aware of any further development on the southwest corner of Tanque Verde Road and Houghton Road intersection?

The team is not aware of any plans for that; however, it was brought to the attention of the group that there had once been plans for development just west of the intersection on the south side of Tanque Verde Road. FEMA was involved in those plans many years ago, but that project fell apart when the owner of that piece of land passed away. There was some fear among some of the members that something may again be planned for that area resulting in higher traffic volume along the corridor.

In reference to the above statement, what are the roadway design plans were for the intersection of Tanque Verde Road and Houghton Road?

The intersection is part of another project currently being initiated by the City of Tucson and the RTA. The Tanque Verde Road project team will coordinate and exchange information about the intersection through the design process. At this time, a major reconstruction of the intersection is not part of the improvements as a result of the project in the interim.

Could there be a possibility that there might be two construction projects for the improvements to that intersection?

Until a meeting is set up between this team and the team working on the Houghton Road improvements to see what the plans and time frame is for that intersection, there isn't any information to give out at this time. Steve let the members know that more information would be coming to them as soon as they had something to report.

Could the piece of land mentioned earlier at the southwest corner of Tanque Verde Road and Houghton Road be developed?

The floodplain status in that area would first have to be lifted by FEMA and that piece of land would be able to be developed someday.

Water on the roadway was a big issue last time.

Those issues will be looked at again.

The team wanted to make sure the members knew that the County really wants to address all the issues the committee has and that everyone will be taking a fresh look at all the issues.

Some of the major issues that need to be addressed are drainage and the impact the improvements would have on the horse properties in the area, i.e. the need for trailers to make u-turns.

These issues will be discussed in detail at future meetings.

The CAC members expressed a need to have reports ahead of time so that the members would have time to study them rather than having them handed to the committee as they walked into the meeting. It was also mentioned that the committee would like to have the new design regulations that are in the 2003 manual.

Bob went back over the schedule that had been laid out at the beginning of the meeting. The next meeting would be at the Kirk Bear Canyon Library from 6-7:30 p.m. The schedule will need to be aggressive, so the team is asking that the CAC members help in moving this process forward. Bob stated that all the issues the group has would be addressed and that he had heard the main issues were the medians and drainage.

Steve reminded the members that he wanted them to e-mail him with available dates to help in planning future meeting dates.

Carol took a moment to introduce Britton Dornquast, the RTA representative. She let the CAC members know that his job would be to work with the businesses and bring their issues and concerns to the team.

Barb Alley, Gordley Design Group Public Involvement Coordinator, asked the members to make sure their e-mail addresses were written in on the sign-in sheet for further communication. Carol verified with the group that it was OK to put individual e-mail addresses on the Web site so that people in the area needing more information could contact them.

There was a question from a member of the public asking for a quick overview of what was approved by the voters in the RTA plan.

Rick stated that the plan was for a four-lane roadway with a median. That plan has some flexibility; however, if there are significant changes being requested, the plan must go back to the voters for another approval – the team has no intention of having to do so.

Steve thanked the committee for their attendance and input, and stated that the team looked forward to working with the committee in order to complete the project successfully.

Meeting was adjourned.