



## MEETING MINUTES

**Meeting Date:** January 3, 2007

**Purpose:** Fern Valley Interchange Project  
Citizen Advisory Committee, Project Development Team Meeting

**Distribution:** CAC Members, Project Development Team, Public

**From:** Sue Casavan, RVCOG

**Date Prepared:** January 2007

**CAC Attendees:** Bob Korfhage, Joan Haukom, Dack Doggett, Pauly Hinesly, Lee Carrau, Harry Page, Lenny Neimark, Tani Wouters, Mark Gibson, David Lewin, David Lowry, Terry Helfrich and Madison Taylor

**Project Team Attendees:** Jerry Marmon, ODOT Environmental Project Manager  
Debbie Timms, ODOT Project Manager  
Gary Leaming, ODOT Project information  
Brian Sheadel, ODOT Senior Designer  
Christina Fera-Thomas, ODOT  
Peter Schuytema, ODOT  
Nancy Reynolds, URS Project Manager  
Vicki Guarino, RVCOG  
Sue Casavan, RVCOG

**Other Attendees:** 41 members of the public signed in (sign-in sheet in file)

**PDT Attendees:** Jerry Marmon, Brian Sheadel, Christina Fera-Thomas, Peter Schuytema, ODOT; Jim Wear and Bruce Sophie, Phoenix; Nick Fortey, FHWA

## **1. Introductions, Review Agenda, Approve Minutes**

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Guarino began the meeting at 6:35 and explained that this was a joint meeting with the CAC (Citizen's Advisory Committee) and the PDT (Project Development Team). She introduced Bruce Sophie with the Phoenix City Council and said he would be joining the Project Development Team in the place of Murray LaHue. The committee started with introductions and reviewed the agenda for tonight's meeting. She asked committee members to review the CAC and PDT minutes for changes or corrections. Minutes were approved as presented.

## **2. Project Update**

Debbie Timms, ODOT

Debbie T. said that at the last meeting the committees had looked at the Crossing Diamond Interchange (CDI). She said tonight ODOT would present 4 east / west alternatives using the CDI. She added that Murray LaHue used to be the representative for the City of Phoenix and the City Council had appointed Bruce Sophie in his place and there have been some people speaking with ODOT who think the PDT voting member for Phoenix should be an engineer or staff person. She talked with some city people and thought as long as Jim Wear was on the team he could be the city engineer and if it was proposed to develop another position from what Bruce S. will be doing it would be a city choice and not a state choice. She suggested Joe Strahl might want to sit in to catch up and when Jim Wear leaves there would be someone to replace him.

Debbie T. explained that there are 4 alternatives on the table plus the CDI and people are still coming in with changes. She wanted to point out that the four chosen alternatives plus the CDI options will probably move into the evaluation criteria stage and the time to voice concern with changes will be when the document reaches the public comment period stage. Instead of going to ODOT, she said there will be an open public hearing and people can take their individual changes to the draft comment period and that is where people voice their concerns.

## **3. Bike / Pedestrian Sub-Committee Report**

Debbie Timms, ODOT

Debbie T. said there was a bike / ped meeting prior to the joint meeting tonight and also one a couple months ago. The members wanted ODOT to see if there was any way they could narrow the lanes and still accommodate bike/ped.

Brian S. said at the last meeting the committee discussed the cross-section on Highway 99 and ODOT was asked to see how they could accommodate the two through lanes in each direction and the dual left turn lanes at the Bolz intersection and how to best accommodate those elements in a cross-section as minimal as possible. He said he contacted the roadway people in Salem and proposed a minimum section, turn lanes, roadway travel lanes, and bike lanes to see if they would support it because it would require an exception to the design

standards. The team in Salem agreed it could probably work on Highway 99. Brian S. presented the cross-section to committee members.

- Two 11 ft. travel lanes
- Two 11 ft. turn lanes for the dual lefts at Bolz
- 1.5 ft. traffic separator
- 1 ft. shy
- 5 ft. separate bike path shoulder
- 6 ft. sidewalk

Debbie T. explained the traffic team said this would be the absolute minimum that they would accept and they did not say it was a 'for sure' thing. The majority of the committee members agreed that this was a good compromise. Debbie T. said when the committees get to bike / ped issues with other areas of the intersection the committee will be brought back.

