South Mountain Corridor Study
Citizens Advisory Team
Meeting Summary

Date: October 20, 2005
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: District 6 Learning Center, Komatke Center,

CAT Members Attending:

Rock Argabright, Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce
Laurel Arndt, Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee
Kris Black, Ahwatukee Foothills HOA
Steve Boschen, Valley Forward
Jim Buster, Avondale
Peggy Eastburn, Estrella Village Planning Committee
Michael Goodman, Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council
Don Jones, Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce
David Lafferty, Tolleson
Sylvia McCabe, GRIC District 6
Bob Moss, United Dairymen of Arizona
Wayne Nelson, GRIC District 7
Nathaniel Percharo, I-10 Pecos Landowners
Laura Prendergast, Laveen Citizens for Responsible Development
Michelle Pulich-Stewart, Sierra Club
Jim Strogen, Kyrene Lagos Elementary School
Mary Thomas, GRIC
Anthony Villareal, GRIC District 6

Staff and Consultants:

Mike Bruder, ADOT
Matt Burdick, ADOT
Kelly Cairo, GCI
Chris Clary-Lemon, HDR
Amy Edwards, HDR
Ralph Ellis, ADOT
Theresa Gunn, GCI
Dan Lance, ADOT
John Roberts, GRIC
Ben Spargo, HDR
Bill Vachon, FHWA

Citizens:

Jason Fifield
Roger Ray
C. Dale Raphael
Dave Swisher
William Ramsay
Doug Murphy
Dan Lance
Corinne Purtrill
William Eastburn
David Folts
Jim Burke

ACTION PLAN

Task/Activity	Who	When
Provide maps corresponding with table one of the Design Data Report in color.	Amy Edwards	Next Meeting
Obtain additional information from City of Phoenix regarding 32nd Street intersection evaluation.	Amy Edwards	Prior to CAT evaluation in January

Welcome and Introductions

Theresa Gunn welcomed attendees and explained that comments from public attendees are accepted in writing, and if possible, responses provided. She reviewed rules for a good meeting, and urged the CAT to take advantage of the index cards to record comments to be captured verbatim, and questions that need to be answered.

Gunn introduced new CAT member Sylvia McCabe, representing District 6, and asked the remaining CAT members to introduce themselves. *Statements shown in italics are recorded verbatim from comment cards.*

CAT Member Questions and Comments

Question: Will we get displacement costs? *Need displacement costs for each proposed west side route.* **Response:** The economic report will include the number of displacements, and will be available toward the end of this process. The dollar value information will not come until further into the process.

Question: When will we get the traffic report? **Response:** This report will be complete toward the end of the process, and we will send it as soon as it is available. **Reply**: What is holding this up? **Response**: There are many other reports in process, and extensive traffic modeling must occur in order to complete the traffic report.

Question: I want to know the figures for commercial versus residential traffic. *When do we get the traffic operations report containing % of commercial vs. residential vehicles?* **Response:** This is part of the traffic report. However, right now the figures look like 10 percent truck traffic.

Question: *Would you review with us the significance/impact of CAT input on the project is?* **Response**: ADOT and FHWA will review the input from the CAT and the public as a factor in the selection of a preferred alternative on the west side. They also want input on the Pecos Road alternative. **Reply**: How much weight does the CAT recommendation have? **Response**: There isn't a set weight. Past CAT processes have had significant impact on selecting a preferred alternative.

Project Update

Edwards reviewed the project timeline. The draft EIS is scheduled for the end of 2006. The document will be available for review and additional public comments will be taken at that time.

She noted that the design data report, to be presented as the next agenda item, shows right-of-way footprints, but that this data, like all data in these reports, is "pre-decision data" and subject to change. In the case of right-of-way footprints, the report shows a conservative scenario in which it is feasible to build a freeway allow some flexibility. It is important to attempt to show the maximum right-of-way that might be needed, so that if the freeway is built, additional right-of-way will not be needed at the design stage.

