

## SouthEast Connector Phase 2 Design: Neighborhood Meeting, May 23, 2013

**ATTENDEES:** Members of the Public  
Garth Oksol/RTC  
Jeff Hale/RTC  
Michael Moreno/RTC  
Cindy Potter/CH2M HILL

David Dodson/CH2M HILL  
Matt Setty/CH2M HILL  
Mark Gallegos/CH2M HILL  
Leslie Bonneau/CH2M HILL

**PREPARED BY:** Mark Gallegos/CH2M HILL  
**DATE:** May 23, 2013; 6:30 to 8:30 P.M.  
**PROJECT NUMBER:** RTC Project No. 532013 / CH2M HILL Project No. 458723

On Thursday, May 23, 2013, the Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County (RTC) hosted a Neighborhood Meeting for the SouthEast Connector Phase 2 Design project held at Hidden Valley Elementary School, 2115 Alphabet Drive, Reno, Nevada. Meeting notifications were mailed to approximately 1,900 area residents and the meeting was well attended with over 200 area residents in attendance. Following is a summary of the meeting, including its format, a description of the informational materials provided, and a summary of the questions and comments received at the meeting.

*Note: The following is intended to provide a summary of the evening's proceedings. The questions, comments, and responses included are not intended to be verbatim accounts and are not documented in strict chronological order. In some cases, related discussions that took place at different times and through various communication media have been combined.*

### General Meeting Summary

The SouthEast Connector Neighborhood Meeting held on May 23, 2013 featured a project overview provided by the RTC and members of the design team followed by a facilitated question and answer session. Following the project presentation and Q&A session, project team members met one-on-one with residents to provide project information and answer additional questions. Alignment map displays were used to orient attendees as the design team presented the project preliminary design and environmental features. Hand-out materials provided to attendees included a Project Fact Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions dated March 2013; a flier providing project website and contact information; and a project comment form.

### Questions & Answers

The following is a summary of the questions asked and responses provided during the question and answer period following the presentation.

1. What is the roadway elevation through the Rosewood Lakes Golf Course?  
***The roadway elevation through the Rosewood Lakes Golf Course varies between 8 to 12 feet higher than existing ground (including structures). This elevation is required to maintain one lane in each direction above the 117-year flood event and to accommodate bridge crossings and flood equalization culverts. Throughout the alignment, the design team is working to keep the roadway elevation as close to the existing ground elevation as possible.***
2. What will the speed limit be on the new roadway?  
***The proposed posted speed limit is 45 mph.***

3. Will there be meeting summary provided for tonight's meeting?  
***Yes, a summary of tonight's meeting will be made available and posted to the project website, [www.SouthEastConnector.com](http://www.SouthEastConnector.com).***
4. If the feeder roads are only four-lane roads, why does the SouthEast Connector need to be a six-lane road?  
***The SouthEast Connector is being designed to accommodate the projected traffic volumes that will be coming from the various feeder roads. Currently, the primary feeder roads are Sparks Boulevard and Vista Boulevard at the north end and South Meadows Parkway and Veterans Parkway at the south end, each of these are 4-lane facilities for a total of sixteen lanes potentially feeding into the SouthEast Connector's six lanes. Additionally, there are potential traffic volumes that will enter the roadway at the intersections with Pembroke Drive and Mira Loma Drive. Similar to what you would see in a river tributary system, when there are multiple tributaries flowing into a primary artery, the primary artery will typically need to be larger than its tributaries to have sufficient capacity to handle the collective flows coming from those tributaries.***
5. How do you plan on keeping larger wildlife (horses, deer, etc.) off of the new roadway?  
***The design team is surveying existing fencing on parcels that have been or will be acquired by the RTC; any repairs needed to existing fencing will be included as part of the project; additional fencing will also be installed in certain areas to further limit the potential of larger wildlife entering the roadway. Additionally, the roadway was shifted to the west of the creek during the initial alignment refinement process – as the primary driver for bringing wildlife into the corridor would be access to the water within the creek, this shift in the alignment is anticipated to minimize the need for larger wildlife to attempt to cross the roadway. The design team has been working closely with regulatory agencies to develop wildlife management strategies for the project.***
6. Why is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) not being developed as part of the project?  
***Although the project is not subject to an EIS, the project is still subject to a NEPA review process. The Federal action related to this project is the Section 404 Clean Water Act authorization required from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The USACE will conduct a NEPA review as part of the application review and permit decision. The content outline for this permit is very similar to that for an EIS. The RTC expects the USACE will make a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and will conclude the review with an Environmental Assessment (EA). Should the USACE review determine there are significant project related impacts that cannot be adequately mitigated the USACE may require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be prepared.***  
***Technical and environmental studies being performed as part of the project's Section 404 Permit application, including consultations with regulatory agencies and public involvement activities, are similar in scope to those that would typically be incorporated within an EIS.***
7. What steps are being taken to ensure pedestrian safety along the new roadway?  
***Pedestrians will be separated from vehicle traffic via the planned multi-use path which is also designed to ADA standards. The majority of the path is separated from the roadway; in locations where the path is immediately adjacent to the roadway (primarily at bridge crossings and intersections) barrier rail will be used to separate pedestrians from vehicle traffic. Pedestrian crossing opportunities will be provided at signalized intersections at South Meadows Parkway, Mira Loma Drive, Pembroke Drive, and Sparks Boulevard. These signalized intersections will have standard pedestrian safety features including Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant crosswalks and pedestrian signals.***
8. How will the path be aligned in relation to the roadway and how will it function in conjunction with the roadway?  
***The multi-use path will start at the intersection of South Meadows Parkway where it will run along the east side of the roadway until just north of Alexander Lake Road; at this location the path will cross under the new Huffaker Narrows Bridge and continue along the west side of the roadway to the Sparks Boulevard intersection. The multi-use path will primarily be located at the base of the roadway embankment with the exception of intersection locations and bridge crossings over open water, at these locations the path will***

