

Silverbell Road Task Force Wednesday, December 2, 2009

Summary of Meeting #2

The second meeting of the Silverbell Road Task Force (SRTF) took place from 6:00 p.m. to 7:50 pm at the Silverbell Golf Course Clubhouse, 3600 North Silverbell Road.

In attendance were these members of the Task Force: Robert De La Cerda, Kendall Elmer, Judith Meyer, Barbara Whitaker, Midge Hardy, Frank Stryker, Michael Mencinger, Angela Wagner-Gabbard, Julie Prince, Gale Marsland, Josh Wright and Hurvie Davis. Sandy Fagan, Bradley Lang and Wain Cooper were absent. Also present were Andy Dinauer, Project Manager for the City of Tucson, Jim Schoen, Project Manager for the Kittelson consultant team, Jason Simmers (Kittelson), Evelyn Urrea (Kaneen Advertising), and Freda Johnson (Rillito Consulting Group).

1. Call Meeting to Order – Confirm Quorum

Freda Johnson, meeting moderator, welcomed everyone and announced that a quorum was present.

2. Introductions of SRTF Members and Project Team

Members of the Task Force introduced themselves and told about their affiliations and interests. Project Team members Andy Dinauer and Jim Schoen introduced themselves as well as did members of the audience, including representatives from Pima County and the Town of Marana.

3. Announcements

Freda introduced this item by saying that the City Clerk was unable to attend this meeting of the Task Force but could do so at a future meeting to clarify procedures required under the City of Tucson's Open Meeting Law. Barbara Whitaker suggested that subcommittees be formed for Task Force members who wished to delve in more deeply into topics. Judith Meyer indicated that while she understands the intent of subcommittees, she expressed concern that they would take away from the full committee's role to hear and provide input on all project elements and issues. No action was taken on this suggestion.

Freda acknowledged that a summary of the first Task Force meeting had been distributed. She said that observers are invited to fill out meeting comment forms as well as address the Task Force during the Call to the Audience. Freda concluded the item with a review of meeting ground rules established by the Task Force on November 4, 2009.

4. Consideration of Electing a Chair and Vice Chair

Freda announced that every committee working on Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) does it differently and that some have chairs and some don't. In response to a question, she said that a chair could open and close the meetings and represent the Task Force in front of elected officials in the three jurisdictions from time to time. By general agreement, the Task Force requested that this topic be addressed at a future meeting after hearing from the City Clerk's representative.

5. Staff Reports. Presentations and Discussion

Jim Schoen gave information about the project scope in a Power Point presentation. He invited questions and discussion after each of the subtopics. The reports were as follows: Traffic Report, Cross Section Alternative, Path Connectivity Options and Alignment Alternatives.

Following the Traffic Report presentation, Gale Marsland asked about transit and alternate modes of travel. Jim said that all modes would be covered in addition to vehicular travel. Barbara Whitaker said that access and turn lanes are important issues to her. In response to another comment, Jim said that the multiuse path can be more than for walkers and cyclists, but it would be used for non-motorized travel, which is consistent with other paths in the region. Use of the path will be governed by local traffic laws and ordinances.

Angela Wagner-Gabbard asked about how lighting would comply with the 'Dark Skies' initiative and why there is no lighting indicated north of Goret Road. Jim Schoen explained that the recommendation for lighting between Goret Road and Grant Road is based on the City of Tucson's roadway lighting program which includes this section of Silverbell Road. Installation of lighting on this section of Silverbell considers the commercial and higher density residential developments which generate greater vehicular and pedestrian traffic. This is not the case, nor will it be in the future, north of Goret. Andy Dinauer said that continuous roadway lighting is typically considered to address safety considerations, especially in commercial areas. He said that the City of Tucson typically installs continuous roadway lighting on arterials but Pima County and the Town of Marana typically do not. The City addresses up-lighting by using shielded luminaries that direct the light down and not up. The fixtures that are used are dark skies compliant. Scott Leska from the Town of Marana said that 'Dark Skies' compliance in Marana applies only to private development.

Comment was made that the 'segway' vehicle is motorized and that people who own them are not sure where they can travel. Jim said that use of the multiuse path needs to be clarified and this information will be provided to the Task Force. Scott said that in Marana segway vehicles are OK within the paved roadway shoulder (multiuse lane) on curbed roadways.