#### **4. Alternative Highway 99 Scenario**

Christina Fera-Thomas, ODOT

Christina F. said they were asked to look at this alternative and the difference between this and essentially a no-build is the way the lanes connect from Fern Valley onto Highway 99.

- 3 lanes coming in
- 1 lane is an exclusive left
- 1 lane is an exclusive right
- Center lane is all directions - left, through, and right

She said what they found was:

- The v/c is over
- There is a continuous queue 0.5 mile past South Stage Road
- There is a continuous queue along Fern Valley Road that runs down to I-5 mainline

Nick F. asked for repeat of what the lane configuration was.

Christina F. explained, westbound to Fern Valley Road to Highway 99 there is an exclusive left going southbound, an exclusive right going northbound, and a center lane allowed to go left, through, or right.

Jerry M. added that based on the analysis that Peter and Christina have done the conclusion was that this is not a feasible alternative.

#### **5. Crossing Diamond Interchange: Traffic and Access**

Brian Sheadel and Peter Schuytema, ODOT

Brian S. and Peter S. presented 4 alternatives with the CDI for the Fern Valley Interchange project. Brian S. reviewed the traffic movements and facilities associated with the CDI and asked if there were any questions that came up since the last meeting.

David Lewin asked if disabled persons in wheelchairs or scooters using the pedestrian sidewalks would have difficulty getting across the intersections.

Brian S. responded that they would cross at a right angle at the shortest distance, crosswalks if possible. The sight distance and crossing movements would be made in small pieces, islands, looking for a break in traffic.

Mark G. wanted to make sure ODOT keeps in mind when going through the designs that they allow the potential for some sort of design to allow up and over movement of oversized levels.

Peter S. said there were a couple points to make relating to all the CDI options regardless of which one. He added that one thing about the CDI is that queues on the ramp terminals are definitely shorter than all the other options. The queues on the ramps themselves will be 200 feet about the same as the SPUI but shorter than the diamond loop. Shorter queues and better operations still reflect the positive operation. The v/c will be pretty much the same for all the alternatives, the lane configurations will not change.

#### **4 Lane CDI - PBA West / PBA East**

Brian S. explained his concern of the east side queues because of the proximity of the off-ramp terminal to the Petro truck base where the curvature of the crossover ends at the baseline of the truck bay.

He added that when trucks come from the southbound connection across the interchange it would be highly unlikely that they will see the correct configuration to make a lane change after they pass through the second crossover intersection. He said they have to make sure to allow enough time and distance for vehicles to make a legal lane change for turning into the truck base and what this means is 300-400 feet will be needed for time for a right turn. He explained other concerns that queues at North Phoenix Road will show 400 feet and will limit access along Fern Valley and in his opinion concerning truck operations it would not be safe to allow the direct connection from Fern Valley to the Petro truck base. There would not be enough maneuverable room to handle that in a safe manner.

Pauly H. asked if only trucks left the freeway earlier to turn right into the bay if there could be an off-ramp for trucks in that area.

Brian S. said that would be a slip-ramp and there would not be enough room for deceleration.

Tani W. commented that it could be alleviated with signage.

Mark G. added that truck stop traffic could be assigned to the right lane.

Peter S. said the engineering concept of the intersection itself is that the physical place where trucks cross is a small area and the functional area of the intersection is the area where you consider perception of reaction time, deceleration and braking distance. Drivers have to perceive and react and there is a point which includes actual distance traveled while perceiving and reacting. He said they needed to consider each conflict point in advance and do not want the points overlapping each other because that is where accidents occur.

He added that there would be a crossover with a right turn with the southbound terminal coming down, then there would be the downstream Petro fuel base all of which are close together and if all those different areas were layered on top of each other signing would not really work.

Pauly H. commented that she could easily see if there was an extra lane going out to the right that someone coming off the intersection there would be no right and she had not thought about that.

Debbie T. said to keep in mind that this type of interchange would require some strict access management and that this is the only way it is going to work and the committees need to balance and compare them.

Mark G. asked if there was any way to adjust the angle that the interchange crosses the freeway to allow for the bend at Pear Tree to be diminished.

Brian S. said he couldn't really change the shape because it was developed for a movement.

David Lowry suggested 3 lanes coming off so that the right hand lane was for the trucks.

Brian S. responded that it would put more distance with another lane and would become more of a problem.

Tani W. asked if the 6 lane CDI would change that.

Brian S. said it would create more places of confusion with all the lanes and would not change it.

