

# **Silverbell Road Task Force Wednesday, June 2, 2010**

## **Summary of Meeting #8**

The eighth meeting of the Silverbell Road Task Force (SRTF) took place from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Luz Academy, 2797 North Introspect Drive. In attendance were the following members of the Task Force:

Wain Cooper, Regional Transportation Authority  
Kendall Elmer, Pima County Neighborhoods  
Judith Meyer, Pima County Neighborhoods  
Barbara Whitaker, City of Tucson Neighborhoods  
Sandy Fagan, City of Tucson Neighborhoods  
Michael Mencinger, Regional Transportation Authority  
Angela Wagner-Gabbard, Town of Marana Neighborhoods  
Julie Prince, Tucson-Pima County Bicycle Advisory Committee  
Gale Marsland, Pima County Businesses  
Robert De La Cerda, City of Tucson Neighborhoods  
Josh Wright, Town of Marana Businesses  
Midge Hardy, City of Tucson Businesses  
Bradley Lang, City of Tucson Businesses

Absent were SRTF members Frank Stryker, City of Tucson Businesses, and Hurvie Davis, Town of Marana Neighborhoods.

Also present were members of the Silverbell Road Project Team:

Jim Schoen, Project Manager, Kittleson & Associates consultant team  
Jason Simmers, Lead Engineer, Kittleson & Associates  
Rick Ellis, Project Manager, Pima County Department of Transportation  
Scott Leska, Project Manager, Town of Marana  
Darlene Showalter, Landscape Architect, McGann and Associates  
Jonathan Mabry, Historic Preservation Officer, City of Tucson  
Freda Johnson, Meeting Facilitator, Rillito Consulting Group  
Evelyn Urrea, Community Outreach, Kaneen Advertising and Public Relations

### **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 as did members of the Project Team. Observers were also asked to introduce themselves.

### **3. Approval of SRTF Meeting Summary of May 5, 2010**

Comments of clarification were made about the March 2010 meeting minutes. Barbara Whitaker asked that the record be changed to accept her statement that she “is opposed to the type of clear cut/angled sloping down on the corner of Silverbell and Goret. This sloping has existed now for a few years and nothing has grown with the reseeding except tumbleweeds. It looks unnatural, especially along a scenic roadway. She supports that cut hillsides not be reseeded and angled but finished consistently along the roadway such as soil nail walls.” The May 5 meeting minutes were accepted by general agreement as modified.

### **4. Announcements**

- a. Freda Johnson reviewed the Task Force meeting ground rules. Jim Schoen announced that there were more meetings with property owners in the project area.
- b. The Task Force was reminded of the June 7 and 9 open house meetings on the project.
- c. A reminder announcement was made that the July Task Force meeting would be cancelled.

### **5. Staff Reports, Presentations and Discussion**

#### **a. Archaeology/Environmental Clearance Process**

Topics under this item included Archaeology/Environmental Clearance Process, Review of Proposed North Section Roadway Alignment and Update on Right of Way Impacts. Jim Schoen presented an overview of these topics in a power point presentation, copies of which were distributed to the Task Force. Regarding the archaeology investigation, Angela Wager-Gabbard asked what the basis for identifying sensitive areas is. Response was made that studies were done and many sites were identified including a large village. The process applies to private property as well. Brad Lang asked about archaeological findings in the area in Marana from Cortaro to Ina Road. Scott Leska said that study and mitigation was done and the biggest archaeological site in Arizona was identified. Three hundred remains were found as well as 11,000 artifacts. Scott said that this is a continuing issue and information is still being processed.

The area needs to be cleared completely before construction can begin. Angela asked if this activity pushed over the timeline. Scott said no, that the contractor was tied to a one-year process. Judith Meyer asked if mammoth bones had been found at the streetlight at Sweetwater. Scott said that he didn't know. Wain Cooper asked about the extent of archaeological investigations. Jim Schoen said that the limit of work is within the roadway footprint. Wain asked if the \$12 million estimate includes everything. Jim said that it's the best estimate of what it will take to clear everything before construction. Jim continued by reviewing the timeline that includes construction of the south section of the corridor in the fall of 2013. Angela asked about the costs to identify and mitigate the archaeological work in Marana. Scott said approximately \$2-2.5 million from Cortaro to Ina in 2008 dollars. Angela said that she thought the \$12 million for Silverbell might be a conservative estimate.

**b. Review of Proposed North Section Roadway Alignment, and  
c. Right of Way Impacts Update**

Jason Simmers presented an overview of the north section roadway alignment from Camino del Cerro up to Ina Road. In the first section he said the roadway would shift 30-40 feet to the east. Because of flood plain issues, Jason said that the roadway would be raised as much as 10 feet about ½ mile north of Camino del Cerro. The average in this vicinity would be 5-6 feet. Julie Prince asked why the roadway was not elevated at the Camino del Cerro intersection. Jason said because that project added shoulders and some paving but the Silverbell project is a total reconstruction. Going north, Jason pointed out that some trailers on the east side would be taken. He noted that up towards Sunset the Santa Cruz River is very close to the roadway and this project cannot impact the floodway. He reported that another RTA project would address a Sunset connection and a new bridge over the Santa Cruz.