CAT Member Questions and Comments

Question: When will we know the actual right-of-way? **Response**: In 2007, there will be a Record of Decision from FHWA that tells us if a freeway will be built. If it is to be built, the project enters the design stage and in approximately one to two years, actual right-of-way would be determined.

Question: Why did you say in the past that 200-300 feet of right-of-way would be needed and now it looks like 500-800 feet? **Response**: We want to reserve a larger right-of-way space and may need drainage channels in some areas. This figure will likely decrease at the design stage.

Design Data Report

Chris Clary-Lemon reviewed alternative naming conventions and presented the Design Data Report to the CAT. Presentation highlights include:

- Design speed is 65 mph.
- A system traffic interchange is a freeway-to-freeway interchange.
- Horizontal geometry shows how traffic moves left to right.
- Vertical geometry uses the same stations as those shown for the horizontal geometry.
- Vertical geometry charts should be read left to right, top to bottom.
- Technical reports reflect the information received from the CAT. For example, the footprint shown in the horizontal geometry was modified to avoid a historic site.
- Specific elevation constraints occur along each of the alternatives.

CAT Member Questions and Comments:

Comment: Regarding Table 1, I would like color maps that correlate with the handout **Response**: We will provide this information.

Question: Is design speed the same as the posted speed? **Response**: These are typically different, and design speed is often higher. We plan to change the design speed to 75 mph.

Question: What if some future law allows for a speed limit higher than the design speed? **Response**: Higher speeds might be acceptable on straight areas (tangents). The curved areas would have to be reviewed.

Question: How will it be determined if a drainage basin is needed? **Response**: This will be addressed later in this presentation.

Question: Will decibel studies assume that sound would originate from a deck 27 feet over South Mountain Park? **Response**: These issues will be looked at in the noise report. Additionally, Section 4(f) areas receive additional analysis which is discussed in the Section 4(f) and 6(f) report.

Question: If ADOT prefers a balance of above and below grade in building a freeway, why are 24 stations elevated, and two semi-depressed? **Response**: In the west, up to the Salt River, factors that keep the freeway elevated include: meeting the grade of the existing freeway, the railroad, proximity of Van Buren Street, other streets that cannot go under, and the Salt River. From the Salt River to South Mountain Park, there are water table issues. Some areas of Laveen show a water table at just nine feet, and the Laveen

conveyance channel is a factor. From South Mountain Park to Pecos, there are utility issues, though it is possible to relocate utilities. Drainage along the surface of South Mountain currently runs under Pecos and we would like to maintain this if possible.

Question: Why not provide a fully depressed area along Pecos like other area freeways? *Why Elliot or Estrella, not depressed/semi-depressed.* **Response**: There are drainage issues along Pecos.

Question: We are seeing the least path of resistance. Does this mean there won't be any work done to consider pump stations? **Response**: The purpose of the report is to establish a right-of-way footprint for a feasible freeway.

Comment: We would prefer a depressed freeway near the school. *Depressed vs. raised highway. At Lagos it appears that the freeway will be approximately 15 feet above current grade. It would seem that a depressed freeway would have less impact. Can pumping stations be set up to allow depressed freeway at Lagos and would that mean that 40th and 32nd streets end up being raised over the freeway?*

Comment: Pumping in order to depress the freeway should be considered. *Preference would be to create a semi-depressed depressed alternative for Pecos Rd. evaluate drainage issues.*

Question: Can the elevation be reversed so that the streets run above the freeway? **Response**: There is room for change. However, if there is too much change to the profile of the study, this would also change the Environmental Impact Statement.

Comment: We need to know when something cannot be changed – and if a change would require an entire new study to occur.

Question: Are habitat corridors included? **Response**: The issue has been recommended.

Question: Can a habitat corridor come later in the process? **Response**: The biology report is pending. ADOT has not committed to this issue, but is aware that habitat connectivity is an issue.

Comment: We should consider how a freeway would affect our water, such as untouched land in the community and how it would affect plant life. *Mitigation to protect habitat, especially also with regard to important medicinal plants vital to GRIC.*

Comment: We need to know if the design is open to change. *Please address: How much change is possible with design, both vertical & horizontal?*

Question: I would like to see an example of a semi-depressed intersection. **Response**: We will review this later in the presentation.

