



MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: November 1, 2006

Purpose: Fern Valley Interchange Project
Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee Meeting

Distribution: Bike/Ped Subcommittee, CAC Members, Project Development Team, Public

From: Sue Casavan, RVCOG

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Bike/Ped Attendees: Carolyn Bartell, Rosalie Lindvig (for Pat Folger), Terry Rombach, Brian King, Chris Haynes, Edgar Hee, Craig Anderson, and Jim Wear

Project Team Attendees: Jerry Marmon, ODOT Environmental Project Manager
Debbie Timms, ODOT Project Manager
Gary Leaming, ODOT Project information
Brian Sheadel, ODOT Senior Designer
Vicki Guarino, RVCOG
Sue Casavan, RVCOG

Other Attendees: 13 members of the public signed in (sign-in sheet in file)

1. Introductions

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Guarino began the meeting at 6:50 and explained that this was not a regular Fern Valley Interchange committee meeting and there would be no public comment or questions. The CAC will meet on December 6th and public comment will be heard. The Bike/Ped Subcommittee will make recommendations to the CAC. She said tonight's meeting will take a closer look at bike/ped issues on Highway 99.

2. Subcommittee Purpose and Goal

Debbie Timms, ODOT

Debbie T. explained that this subcommittee will help work through bike/ped business impact issues on Highway 99 and will concentrate on the Highway 99 corridor. She said this will be a joint effort where we can hear each others views and opinions with respect and come up with some integrated, cooperative way to address the problem on Highway 99. She added that there has been some talk about a Transportation Growth Management (TGM) grant which helps communities develop their downtown core areas. ODOT is not allowed to apply for the funds but the city is allowed to apply and she thought that would be a great idea. She would like the committee to get all the issues out on the table see if members could come up with some kind of compromise.

3. Overview of Project

Debbie Timms, ODOT

Debbie T. reminded members that the purpose and need of this project is to address safety, capacity, and operations of the interchange system and the roads in connection to the interchange. She said it was important for the committee to concentrate on the purpose and need and not the 'us and them' issue. She added that you cannot build a road without someone in some way being impacted.

4. Bicycle and Pedestrian Regulations

Debbie Timms, ODOT

The following documents were given to committee members.

- City Transportation System Plan (TSP)
The city comprehensive plan has a chapter on transportation systems and improvements dated 1999. There is a requirement for new or reconstructed arterials in the City of Phoenix to require a bike lane but some of language is confusing as to where it should be.
- Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS)
Handout to committee members
- ODOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Debbie T. said she wanted the committee to get together as a team and Brian S. could show us things that we could work on together.

Carolyn B. wanted the committee members to know what the citizens of Phoenix are doing. She said as citizens we are concerned about keeping the livability of Phoenix and we are circulating a petition asking the city officials to take jurisdiction of Highway 99. We have had an overwhelming positive response and she wanted to share with committee what the townspeople want.

Jerry M. asked if the city been involved with that and added that city transfers come with a lot of burden in terms of maintaining the facility.

Carolyn B. said they had just had a workshop with the city and started discussion. She added that they know there are cost issues but she felt the city officials wanted to keep the town intact and that they are working on sharing more information and coming together.

Jerry M. asked what the overall goal or outcome would be if the city takes jurisdiction.

Carolyn B. responded that the citizens will have a say in what happens to Highway 99 and they we would like to have more control of what will happen in their city.

Jim W. said he would like to see the city get jurisdiction. He asked if Phoenix did take jurisdiction and did the very minimal cross-section on Highway 99 and needed to build in the future would they lose the opportunity of getting state or federal dollars to correct future problems.

Jerry M. said he didn't think there was a restriction on eligibility for funding.

Debbie T. said we will look into it further but my understanding is there are modernization funds inside city limits. It is a good question and we need to take it back and make sure.

