



## MEETING MINUTES

**Meeting Date:** March 7, 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:** March 2007

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

**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  
John McDonald, ODOT  
Nancy Reynolds, URS Project Manager  
Vicki Guarino, RVCOG  
Sue Casavan, RVCOG

**Other Attendees:** 45 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, Bruce Sophie and Joe Strahl, Phoenix; Dale Petrasek, Jackson County

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

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Guarino began the meeting at 6:37 and explained that this was a joint meeting with the CAC (Citizen's Advisory Committee) and the PDT (Project Development Team). She said the purpose of this meeting was to look over the decisions that were made last month and for the project team to give additional information. Vicki G. asked if there were any changes or corrections to the February meeting minutes. Minutes were approved as presented. She said they had recently put out a newsletter about the project which contained detailed drawings of the 2 alternatives to be forwarded into the Environmental Assessment for detailed analysis. The newsletter also contained design features for each alternative and a schedule for the project. She added that there is a lot more work to do and decisions to be made.

## **2. Project Update / Recap Voting**

Debbie Timms, ODOT

Debbie T. thanked everyone for getting through this first big step, appreciated all the hard work and everyone's input. She wanted to clarify what was voted on and what it means. She said that the CAC recommended forwarding two alternatives to the PDT and the PDT concurred with the two alternatives and they will be forwarded into what is called a draft environmental process. The two alternatives will be looked at and a detailed footprint will be laid out. The technical teams will look at impacts based on the footprint (biology, wetlands, special economics, archaeology, etc.) She added that there will be a 30-day public comment period and during that time an open public hearing. The teams will gather all information and come back to the team to present the information. The two alternatives on the east side will be reviewed equally with all the technical information and narrowed down. Debbie T. said she would encourage people within the next few months to submit ideas they may have, she could not guarantee all analysis would be done but it will get back to the design team. Jerry M. added that the project was moving into the draft Environmental Analysis (EA) starting the comment period. He said there are two functions of the comment period, the first is to comment on the build alternatives that will be evaluated in the document and the second is if someone has an alternative that they think ODOT has missed this would be the time to bring it forward. He emphasized that process was not closed by any means. Debbie T. added that there will be a lot more meetings, processes, and time for input. David Lewin asked if suggestions were welcome to submit for preliminary overview for viability. Debbie T. responded yes but added to remember in the next few months that anything submitted if it involved taking time from Brian or Christina they could not guarantee they would have time for a detailed analysis, it would just be quick analysis. She said however, if a working group comes together before that and finds something in the middle she would encourage them to submit it.

### 3. Brainstorming Option Refinements

Brian Sheadel, Peter Schuytema, Christina Fera-Thomas, Debbie Timms of ODOT Brian S. started with the west side alternative saying there were no changes but presented it more three-dimensional. He added that the lines on both sides were cut-fill lines. David Lewin asked if everything was 2 lanes in each direction and Brian responded yes. David Lewin added that it would be 6 lanes wide on Highway 99 with the two left turn lanes and the directional travel would be 2 lanes north and 2 lanes south and Brian responded that was correct.

Joe S. asked Brian S. to discuss constructability issues of the CDI and how it would be phased and developed with the existing interchange. Brian S. said the key will be to develop a plan that will maintain the functionality of the interchange during construction and it will be one of the biggest challenges. He added that the new interchange will be built pretty much on top of the old and that study will be part of the tech reports, identifying the stages of the plan. He said he did not currently have that information. He discussed the existing bridge as having enough room to build the new bridge while maintaining traffic on the old and the biggest challenge would be keeping the ramps open.

Debbie T. asked Brian S. if there were any ideas of how bike and pedestrian issues would be addressed. Brian S. said the bike facilities were in the design process and they will be on Highway 99, Fern Valley, and the North Phoenix extension. He added that running a bike path up to the crossing intersections would be considered in the next month or two.

#### **TPAU East**

Brian S. explained the traffic movements, access issues. David Lewin asked if there was a filter lane for trucks coming off the interstate to make the right turn. Brian S. said it was part of the regular lane and explained that with the high left turn volume going on to North Phoenix one of the through lanes becomes a left turn lane.

David Lewin asked if a truck would have to come to a complete stop. Brian S. said it would have to make a complete stop according to the signal. Jerry M. asked David L. that when he was talking about a filter lane if he meant a dedicated right turn lane.