**run immediately adjacent to the roadway or bridge and barrier rail will be used to separate pedestrians from vehicle traffic.**

9. Will bicyclists be allowed on the new roadway?  
**The new roadway will not be signed as a bike route and will not include dedicated bike lanes. While bicyclists will be encouraged to use the multi-use path, they will not be prohibited from riding within the shoulders of the new roadway.**
10. How do you plan to mitigate for the eagle habitat that exists within the project corridor?  
**Eagles are no longer listed as protected under the Threatened and Endangered Species Act. As a part of the USACE permit process, we are in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to evaluate existing raptor habitat (as well as other wildlife habitat) within the corridor and are working with them to develop appropriate mitigation strategies for any existing habitat affected by the project. The raptors that are currently living in trees that will be removed will find other habitat (either in nearby trees to remain or new trees to be planted).**
11. How can you begin construction of Phase 1 without having the appropriate permits for the entire roadway?  
**The RTC and its contractor, Kiewit Construction, obtained the requisite permits and approvals from regulatory agencies prior to the start of construction including local construction permits and regional flood ordinance compliance authorization. A compliant Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan has also been developed and implemented for the project. As the alignment of Phase 1 does not impact Waters of the U.S., a Section 404 and Section 401 Clean Water Act Permit are not required by the USACE. [Editor's Note: At the time of this meeting, NDEP was not requiring a Working in Waterways Permit (Rolling Stock Permit). Upon further review of the Phase 1 construction, NDEP has elected to require a Working in Waterway permit for the construction of the Veterans Memorial Bridge over the Truckee River, due to impacts along the top of the bank, above the ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM). A Working in Waterways permit application has been submitted by the contractor and the permit has been issued by NDEP. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is aware of NDEP's requirement of a Working in Waterways permit; however, as the work limits are not within the OHWM of the Truckee River as defined by the USACE, a Section 404 and 401 Clean Water Act permit is not required for the project.]**
12. Will there be sound walls installed as part of the project?  
**A noise study is being performed as part of this project and appropriate noise mitigation measures will be implemented based upon the findings of this study.**
13. What percentage of Phase 1 has been completed?  
**Approximately 10 percent of the Phase 1 construction has been completed.**
14. Fencing in the area of the Phase 1 construction site is not being maintained, how will you be addressing this?  
**It was requested by the RTC that the person who asked this question call Garth Oksol directly regarding this issue as there are other projects underway within the area. Clarification of the location in question was needed to determine if this was part of the SEC Phase 1 work or part of another project in the area.**
15. What percentage of truck traffic is anticipated to use the new roadway?  
**The roadway is being designed using an estimated daily truck volume of approximately 5% of the total average daily traffic based on typical NDOT design standards.**
16. Who determines what types of vehicles (cars, bikes, trucks, etc.) will be allowed to use the new roadway?  
**Washoe County and the Cities of Reno and Sparks make these decisions for the roadway sections within their respective jurisdictions. It should be noted that the RTC does not own, operate, or maintain area roadways; all operational decisions are made by Washoe County and the Cities of Reno and Sparks within their respective jurisdictions.**
17. How do you intend to address light pollution?  
**Continuous street lighting along the new roadway is not being considered as part of this project. Street lighting will be included at intersections. As with any roadway, it is anticipated that there will be some**