5. Design Charette

Brian Sheadel, Debbie Timms, and Jerry Marmon, ODOT

Brian S. explained the two cross-sections to the committee. Jerry M. said the committee is encouraged to have open dialogue and discussion and if other design issues come we can take them back and evaluate them.

Highway 99 Reduced Impact Cross-section

- 6 foot sidewalks
- 14 foot outside travel lane with shared bike lane
- 11 foot travel lane
- 28 foot left turn lanes southbound and northbound with median (90 feet total)

Carolyn B. asked what the total width of this cross-section was and what it is currently at Ray's Market.

Brian S. responded that it is 78 ft. curb to curb not including the 12 ft. sidewalks. The existing is 65 ft. curb to curb with 6 ft. sidewalks.

Craig A. asked if this was an STA would you be able to use narrower lanes.

Brian S. said it would not pass for STA, there was too much truck volume.

Jim W. asked to define the north and south boundaries of this project.

Brian S. responded, Coleman Creek to north and past the right turn lane to the south.

Edgar H. asked why there were side-by-side left turn lanes.

Brian S. said there is certain volume of traffic that needs to be queued up to turn left.

Terry R. asked how close you can get to a building before it affects the building and Brian S. responded that it is a case by case scenario.

Comments:

Craig A. said a 14 ft. outside lane is roughly what we have today. This is part of my commute and I am okay but we need to look out for people who do not have the experience,

particularly kids. Maybe there is a way to squeeze out a few feet to get a 16 ft. outside lane and give a 5 ft. bike lane which I think would be sufficient.

Craig A. suggested the following:

10 ft. center turn lane

11 ft. travel lanes

½ ft. median

1 ft. shy distance

5 ft. bike lanes

Edgar H. said he somewhat seconded that and gave an abstract to the group from FHWA bicycle manual. He said the abstract showed how fast the traffic was going and the class of cyclist. The design table is based on speed and average ADT (Average Daily Traffic). He added that what we are trying to do from a quality of life perspective is to encourage more people to cycle and that is one of the goals of the RTP.

Jerry M. asked Edgar H. how the Greenway played into it when he was talking about level of user.

Edgar H. responded that it is great facility but if someone was trying to get to the neighborhood across from Pear Tree to Angelo's you would not use the Greenway and that a person should be able to use Highway 99 as a transportation corridor.

Chris H. said the narrowest footprint is the closest to what I understand is how the Phoenix citizens are trying to make the community livable and minimize impact. I share those goals. The downside is it does not move farther than what you currently have today towards a livable community. He wondered if speeds could be reduced on Highway 99 by narrowing lane widths.

Terry R. asked how wide bike lanes have to be.

Edgar H. said it depended on the speed of the traffic, on neighboring traffic speed, and volume.

Terry R. said he could not understand the justification to alter Highway 99 to accommodate a small percentage of people riding bikes. That is my objection.

Chris H. said let me respond with a philosophy I hear in transportation issues. Try to think about how we measure the quality of society, how we care for the least advantaged citizen. People that we look to and honor are those that do it well. Carry that into the transportation system. System effectiveness can be measured by how well the system takes care of the least advantaged user. People need an effective, safe way to walk. You don't see many people using the sidewalk but we need to have the option for the least advantaged user.

Edgar H. added that this is a quality of life issue, unfortunately this valley will grow whether we like it or not. As more people use the road you are in a situation where ODOT is asked to improve the facilities which means widening with more lanes and more traffic more parking spaces. The quality of life vision is to reduce the VMT (vehicle miles traveled) per capita by 5% in this region.

Carolyn B. said what she saw on the maps was a lot of impact. I hear everyone saying this sounds good, but it is not enough. We do want Phoenix to be pedestrian friendly, but if you look at this intersection it already does that. It will impact so many businesses and access.

Rosalie L. said she agreed with Carolyn and people should think about the fact that if all these businesses close vehicles will have to travel farther because there won't be any local businesses.