Brian S. asked Christina what the volumes were and she said the through volume is really low; 130 cars go straight through and she thought it was 150 turning right including trucks. David Lewin said he thought one of the big issues with TPAU East was the potential for traffic congestion at this intersection. Brian S. said the potential exists for that to happen and the mitigation for that would be to have a right turn lane but we are not seeing a need for that right now. He added that it relates more to the heavy right turn westbound on Fern Valley and northbound onto North Phoenix and this was the critical move for this intersection.

David Lewin said the trucks could get to Petro relatively easily without getting caught up in traffic but when they are trying to get back to the interstate they might get caught up at the traffic signal. Christina F. said that is where we get that fairly long queue heading northbound on South Phoenix Road and they do need to wait for the green light to go.

Mark G. asked if the left turn northbound would be a dedicated left. Christina F. thought it was protected and had to be dedicated. He asked about a flashing yellow light and Peter S. responded because that left turn is also posing the very heavy right turn there is too much movement there to have a flashing yellow.

David Lewin asked if the residential traffic from Breckenridge would also be subject to queuing there. Brian S. said the volumes are relatively low and the queues will be low also so it would not really be an issue.

Jerry M. asked the members if they were interested in connecting bike/ped to old Fern Valley Road and bringing them up somewhere by the interchange off-ramp. Brian S. said what he perceived was a connection to a certain landing point, nothing elaborate, just a place to get up to the Fern Valley alignment from the old Fern Valley alignment.

### **CDI / North Phoenix Thru**

Brian S. said the west side remained the same but instead of the CDI sharing the existing alignment it pushes off to the north and there was some advantage with a built-in detour alignment when building the new interchange.

David Lewin said some people are concerned with how close the alignment is to Home Depot. Brian S. explained that part of it is on the property but does not get into the building itself and he had worked with their engineers during the development to get the building located in a way that it would miss.

Brian S. explained the traffic movements.

David Lewin asked in terms of truck and car traffic heading south into the residential neighborhood or to Petro, if there was a filter lane for the traffic to keep moving. He was concerned with trucks stopping and starting costing time and fuel.

Brian S. said there are 2-through lanes heading north and a right turn lane. He added that they would still have to stop, but could make a free right and a dedicated right turn lane could be added later.

Joe S. asked how many lanes would accommodate the left turn movement for trucks coming back from Petro and coming back to the interchange. Brian S. said it would be a single left turn lane.

Lenny N. asked Christina F. is there was a count on the number of trucks coming out of there making a left turn in either of the designs. Christina said she does have a percent of trucks for all the movements but did not have that information with her but could get it to committee members.

Harry P. asked if there was a right hand lane straight through the intersection going north. Brian S. said it is a through lane and a right, one lane for both.

David Lewin asked if it was just one lane going across Fern Valley. Brian S. said it is one lane heading north and one lane heading south.

Jim W. asked how far from Fern Valley and the road that comes down to the north intersection would there be full access. Brian S. said a lot of it would depend on the road configuration.

David Lewin commented that at one point in time there was a discussion on a connection of TPAU East going directly over Meadowview and wondered if that was still part of the discussion. Brian S. said it does not provide the needed functionality and he did not see the benefit of taking it straight through.

## 4. Interchange Area Management Plan (IAMP)

John McDonald, ODOT

John M explained that an IAMP incorporated the following:

- An “Interchange Area Management Plan” – a plan for managing the Fern Valley Interchange and surrounding area through 2030.
- A joint agency plan expressing Phoenix and ODOT’s management objectives.
- A plan to protect the function & capacity of the interchange – i.e. “managing the margin.”

He said that people researching transportation have noticed that there are certain cycles that communities go through. There are improvements, improvements lead to increased access ability, lead to increased value, lead to land use changes, increase generation of traffic, deterioration of the traffic flow, leads back to arterial improvements. The IAMP will help develop management tools for the city of Phoenix in such a way that when development occurs and generates an increase in traffic volume, the transportation system would be managed to help Phoenix be viable and sustain livability.

John M. showed aerial photos of the following to demonstrate why an Interchange Area Management plan is needed:

### **Fern Valley Interchange ca. 1965**

- No commercial development near the interchange.
- Residential (urban) development limited to west of Bear Creek.

