

SouthEast Connector Phase 2 - Community Working Group (CWG) Meeting #2

ATTENDEES:**CWG**

Anne Woodring
Charles Johns
Vern Schulze
Clif Ushen
Jim Nadeau
Lissa Butterfield
Lori Wray
Margo Medeiros
Pat Gallagher
Randy Walter
Roger Frantz
Scott Hall
Terri Thomas
Tom Judy
Pat Martinez
Valerie Andersen
Tray Abney

RTC

Garth Oksol
Jeff Hale
Lee Gibson
Michael Moreno

CH2M HILL

Cindy Potter
Leslie Bonneau
David Dodson
Leo Heuston
Mark Gallegos

Atkins

Josh Thomson
David Farley

COPY TO:

Alan Gubanich, Amy Cummings, Andy Bass, Eddie Bonine, Franco Crivelli, Geoffrey Schafler, Kathleen Taylor, Lisa Mann, Marge Frandsen, Matt Setty, Mike Kazmierski, Phil Condon, Roger Jewett, Scott Carey, Shannon Windle, Tory Friedman, Troy Miller, Resource Agency Committee (RAC)

PREPARED BY:

Mark Gallegos

DATE:

March 21, 2013, 5:30 P.M.

PROJECT NUMBER:

RTC Project No. 532013 / CH2M HILL Project No. 458732

On March 21, 2013 the Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County (RTC) hosted the second Community Working Group (CWG) meeting for the SouthEast Connector Phase 2 Design project. The meeting was held at the Associated General Contractors of Nevada (AGC) offices located at 5400 Mill Street in Reno, Nevada. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the Phase 2 preliminary roadway design and continue discussions regarding potential landscape and aesthetic concepts.

5-Minute Opportunity

Attendees were provided a "5-minute opportunity" to discuss any items of concern not included within the evening's agenda and suggest agenda topics for future CWG meetings. Items brought forward are as follows:

- Request for status update on the proposed McCarran widening project.
- Request to address a petition generated in 1995 regarding the removal of the Mira Loma/Pembroke link from the Regional Transportation Plan— How have conditions changed?
- Request for more detailed event timeline for the development of the SouthEast Connector project from initial concept through current status.

- Request for information regarding the status of the potential redesign of the Rosewood Lakes Golf Course.

CWG Working Agreements

Attendees were provided an opportunity to ask questions and raise any items of concern with regard to the draft CWG Working Agreements provided for review during the CWG meeting held on February 21, 2013. Items brought up for discussion and associated comments are as follows.

Media Communications – There was concern expressed regarding the restrictions placed on CWG members with regard to speaking with the media about the project. Leslie Bonneau provided clarification that CWG members are free to speak to the media on behalf of their constituencies or to express their personal views regarding the project; however, CWG members are not authorized to speak on behalf of the CWG or the project team and asked to refer these media inquiries to Michael Moreno, RTC's Public Information Officer.

Group Consensus – A question was raised as to how "group consensus" would be determined, particularly in the event that there is disagreement within the group regarding recommendations to be made to the RTC. Leslie Bonneau advised that an item will be added to the April 2013 CWG agenda to allow time for a more detailed discussion on how the group would work toward building consensus on recommendations as well as how consensus will be determined in the event that unanimous consensus is not achievable.

Consensus Item:

The group agreed to adopt the CWG Working Agreements without amendment. If any concerns arise with regard to these agreements as the project progresses, the CWG will discuss these concerns and consider potential amendments as needed.

Roadway Design Overview

Leo Heuston, David Dodson, and Josh Thomson provided an overview of the roadway design which is currently 30 percent developed. The overview covered the current alignment, features of interest, challenges, constraints, and opportunities. Included was a review of what both the full and narrow median options might look like. The purpose of this overview is to provide a big-picture look at the overall footprint of the new roadway and what kinds of decisions are being made in the early stages of this roadway design. The following is a summary of the discussion and questions raised during the 30 percent design overview.

A grade separation (bridge) has been provided over Alexander Lake Road to provide access to the existing gravel pits in this area. The structure will also provide for balancing flood waters and keeping flood flows and volumes on both sides of the roadway similar to those that currently exist. A structure at Mira Loma will allow for flood flows to converge/rebalance.

