



MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: Wednesday, April 6, 2005

Purpose: Fern Valley Interchange Project
Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting

Distribution: CAC Members, Project Development Team, public

From: Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Date Prepared: April 7, 2005

CAC Attendees: Harry Page, Dan Sauro, David Lowry, David Lewin, Joan Haukom, Bill Rombach, Wendie Nichols, Dack Doggett, Pauly Hinesly, Mark Gibson,

CAC Absent: Bob Korfhage, George Cota

Project Team Attendees: Jerry Marmon, ODOT Environmental Project Manager
Debbie Timms, ODOT Project Manager
Brian Sheadel, ODOT Senior Designer
Peter Schuytema, ODOT Engineer
Christina Fera-Thomas, ODOT
Gary Leaming, ODOT
David Pyles, ODOT
Nancy Reynolds, URS Corp. Project Manager
Emily Moshofsky
Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Other Attendees: Jeff Welch, David Newby, Jim Zundel, Greg Holt, Bob Nelson, Gary Hall, Terry Helfrich, Sam Camp, Dick & Fran Flodstrom, Carlos DeBritto, Gary Woodring, Muriel Johnson, Carol Engle, John Graves, Angela Harding and Jim Wear

Review of agenda and process/Approve Minutes

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Vicki Guarino reviewed the agenda for tonight's meeting. She announced that Dan Sauro was moving from the area and this would be his last CAC meeting. She said project management team has no plan to fill the position because there is still a broad-based, qualified CAC membership representing the community to make project recommendations to the Project Development Team.

A request for approval of the Nov. 3, 2004 CAC Minutes was made. There were no corrections or additions. The minutes were approved as written.

2. Review Accomplishments to Date

Jerry Marmon, ODOT
Nancy Reynolds, URS

CETAS Update

Jerry Marmon reported that he and Nancy Reynolds presented the evaluation criteria to the CETAS group – federal regulators who meet and review project milestones. CETAS concurred with work done to date. This is an important review for the project, which has now passed two concurrence points and has two more to go.

Project Accomplishments

Nancy Reynolds reviewed key project accomplishments to date. She said the CAC began by reviewing the original purpose and need for this project that had been developed by the PDT (Project Development Team). Any alternatives developed must fulfill the purpose and need. From that, the CAC developed the desired community-based goals and objectives. The PDT and CAC then developed evaluation criteria and quantitative measures. The PDT developed 15 alternatives and 11 options. The CAC developed 9 additional alternatives. The PDT dropped 10 alternatives and 3 options so far. The CAC has recommended dropping 7 additional alternatives which the PDT will consider. An updated matrix on the remaining alternatives and options is nearly complete.

3. Existing Year Baseline Conditions

Christina Fera-Thomas, ODOT

Christina Fera-Thomas distributed a set of project-area maps showing existing and future (2030) traffic volumes at key points in the project area (maps in project file). She started by explaining how traffic volumes were developed – when and where traffic counts were taken. She described how volume and capacity information is analyzed and what mobility standards are used. Christina showed slides in around the project area illustrating current traffic flow situations. She then showed future volumes based on RVCOG data, focusing on over-capacity trouble spots. Christina explained the four main issues: congestion at the ramp terminal, delay on North Phoenix Road, and future trouble with southbound off- and northbound on-ramps. Also, future development will add volume to this area. The 2030 model includes updated land uses and anticipated future growth and development.

4. Modeling Presentation

Peter Schuytema, ODOT

Peter Schuytema referred to a PowerPoint presentation (slides were distributed prior to the meeting; in project file) and described the purpose and method of transportation modeling. Modeling attempts to answer many questions regarding transportation behavior in an area. Data is compiled from traffic counts, household surveys, land use, census, etc.

5. Alternative Screening Results

Peter Schuytema, ODOT

Peter Schuytema presented Technical Memorandum 1, results of the first level of analysis based on the modeling, which was distributed prior to the meeting (in project file).

Peter explained that purpose of this analysis was to get high level impact, rather than small detail, in order to screen out certain options. He reviewed each option that was recommended to be dropped because it would not have a significant impact on traffic on Fern Valley Road.

This modeling process used the updated RVCOG travel demand model to project future traffic conditions. A model scenario was created for each option and alternative, and results were compared on a relative basis. Scenarios include all the city, county and state projects outside the Fern Valley interchange area set to be funded in the next 20 years. The 2030 volumes assume substantial development in the northeast quadrant above and beyond the Home Depot.

