
CITY COUNCIL REPORT

FORMAL AGENDA

TO: Rick Naimark
Deputy City Manager

AGENDA DATE: July 6, 2011

FROM: Wylie Bearup, PE, PhD
Street Transportation Director

ITEM:115 PAGE: 165

SUBJECT: SONORAN BOULEVARD SOLUTION BASED FORUM RESULTS

This report provides backup information on item number 115 on the July 6, 2011 Formal Agenda regarding the solutions based forum held on June 28, 2011 to discuss the Sonoran Boulevard construction project. The report increases staff recommendations based upon the results of the Forum that include project enhancements, future area transportation priorities, and process improvements for City Council consideration.

THE ISSUE

At the City Council Policy Session Meeting on June 14, 2011, Street Transportation staff presented a Sonoran Boulevard project update to the City Council. A variety of stakeholders, both in support and in opposition to the construction, provided input at the meeting. As a result of the public involvement, Council approved the facilitation of a solution based forum designed to reconcile the different opinions concerning the project and recommend potential improvements. An attorney with extensive experience in this process, David C. Tierney, agreed to conduct the sessions at no cost to the City.

OTHER INFORMATION

During the week of June 20, 2011, Mr. Tierney met or spoke by phone with various stakeholder groups. About 85 people attended a "Solutions Forum" held on June 28, 2011. Participants included the area's major homeowner groups, developers, employers, and other interested agencies. Representatives from the State Land Department, City Council District 2 office, and the Street Transportation, Planning and Development Services, and Parks and Recreation Departments were also present. A series of requests and suggestions were agreed upon by a nearly unanimous consensus. A memorandum from Mr. David C. Tierney to the Mayor and City Council describing the process and the recommendations of the stakeholder groups is attached.

The Sonoran Boulevard project that extends from 23rd Avenue to Cave Creek Road is currently under construction. Specifically, construction is proceeding within the area between 23rd Avenue and Paloma Parkway, and between Central Avenue and Cave Creek Road.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the following actions and items based upon the results of the Solutions Forum:

Sonoran Boulevard Project Enhancements

1. Initiate the process for renaming the roadways of Sonoran Boulevard and Sonoran Desert Drive. This process would include a community wide canvassing to determine a consensus on the name for the northern roadway (Sonoran Boulevard/Dove Valley Road) and the southern roadway (Sonoran Desert Drive/Lone Mountain Road/Sonoran Boulevard). Based upon the neighborhood responses and Council approval, produce and install the appropriate street name signs and coordinate with the Arizona Department of Transportation to erect new freeway signage with the new corresponding street names.
2. Install speed control measures along Sonoran Boulevard between North Valley Parkway and 15th Avenue. The speed limit within this residential area shall not exceed 35 miles per hour. These measures may consist of additional speed limit signage or speed feedback indicators with associated flashers. Other measures may be warranted based upon field evaluations after roadway construction is complete. Additionally, the speed limit along Sonoran Boulevard east of 15th Avenue shall not exceed 45 miles per hour.
3. Design and install enhanced landscaping along Sonoran Boulevard from approximately 22nd Avenue to 15th Avenue. The anticipated standard is to place a minimum of 3-inch caliper trees at 20-foot spacing on center in coordination with adjacent residents and Homeowner's Association tract properties. Enhancements to tract areas will be subject to Homeowner's Association approval. Additional landscaping will be maintained by the adjacent property owners.
4. Install a traffic signal at the intersection of North Valley Parkway and Sonoran Boulevard upon completion of the current Sonoran Boulevard construction project.
5. Conduct a final evaluation of the 27th Drive and Carefree Highway intersection once the Sonoran Boulevard project is complete. Traffic volumes and service levels will be used to determine if the installation of dual left turn lanes and traffic signal phase adjustments are warranted.
6. Further investigate limiting the Gross Vehicle Weights along Sonoran Boulevard in compliance with local and state statutes. This restriction would also require cooperation from the Police Department for field enforcement.
7. Review and ensure compliance of the Sonoran Boulevard project with Edge Treatment Guidelines. This review will require coordination with the Parks and Recreation and Planning and Development Departments.

