

Silverbell Road Task Force Wednesday, March 3, 2010

Summary of Meeting #5

The fifth meeting of the Silverbell Road Task Force (SRTF) took place from 6:00 to 7:35 p.m. at the Silverbell Golf Course Clubhouse, 3600 North Silverbell Road. In attendance were the following members of the Task Force:

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

SRTF members Wain Cooper and Angela Wagner-Gabbard were absent.

Also present were:

Andy Dinauer, Project Manager, City of Tucson Department of Transportation
Jason Simmers, Project Engineer, Kittelson and Associates
Jose Ortiz, Traffic Engineer, City of Tucson Department of Transportation
Freda Johnson, Meeting Moderator, Rillito Consulting Group
Evelyn Urrea, Community Outreach, Kaneen Advertising & 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 guests in the audience.

3. Approval of SRTF Meeting Summary of February 3, 2010

Discussion took place about the language correcting Brad Lang's request to clarify that large trucks should be kept off Silverbell and not diverted to adjacent neighborhoods. It was reported that the February minutes have been corrected and posted on the web site. Frank Stryker commented that tractor-trailers would come and go out of the Silverbell

Nursery. Brad said his intent is to make things safe and that he understands that there will need to be business deliveries. Judith Meyer asked to correct the record in the middle of the bottom paragraph of page 3 of the February minutes. She asked that the sentence attributed to her read as follows: “Judith Meyer said she would have a concern if the Task Force consensus is to take private land *any more than necessary*.” (The italicized language reflects the change.) By general agreement the February minutes were approved as modified.

4. Announcements

Freda Johnson reviewed the Task Force meeting ground rules. Sandy Fagan said that news coverage has occurred about the possibility of the City Manager seeking to sell open space land along Silverbell Road to generate revenue. Staff responded that this would be checked out and the Task Force would be kept in the loop. Kendall Elmer requested further discussion about the centerline of the roadway and any takings of private right-of-way. He said it is important to clarify exactly what impacts might occur. Andy Dinauer said this topic could be addressed at the next meeting of the Task Force, or perhaps in another month or two.

5. Staff Reports, Presentations and Discussion

Jason Simmers, Kittelson and Associates, presented information about the four signalized intersections in the southern portion of the project area. These are at El Camino del Cerro, Sweetwater, Goret, and Grant. He said that each has left-turn lanes with a raised median on Silverbell and right-turn lanes along with a 6-foot bicycle lane. He provided handouts showing maps of each of the intersections. He said that the 6-foot median might not be planted because it is too narrow. If it is planted, plants would need to be less than 30 inches to allow for good sight distance. Brad asked about right turns and Jason responded that traffic would merge across the bike lanes to make right turns. Gale Marsland asked how many cars would be stacked going left off of Silverbell at Sweetwater. Jason said there would be space to store 6 to 8 vehicles. Julie Prince commented that she would also like to see bike lanes on the side streets at intersections. Jason commented that the bike lanes on the side streets taper back to match the existing roadway configuration. On the west leg of El Camino del Cerro, Jason indicated that widening to provide an eastbound bike lane on the west leg would have private property impacts. Julie asked if the area where the raised median exists could be ~~reduced~~ *removed* to make room for a bike lane at the roadway edge. (Language in italics reflects requested changes.) Jason said that he would look into this.

At the Sweetwater intersection, Judith Meyer asked for clarification about the Unisource facility. Jason said that TEP is still indicating that it will be gone. Gale said that the 10-foot multipurpose lane is not shown. Andy commented that the road to the east might be expanded. Judith referred to lines on the maps that denote encroaching on a facility. Jason said this would be clarified.

At Goret, the same intersection configuration exists with exclusive left turn lanes. Frank Stryker asked about the possibility of landscaping at the northwest corner of the intersection. Andy said that this is possible and will be addressed in a vegetation plan. Gale said she sees no bike path there and Jason responded by saying that there would be striped shoulders on Goret to match the existing roadway configuration. He said he would check on this east of Goret. In response to a question from Brad, Jason said that the aerial map is from 2009.

For Grant Road, Jason reported that there would be dual left turns at the intersection and a bus pullout in the vicinity of the bank at the southeast corner of the intersection. Andy said that there is a possibility of a bus pullout on the west side of the intersection on Grant. Barbara Whitaker asked if there would be bus pullouts all along Silverbell. Jason said there would be none north of Goret. Andy said that 12 feet of pavement is required for bus pullouts. Julie asked about the status of a bike lane west on Ironwood Hills Drive. Jason said that existing striping would be maintained. Robert De La Cerda commented that there is an awkward placement of a bus stop on Grant just north of Silverbell. Andy said that an exclusive right-turn lane would be added there. Julie said that bicycle training rides often stage at the shopping center at the intersection. Gale asked that more information be provided about bus stops along the project area and requested that this topic be added to a future agenda.