Continuing northward up to Orange Grove Road, Jason said that there are a lot of poor sight lines and the roadway would shift 100 feet to the east. He said that the Idle Hour Wash drains in this area near Benjamin Road. In this area Portland Cement owns a lot of land in this area. Elevation change would be between 2-4 feet. Jason continued by describing the area near Orange Grove Road where there are private properties on the west side of Silverbell. It is proposed that an existing frontage road would be removed and a third lane would be added to the east side to function as a right turn lane. On the west side, walls are likely to protect private property. Just past the developed area, Jason noted the existence of an arch and that bridge options and culverts are options to be considered. The rest of the way north there is much County-owned land. The project ends just south of Ina Road.

Gale Marsland asked about the status of the floodplain in the northernmost area. Justin said that it snakes in and out. Angela asked about meetings with property owners. Jason said that there was not a lot of concern heard since there would be minor impacts at most. He said that the team had met with most property owners in the heavily impacted area. Brad Lang commented that up in the Phoenix area, the Salt River Project dammed the river. Jim Schoen said that this is an option except that the US Army Corps of Engineers would not approve channelization of this section of the Santa Cruz River because the rules have changed. Jason summed up by saying that with regard to access, the team used the same criteria as was set for the south end. Jason distributed handouts of the entire corridor that show roadway elevations. Judith Meyer commented that the roadway is not raised as much in the south end. Jim said that in August there would be more discussion about slopes and walls and what the tradeoffs are. He said that the ‘f’ symbol on the handout means fill and ‘c’ means cut.

Gale Marsland raised the issue of fencing for wildlife. She said that she has concerns about a straight ugly wall going up. She urges that wildlife be celebrated and maybe tie it in with cultural resources such as a trail and public education. Further, Gale suggested that the project could tie in to other sources of funding. Jim said that 1% of the project cost will go to public art and interpretive education could be part of this. The public artist will work with the project team and the jurisdictions later in the process. Rick Ellis, Pima County, said that there are visions for this entire segment of

the town. Judith Meyer said that there is a public artist working with development of ball fields at Camino del Cerro. Julie Prince asked if this project could tie in with the educational obelisks in Marana at a new park there.

Brad Lang asked if the Task Force could be given a list of consensus decisions in chronological order. Staff said that this could be done.

## **6. Next Steps**

It was announced that the next meeting of the Task Force would be August 4.

## **7. Call to the Audience**

Betsy Blaylock from the Agua Dulce neighborhood, expressed thanks for asking Task Force members to stand when they introduced themselves.

Julian Hadland, speaking on behalf of elderly residents of the Silverbell Rd. Corridor, has two main concerns: SAFETY and BUDGET CRISIS. SAFETY: Have there been many accidents at the exit/entrance to Chevron and Jack-in-the-Box at the Camino del Cerro/I-10 intersection? If not, why is there a need for a “right turn exit only” out of the church at Camino del Cerro and Silverbell Rd.? Some of my neighbors said: “That is crazy!” Does this CHURCH have HIGHER TRAFFIC DENSITY than the CHEVRON GAS STATION? Why is there a NEED for a CURBED MEDIAN when, as Mr. Andy Dinauer kindly pointed out last month with reference to school bus stops on River Rd. between La Cholla and La Canada? DIVIDED roads are LESS SAFE regarding school bus stops. This is because school children do NOT understand the difference between DIVIDED roads and UNDIVIDED roads. COST: A CENTRAL TURNING LANE is SAFER, as well as LOWER COST and LOWER MAINTENANCE. On Silverbell Rd. south of Grant Rd. at least TWENTY TREES are OVERHANGING (from the CURBED MEDIAN) Silverbell Rd. by OVER TWO FEET. Is COST the reason these trees in the MEDIAN are NOT being property MAINTAINED? IF there must be a MEDIAN, why not design it like Calle Concordia (photos available from yesterday’s Daily Star) with a slight incline, enhancing drainage and water-harvesting, onto the Uncurbed MEDIAN? SAFETY: On Wednesday May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at 9:44 AM, an EMERGENCY VEHICLE in an EMERGENCY drove along the CENTRAL TURNING LANE on La Cholla Blvd. just south of MAGEE Rd. for about one hundred yards, to drive through traffic. This LIFE-SAVING action is NOT POSSIBLE where a road has both CURBED SHOULDERS and a CURBED MEDIAN. My final point is that ... Please remember that if a CONSENSUS is obtained, when those contributing to the CONSENSUS are NOT FULLY INFORMED, then that CONSENSUS is NOT VALID.

## **8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.