

# **Silverbell Road Task Force Wednesday, September 1, 2010**

## **Summary of Meeting #10**

The tenth meeting of the Silverbell Road Task Force (SRTF) took place from 6:10 to 7:30 p.m. at the Luz Academy cafeteria, 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  
Angela Wagner-Gabbard, Town of Marana Neighborhoods  
Robert De La Cerda, City of Tucson Neighborhoods  
Midge Hardy, City of Tucson Businesses  
Bradley Lang, City of Tucson Businesses  
Frank Stryker, City of Tucson Businesses  
Julie Prince, Tucson-Pima Bicycle Advisory Committee  
Josh Wright, Town of Marana Businesses  
Gale Marsland, Pima County Businesses

Absent were SRTF members Michael Mencinger, Regional Transportation Authority, and Hurvie Davis, Town of Marana Neighborhoods.

Also present were members of the Silverbell Road Project Team:

Andy Dinauer, Project Manager, City of Tucson Department of Transportation  
Jim Schoen, Project Manager, Kittleson & Associates consultant team  
Jason Simmers, Lead Engineer, Kittleson & Associates  
Rick Ellis, Project Manager, Pima County Department of Transportation  
Darlene Showalter, Landscape Architect, McGann and Associates  
Freda Johnson, Meeting Facilitator, Rillito Consultants  
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. Project Team members Andy Dinauer and Jim Schoen introduced themselves as well as did others on the project team. Observers introduced themselves.

### **3. Approval of SRTF Meeting Summary of August 4, 2010**

A correction was requested by Wain Cooper regarding the cost estimates for slopes compared to cost estimates for soil nail walls. He asked that the estimate for cut slopes should be corrected to show \$70,000, not \$170,000. This appears on page 3 in the last sentence of item b. Soil Nail Wall vs. Grade Slope Discussion. By general agreement the minutes were accepted with this modification.

By email, Michael Mencinger also asked that a revision be made to the August 4 minutes attributing comments to him, and not Hurvie Davis, as follows: ~~Hurvie Davis~~ *Mike Mencinger* (italicized text reflects requested changes) commented about the problems of maintaining roadway landscaping with budget cuts and trimming survivability.

### **4. Announcements**

#### **a. Review of Task Force Ground Rules**

Freda Johnson reviewed the ground rules established at the first meeting of the Task Force.

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

#### **b. Landscape Concept Discussion**

By general agreement, the discussion of landscape concepts was addressed first. Darlene Showalter reviewed the themes that had been presented at the August meeting. She said that she recommends merging the four elements into median nodes and use of classic pavers. In response to a question, she said that there is not a big difference in cost between standard pavers and other patterns. Barbara Whitaker said that she likes the patterns, as did Wain Cooper. Frank Stryker asked if pavers were absolutely necessary and wanted to know why they are better than plantings. He said that it appears that 80% of medians will be in nodes or noses. Andy Dinauer said that they are not necessarily continuous and that areas narrower than four feet will not be used for planting. Judith Meyer said that there should be decent looking pavers where we cannot have plants. Darlene clarified that within unincorporated Pima County it is required to have 100 feet of paving on bull noses. Plant height is limited at bull noses because it is a visibility issue.

Several people said that they like the effect of plants in medians and suggested that plants be used wherever possible. At the same time, people said they understand the need for good visibility and that safety is important not only for drivers but for animals. Brad Lang asked that the Task Force be given a better perspective on what the long-term maintenance impacts will be. In response to discussion about plants, Darlene said that vegetation would be maximized wherever possible. Discussion continued about the importance of colors that blend with the surrounding soil and that there be consistency throughout the project area. There was strong sentiment to minimize use of white with a preference for the natural colors of the terrain. Judith Meyer asked if medians would be a good location for public art. By general agreement, the plant themes presented were accepted by the Task Force. Darlene presented concepts for pedestrian node designs that included an eroded wall image, a bobcat footprint and water and geology images. All of these themes were deemed acceptable but several people spoke about the importance of emphasizing natural colors and simplicity in design. In response to a question, staff replied that there are between 10-15 pedestrian nodes

throughout the project area. Gale Marsland asked that there be shade and trees at pedestrian nodes. Staff said that the Design Concept Report would reflect the Task Force preference for natural colors and simplicity of designs.