8. Research the necessary elements required for the enforcement of sound levels generated by motorcycles. This effort requires analysis of the city code and motor vehicle code for authority and requires coordination with the Police Department for field enforcement.

Future Area Transportation Priorities

1. Initiate an alignment study for Sonoran Desert Drive (southern alignment) from Sonoran Boulevard to Paloma Parkway to evaluate alternative or additional roadway connections and to site the required right-of-way for the corridor. Area stakeholders, including the Arizona State Land Department and the Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council, are to be invited to participate in the process.
2. There will be no future expenditure of City capital funds on Sonoran Boulevard (northern alignment) between Paloma Parkway and Sonoran Desert Drive to widen the roadway beyond the one lane in each direction that is currently under construction. Adjacent private development would still need to comply with City ordinances and provide improvements along their property frontage. Expansion to four lanes will not occur until such time as the southern alignment (Sonoran Desert Drive) is completed or adjacent development of State land warrants it.
3. Initiate the process to consider a Scenic Corridor designation for both the Sonoran Boulevard and the Sonoran Desert Drive alignments through the Sonoran Preserve area. Key stakeholders will be the Arizona State Land Department and the Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council. The City of Phoenix may have to acquire and purchase land for the scenic corridor should that be one of the elements. This process is generated by the Planning and Development Department and requires Council approval to designate.
4. Confirm the roadway classification of Sonoran Boulevard (northern alignment) from North Valley Parkway east to Sonoran Desert Drive as a [minor] arterial street with a maximum of two through lanes in each direction at ultimate build-out.
5. Confirm the roadway classification of Sonoran Desert Drive (southern alignment) from North Valley Parkway east to Cave Creek Road as a major arterial street with a maximum of three through lanes in each direction at ultimate build-out.
6. Request that City staff review proposals for public-private partnerships to advance the construction of the roadway connection and bridge (100 year flood crossing) along the Sonoran Desert Drive alignment from the I-17 freeway to North Valley Parkway.

Process Improvements

1. Initiate a task force to review the current street renaming process and recommend improvements to be instituted citywide. This process is facilitated by the Planning and Development Department. Residents from the Sonoran area communities must have representation on the task force.

2. Request that the District 2 Council Office create a formal “stakeholder list” for the Sonoran area and notify these stakeholders of all developments and City street projects within a defined geographic area.

Funding

Funding for the implementation of the project enhancement, future transportation priority studies, and process improvement identified in this report is estimated at \$500,000 and will be provided through the reallocation and reprogramming of funds through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) in City Council District 2.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff requests City Council approve the recommendations resulting from the Solutions Forum as detailed in this report and also recommends that the portion of the Sonoran Boulevard project between 15th Avenue and approximately Central Avenue resume construction. The Street Transportation Department further requests authorization to reprogram the corresponding CIP funds as necessary.

Attachment

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Gordon and Members of the City Council

FROM: David C. Tierney *Dave*

DATE: July 1, 2011

SUBJECT: June 14, 2011 Assignment as Facilitator related to Sonoran Boulevard

I. Introduction :

On June 14, 2011, you approved my acting as facilitator concerning citizen queries and concerns concerning the Sonoran Boulevard construction project in the area of Cave Creek Road to North Valley Parkway, in the North quadrant of our city. At a “Solutions Forum” held on June 28, 2011, with some 85 persons attending, a series of requests and suggestions were agreed upon by a nearly unanimous consensus. Those are presented below.

II. Preparation:

During the week of June 20, 2011, I met face-to-face¹ with 15 stakeholder groups in meetings held at their locales. Meeting ranged from 2.5 hours to 45 minutes and were designed to let folks speak freely and off the record concerning the situation. I made phone contacts with others on the stakeholder list.