Question: Will the Salt River elevation be consistent with plans for the future? **Response**: Yes, we would be consistent with the Rio Salado project.

Question: What is the implication if there is no access to private land? **Response**: If there is no road to access private land, that land would be purchased.

Question: Regarding the right-of-way in the Alta Ridge area in the E-1 alternative, why is it shown to be so far north of GRIC? **Response**: There is a 200-foot utility easement. However, we would work with the utilities on this issue.

Following a short break, Bill Vachon addressed concerns regarding what items shown in these technical reports may or may not be changed. Highlights included:

- Nothing is decided until there is a record of decision.
- This includes where the freeway would be (horizontal and vertical alignment).
- This is the time to say what you don't like in these designs, and we will attempt to address your concerns.
- The information shown is a best determination based on what we now know. Data provided in the reports may be updated. This may also significantly change based on public input.
- As an example, if you want to see certain areas depressed, we would like you explain why and we will address whether or not this is feasible.

CAT Member Questions and Comments:

Comment: For the sake of time, if something can't be changed, we need you to tell us. **Response**: After a record of decision, an elevation can only be changed by perhaps one foot.

Question: What elements are we actually recommending? **Response**: The CAT will recommend a route with its horizontal and vertical profile as best we can show it at this point. If there is significant change, we may have to come back and revisit the NEPA process.

Comment: Once the freeway is depressed at Dobbins, I would like it to remain depressed.

Comment: Any habitat corridor in the South Mountain area would be disrupted if the freeway was below grade. *Wildlife Corridor Concern Re: destroying fragmenting habitat.*

Due to time constraints, Clary-Lemon asked the group how they would like to proceed. There was general agreement that the CAT would like a detailed review on one of the alignments. He showed detailed interchange information on W101PR-1 and reviewed and example 4-leg and 3-leg intersection on W55-1. Other presentation highlights included:

- A full interchange allows all movements on and off a freeway; whereas a half interchange allows only half of those movements.
- Van Buren is shown as a half-service interchange due to the proximity of the street to freeways.
- Putting in a freeway results in severance of local streets. Options to provide access to property include creating a cul-de-sac or connecting the street to another.

CAT Member Questions and Comments:

Question: Can't the Laveen area use the given conveyance channel for water that would be associated with a depressed freeway as well? **Response**: We can discuss this option with flood control. **Reply**: *Co op with McFlood. Use LACC redesign benefits over excess land taken.*

Question: Is there a reason a box culvert is not used in these designs. **Response**: A box culvert could be used, however, we are showing the most conservative right-of-way area.

Question: When do geological issues come into play? **Response**: This will be part of the geotechnical report, and will also be covered in part in the report that covers Section 4(f) issues and mitigation impacts.

Question: I am confused about the drainage from South Mountain Park to the Elliot/Pecos area. **Response**: We would try to follow the natural drainage pattern. A depressed freeway must capture any rainwater that falls on the pavement, and water that flows from the land above down to the freeway.

Question: I am concerned about the land's ability to absorb water, particularly if a freeway footprint is covering some of the land. *Water has been running through this community (Gila River) for hundreds of years. By tampering with it's natural flow may be disastrous.* **Response**: Many of these issues are addressed in forthcoming reports.

Question: Is partial or full reconstruction preferred for maintaining traffic on the 101? **Response**: Full reconstruction would help maintain existing traffic during construction.

Question: Is partial or full reconstruction more advantageous for the overall project? **Response**: Probably one would be better, but I don't know which.

Question: How many lanes would this freeway be? **Response**: The freeway itself would be three lanes in each direction. However, when ramp lanes are accounted for, the system interchange areas would add two more lanes in each direction, for a total of 14 lanes. These lanes would gradually taper off after the system transition.

Question: Are local access options included in these graphics? **Response**: Yes, however, there don't happen to be any on this 101 graphic.

Question: Does this design plan for a future I-10 that would have 22 lanes? **Response**: Yes.

