

Meeting Summary

City of Tucson Department of Transportation (TDOT)
Ward 2 Citizen Design Review Committee (CDRC)
Houghton Road: Broadway Boulevard to 22nd Street
Nov. 19, 2013, 5:30 to 7 p.m.
Tucson Eastside City Hall, 7575 E. Speedway Blvd.

ATTENDEES

Ward 2 CDRC Members

Helen Arnold, Macalester Park Homeowners Association (HOA)
Mike Collins, five homes on Houghton Road
Dominique Drentrea, Casas de Santo neighborhood
Paul Gegenheimer, property owner
Richard Hagenah, Houghton Neighborhood Association (NA)
Frank Salbego, Eastside NA
Tom Stefanek, Mesquite Trails HOA
Rick Wilson, Eastpoint Estates HOA

Guests

Steven Eddy, Tucson Electric Power (TEP) Government & External Affairs
Cynthia Garcia, TEP Superintendent, Transmission & Distribution
Larry Lucero, TEP Manager, Government Relations
Debra Sykes, TEP Project Manager, Public Improvements

City of Tucson, Ward 2 Council Office

Ted Prezelski, Management Analyst

TDOT and Consultants

M.J. Dillard, TDOT Project Manager
Joe Vaskovic, Parsons Brinckerhoff Construction Manager
Jan Gordley, Gordley Group, Public Involvement
Lori Lantz, Gordley Group, Public Involvement

MATERIALS

- Agenda
- Houghton Road: Broadway Boulevard to 22nd Street fact sheet
- Sun Tran Park & Ride fact sheet
- Construction contact sheet
- Meeting evaluation form
- Comment form
- Implementation plan map
- CDRC neighborhoods map
- Oct. 9, 2013, Ward 2 CDRC meeting summary

INTRODUCTIONS

Lori Lantz opened the meeting and noted that new Ward 2 CDRC member Rick Wilson was in attendance. Rick was newly appointed by Council Member Paul Cunningham to represent Eastpoint Estates HOA. Representatives from TEP were also in attendance. Lori asked all present to introduce themselves.

PROJECT UPDATES

M.J. Dillard provided updates on the Houghton Road Corridor.

Houghton Road: Broadway Boulevard to 22nd Street

- Utility relocation is wrapping up at the Broadway Boulevard intersection. TEP decided to go underground instead of overhead at the Broadway intersection, which meant that other utilities on those poles had to find alternative solutions, and have all relocated underground.
- The Houghton Road and Broadway Boulevard intersection and Sun Tran Park & Ride lot will be constructed first. Houghton Road from Broadway Boulevard through 22nd Street intersection is being designed at the same time and is planned to be constructed as the intersection work is concluding.
- Intersection construction will begin on the north side of Broadway Boulevard and the west side of Houghton Road. Once these are done they will move to the south and east sides.
- Construction-related barricades have been adjusted to allow improved access during construction and to slow traffic. A reduced speed limit is in place to ensure safety.
- Access to local businesses will remain open, and notice will be given 48 hours in advance, if any individual driveways need to be temporarily closed.
- Throughout the construction process, M.J. will be available for questions and concerns, and construction updates will be emailed to the Ward 2 CDRC. An updated construction contact list will be sent with the first project update in case of emergency or general questions.
- Safety dictates, and residents have requested, street lighting, so lights have been added to the project area. Lights will be shielded, cost-efficient LED and will be Dark Sky compliant.
- At this time, there is no money remaining in the City franchise agreement fund to pay for the cost of moving the TEP distribution lines underground. The cost differential is about \$1.7 million for underground lines.
- Rubberized asphalt will be used for noise mitigation, and some screening vegetation will be added. Sound walls are not planned.

TUCSON ELECTRIC POWER LINE LOCATION

M.J. Dillard gave some background on the TEP power line relocation.

- Once the intersection construction is complete, TEP is planning to put the distribution lines above ground on the west side. The high-voltage transmission lines need to be on separate poles and above ground, and those

will remain on the east side. This means that there will be overhead power lines on both sides of the road.

- TEP has to move the existing poles due to placement of the new roadway.
- There is nothing in the franchise agreement between the City and TEP that will allow TDOT to force utilities underground at their expense.
- The cost to the City to pay the difference to place the distribution lines underground would start at \$1.7 million and there is no funding available for this.
- One option would be to put together an improvement district, where neighbors would pay the cost, but there is no apparent interest in that possibility.