David Lowry wanted to clarify his suggestion. He pointed out the two lanes where natural flow would be, a truck driver would make a decision to bear to the right and not follow through. He added he did not think they were talking about trying to cross three lanes, they do have to get across but the natural flow would be into the truck stop.

Harry P. asked if figure 2 solved part of this problem.

Brian S. responded that essentially it did.

David Lowry asked if the whole interchange could be rotated so the east side points more to the north creating space for the turn lane.

Brian S. suggested moving on to the other alternatives to see if that would answer their questions.

#### **4 Lane CDI – PBA West / TPAU East**

Debbie T. said she thought the committee decided which ones were narrowed down on the east and west side and that is what they were working with. She wanted to know if this was something new and different.

David Lowry commented that when they were considering the other options they didn't see this kind of interchange and he felt this changed everything.

Debbie T. asked the members if they wanted to go back and look at a CDI with new connections on the east and west.

David Lewin added that he thought this was more of a modification.

David Lowry asked why the design wouldn't go more perpendicular over the freeway with this option.

Brian S. responded that there is an advantage to keeping the alignments parallel across the freeway; existing facilities could be used while building the new facility. He added that when an existing facility crosses the proposed facility there are huge construction issues.

David Lowry asked if it was considered going into Bolz Road.

Brian S. said they wanted to keep the separation with Bolz and the old and new Fern Valley.

Debbie T. commented that she thought the committees were down to knowing what they were doing on either side and what she was hearing is that they wanted to go back and look at this again.

Committee responded no.

Peter S. commented that TPAU east has the shorter queues.

Lenny N. asked what caused the queues to be shorter.

Christina F. responded that the TPAU will push all the trucks through the intersection.

Woman from audience commented that traffic would be coming through the existing Fern Valley north southeast intersection twice.

Peter S. responded traffic would only go through twice if they were going from the south and coming from Fern Valley they would turn right on S. Phoenix Rd and make another immediate right onto Fern Valley. He added that traffic would not be in the neighborhood when going around.

Terry H. asked if there was enough queuing for a series of 3 or 4 trucks.

Indecipherable due to multiple speakers

Joan H. asked if there would be a signal at Breckenridge.

Peter S. said no there would not be.

Madison T. commented that theoretically if you were driving a car and wanted to go to Iron Skillet you would have to go through the truck bays or the gas station.

Indecipherable due to multiple speakers

#### **4 Lane CDI – PBA West / N. Phoenix Thru East**

Brian S. explained the traffic movements.

Joan H. asked what the signalization would be at the now existing North and South Phoenix Road across Fern Valley.

Peter S. response was inaudible due to multiple speakers

Woman from audience commented that Breckenridge from Meadowview to Fern Valley was the same as from Breckenridge at Fern Valley up to above Home Depot; it was not halfway to Medford.

Harry P. said they just did a good job of separating the east and west side.

David Lowry added that visually looking at it, it seemed it would be difficult for businesses to get deliveries.

Debbie T. explained that what the team was trying to do was show all of the alternatives.

She added that they would finish the presentation and she hoped next month the committee could go through the evaluation criteria to get people's opinions on each one like what was previously done.

#### **4 Lane CDI – Bolz West / N. Phoenix Thru East**

Peter S. explained the traffic movements. He said this was very similar to the previous alternative. He explained that this was the best and most efficient alternative and it would run much better and smoother in the future. He added that it concentrated the traffic in one spot and this configuration offered the best chance for operation.

David Lewin said with the CDI we are talking smaller lanes, with the SPUI or diamond interchange we are talking about 6 lanes, so we are comparing 4 travel lanes with the CDI and 6 lanes with the others.

Brian S. said that was correct.

Terry H. commented that on the Bolz alternative looking at the queuing he did not see Rose Street on there and thought if Rose Street was thrown in as an arterial parallel with Highway 99 it might help move traffic through.

Peter S. responded that local residents probably use it now and it probably would not pull traffic off of Highway 99 because the through traffic would still use Highway 99 to get to the freeway.

Terry H. added that on the west side of Talent and the west side of Phoenix there is a lot of rural property and if they used Rose Street and got on Bolz it would be a straighter shot. Debbie T. said that through this process ODOT would not put money into improving Rose Street.

Dack D. commented that it would connect with Bolz and take out residential with huge impacts and there is no median on Highway 99.

Brian S. said it was the same process with Highway 99 as we have seen with all the other alternatives.