Comment: What help is a TI if traffic gets off the freeway and uses the arterial streets? *No TI's at 32nd/24th Sts. & Pecos. All TI's off of Pecos dead end at Chandler – why fund expensive TI's that are only ½ mile long?*

Question: What determines how many interchanges there will be and where they are? **Response**: (Don Herp, City of Phoenix responded to this question.) Some interchange issues are being discussed at City of Phoenix staff level, such as not needing a 32nd Street TI. Also we believe the TI, which is currently shown at approximately 25th Avenue, should be aligned with 27th Avenue.

Question: Is the 32nd Street issue related to a historical site? **Response**: No, land use in that area was planned without an interchange.

Comment: The design includes a lot of major intersections, which are very expensive to build, yet didn't look at pumping due to the cost. **Response**: The intersections shown are the current major intersections.

Question: What about frontage road? **Response**: This is a completely different issue.

Comment: I would like to see design and mitigation alternatives so that we know that there are options to what is being presented.

Don Herp added that the 32nd Street intersection would be evaluated by the City of Phoenix, and the city would like input from GRIC as well. More information will be available on this issue prior to the CAT evaluation in January.

Respond to Written Comments/Questions:

Comments and Questions are shown verbatim from forms received.

William Ramsay

Question: What organization is responsible for rendering the records of decision? **Response**: FHWA.

Question: At what point of the design phase would a "no Build" decision be made? **Response**: At the record of decision.

Question: What would be the primary factor or considerations involved in a "no build" decision? **Response**: These are the same factors used in evaluating the other alternatives.

David Folts, Concerned families along SM & Loop 202

Question: If the new quiet asphalt is used in the construction of Loop 202, will this cause sound abatement walls to be much shorter or not constructed at all? After all, ADOT only has to meet certain sound criteria and if it is met, why build walls? **Response**: This will be part of the noise technical report.

Question: Can ADOT explain sound abatement techniques on the elevated interchanges planned for S. Mt. Loop 202 as it passes through Ahwatukee. Will sound abatement walls be used on the elevated interchanges and if so how tall will the walls be? How many feet higher will the sound abatement walls be then the elevated interchanges? **Response**: This will be part of the noise technical report.

Question: Can ADOT supply 3 artists renderings of 3 typical elevated interchanges in Ahwatukee. Please provide elevations and show any sound abatement walls on other sound abatement design techniques. **Response**: We will forward this suggestion to ADOT for their consideration.

Question: A question was asked last week about the height of the elevated interchanges being measured from the surface of the grade/road under the structure. This question was asked because ADOT staked the height of the bridges would be 25 feet. What will be the highest point of the elevated highway in feet measured from the surface/grade of the highway? **Response**: Typical heights on arterials are about 25 feet. At railroad tracks, heights are about 30 feet.

Question: ADOT & HDR stated in the past that they would take photos (not video) of present housing and development then superimpose the complete highway alignment (all alignments West End) over the actual photo maps. This would show the best and latest birds eye view of this project on present day development. Does ADOT already have something similar to this? **Response**: This information is forthcoming in the video mentioned previously.

Question: Is a hard copy of the summary from the previous SMCAT meeting as shown on S. Mt. Corridor study web page given to each SMCAT member? (specifically answers to questions from the public gallery and SMCAT members) **Response**: Yes.

Question: During heavy rains in the summer, quite a bit of rain runoff will be collected in the drainage canal on Pecos Rd. The north or south side of S. Mt. Loop 202. What will be the retention time in days that standing water will sit in the collection canals during a 3 inch rain over 24 hours? How, if at all, will this water be released and where will it flow to, along the Ahwatukee section of S. Mt. Loop 202. **Response**: We are not able to answer this question at this time.

Question: The drainage channel that resides alongside the Ahwatukee section of S. Mt. Loop has the ability to hold what total volume of water in gallons from 51st Ave. to 40th Street? Will this standing water be treated to insure it doesn't become a mosquito breeding ground for such diseases as West Nile Fever? **Response**: We do not have the technical experts in attendance.