TEP staff handed out fact sheets showing the anticipated location of power poles in the project area and shared the following information:

- Approximately 10 new steel poles for 138 kV transmission lines will replace 15 poles currently on the east side. Approximately 20 new poles will be placed on the west side for 13.8 kV distribution lines.
- There is a significant cost difference between locating lines overhead and underground. For this project, that cost would have to be borne by the City. TEP as an overhead utility cannot bear the additional cost of putting those lines underground, which would impact the remaining ratepayers within their service territory.
- In Oro Valley, where the utilities are required to be underground, the Town of Oro Valley paid the difference to locate lines underground.
- Current technology and safety considerations don't allow the transmission lines to be put underground.
- Distribution lines can't be put in a trench with gas or water lines for safety reasons.
- Some neighborhoods adjacent to Houghton Road have underground utilities because builders include that additional cost in the price of the home and it is then included in the mortgage.
- TEP lines are underground at the intersection because it was a very short stretch and cost tradeoffs for that section made it a feasible investment.
- Even with underground lines, a certain amount of above-ground poles are still needed for the distribution system.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

- Is the only option poles on the west side? Can you add poles on the east side?
Response: Underlying easements and utilities on the east side of Houghton prohibit the installation of a new distribution line. (Based on information from the TEP handout.)
- Houghton Road is a designated scenic corridor, so we shouldn't have electric poles on both sides of the road.
- Can you change the project to four lanes instead of six and use the extra money for underground lines?

Response: RTA would not allow those funds to be used for utility work.

- Can we hear from the City finance department regarding how they are funding this project, and where we can find additional money?

Response: M.J. will talk to the staff involved in funding the project.

VISITOR COMMENTS

- What determines six lanes rather than four lanes?

Response: Traffic projections warrant six lanes at this time.

- We were told there would be no overhead lights, or they would be in the median.

Response: All lighting design is based on safety criteria, including not placing it in the median, and neighbors requested street lighting due to safety concerns.

- Have they done anything more about a screening wall? We don't want to look at six lanes of traffic.

Response: The City has not approved screening walls, but M.J. can put in a request regarding the strong preference.

PARKING LOT (Items waiting to be covered at a future meeting)

- Retaining wall by five houses and frontage road
- Re-examine possibility of adding privacy walls

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Ward 2 Councilman Paul Cunningham and the Ward 2 CDRC wrote letters to TEP strongly supporting underground transmission lines on the west side of Houghton Road.

Copies of those letters were provided to TEP at the meeting and are attached to these minutes. TEP handout is also attached.

Meeting adjourned

November 19, 2013

Debra Sykes
Project Manager, Public Improvements
T&D Operations/Resource Management
Tucson Electric Power Company
P.O. Box 711, Mailstop DB 101
Tucson, AZ 85702

Dear Ms. Sykes,

The Ward 2 Citizen Design Review Committee (CDRC) would like to ask for your assistance in addressing our concerns about the location of utility lines in the Houghton Road: Broadway Boulevard to 22nd Street improvement project.

At the October meeting of the Ward 2 CDRC, committee members were informed about the progress of the Houghton Road projects.

It was reported that Tucson Electric Power (TEP) was completing utility work at the Broadway Boulevard/Houghton Road intersection and placing distribution lines underground, which we greatly appreciated. The committee learned that south of the Broadway intersection, TEP would have above-ground lines on both sides of Houghton Road, with above-ground transmission lines on the east side of the road and above-ground distribution lines on the west side of the road. The committee was informed that high-voltage transmission lines cannot be placed underground, but distribution lines may be.

Concerns arose, especially because Houghton Road is designated as a scenic corridor, and many project decisions and improvements have been based on that designation and its requirements. After much discussion, the committee unanimously agreed that our strong preference is to have the west side TEP distribution lines placed underground.

It is our understanding that construction project manager M.J. Dillard has informed TEP of the CDRC concerns and preference.

The Ward 2 CDRC is requesting that you investigate all possible options to see that the west side distribution lines are located underground, rather than having overhead lines on both sides of a scenic corridor.

Please advise us of any progress in this issue or if there are others with whom we should be in contact in order to reinforce the importance of this issue in our community.