Jason introduced the topic of access and median island openings. He provided handouts for the Task Force. He explained some of the terms used to describe access and median openings. He said that full access means right turns in and out and left turns in and out, and restricted access means left turns in but no left turns out, and right turns in and right turns out. He said that the criteria consist of safety, meeting arterial standards, traffic volumes, full median openings where possible, frequent U-turn opportunities and optimization of opportunities for median landscaping. Frank asked Jason to confirm that there would be a full median opening at the Silverbell Nursery. Jason did so. Hurvie Davis asked if standards for medians are in compliance. Jason said it has been a balancing act to meet the 660-foot requirement. Andy clarified that a 'design exception' would be issued and pointed out that there is a particular challenge at the Safeway Center on the west side of Grant and there would be a slight shift in the roadway alignment of Silver Sun. ~~Judith discussed the church near Camino Del Cerro where a full access median is shown but had indicated that the a traffic engineer informed them that this was a safety concern because it was too close to the intersection and should be right in and right out only. She requested that the City re-evaluate this.~~ Judith Meyer clarified her comments regarding the church driveway south of Camino del Cerro indicating the following: *At the time the church was being built, the Tucson Mountain Association was advised by a traffic engineer that it should be a right in, right out access only, for safety reasons. At that time, the TMA felt that 'it is unconscionable to make only right-in and right-out turns because there is no room for a person to perform a u-turn to get to the church coming from the north'. Now that a raised median is being proposed with 2 lanes in each direction, she is requesting that the issue of having a right in, right out only access be reviewed again.* (Language in italics reflects requested changes.)

Andy commented that the north bound to westbound movement is accommodated there and that it is similar to the configuration at the post office at Speedway and Silverbell. He said that he would look at the situation. He pointed out that the church property is in the County and the roadway is in the City. Jason agreed to revisit the church median access situation.

Frank asked about the possibility of small planters as medians between Grant and Goret. Jason reviewed the median configurations to point out where vegetation might be possible. Kendall raised the issue of Placita Sombra Chula shown on sheet 14 of the handout. It is north of Goret with 1st Street to the south. Andy said that he had met with Estes representatives to discuss reconfiguring the entryway. He said that left turns would be ok out of that subdivision. Someone said that the northwest corner of Goret and Silverbell is not City of Tucson property. Andy said that there are talks going on with the property owners.

Drainage crossings were reviewed and discussed by Jason. He said that this topic is a preview of more detail on drainage issues at the next meeting. He said that he wanted to clarify terminology. In general, Jason said that drainage crossings have the purpose of getting water under the roadway via pipes, culverts and bridges. Inlets and outlets consist of aprons, drops and channels. The PowerPoint presentation he showed will be posted on the web site. Gale asked if drainage crossings would accommodate wildlife. Jason said yes, and that would be discussed at the next meeting. Hurvie asked about vegetation in drainageways. Andy said this could be touchy. He said that the County and the Corps of Engineers are working to remove vegetation in areas designed for no vegetation. He said that a larger channel is needed where vegetation exists. Jason said that flows, flow velocities, and erosion are all part of the balancing act. Andy pointed out that the Corps of Engineers has jurisdiction on some watersheds and that they like sandy-bottomed watercourses.

6. Next Steps

The next meeting was announced for April 7. In response to a question, it was stated that the Task Force would meet throughout the summer. Jason presented another handout at this point illustrating the Silverbell Profile comparing the existing roadway grade and construction centerline with the proposed finished grade and construction centerline. He clarified that the grid in the handout stretches the vertical distance from 5 feet to 50 feet going east to west.

7. Call to the Audience

John Clark spoke about the median access between Camino del Cerro and Hills of Gold. He was concerned about the distance he would be required to travel to get to a location to make a U-turn.

Julian Hadland spoke on behalf of the elderly regarding safety and the overall budget crisis. He said that he is concerned about how fire trucks and other emergency vehicles

will make passage if both the shoulder and median are curbed. He said the friendly engineers from Marana said that there is a central turning lane north of Ina road on Silverbell road, so that if there is a real need for a median it can be installed later. He made comment about the minutes of the last meeting with reference to Calle Concordia having a large school, Canyon del Oro High School, adjacent to the roadway.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.