**impact to adjacent properties from headlights. The proposed use of barrier rail through the Rosewood Lakes Golf Course section of the new roadway will provide some mitigation of headlight impacts through this area of the project. We are also looking at the establishment of a fair amount of roadside vegetation.**

18. Has all of the right-of-way needed for the project been acquired?  
**All of the right-of-way needed for the project has been acquired with the exception of the right-of-way through the Butler Ranch property. The RTC will begin right-of-way acquisition negotiations with the Butler Trust once the design has progressed enough to accurately determine the amount of right-of-way needed.**
19. What is the overall width of the new roadway? Can you give us an example of a similar sized roadway in the Reno-Sparks area?  
**The width of the roadway surface, including shoulders, travel lanes, and medians, is approximately 100 feet. The width of the overall roadway footprint, to include embankments, bioswales, and the multi-use path, ranges from approximately 120-150 feet. The six-lane sections of McCarran Boulevard would be similar in scale to the SouthEast Connector.**
20. Will there be a vehicle weight restriction on Pembroke Drive to prevent truck traffic from using Pembroke?  
**The City of Reno and Washoe County would make any decisions regarding setting weight limits and/or restricting truck traffic on Pembroke Drive within their respective jurisdictions. It should be noted that the RTC does not own, operate, or maintain area roadways; all operational decisions are made by Washoe County and the Cities of Reno and Sparks within their respective jurisdictions.**
21. Will the new roadway affect flooding impacts as compared to those experienced during the flood of 1997?  
**One of the primary design criteria is to ensure that this project does not impact the water surface elevation of the 117-year flood (equivalent to the 1997 flood). We are developing flood models, building off of models developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to analyze existing conditions; evaluate the flood impacts of the new roadway; and determine what mitigation strategies will be employed to mitigate these impacts and maintain, and in some areas potentially lower, the water surface elevation of the 117-year flood within the corridor. The roadway design will be in compliance with the regional flood ordinance. Additionally, the roadway is also being designed such that at least one lane in each direction will be above the 117-year flood event.**
22. What percentage of the total workforce on Phase 1 are Washoe County residents, not including RTC staff? What percentage do you anticipate for Phase 2?  
**Phase 1 will create approximately 280 direct construction jobs. Kiewit Construction has brought in approximately 10 employees for the project from other areas, all of whom are now currently living in Washoe County. Craft labor needed for the project is being hired out of the local union hall; however, this does not necessarily guarantee that the labor hired via this avenue is local labor versus workers coming in from other areas to find jobs.**
23. How is this project being funded?  
**The project is being funded by local fuel tax revenue generated within Washoe County.**
24. If storm drains are not being constructed with the roadway, how will oil be removed from roadway runoff prior to entering waterways?  
**Bioswales will be used to collect and treat roadway runoff prior to it being discharged into the surrounding environment. Bioswales are landscape elements designed to remove silt and pollution from surface runoff water. They consist of a swaled drainage ditch with gently sloped sides and filled with vegetation, compost and/or riprap (vegetation will be used for this project). The water's flow path, along with the wide and shallow ditch, is designed to maximize the time water spends in the swale, which aids the trapping of pollutants and silt. A bioswale may have a meandering or almost straight channel alignment. Biological factors also contribute to the breakdown of certain pollutants.**

## Written Comment Summary

The following is a summary of the written comments received during the meeting. Written comments received from meeting attendees prior to June 5, 2013 via fax, mail, and email are also included within this summary. Comments received after this date will be addressed by other appropriate means and maintained as part of the project record. Responses to written comments/questions have been provided within this summary as appropriate.