Debbie T. said she thought the things to remember was that these are the east and west side options that the committees asked to move forward and this is a collaborative effort. She added that ODOT was asked to bring back the options for the two sides and what we need to know now is would the committee like us to take these and bring them back with criteria so we can discuss them individually or if the entire team wants us to look at something totally new, we need to know that.

Tani W. said she thought Bolz Road was just kind of thrown in there.

David Lowry commented that when the committee was looking at the SPUI, at that point the SPUI had to go perpendicular across the freeway. He added that with this new type of interchange it could go on an oblique angle and as a result it could make more Bolz Road options viable that were not before. He thought if the committee had that flexibility before that the voting would have been different.

Debbie T. asked the committee if they wanted ODOT to redraw something new connecting to Bolz Road in a different configuration. She said we can do that and bring it back in February or March or is the committee still at the point where they voted for four and adding a different interchange type to the four connections being made so we can compare them in February.

Jerry M. wanted to know if there was an interest with the Table 1 West Side connecting with the CDI and with the original alignment and said both of these are still on the table.

David Lowry said he has gotten feedback from people who would like to see North Phoenix Road be the main through street over the overpass and there are two options where that is true and he would personally like to see those drawn so they connect with Bolz Road.

Nancy R. asked if the connection into Bolz using the CDI was narrower than the one that is currently there.

Brian S. said the lane configuration would be the same, the same width.

David Lowry thought the Bolz West / N. Phoenix thru East was a good option and thought it might be important to other people also.

Debbie T. said we could come back and start matching it with the criteria.

David Lewin said he thought what they were talking about was a Bolz connection with the TPAU east, rotating it about 15 degrees so it comes up between Peterbilt and Petro.

Tani W. asked why they would need to do the Bolz Road / TPAU East. She said the queues are the same and we are looking at sections that do not change, it is like we are stepping back.

Debbie T. asked the committee if ODOT could give them more information and move on with the presentation.

Committee agreed to move forward with that.

Peter S. commented that Bolz West / N. Phoenix thru East had substantial benefit over the others.

Debbie T. commented that she thought the thing to remember here is that we are now looking at 2 new alternatives with the same east and west options and we will go back through and get comments from each of you. She advised committee members to look at all aspects of the alternatives.

David Lowry said that truckers and orchardists were very concerned about the sharp turn and it would be expedient if it was drawn in a more realistic way.

Brian S. added that the way it was drawn now was in its worse-case scenario.

Debbie T. said at the next meeting the committee will look at the alternatives with the full criteria and that will be the point where they bring up comments.

Peter S. reminded the committee that the median on Highway 99 will still be required on all options between Fern Valley and Bolz because the turn lanes overlap each other. He explained where the medians would be located.

Tani W. said she thought the full length of the median was different than what she remembered from the original maps. She wanted to know if they would be able to look at emergency vehicle access next meeting.

Debbie T. suggested sending out materials with ample time to study before the next meeting.

Tani W. said it was really helpful to get the materials ahead of time.

David Lewin asked if ODOT was bringing the SPUIs and the diamond back next time.

Jerry M. said ODOT will bring forward the 4 alternatives that the committee voted on last time plus the CDI alternatives.

## **6. Next Steps**

Debbie Timms, ODOT

Combined and discussed in alternative presentations.

## **7. Public Comment**

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Nancy Leever said that she and her husband wanted ODOT to take a serious look at the CDI interchange and they thought it was way superior to other interchanges.

Don Mitchell thanked ODOT and the CAC for all the hard work. He thought there was a way to eliminate one-quarter of the northbound traffic. He explained that coming from the south to the north, take the right hand lane of the freeway and divert into the truck stop with the opportunity to add a divergence to continue which would be the left hand lane. Use the existing right hand lane as a through gradual curve and take the right hand lane from the freeway as a partial frontage road into the truck stop. That would eliminate taking the trucks onto the overpass, at least coming from the south. He said the people on the west side have problems enough and the queuing up to South Stage Road, ODOT knows how to fix that. He added that for the people on the east side anything we can do to eliminate traffic by their homes should be considered. He commented that years ago ODOT had changed the route of Bear Creek, straightened the channel leaving two great big pits in the city of Phoenix. He thought the new storm drainage system could change the wetland status for those pits and allow them to be filled.

Bob Furry said he was relatively new to the whole process and wondered if the advisory group had public meetings so the public could understand the different things that ODOT was presenting to the committee and it could be discussed on a community level.