In response to questions, participants discussed and clarified the level of analysis for this first model run. Peter explained that any alternative with less than 10% difference is not considered significant at this point because it's within the normal range of traffic volume variation in any given location.

In response to questions of funding, Christina said the starting point is the \$15 million in funds available for the west side and the bridge only. An additional \$3 million in federal funds has been received now, and there may be more in the current transportation bill.

Peter said this analysis is just the first stage. In this step, certain alternatives will be screened out, and the next level of modeling will be more in-depth and will flesh out in greater detail the potential benefits of and differences between alternatives in terms of capacity and other criteria.

Options

Peter said the off-system options for the new connection were evaluated under two different model scenarios – if it is built with nothing being done to the Fern Valley Interchange, and if Fern Valley gets built out to four lanes. The model runs assume that baseline level improvements are done. He described each option, the assumptions, and the results of the first stage of technical analysis.

CAC members voted to agree or disagree with the recommendation shown on the chart below. By the votes indicated below, the CAC agreed with all staff recommendations. These options and the CAC recommendations will be presented to the PDT.

Option	Recommendation	CAC Vote	
		Agree	Disagree
Option 4 – Fern Valley Connection to Bolz Ln	Drop	8	1
Option 5 – Fern Valley Connection to Cheryl Ave	Keep	7	1
Option 6 – Old South Stage Rd Overcrossing to N. Phoenix	Drop	8	2
Option 8 – First St Extension to Bear Lake Estates	Drop	8	1
Option 15 – Northridge Terrace Overcrossing	Keep	8	1

Alternatives

Peter resumed his presentation, discussing the project interchange alternatives. He explained that he looked at these alternatives with three different things in mind – comparing volumes, comparing capacities, and comparing travel times. Peter described how the alternatives would work and the impacts shown through the analysis.

The CAC voted on the recommendations as shown on the table below.

Alternative	Recommendation	CAC Vote	
		Agree	Disagree
Baseline Diamond	Keep for now – as control	--	--
Partial Cloverleaf	Drop	9	0
CAC Lowry SPUI	Keep	8	1
CAC Lewin SPUI	Keep	8	0
CAC Table 1 SPUI	Keep	6	3
CAC Table 3 SPUI	Drop	9	0
PDT Alt 1 SPUI	Drop	9	0
South Stage Diamond	Drop	8	3

6. New Option: Roundabout

David Lewin, CAC member

David Lewin described his intention to avoid a situation with multiple traffic lights and trying to come up with a somewhat different approach which limited impact on existing businesses, including access into Ray's. He described the direction of traffic flow in what he called a modified roundabout option. The roundabout would keep traffic flowing without stoplights. He acknowledged that there may be problems with this option, but wanted to present it in order to stimulate other ideas as to how to connect with Highway 99.

Project staff said they would present it to the PDT.

5. Public Comment

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Gary Hall recommended filling Dan Sauro's vacancy with someone from Phoenix city government in order to keep the same mix on the CAC. Vicki Guarino noted that the city also has two votes on the Project Development Team. Joan Haukom responded that she saw Dan as a representative of the Bear Lake Estates rather than as a Phoenix City Council representative, and so if a replacement is named, she would like to see the person represent that community.

Gary Woodering expressed concern about the lag time (approximately two years) between completion of the Home Depot and the construction of the interchange. Gary spoke with Art Anderson at ODOT about putting four lanes to the Home Depot on the east side; Art said that's up to the City of Phoenix. City of Phoenix has planning criteria that says urban services must be in place before a project is open.

Robert Mumby asked about the Bolz alternative which was described as bringing more traffic to Phoenix and providing better access to the west side of the valley. He expressed surprise that this alternative was turned down because he saw this as an advantage to the community to increase people coming to businesses. He said that made him wonder about the orientation of this committee.

David Newby said he was not clear on what the assumptions are for North Phoenix Road. He asked if it would be a four lane road from Barnett to Fern Valley. Peter Schuytema responded that all scenarios assume North Phoenix Road would be four lanes from Fern Valley Road to some distance north, although probably not all the way to Barnett. David mentioned the new developments along the area of North Phoenix Road near the Albertson's. Peter explained that that area would fall under Jackson County and the City of Medford jurisdiction.

Dan Sauro asked about federal regulations which require that any bridge across a freeway be perpendicular. Peter explained that there are height and width standards, but there is no requirement that it be perpendicular. Certain alternatives do have a maximum skew.

6. Adjournment

The next CAC meeting will be May 4, 2005.

The meeting adjourned at 9 p.m.