A multi-use path is provided along the length of the new roadway to separate pedestrians from vehicle traffic. The path will be 10 feet wide and will be a minimum of 26 feet from the vehicle lanes except at intersection locations and possibly at drainage locations. The path is currently located on the west side of the roadway; however, the final location of the path is still open to discussion and the design team will be looking for recommendations from the CWG as to the path's final location.

There is a difference in elevation between the Huffaker Narrows area and the Butler Ranch. There will be a gradual sloping of the roadway with a 4-5 foot change in elevation.

Excavation for flood water balancing and mitigation work for the project will generally be located between Steamboat Creek and the roadway.

The design team is working to have the new roadway intersect Mira Loma as close to existing grade as possible; however, to meet the agreed upon design criteria for the new roadway, the Mira Loma intersection will need to be elevated above the 117 year flood. The current design has elevated the intersection at Mira Loma about 2-3 feet higher than existing grade. Some widening may also be necessary at the Mira Loma intersection.

Just north of Mira Loma, Steamboat Creek will be realigned and restored to keep the creek to the east of the roadway and provide flood water storage.

The roadway from South Meadows north to Mira Loma is currently designed with a full median which does not require a center barrier rail. From Mira Loma to Pembroke, the roadway currently includes a narrow median with center barrier rail to reduce the footprint through the Rosewood Lakes Golf Course. The narrow median with barrier rail design continues north from Pembroke to Sparks Boulevard to tie in with the Phase 1 design.

Questions Regarding the 30 Percent Design

What does “30 percent design” mean? *The 30 percent design is a preliminary/high-level design incorporating sufficient detail to determine overall project footprint, structure locations, intersection locations, number of lanes, and proposed miscellaneous amenities and their locations (i.e., sidewalks, paths, shoulders, medians, guardrails, etc.). The 30 percent design also provides sufficient detail to determine potential environmental and community impacts so that appropriate studies can be performed to determine how best to avoid and/or mitigate these potential impacts. The design is divided into 30, 50, 90, and 100 percent design, each with a progressively greater level of design detail. Plans are submitted to local agencies at each of these design levels followed by a review and comment period. Any issues, questions, or concerns raised during this comment period are addressed and requested changes are incorporated into the design as appropriate.*

What are design criteria and how are these determined? *“Design criteria” refer to a set of standards or guidelines that govern the development of various aspects of the roadway design, including but not limited to, design speed; horizontal and vertical geometric criteria, lane and shoulder widths; preferred roadway drainage systems (i.e., curb/gutter, swales, inlet types, etc.); pedestrian/bicycle accessibility requirements; safety elements (i.e., barrier/guard rails, lighting requirements, etc.); pavement materials; and maintenance and emergency access considerations. The design criteria for the SouthEast Connector were developed in coordination with the RTC, Washoe County, and the Cities of Reno and Sparks; in accordance with various local, state, and federal standards for roadway design.*

What is a typical section? *Typical sections are used to show the “typical” configuration for roadway elements shown in a cross-section view. For this project, elements shown include the typical layout and widths of vehicle lanes, median, multi-use path, bioswales, clear zones, and access roads. The layouts shown can vary somewhat based on location along the alignment.*

Shouldn’t the RTC wait to see if they can get a permit for the roadway before spending time and money designing a project that may not be approved? *Regulatory agencies, such as the USACE and NDEP, require a sufficient level of design be performed (typically 50-75 percent design) prior to the submission of permit applications. This is to provide enough detail to adequately determine potential impacts to environmental and community resources and to evaluate whether the RTC’s proposed avoidance and mitigation measures meet regulatory requirements.*

What is a bioswale? *A bioswale is a type of roadway drainage collection system that uses vegetation within drainage swales to treat roadway runoff prior to the runoff being discharged into adjacent waterways. Bioswales are being used as an alternative to curb and gutter and more maintenance intensive drainage treatment systems.*

How do you intend to mitigate the mercury within the soils in many areas along the alignment? *Soils containing high levels of mercury as result of historic mining activities within the region will be handled using various methods including:*

- *Avoiding the disturbance of contamination “hot spots” where possible*
- *Burying/encapsulating contaminated soils within the roadway fill embankments, above the ordinary high water line, to minimize the chance of mercury entering adjacent waterways and ecosystems*
- *Disposal of contaminated soils in accordance with local, state, and federal regulations*

Will the multi-use path be paved? *Yes. The multi-use path will have asphalt paving.*

Can the multi-use path be paved using decomposed granite as opposed to asphalt for improved aesthetics and to hold down construction and maintenance costs? *The multi-use path is intended for use by both pedestrians*

and cyclists and will also need to be ADA compliant. Asphalt provides a better surface for cyclists to ride on and also provides a better surface for wheelchairs and motorized assistive mobility devices.