Jim W. asked for clarification of what Craig A. said. With the existing footprint shown here including the 6 foot sidewalks and narrower lanes is it legal in Oregon to reduce it this much. Brian S. answered that in order to legally go down to 10 foot lanes for this particular project it would require an exception and would have to be approved.

Highway 99 Minimum Bike / Path Shoulder

- 6 foot sidewalks
- 5 foot bike lane
- 11 foot outside travel lane
- 11 foot inside travel lane
- 28 foot left turn lanes southbound and northbound with median (94 total feet)

Brian S. said bottom line for this design is it is 2 feet wider on each side.

Debbie T. asked when you say 2 feet on each side if it could be one side or the other.

Brian S. responded that we could shift to one side but you need to taper back and the impact goes either farther north or south.

Craig A. asked if the triangular piece could be a roundabout and green space.

Debbie T. said that was an option we looked at but the property owners said they have re-development plans.

Jerry M. said the traffic analysis showed that it was not significantly better than the designs given the impacts.

Committee members wanted to look at individual parcels and asked about impacts.

Edgar H. asked if changing the 11 ft. lane to the 10 ft. lane would have a tendency to reduce actual speeds.

Brian S. said we already reduced project expectations and one thing we cannot get past are v/c ratios (volume/capacity). If we reduce the speeds here it will affect the v/c ratios.

Chris H. asked if the city took ownership would the same standards be mandatory.

Brian S. said it is still a part of the transportation solution and the city can say okay.

Edgar H. added if the city is willing to accept the peak hour congestion as long as it doesn't back up on the freeway if that would be a problem.

Brian S. said ODOT does not want the freeway to be impacted by the issues on Highway 99, as long as the queues do not back up onto the freeway it would be acceptable.

Edgar H. added that if the people living here are willing to accept peak hour congestion and it is not a safety issue on the freeway it is their town and should be their decision.

Carolyn B. asked if the city had jurisdiction could they do what they wanted with Highway 99 as long as it didn't affect the interchange.

Debbie T. responded that ODOT does not want the city to take control of the system when they still own both sides of that system and it would somehow impact a higher facility. It is not like the city just takes the jurisdiction, there is a lot to it, cost and maintenance for the city, it is a great idea and we need to discuss it further.

Brian King asked if there was enough traffic to justify the two left turn lanes.

Brian S. responded that the left turn lanes are the biggest issue surrounding the queuing on Highway 99. There is a lot of volume traffic trying to get to I-5 and it could not be done with one lane.

Edgar H. said to cut the travel lane widths to the extent that we can.

Chris H. said he would be more aggressive to make this a livable community. He would change the environment of downtown and encourage traffic calming. This one is better from his perspective.

Terry R. said he is for the plan that takes the least property away from the business owners. Sacrificing the business core of this city for a sidewalk doesn't make sense to me but if there are laws that say you have to do this, I agree with the one with the least impact.

Carolyn B. said she sees these plans as bringing the most amount of people through our town as fast as they can go. If this happens it will impact the businesses and people will not be able to access the businesses that are left. Twenty years from now it might be a different developed area but we will lose and die before it comes back. We should respect the people here. I don't see any pros.

Rosalie L. said she agreed with Carolyn B. and did not see any pros with destroying the businesses.

Jim W. added that there are laws that require minimum things. I like the idea of PBA with the reduced impact. If the travel lanes are narrowed to 11 ft., there is only ½ foot difference between the two. I like the livable community but I think that is farther down the road with new development.

Stan Bartell said if we lose 2 or 3 feet it does have an impact and there are subtle things that make a difference.

Wouters asked what other community has been impacted like Phoenix and why can't we have shared lanes. Let's reduce the travel speed.

Members discussed issue of turning it over to the city and Debbie T. said she thought that would be a fair compromise.

Committee discussed the PBA footprint and how the facilities could be fit in.

6. Next Steps

Debbie Timms, ODOT

- Further study to reduce the lane widths
- With these reductions how does this affect traffic (interchange)
- Evaluate speed reduction

7. Adjournment

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.