

6.0 PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Public information and involvement have been used throughout the planning process for the new facility (Northern Parkway) to ensure that citizens were informed about the project and had opportunities for input.

Since the project was initially conceived as part of the Glendale Onboard Transportation Program, it has been featured at annual public open houses for that program for the past four years, from 2002 to 2006, and updates on the design progress have also been included in the annual Glendale Onboard Program informational brochure mailed to citizens of Glendale.

Four public meetings have been held specifically for the Northern Parkway project. All were conducted in open house format, allowing attendees to talk directly with project representatives. In addition, the project sponsors conducted a series of smaller meetings with individual neighborhoods along the alignment that would be affected directly by the new facility.

6.1 NOTIFICATION

Notification of general public meetings about Northern Parkway was made through newspaper advertisements, direct mailing to property owners, and door hangers to adjacent residents. Newspaper ads were published in both English and Spanish. Publications used included *Glendale Star*, *Arizona Republic*, *La Voz*, and *Peoria Times*. Each year, an updated property owners' mailing list was obtained through the Maricopa County Assessor's office. For the first two meetings, notices were mailed to all owners within 0.25 mile of Northern Avenue from Grand Avenue (US 60) to SR 303L. For the second two meetings, notification was mailed to everyone within 0.5 mile of the alignment. Additionally, door-hanger notices were distributed to all businesses, apartments, and homes within 0.25 mile of the alignment.

For the individual neighborhood meetings, various methods were used to ensure that everyone in each neighborhood was notified of the meeting. In some cases, property management companies provided mailing lists of their residents, which were used to mail notices. In other cases, notices were distributed door to door by either project staff or volunteer residents.

6.2 PUBLIC MEETINGS

The first Northern Parkway public meeting was held on February 12, 2003, at the Desert Garden Elementary School. It was conducted in an open house format, allowing the public to come and go at leisure, and talk one on one with project and city staff. The purposes of this first public meeting were to notify the public of the project proposed to be completed in the area over the next 10 to 20 years and to provide an opportunity to review and comment on conceptual

engineering concepts. Comment cards and flip charts were used to gather public comments. A total of 58 people attended this public meeting, including Glendale and Peoria citizens, Glendale council members, and media representatives.

The second public meeting also was an open house format held on July 10, 2003, at the Desert Garden Elementary School. The purposes of this meeting were to allow the public to review preliminary engineering plans for the new facility, demonstrate that comments from the previous meeting were incorporated into the latest plans, and allow meeting participants to speak with project and city staff. Comment cards and flip charts were used to gather suggestions and concerns. A total of 70 individuals attended the second public meeting, including citizens, officials of the Glendale and Peoria city councils, and the media.

The third public open house served as the public scoping meeting for preparation of an EA in conformance with NEPA for the *Northern Parkway 30 Percent Plans & DCR – Loop 303 to Grand Avenue Project*, under the direction of ADOT and the FHWA (as lead federal agency). The open house was held on June 1, 2005, at Desert Spirit Elementary School. A Spanish-speaking staff person was available for translation, as needed. Approximately 55 citizens attended the meeting. Information about project history and status was provided on a one-on-one basis by study team members, and attendees were asked to complete a comment form if they desired; 26 comment forms were received. All but one person identified themselves as residents and/or property owners in the area who learned about the meeting from the flyer mailed or delivered to their homes. Public comments received at the scoping meeting prompted the project sponsors to examine additional localized design concepts and an alternate alignment due to concerns over noise and air quality issues, as well as potential impacts on existing residences and businesses.

The fourth public meeting was held to update the public on the results of those studies and to discuss the current concepts under consideration. It was held at Desert Spirit Elementary School on December 8, 2005. A Spanish-speaking staff person was also available for translation, as needed. The room was organized by station, each focusing on a geographic segment of the corridor. Attendees were asked to complete comment forms, and 34 people did so. Approximately 63 members of the public attended the meeting.

6.3 NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

To supplement the general public meetings held for the Northern Parkway project, a series of meetings with residents of individual neighborhoods were held between November 2005 and March 2006. Through these individual discussions, the project sponsors wanted to obtain a broader level of public input and ideas and to gain better insight into public preferences for the

local design options being studied by talking with residents of the neighborhoods adjacent to Northern Avenue. All residents of directly adjacent neighborhoods were contacted to determine their interest in meeting with project team representatives. Meetings were held with residents of 10 neighborhoods over a period of several months, as their schedules permitted. Some of these meetings were discussions with the homeowner associations at their regularly scheduled meetings, and others were special events arranged to discuss this project. The attendance at these meetings averaged between 15 and 25 residents. The following neighborhoods hosted meetings:

- Country Meadows Estates, Peoria – January 21, 2006
- Country Meadows Condominiums, Unit 2, Maricopa County – February 20, 2006
- Country Meadows Condominiums, Units 4 and 4A (combined), Peoria – January 14, 2006
- Country Meadows Condominiums, Units 9 and 10 (combined), Maricopa County – February 11, 2006
- Meadowood, Peoria – November 19, 2005
- Suncliff 4, Peoria – March 6, 2006
- Suncliff 5, Peoria – December 5, 2005
- Rovey Farm Estates North, Glendale – March 23, 2006

A discussion was also held with the Coalition of Arizona Bicyclists at a meeting of that group on November 21, 2005. Participants wanted Northern Parkway to have bicycle accommodations which would include the widening of bridge structures on the eastern portion for bicycle use.

Neighborhoods for which we were not able to arrange meetings are Summersett Village, Country Meadows Townhouses Unit 1, and Country Meadows Condominiums Unit 3.

At each meeting, project representatives provided detailed descriptions of the Northern Parkway design concepts under consideration and discussed with residents how these might affect the neighborhood. The EA process, project implementation process, and schedule were also presented. Where relevant, residents were asked if they preferred one design option over another.

6.4 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Several common concerns about the project have been expressed throughout all the public open houses and neighborhood meetings. In general, these have included the following:

- **Neighborhood Access Restrictions** – Most residents were unhappy about losing the unrestricted access they have today. People felt it would be inconvenient to have to use alternate access points at major intersections rather than the local street closest to them. Some suggested that making U-turns to return to their streets could be a safety hazard. Some neighborhoods suggested constructing additional access points at new locations to provide alternate ingress and egress, and several of these suggestions have been incorporated into the project design concept.
- **Alternative Alignment to Avoid Residential Areas between 115th Avenue and SR 101L** – Some participants suggested studying an alternate alignment that would move a portion of the project south to Glendale Avenue due to concerns about potential noise and pollution issues as well as a perceived loss in real estate value. This alternative was developed to a conceptual level. Although not initially identified by the project sponsors, it has been included in this draft EA.
- **Traffic Speed** – Many people pointed out that traffic travels at high speeds on Northern Avenue today and were concerned that speeds would increase on the parkway. Pedestrian safety was a concern, as well as the ability to make safe turns into/out of local access streets; deceleration lanes were suggested to accommodate turns. People would like to know how speed would be controlled on the parkway.
- **Safety of School Children** – In the area between 103rd and 111th avenues, many children live on the south side of Northern Avenue and attend school on the north side. Their ability to cross Northern Parkway safely was a concern of many parents. People suggested that a safer situation is needed even in the absence of Northern Parkway improvements and that this issue should be investigated by the appropriate agencies in the interim and be addressed in the ultimate Northern Parkway configuration.
- **Traffic Noise and Air Quality** – People asked how the project might increase noise and air quality. They wanted to know if noise walls would be built; some were concerned about such walls blocking the views from yards.
- **Property Values and Disclosure Obligation** – Some people were concerned that the parkway would decrease the value of their property. A few said that they would probably move before the project would be constructed in their area, and they wondered if they would be obligated to disclose information about the project when they sold.

- **Bicycle Accommodation** – Some residents, as well as the Coalition of Arizona Bicyclists, would like to see the project provide bike lanes and connections to other bike routes. It was pointed out that there is no long-distance continuous east-west bike route in the area for commuters.
- **No Consensus on Design Options for 107th to 111th Avenues** – The options include either two traffic signals or an overpass “jug handle” to provide better access to and from the neighborhoods to compensate for loss of left turns at several locations. While many people thought the signals would improve access, many felt they could increase accident potential and noise.

6.5 AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

The idea for the Northern Parkway was first proposed by the CACTI committee in February 2001. A meeting was held with the Peoria Public Works Director in June 2001 to discuss the potential “super street” concept. In January 2005, a committee was formed composed of staff from Glendale, Peoria, Maricopa County, El Mirage, ADOT, and Luke AFB. The committee met monthly and provided guidance for the development of the Northern Parkway concept. A Design Concept Report was completed in October 2003 that included grade-separated intersections at arterial streets with limited signals placed every 0.5 mile.

After the county vote, the Northern Working Team was formed, which included representatives from Glendale, Peoria, El Mirage, MCDOT, MAG, Luke AFB, ADOT, FHWA, and FCDMC. This team, which now consists of a management committee and a technical committee, has met monthly and has provided review and guidance for further development of the design concept. The design concept as presented herein has the concurrence of representatives from these agencies. An agency scoping meeting was held in February 2005. Agencies and stakeholders, including utility companies and landowners, presented their concerns and issues regarding the project.