Andy Dinauer summarized the projected volumes that dictate the number of lanes in each direction and asked if there is agreement by the Task Force on this recommendation. Kendall Elmer said that the Task Force is in agreement with this information. The traffic report recommends a four-lane, divided roadway with left turn median openings allowed at specific locations and right turn lanes in each direction at signalized intersections. Julie Prince said she is interested in more clarity about bike lanes and that there be adequate signage for cyclists. Midge Hardy expressed concern about access to her property and the ability of people to turn into and out of her property. Jim said the project team would sit down with her to work out details of access to her property. He noted that the design will need to consider the close spacing between her driveway and Neosha, as well as the large wash that runs between the two. Judith Meyer observed that equestrian access and ability of horse trailers to turn into Columbus Park is important.

Jim presented information about cross sections and said that components include a) the median, b) the travel way and c) the shoulder. A typical cross section was presented on a board. Jim said that the median width standard for all three jurisdictions is 20 feet and that this allows for safe u-turns for a vehicle-trailer combination and left turn staging for vehicles entering the roadway from a side street or driveway. He pointed out that Marana requires outside curbs on all arterial roadways. The City of Tucson evaluates cross sections on a case-by-case basis. Jim pointed out that an uncurbed median is not necessarily lower in cost though it may provide a more rural feel. He asked the group if the team is on the right track with curbed medians throughout. By general agreement, the answer was yes. Judith asked about how water harvesting will work with curbed medians. Andy said that water that falls on the median would be captured there as well as some runoff from the pavement

A question was asked about who maintains roadways. Andy said that there are intergovernmental agreements between the jurisdictions and maintenance responsibilities are shared in some instances where it makes sense to do so. Regarding the travel way, an 11-foot lane is proposed on the outside and a 12-foot lane is on the inside. Regarding bike lanes, there is variation. For example, Marana specifies a 7-foot lane (5-foot paved surface with a 2-foot concrete gutter) and calls it a 'multiuse lane'. Jim and Andy described the function of the concrete gutter as well as the variation among the three jurisdictions. For this project, Marana has agreed to use a 1-foot gutter pan instead of 2-feet. Frank Stryker observed that many cyclists use Silverbell and 5-feet of paved surface is not adequate. He urged that a wider lane would be better. Julie pointed out that a 6-foot lane is preferred by the Bicycle Advisory Committee. She said that safety is an issue as is the ability of riders to be traveling side-by-side. A 7-foot lane with a 2-foot gutter pan would be better. Angela asked how a gutter pan affects water harvesting. Jim said that a gutter pan preserves the life of the pavement. He acknowledged the desire to have wider bike lanes. Andy said that a 6-foot lane would apply to the City of Tucson section and Rick Ellis from Pima County concurred and said that if it's wider than 6 feet, drivers will use it as a turn lane which compromises safety. Angela observed that the City doesn't require a gutter pan but Marana and Pima County do. She said that she is concerned about space and by the budget impact. Julie said that costs should consider lives saved with safer facilities for cyclists. Several people spoke in favor of encouraging

cycling in the Silverbell corridor. Pima County is considering adopting the City of Tucson standard of 6-foot bike lane with curb, but no gutter.

Discussion took place about whether or not shoulders should be curbed. In Marana, they will be curbed but in Tucson and Pima County they are not necessarily done that way. Pros and cons of curbed vs. uncurbed were reviewed. Some preferred uncurbed because it enhances the rural feel of the area. Jim said that from Goret to Sunset, uncurbed sections can be considered.

Jim summarized aspects of path connectivity in the project. He said there would be a 10-foot multiuse pathway on the east side with some sidewalk on the west for pedestrian connectivity to signalized intersections. Equestrians would cross at intersections with push buttons to activate signals. Judith said she wonders about the advisability of this. Gale Marsland pointed out that a map showing trails shows an existing trail crossing her property. It was clarified that the trails depicted reflect work done by the Pima Trails Association. Staff acknowledged Gale's concern and said they would work to clarify the situation since consent had not been sought or received from the property owner.

Criteria for a roadway alignment were reported and discussed. Jim said that nothing can be built in a floodway and that although the flood plain is wider, building is possible in some cases. Staff said that agreement would be sought on the list of criteria at the next meeting. Judith said that she would like to know what the cost differences are between curbed and uncurbed sections along the roadway.

6. Next Steps – Future Meeting Dates

By general agreement, the first Wednesday of January would be the date for the next meeting of the Task Force.

7. Call to the Audience

One person rose to address the Task Force, Julian Hadland, who reported his concern about the well being of elderly residents in the corridor. He pointed out the difference between Silverbell, which is near the I-10 corridor and River Road. He reminded everyone that the RTA language says that up to four lanes are desired on Silverbell and he said he prefers a three-lane scenic roadway with a center turn lane. He said that he is still not satisfied with the width of bike lanes and that he is still interested in learning the dates of traffic surveys done for this project.

8. Adjournment

By general agreement, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.