III. Procedure for the June 28, 2011 Forum:

City staff produced e-mails and letter notifications to stakeholders and to those who had Councilman Jeffries Office regarding the convening of the Forum. Fliers were also distributed to various of the neighborhoods. The meeting was held at 4 p.m. at the Goelet A.C. Beuf Community Center at 3435 W. Pinnacle Peak Road, Phoenix. Prior to that meeting, two homeowner groups had produced written position statements, one of which was distributed at the meeting. Some 85 citizens attended the 4 hour session, including all but two of those with whom I had earlier met. Representatives were present from major developers and employers in the area, the State Land Department, the District Two Staff, Streets Department personnel, personnel

¹ ¹ As I am an attorney, I made a “potential conflict disclosure” to everyone with whom I dealt. Of the 50+ names on the initial stakeholder list, some lawyer in my firm had been for or opposed to 6 in the past (files now closed). We had one case currently open in the firm against Westcor and one against the State Land Development. Some lawyer in the firm had an open file for Madison Granite and the LLC which owns that company. I later learned that John C. Lincoln Hospital was involved and disclosed that I am a member of the Board at St. Joseph’s Hospital. None of this creates a conflict as I have the role of facilitator, not advocate.

from Planning & Development and from Parks & Recreation, and the major homeowner groups in the area. Councilman Jeffries opened the session and a productive dialogue resulted. Rick Naimark, Deputy City Manager, and Shane Silsby, the Deputy Director of the Streets and Transportation Department, answered questions as they came up in 4 hours of spirited conversation.

IV. Points of consensus arrived at during the June 28, 2011 Forum:

The following are points on which general consensus was reached on June 28, 2011. These points are divided into 3 “buckets”:

Attached as the only exhibit to this Memorandum is a single-line drawing which I created early on and used in face-to-face meetings and at the June 28, 2011 Forum. Having a “less busy” map than the Streets Department colored drawings made things simpler for those I spoke with.

A. Practical Enhancements:

1. Dove Valley Road² (currently termed Sonoran Boulevard) is to remain a minor arterial roadway from North Valley Parkway eastward past 15th Avenue to the Y (approximately Central Avenue).

2. Dove Valley Road (currently termed Sonoran Boulevard) will be four lanes from North Valley Parkway to 21st Ave, then become two lanes eastward to the “Y” connection. The two lane configuration shall continue until (a) the “Southern” roadway (Lone Mountain, currently termed Sonoran Desert Drive) is completed from I 17 to the “Y” connection, OR (b) residential development on what is currently state land around the 15th Avenue and Dove Valley Road (“S.B.”) is such that creation of two more lanes may be needed. No city funds are to be expended adding the two lanes.

3. Enhanced landscaping is to be added to the Dove Valley Road (“S.B.”), such to be selected by using input from neighbors and others. This will be needed from 15th Avenue to 21st Avenue approximately.

4. The “edge guidelines” in the City Zoning Ordinance are to be met by the city in the current construction and the construction of the Southern Roadway (Lone Mountain, currently termed Sonoran Desert Drive).

5. A “scenic corridor” designation is to be pursued for the current project – and for the future Southern Roadway (Lone Mountain currently termed Sonoran Desert Drive). This is to be done in cooperation with the Arizona State Land Department to minimize the impact on State Land.

² This terminology is being used because of a renaming request set out below as item 4(A)(13) below.

6. Speed controls in the residential area (North Valley Parkway to 15th Avenue) are to be set not to exceed 35 mph. It is hoped that the Streets Department will set the speed for the remainder of the route (from 15th Avenue eastward) no greater than 45 mph so as to keep the access to the preserve and the appreciation of the preserve at an optimal level.

7. The current construction project should place a signal at the North Valley Parkway and Dove Valley Road (“S.B.”) intersection.

8. Rubberized asphalt should be considered to reduce noise in the residential areas. On this point, staff indicated to the group that rubberized asphalt costs twice as much as “D½” standard mix asphalt and that for a period of years there was relatively little difference in noise generation. The group rated the need for rubberized asphalt as an initial placement of asphalt relatively low on the list of priorities set out in my paragraph 5 on page 4 below.

9. There should be a limit on commercial truck weights for through traffic of 8 tons (16,000 pounds). This will not impede construction trucks doing local construction work, garbage trucks, emergency vehicles, and the like.