Will there be striped bike lanes on the roadway? *No. Currently, there are no plans to provide striped bike lanes on the new roadway.*

Will bicycles be prohibited on the roadway? *No. There are no current plans to prohibit bicycles on the new roadway. While cyclists will be encouraged to use the multi-use path, the roadway is being designed with 8-foot, paved shoulders that cyclists may also use.*

Will intersection configurations allow for continuous bicycle and pedestrian access to the multi-use path? *This is a design detail that will be addressed as the design progresses to determine how best to accommodate path access at the new intersections. ADA requirements will also be a factor in path connections and accessibility.*

What is the width of the right-of-way needed to accommodate the roadway? *The right-of-way width fluctuates depending on the location of the path as it meanders alongside the roadway as well as the steepness of the embankment slopes used. In general, the width of right-of-way needed is roughly 200 feet or less.*

How steep will the roadway embankments be? *The preferred slope is 4:1 or flatter; however, some areas may need to be steeper due to right-of-way constraints and/or to minimize adverse impacts.*

What types of structures are being used for flood conveyance? *Flood conveyance structures will primarily be concrete box culverts of varying sizes with bridges used at some locations to span existing water bodies and to span Alexander Lake Road.*

Can the culverts be used as crossings by wildlife? *The culverts vary in size depending on location and are currently designed to meet the minimum requirements for flood conveyance. The need for wildlife crossings, the types of wildlife that need to be accommodated and potential crossing locations have yet to be determined. The team is consulting with various environmental and wildlife groups, as well as local, state and federal agencies to determine how best to meet potential wildlife needs. It should be noted that while there are some wildlife groups that would like to see a "free range" condition through the area, there are also wildlife groups that would prefer to use barriers to limit access – the RTC will need to see if there is a way to balance the needs of these competing interests as well as the sometimes competing interests of groups representing different types of wildlife (avian vs. equine vs. deer).*

What is going to happen to the duck pond that currently exists in the area of Herons Landing? It looks as though the roadway runs through it. *The plan is to recreate the pond outside of the roadway footprint. This may have been created as part of a previous jurisdictional mitigation and there may be restrictions attached. The team will be discussing with the USACE to determine available options as the design progresses.*

Will there be a traffic light at the Pembroke intersection? *Yes, and also at the Mira Loma intersection.*

Can we move the path to the east side of the new roadway? *The location of the multi-use path is one of the items for which the design team will be seeking additional input from the CWG as the design moves forward. There are some conflicting views on the protection of wildlife within the area. Some groups would like the path on the east to provide viewing areas while others would like to keep the path on the west to minimize habitat disturbance. Some of the flood conveyance culverts could potentially provide pedestrian access points under the roadway and allow for the path to meander between the west and east sides of the roadway at various locations.*

The Cities and County are having a tough time maintaining the facilities they currently have due to funding issues, how will they be able to maintain this new roadway? *The design team is working closely with Washoe County and the Cities of Reno and Sparks to determine maintenance needs and minimize maintenance costs to the extent possible.*

Landscape and Aesthetics

Leslie Bonneau and David Farley led the group through an exercise to obtain input regarding various landscape and aesthetic elements that could potentially be included as part of the roadway design. The CWG were shown photographs of various landscape and aesthetic elements in quick succession and was asked to provide an initial

“gut” reaction to the various design elements (positive or negative). Those elements that were viewed positively were added to a palette of ideas for the landscape architects to work from.

The CWG was advised that the palette created during the exercise would also be incorporated into an exhibit to be used at the March 28, 2013 public meeting to get additional feedback from the public at-large. The resultant palette would then be used as a starting point for the development of landscape and aesthetic concepts to be presented at the next CWG for additional input.

Overall, the CWG appeared to have a preference for natural looking elements with softer lines over geometrical, angular patterns.

The next CWG meeting is scheduled for April 18, 2013, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.