Sincerely,

Stelen Arnold
Ginnica Duroto
Jim Sachs
Richard W. Glean
Thomas Stepanek
Paul H. Hesch
Rich Wilber

Ward 2 Citizen Design Review Committee

cc: Cynthia Garcia, Tucson Electric Power Superintendent, Transmission & Distribution
Paul Cunningham, Ward 2 Council Member
M.J. Dillard, City of Tucson Construction Project Manager



CITY OF
TUCSON

WARD 2 COUNCIL OFFICE

PAUL CUNNINGHAM
COUNCILMAN

November 19, 2013

Cynthia Garcia
Superintendent, Transmission & Distribution Operations
Tucson Electric Power
PO Box 711
Tucson AZ 85702-0711

Ms. Garcia,

I am writing you to express my concern about the possibility that Tucson Electric Power will place power poles on both sides of Houghton Road. Houghton Road is a designated scenic corridor and, like the neighbors in the area, I don't see how another set of power poles furthers the aims of that designation.

Work on Houghton Road is part of a voter approved RTA project. The residents in the area support the project as a whole and local governments have worked with neighborhoods to make sure that the project is done in a way to preserve and enhance the quality of life for people along Houghton Road. I would like TEP to be part of that partnership.

Cities in other parts of Arizona have undergrounded their lines, and our own code designates underground lines in new developments. I want to work with TEP to mitigate the visual clutter in the area.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Cunningham".

Paul Cunningham
Ward 2 Council Member

11/19/13

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

TEP is planning to relocate and replace an existing 138kV transmission line and 14kV distribution line in anticipation of the City of Tucson's Houghton Road widening project from Broadway Boulevard to 22nd Street. The transmission line will remain on the east side of Houghton Road and the distribution line will be relocated to the west side of Houghton Road.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

- TEP received approval to build the transmission line from the Arizona Power Plant and Transmission Line Siting Committee (Siting Committee) and the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) in February and April 1976 respectively. The approval stated the following:
 - The voltage of the transmission line shall be 138,000 volts (138kV).
 - The transmission line shall be double circuit.
 - The transmission line shall be located on the east side of Houghton Road.
 - The final poles installed to carry the transmission line shall be green steel. (The current wood poles are considered temporary and were installed in the 1980's in anticipation of planned improvements to Houghton Road.)
- The transmission relocation work will include replacing 15 existing wood poles with 10 green steel poles on the east side of Houghton Road. The poles will be approximately 75-85 feet in height. Spans between poles will be approximately 700 feet. Similar relocation work has been completed on Houghton Road north of Broadway Boulevard.
- The distribution relocation work will include installing 20 self-weathering steel poles on the west side of Houghton Road and 8 poles on the north side of 22nd Street. The poles will be approximately 40-55 feet in height, depending on roadway design features and topography. Spans between poles will be approximately 265 feet.
- Transmission and distribution pole relocation work will occur between Kensington Drive to 29th Street on Houghton Road and Leland Drive to Barbara Drive on 22nd Street.
- The current overhead distribution design location (west side of Houghton) is based on the following factors:
 - Existing transmission line is on the east side of Houghton and can no longer accommodate a distribution line on the 138kV pole line.
 - There are underlying easements and utilities on

the east side of Houghton that prohibit the installation of a new distribution line.

- Overhead construction is the least intrusive and most cost effective construction methodology given the limited right of way and saturation of underground utilities in this project section.
- The cost differential between overhead and underground design is billable to the City of Tucson and is not accounted for in the project budget.
- The City of Tucson project design build schedule does not provide the necessary time to design and construct an underground system, where there is adequate room to construct in available right of way.
- Underground construction will severely impact existing and future plantings within the corridor.

CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

- Vegetation removal at pole sites will begin in December 2013.
- Pole installation will begin in January 2014
- Southwest Gas will follow TEP's construction schedule for the installation of a high-pressure gas line on the west side of Houghton Road.

CITY OF TUCSON HOUGHTON ROAD WIDENING PROJECT

TEP TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION RELOCATION PROJECT: BROADWAY TO 22nd



Tucson Electric Power

AVERAGE HEIGHT OF
TRANSMISSION POLE: 75'-85'

AVERAGE HEIGHT OF
DISTRIBUTION POLE: 40'-55'