10. A dual left turn lane is needed at 27th Avenue and Carefree Highway with adequate signalization.

11. Several people asked that the city investigate a “Decibel Ordinance” along the lines of one said to be in use in the town of Cave Creek. This would be an attempt to control excessively loud motor-bike and motorcycle usage which affects the neighbors.

12. Lone Mountain (“SDD”) should be reaffirmed by the City Council to be a 6 lane major arterial street as it is now shown on the street designation map.

13. The Council should rename the streets as they were before changes made some months ago. Thus Dove Valley Road (“S.B.”) should be renamed Dove Valley Road. Lone Mountain road should be renamed Sonoran Boulevard from I 17 to Black Mountain Road. These name changes were opposed by some residents in the room and were discussed extensively. The Streets Department has indicated that it would want to engage the public to be sure that folks want this, though it appears that some participant stakeholders do want the changes. Staff has confirmed with the Maricopa Association of Governments that such name changes will not in any way affect construction - nor construction funding.

B. Transportation policies for the future:

There was a discussion of “growing smarter” and the city policy that roadways and improvements, where appropriate, are to be built and paid for by developers whose projects adjoin those improvements and are benefited thereby.

1. To the extent that a public-private partnership can be created regarding the portion of Lone Mountain (“SDD”) which is East of the 303 connection at I17 and continues to a point

approximately ½ mile East of North Valley Parkway, the City should promptly proceed with the local developers who have been investigating financing options and construction costs. The construction of a “dry” crossing East of the 303 junction with I17 and of some roadway reaching to N. Valley Parkway will benefit residents and businesses stretching from Jomax Road to Carefree Highway who are to the East of Skunk Creek Wash.

2. The City should start work on the alignment Study for the Lone Mountain (“SDD”) connection to the “Y” intersection.

3. Some investigation of the possibility of moving the “Y” Westward and Northward (as an economy measure) should be made, understanding that this is a matter involving the State Land Department and its concerns.

4. Residents were receptive to the possibility that John C. Lincoln Hospital may close on its purchase of a portion of Westcor’s property on the I17 access road. The Hospital would be a desired amenity. The residents urge, therefore, that items 1 and 2 be attended to forthwith because some residents are apprehensive that were a Dove Valley Road (“SB”) connection to be made to I17 without a connection being made at the 303/I17 interchanges, the Northern connection might amplify traffic on Dove Valley Road (“SB”) in advance of the Southern 303/I17 connection being accomplished.

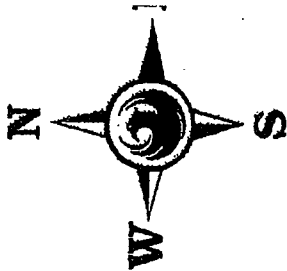
C. Possible Process Improvements:

1. The Process by which roadway name changes are noticed to residents should be reviewed and modified. The residents understand that this will need to be done by some sort of a City-wide task force and they would like to have representation on that task force.

2. The residents plan to work together to create a joint “stake holder” list for area residents, developers, employers, and others interested in transportation matters. They plan to deliver this to the Council District 2 office and to ask that future events or changes related to the transportation network be brought to the attention of the stake holders list.

V. Priorities: Near the end of the 6/28/2011 Forum, Mr. Silsby noted that the Streets Department budget for matter such as the above was “\$0.” He created an Exhibit-Board and asked those present to rank priorities on the following items. As one resident noted, this requires “ranking” of very low cost items against relatively high cost items, but such ranking may reveal the importance residents attach to various items.

| <u>Consensus Priority #</u> | <u>Items</u> |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 | East-West Alignment Study for Lone Mtn. (“SDD”) |
| 2 | Renaming of the Streets |



CAREFREE HWY

CAVE CREEK RD

BOARD #1

SONORAN BOULEVARD

PALOMA PKY

SONORAN BOULEVARD
(DOVE VALLEY RD)

SONORAN DESERT DR
(LONE MOUNTAIN RD
SONORAN PKY)

NORTH VALLEY PKY

27TH AVE

St Dixie left

Jamax

LOOP 303