Tani W. commented that there was the Chamber of Commerce and citizen's groups and she could give him that information.

Bob Furry asked if ODOT will come back with new programs of Bolz or Fern Valley and how they crossover.

Debbie T. explained that a few months ago this team forwarded 4 alternatives and after that ODOT came up with this new interchange type, they will look at them with the same east / west connections and they will critique them based on evaluation criteria. She added that the city has had some workshops that involved some of the citizens, if you have an issue and you want to speak to ODOT that would be fine.

Bob Furry asked if the citizens that come here would be able to meet with the advisory group in an open council floor on a one-to-one.

Vicki G. responded that this would be something he could work out with the community, the City Council has had meetings and he could access information on the ODOT website.

Madison T. added that each one of the CAC members represented a certain group and that the representative could listen to him and represent his view.

Debbie T. said there would also be a public hearing.

Mike McKee asked Brian S. that with this new crossing design had he been in contact with their department to find out why they built on the ground versus in the air.

Brian S. it had to do with the ground facility, the lay of the land, and what was there before.

Mike McKee commented that looking at this one, it appeared it would be easier to do the structure on the ground and he thought the cost would be less.

Rosalie Lindvig said she was in favor of the CDI and has watched the whole process. She was not in favor of Bolz Road. She was in favor of Fern Valley going straight through. She was not in favor of a cul-de-sac in front of Petro.

Phoenix Fire Chief said he was asked to make comments on the CDI with the median on Bolz Road and Cheryl and was not exactly sure how long the comment period was and wondered if the department would have sufficient time to make comments.

Debbie T. said ODOT would be working with the fire department on access issues.

## **8. Comfort Check**

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Brian Sheadel – I feel good about this.

Jerry Marmon – I am good, glad we are not taking a step back, we'll get through this and figure out which alternative will work and that is the goal.

Peter Schuytema – I am fine with the progress, we are moving forward and I feel like we are on track.

Christina Fera-Thomas – I think it is going the way it should.

Nick Fortey – I think the CDI is innovative and worth taking a look at, the only thing I can stress is the importance of how to make the operation work with the truck traffic, it is a sizeable investment.

Jim Wear – I would like to ask if at the next meeting we could have more than one projector so we can see two alternatives side by side, I think it would help us take some off the table.

Bruce Sophie – I am ready to look at some criteria.

Terry Helfrich – I am pleased with the progress and I think we are down to 3-4 strong alternatives with good merit.

Harry Page – I felt pretty optimistic at the last meeting, going into this one I was afraid we were going to back into deep analysis but I think we are coming out of it. Let the engineers do their job and let us know what we need to decide on at the next meeting and that would be great.

David Lewin – Looking forward to the next meeting.

Bob Korfhage – I ditto that, looking forward to the analysis.

Joan Haukom – Very excited to see the CDI and looking forward to the next meeting.

Pauly Hinesly – I like the CDI very much but I am confused about the east side and the west side.

Mark Gibson – I am happy with the progress and looking forward to the next meeting.

David Lowry – We have to make sure we don't overlook how the trucks are handled, that has an unusually large impact on the interchange.

Dack Doggett – I like the CDI but I always get really uncomfortable when you start talking about Bolz and the impacts and changing the footprint of the town, it feels like we are going backwards in that area. I am concerned about the impacts the Bolz option would have in taking businesses and homes. Looking forward to seeing how this will come out next meeting.

Lenny Neimark – I think the CDI is a tremendous opportunity for us but it is also an opportunity for us to go back where we were a year ago, hope we keep in mind what delayed all this for a year, coming up with solutions that will address impacts and livability to people and not just engineering numbers out of a box.

Tani Wouters – I agree with all of that, I don't want us to be back there with all of that. We need to stay focused. It would be great to get the material ahead of time so we can analyze it.

Madison Taylor – Getting the information ahead of time was very helpful and that would be great.

Nancy Reynolds – Sometimes it feels a little chaotic and we are doing it and doing it real well.

## **9. Agenda Build for Next CAC Meeting**

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Vicki G. asked members if they had any thoughts on agenda items for the next meeting. Debbie T. informed members that ODOT would be working with the City of Phoenix Interchange Management Area Plan (IMAP). She said ODOT will probably ask some of the CAC members to be part of this project also. Vicki G. said if they thought of anything to add to the next agenda to please contact her.

## **10. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.