There was a brief discussion about the nature of the multiuse path. Staff clarified that there will be some separation except in those situations where it will be next to curb around drainage structures. It was clarified that it would be asphalt, not concrete.

Darlene said that plants are being reviewed and there is a good selection that would require low water use. She said that invasive species will be addressed, especially the buffel grass problem. There was general and enthusiastic agreement about the approach that Darlene had presented for landscaping.

#### **a. Retaining Walls vs. Graded Slope Discussion**

Jim Schoen reviewed the differences between slopes or walls and said that he and the project team are looking for consensus from the Task Force on applications of these techniques. He pointed out that there is a 40% difference in cost between the two applications with the soil nail walls being more costly. Judith Meyer said that overall in the south half the cost difference is probably about \$500,000 and that is out of a \$40 million project. She said that the tradeoff is between costs and aesthetics. Some people said they don't care for the look of soil nail walls because they look artificial. Jason Simmers suggested that there could be contouring of walls across from the golf course. At the same time, Barbara Whitaker said that she wants to see soil nail walls in that area. Angela Wagner-Gabbard suggested that a compromise could be reached. Jason said that shorter walls could be applied in that area. Jason said that sloping back in the vicinity of the golf course is proposed because soil is needed for fill in other areas.

Judith Meyer pointed out that in Pima County the slope ordinance requires terracing. Jason said that the ordinance would likely require a 3:1 ratio but this project is proposing a flatter 4:1 ratio. There was general agreement that for private properties, walls would be incorporated and for public property both a wall and slope combination would be applied to reduce the grading impacts but still provide additional soils for fill. Plus recontouring the slopes, maybe with mini-benches, will be considered.

### **6. Next Steps**

Jim Schoen said that preliminary plans for the southern section would appear in the Design Concept Report and that this report would be given to the Task Force for review in October. It was proposed that the next meeting of the Task Force take place in November. He added that if there would be a report or statement or a letter from the Task Force this would be documented in the report. In response to a question from Wain Cooper, Jim said that the contents of the Design Concept Report summarize traffic needs, cost estimates, drainage and a recommendation for the landscape theme. Barbara asked that the document be sent to the Task Force. Angela commented that she would like to get public feedback before final comments are developed from the Task Force.

In summary, Jim said that the Design Concept Report would be sent to the Task Force in mid October and then there would be public meetings at the end of October. The next Task Force meeting would take place the first Wednesday in November.

## 7. Call to the Audience

(Copied from Mr. Hadland's typed notes) Julian Hadland, speaking on behalf of elderly residents, among others, of the Silverbell Rd. Corridor: First I would like to draw your attention to some omissions from the minutes of the previous two meetings.

At the meeting of June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2010 Mr. Jim Schoen said, "**If it is not clear that a consensus was reached on certain items, we can go back and review them.**"

At the meeting of August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010, in reply to a question about a HAWK crossing, Mr. Andy Dinauer replied: "**I have already answered that question a hundred times.**"

*(Per review of the taped meeting minutes Andy Dinauer said: "I'm going to answer that one more time for you. This is the third time I have answered this. We will address the need for a HAWK when we are doing the final design plans...")*

And then, about thirty seconds later, Mr. Andy Dinauer said: "**Is the school [Luz Academy] even going to be in existence when the project is completed?**"

*(As far as the "existence of the Luz Academy", Andy Dinauer's statement was in the context of the City of Tucson needing to address the warrants of the crossing during the final design rather than during the 30%/DCR phase because many things could change along the corridor before construction actually begins in 2013.)*

It would be appreciated if these omissions could be included in the minutes.

It is sad that some of those with responsibilities on the SFRT are not willing to make reasonable accommodations.

I have recently spoken to several more, even less elderly, residents who have affirmed that a **disproportionately large percentage of accidents are caused by drivers doing U-turns on divided roads, especially if the drivers' vision is obscured by trees and bushes in the curbed median.**

Do the members of the SFRT wish to be responsible for an increased number of accidents on Silverbell Rd?

It seems that some of the members of the SFRT are not listening to these words from the audience. However, *to those who intend to take action based on these words, I thank you for listening.*

## 8. Adjournment

**(The above is a summary of the September 1, 2010 Silverbell Task Force meeting, not verbatim minutes.)**