



Rural Road Standards Workshop #5 (March 20, 2007) Meeting Notes

Handouts

- Meeting Agenda
- February 20th Workshop Summary
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Rural Road Improvement Standards Annotated Outline (Dated March 20, 2007)

Action/Follow Up

At the next workshop staff will bring back the list of issues outside the project scope. Staff will also bring a comprehensive list of project issues and comments heard to date. Residents requested a discussion of noise standards and abatement options at some point.

Feedback Loop

Community Identification Signage. Through this workshop series, we've heard interest in establishing community signage. City Council heard this comment at their last meeting at the same time they discussed the Citywide branding campaign and gateway signage items. Council directed staff to consider this issue as part of those efforts and to report back in the coming months. Thus, the issue of community signage may be addressed outside the scope of this project.

Rural Road Improvement Policy/Traffic Counts

David Robinson from Fehr & Peers presented information about the traffic counts currently underway in the rural area. The traffic counts are being taken at 6 intersection locations and 13 roadway segments in the rural area. The counts will include peak, non-peak, weekdays, and weekends trips. In addition, the counts will include collecting vehicle classification data, such as the number of automobiles, trucks, agriculture vehicles, and other vehicles that travel through the area.

Q: How do you know the difference between the types of vehicles?

A: Counts are being taken 24 hours a day/7 days a week and the equipment used is able to tell the types of vehicles that pass through. The equipment can differentiate the types of vehicles by measuring the space between the axles. The vehicle type is also being surveyed at traffic count locations, but not 24 hours a day so the equipment supplements what is being observed in the traffic counts by survey crews.

The community members identified concerns regarding the location of traffic counts that are currently being taken. Specifically, the residents would like to know why traffic counts are not being taken at the following locations:

- South on Bradshaw
- Bond & Bradshaw

- North and South on Waterman Road
- North of Sheldon on Excelsior
- Bond & Grant Line
- Calvine Road

Other concerns regarding traffic counts include:

- Why traffic counts were being taken at 7 locations along Sheldon Road? Felt locations needed to be dispersed throughout the rural area. Also, if no improvements are proposed east of Sheldon then why are counts being taken?
- Bader and Sheldon should not have traffic counts taken at this time because the next year the boundaries for Pleasant Grove HS will change.
- There was also concern regarding the validity of the counts being taken this week due to the high school having an alternate schedule due to testing. The alternate schedule may “up” the counts since some people are increasing their trips to and from school because of the off schedule. It was mentioned that in the future when calling the Elk Grove Unified School District the questions asked should be more detailed.
- On-going construction on Calvine and Sheldon roads may skew the numbers.
- March is not Ag season so there are not many Ag vehicles such as trailers or hay bailers on the roadway.

Q: Will the new traffic counts on Bond Road be considered for the proposed widening—what if the counts show the road does not need to be widened?

A: Work on the Bond Road project is continuing, however, the new traffic counts will be reviewed.

Q: Under the proposed improvement policy, how often will the traffic counts be taken?

A: This depends on the situation; it could be after improvements are completed or maybe every other year. The idea for this initial traffic count is to establish a baseline. Traffic counts thereafter do not have to happen often, only if there changes or improvements to the roads that may alter the numbers. This will be part of the Rural Roads policy.

Q: Is a speed study being conducted at this time?

A: No, at this time only traffic counts are being taken.

Q: Why are there traffic counts for Bader Road & Bond Road and Sheldon & Grant Line Road?

A: These locations were taken into consideration for the traffic counts as possible locations for roundabouts. Under the General Plan, these roads will stay as 2 lanes. These roads will not be widened and the policy and standards will be consistent the General Plan. Some residents think we should address conflicts between Land Use Element and Circulation Element in the General Plan. Additionally, the feeling is that the original traffic counts as part of the General Plan were flawed.

Q: Why aren't traffic calming techniques being utilized prior to the traffic counts being conducted?

A: This is not a speed survey, only traffic counts are being taken in order to obtain baseline information.

Q: When is the traffic data going to be available?

A: Depends on whether we add locations as suggested here tonight, but this data will be available in the coming weeks and months. Jim reminded the residents that these counts have been done in response to concerns about the validity of the previous counts and that we've tried to address all of the concerns. He also reminded the residents that there may never be a perfect time for counts because there will likely be construction going on somewhere in the vicinity on an ongoing basis.

Rural Road Improvement Policy

Jim Estep, Assistant City Manager presented the key components of the Improvement Policy (as listed in the PowerPoint presentation and handout). Residents asked that the GP and Circulation element be reviewed. There is concern by residents regarding the interpretation of the Policy. They want to make sure the Policy is implemented as agreed upon by this group. Need to put safeguards (finding/process for deviations) into the Policy to make sure that it is carried out properly into the future. Additionally, the purpose and intent of the Policy needs to address the rural character of the area.

Q: Will the Policy "in effect" supersede the GP as a determinant for road improvements?

A: Not formally, but the policy will tell you how to get there.

A resident mentioned an article that recently appeared in the NY Times that discussed allowing traffic to build up as a means to slow down traffic—maybe this is not a bad thing to focus on delay and LOS.

Traffic Circle/Roundabout Standards

Kristen Calia with Fehr & Peers provided information on the size/diameter and right-of-way considerations for traffic circles and roundabouts. For intersection improvements, she clarified that we are talking about roundabouts, not traffic circles.

Q: What can we do with the center of the roundabout?

A: The center can be natural landscaped, or treated how rural residents would like it to look. Most residents want natural landscape, especially when there is an option to preserve oak or native trees. The center will also be made with materials that can withstand large vehicles, such as trucks, agriculture vehicles, and emergency vehicles.

Q: Does the roundabout actually improve the traffic flow/LOS at the intersection? Can you delay road widening by incorporating roundabouts?

A: Yes. It can improve the traffic flow and delay the widening of road segments under circumstances related to the criteria for appropriate siting of roundabout facilities.

Residents like the idea of a roundabout at Waterman and Sheldon. Per one resident, there are power line right-of-ways located at this intersection that may prevent certain intersection improvements. Additionally there may be enough land for the right of way for the roundabout.

Staff clarified that certain criteria (previously presented) should be met to consider roundabout locations within the project area. For example, the flow of traffic in both directions should be relatively balanced. The analysis for the improvement policy will help to determine those locations where the roundabouts might work well. Until we have that information, it is difficult to discuss all of the potential locations throughout the project area. Residents along Bond Road did stress that with the right-of-way work being done now along Bond Road, that analysis should be done sooner, rather than later to determine if roundabouts would be an option on Bond and Van Ruiten or Bond and Bader.

Rural Road Improvement Standards

The annotated outline was handed out to residents but not discussed. Staff asked the residents to review the document and to bring comments back to the next workshop.

Next Steps

Staff proposed to have 3 more workshops in early May, mid June, and late July (approximately every 5-6 weeks) on Tuesdays from 7-9 p.m. at the City Hall. Residents can access information from the project website: http://www.egplanning.org/rural_roads/