- Numerous residents believe the traffic on Pembroke Drive will be a problem with trucks; stopping and starting signal traffic; and noise pollution that has been transferred from east McCarran to Hidden Valley homes. The development of extending Mill Street helps significantly in resolving these issues.
- University Farms land should be acquired to complete the Mill/McCarran intersection before the land is sold for commercial development.
- The Mill Street extension to the connector should be planned for future development if it cannot be completed now.
- There is no need for this road. Since McCarran has been widened there is little to no traffic from Mira Loma to Mill Street.
- Spending \$300 million on a road that is unnecessary smacks of special interests pressuring politicians.
- Why not consider the needs of those of us who have already been flooded twice in the past 16 years?  
***Flood modeling is being performed as part of the project to ensure compliance with the regional flood ordinance requiring no net rise to the 117-year flood water surface elevation within the Truckee River flood pool.***
- We are taxpayers, yet our requests to stop this road have been totally ignored.
- Felt like many questions weren't answered directly, there were reiterations of process/policy repeated.
- Is Rio POCO Road going to be an on and off ramp for the new road (close to north Butler Ranch)?  
***No, Veterans Parkway is an arterial roadway, not a freeway facility, and will not include on and off ramps. At-grade signalized intersections will be included at South Meadows Parkway, Mira Loma Drive, Pembroke Drive, and Greg Street (as part of Phase 1).***
- I was surprised that there weren't any local news media at the meeting tonight. With the number of Hidden Valley residents in attendance and the controversy regarding the construction of this project, I would think one of the TV stations would be on-hand, or perhaps the RTC did not want the meeting televised?  
***Local media outlets (broadcast and print) were informed of the meeting on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. As an open and transparent public agency the RTC welcomes media coverage at all RTC hosted public meetings and events.***
- We are certainly against this unnecessary project, which will damage the last remaining open area in Truckee Meadows. If it must come to pass, though, please install efficient, properly-adjusted lights at Mira Loma and Pembroke intersections. Waiting at a red light while no one moves is a wasteful, frustrating experience. This is usually caused by excessive green in one direction or full-period left turn for an empty turn lane. Please get the engineering right on this one.
- What percent of the total workforce of this project are residents, as of year 2010, and taxpayers in the Truckee Meadows (not including your staff)? I don't believe, as well as feel, that my tax dollars should support Clark County residents or residents of any county outside Washoe. Our [un]employment rate is high.  
***Phase 1 will create approximately 280 direct construction jobs. Kiewit Construction has brought in approximately 10 employees for the project from other areas, all of whom are now currently living in Washoe County. Craft labor needed for the project is being hired out of the local union hall; however, this does not necessarily guarantee that the labor hired via this avenue is local labor versus workers coming in from other areas to find jobs.***

- Please be a good neighbor. Flood waters/culverts should be maintained by RTC not Reno, Sparks, or Washoe County. How do you plan to do this?  
***The RTC does not own, operate, or maintain area roadways; all maintenance operations are performed by Washoe County and the Cities of Reno and Sparks within their respective jurisdictions. State law also dictates how available funds can be distributed.***
- “Cut down white top and use soil”?? That does not kill white top. You must use a chemical that I believe is recommended by the Department of Agriculture. Call me, I will be happy to give you the name.  
***White top and other noxious weeds will be addressed within the Weed Management Plan being developed for this project. Appropriate treatment methods will be employed based on the plant species, location and extent of the infestation, and time of year. The handling and treatment of biologically contaminated soils during project construction will also be addressed within the project’s Soil Management Plan. Both of these plans will be included within the Section 404 Clean Water Act permit application that will be made available for public review and comment.***
- I don’t believe your wetlands plan as you state is anything but displacement. Tell me how I am wrong.
- How long is it going to take to replace the wetlands in its current state?  
***The majority of the wetlands impacted by construction will be replanted during the same construction season. Plant reestablishment and restoration of wetland function to impacted areas will take approximately two to four years. The use of salvaged wetland plant material will help to increase the rate of wetland establishment and will be used to the extent practicable during construction.***
- If any chemical displacement happens to any land, what do you plan to do to help us?  
***Soil containing geochemical concentrations (e.g., mercury) will be moved/displaced during construction. Displacement of this type of soil will occur in the project footprint to improve ecological conditions by either (1) burying the soil under the roadway or (2) transportation offsite for proper disposal.***
- Who funds and what agencies control RTC? How can you become a board member of RTC?  
***Major revenue sources for RTC include Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax (local, and the indexed portion of state and federal), Public Transportation (Sales) Tax, Regional Road Impact Fees, and federal funding. The RTC Board of Commissioners is a cooperative regional board comprised of five elected representatives appointed from three government jurisdictions: two from the Reno City Council; one from the Sparks City Council; two from the Washoe County Board of Commissioners.***
- Where is the stoplight on Mira Loma?  
***The signalized intersection of Mira Loma Drive and the SouthEast Connector will be located approximately 0.6 miles east of the existing Mira Loma/McCarran intersection.***
- Bald eagles – we have two golden eagles as well.

**Attachment A:  
Neighborhood Meeting Announcement**

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**Attachment B:  
Project Fact Sheet, March 2013**

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**Attachment C:  
Frequently Asked Questions, March 2013**

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**Attachment D:  
Project Contacts Flier**

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