Question: What % of the 4 million cubic yards removed from S. Mt. Park be used to construct the elevated interchanges on S. Mt Loop 202? **Response**: This requires an analysis of the material removed to determine if it appropriate for this use.

Question: How many feet out from the very center of the interchanges will the highway elevation start? What is the average, minimum and maximum rise over run in feet as you close in, then leave the interchange? **Response**: The maximum allowable grade is three percent, or three feet per one hundred feet.

Question: What is the deepest depression in feet used on Route 60 as it passed through Phoenix, Chandler, Tempe and Mesa? **Response**: The deepest depression in that area is 25 feet deep; however, some areas are only partially depressed and are at about 20-21 feet.

Question: If S. Mt. Loop 202 was fully depressed ie (60 feet depressed from grade) would this have the affect of giving Ahwatukee residents cleaner air? If so, why? **Response**: There will be an air quality technical report later in this process.

Question: If a change in design is made to fully depress S. Mt. Loop 202 as it runs south of Ahwatukee, would this have a tendency to force a new EIS or require more study and data gathering time for the existing EIS? **Response**: As long as the information is part of the draft EIS, a new EIS would not be required.

Jason Fifield

(I am a homeowner near 83rd Ave and Lower Buckeye Rd.)

Comment: I am curious as to the studies that have been done in regards to growth in the West Valley. Are the growth projections being considered current (what are the date of the projection studies/figures)? I've seen in certain media that the West Side is expected to add upwards of 2+ million people in the next 15-20 years. I am concerned that any proposed routes east of 99th Ave. are very shortsighted of the coming West Side growth. Many of the West Side residents will be commuting to jobs on the East Side and with the explosive growth on the West Side there are certain to be many new jobs created that East Valley residents will commute to. Also, I know the committee has talked about semi-trucks using the South Mt. Fwy. as a bypass around downtown. With all the growth and increased traffic on I-10 is the committee factoring in all the other regular travelers passing thru Phoenix who would likely choose this new route over I-10.

Response: We have MAG 2000 census data, and where appropriate will use the new 2005 data when we receive it.

CAT Member Questions and Comments:

Question: *Can we get #'s cars that explain why in design this is assumed to be a freeway rather than a more mellow parkway? Topic areas, engineering and definitions.* **Response**: Traffic volume information is forthcoming. There is no criteria for parkway vs. freeway.

Question: *Will buildings be allowed to stand and the freeway to pass over them? It is done in other cities.* **Response**: This is under consideration.

Question: *Is depress quieter than elevated?* **Response**: The noise report is forthcoming.

Question: *What is the acceptable decibel level in a residential area?* **Response**: This will also be addressed in the noise report.

Additional question and comment cards included:

- *Deja-Vu-2 years ago. "Connectivity of Habitat" issues, wildlife corridor.*

- *Is there any thing in design report to mitigate for wildlife travelways and habitats destroyed?*
- *Allow for wildlife corridor from South Mt. To Estrellas. Construction should minimize disturbance. Any depression – semidepression is a banner to the corridors.*
- *Where is detailed info on wildlife corridors that all 3 proposed alignments break apart by cutting into the S. Mt. Park?*
- *Laveen Channel Park Hwy noise going over park w/horse riders.*
- *Feasibility Issue – 101 at Cactus depressed. Laveen Citizens feel if it's good enough for Scottsdale it's good enough for Laveen.*
- *When will the Legal decision be made as it impacts a real estate sale? This relates to project maps.*
- *Drainage areas with large parcels designed as park/greenbelt not rock pits.*
- *Is the interchange at 32nd street a definite? There are already significant traffic issues at 32nd street and Liberty Lane. (where Desert Vista High School is located)*
- *Change design of Pecos to allow GRIC usual connection to South Mountain.*
- *Blasting thru S. Mt. will alter run off patterns for GRIC. Is this being considered?*

Adjourn:

Next CAT Meeting
The next CAT meeting will be held Thursday, November 3, 2005 at 5:30 p.m. at the Learning Center Meeting Hall, Komatke Center, in District Six.