### **Fern Valley Interchange ca. 1987**

- Commercial development southeast of interchange.
- Residential (urban) development expands east to I-5.

### **Fern Valley Interchange ca. 2004**

- Commercial development occurring in all corners of the interchange.
- Residential (urban) development expands to the east of I-5.

### **Fern Valley Interchange ca. 2030?**

- Further residential, commercial, and industrial development either planned or possible – particularly east of I-5.

### **Proposed Urban Reserves**

PH-5 Proposes:

- Primarily industrial
- Some residential and commercial

PH-10 Proposes:

- Primarily residential
- Some commercial

MD-5 Proposes:

- Primarily residential
- Some industrial and commercial

John M. said this will give some kind of idea of what to expect in the next 30-40 years, we know change is coming so what kinds of management tools do we need in order to best prepare so when change does occur we will be ready to deal with it.

### **Potential IAMP Management Tools**

Transportation System Management (TSM)

- traffic control, lane striping, signing.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

- TDM strategies, transit service, multi-modal facilities.

Land Use Strategies

- overlay zones, modification of allowable uses, trip cap allocation ordinances, zone changes, Comprehensive Plan amendments.

Incorporation of Phoenix Comprehensive Plan, zoning code, and development ordinances.

### **IAMP Future Effects**

- Increased quality in balancing LU&T: better planning leading to better management decisions.
- Recognition of the importance of Access Management to interchange area safety & operations: balancing mobility & access.
- Increased predictability among Local Governments, ODOT and developers.
- Protection of facility improvements through 2030.
- Responsible stewardship of public investments for interchange facilities.

## **5. Next Steps**

Debbie Timms, ODOT

Debbie T. said there would be a couple months of design to identify footprints so the proper technical teams could start evaluating the footprints. Nancy R. said the technical reports would probably start in a couple months. Debbie T. added that this group would not meet for awhile but updates would be available. John M. asked the committee members to consider being on the IAMP committee. He added that it was very important to the success of the IAMP that people who understand and have been involved be part of the process. He said it would be one day a month should take about 5 months and highly encouraged members to consider the committee.

David Lewin asked when the IAMP committee would start and John M. said probably in April.

## **6. Public Comment**

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

John Graves – He said in all this discussion he did not hear much discussion on the air quality impact. A lot of 4-way stops are being put in and you all know that a truck gives off bad air at every stop creating bad air quality for the residents. I think the environmental impacts will be critical.

Jerry M. said there was an air quality section in the document; two elements, regional conformity and project specific ‘hotspot analysis’ which will be looking in detail at air quality issues.

## **7. Comfort Check**

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Jerry Marmon – I am great, just wanted to take some time to thank the CAC, you have put in the last two years or more, I really appreciate it and I think we are in a great spot, we have come a long way and I just wanted to thank you all.

Peter Schuytema – Fine.

Christina Fera-Thomas – Fine.

Jim Wear – I want to commend John McDonald for his information on the IAMP.

Joe Strahl – Fine.

Bruce Sophie – Fine, just waiting for the environmental impact studies and we can go forward from there

Dale Petrsek – Nothing new.

Terry Helfrich – I’ll pass.

David Lewin – I am looking forward to the next step.

Bob Korfhage – No other comments.

Joan Haukom – I want to say thank you to the community for all their involvement.

Harry Page – It works for me.

Mark Gibson – I am glad we took the extra time to look at this, I think it is worth it.

David Lowry – No comments.

Dack Doggett – Great, thank you.

Lenny Neimark – Just want to echo the comments in the editorial in the Mail Tribune “Three Cheers to ODOT” and I would like to extend that to the City of Phoenix and to everybody sitting out here who has worked so long and hard who have worked through some difficult times and I think everyone has done a tremendous job.

Tani Wouters – I agree with that I think it has been a challenge to have the entire community come together and I look forward to the next steps.

Lee Carrau – I just have a little trouble, it will probably exceed my anticipated lifetime.

Nancy Reynolds – Nice job and the process works, I know it is crazy sometimes but it does work.

Debbie Timms – I appreciate everyone’s time and effort, thank you.

## **8. Adjournment**

Vicki G. thanked everyone for their time and said there would not be any meetings for quite some time but that updates will be available on the ODOT website. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.