

Pojoaque Valley Planning Committee Meeting Summary
Thursday, February 20, 2006 6:30pm – 8:30pm
Sammy Quintana Community Board Room

(Note: This is a meeting summary and is not intended to give the meeting contents in its entirety. If you would like to get more details about the meeting, please contact another committee member that was present at the meeting, or the SF County Planning staff.)

David Dogruel opened the meeting at 6:30pm. Because there were a number of new people, he asked that we all introduce ourselves. Most of the new people were from the Dept. of Transportation (DOT) or from Louis Berger Group who are working on the consulting on the design and access management plan for US 285 from NM 503 to CR 109.

David then asked for reports from community members.

Committee Member Reports

Mario Romero lives off of 285 north of 503 and has concerns about the plans to change the road. He said that he has circulated a petition to protest the plans, and complained that his calls have not been returned. He is concerned that the plans will make it difficult and unsafe to make left turns when pulling gooseneck trailers. David told Mario that we would discuss the road issues during the presentation that would be given shortly by the DOT.

Chuck Berger and Don Wilson reported briefly on the subcommittee working on high-speed Internet connections. They have found six possible broadband Internet providers, two companies have been interviewed and the subcommittee plans to interview two more soon. They circulated a petition for people to request that Qwest do a feasibility study for DSL in the 455-exchange. This petition is a mechanism defined in the telecom regulations – if there are 75 signatures from people with qualified phone lines, they must do the study. Whether a phone line is qualified depends on the quality of the physical connections. Qwest can determine this quality for each line. We will try to get as many signatures as possible. David D. added however that even though we are making this request, Qwest would not preclude other potential DSL services for the Valley.

Other Information

David D. reminded us that the Aamodt settlement meeting would be Monday evening.

A recent New Mexican article about the PVPC was circulated. People with concerns about the accuracy of the coverage could call the reporter directly or the editors.

Renee said that the County is working on clarifying the legal issues involved in incorporating the Jacona Land Grant into the traditional community boundary. A memo stating the issues expressed in the last meeting was given to the County attorneys for a legal opinion. Renee will notify the Jacona Land Grant representatives when she hears back from them. She also added that the County is also hiring economist and demographer, Al Pitts, to study the demographics and socio-economic of the Valley. Currently the Census data is limited because of the way it is structured, making it difficult to get a clear perspective of the current population and economic characteristics of the Valley and to try to forecast future trends.

Presentation by DOT and Louis Berger Group

Joe Garcia, of the DOT, told us that Louis Berger Group is working on the design for the first segment of 84/285, the .8 of a mile between NM 503 and CR 109. This work is being done because of the accident rate and the projections of increased traffic in this area.

Carlos Padilla of Louis Berger began by saying that they were glad to work with the PVPC. He explained that work on this design was begun some years ago, then halted, but was restarted about a year ago. He said that the alternatives they have been considering are considered “urban type alternatives,” as opposed to freeway. Safety is the overriding consideration. In all three alternatives, the roadway footprint (the width of the road) will be unchanged. There could possibly be a signal light at CR 109. There will be improvements to the shoulders, to give cars, getting on or off of the road, the ability to adjust their speed.

The alternatives concern the treatment of the center median – the number of places at which you can make a left turn. Alternative A provides a continuous left with limited control left turns at each currently existing driveway, Alternative B has 3 opportunities for a left turn, with an outside shoulder to allow easy flow on and off the road, while Alternative C will have limited places for a left turn by using “left-in” only access and residents would not be able to turn left coming out of their homes. Mario Romero would like a continuous left, like the arrangement currently in Espanola. Joe said that this alternative is not safe, even at the current traffic level. He said that as traffic levels and accidents increase, the road design will have to move towards more restriction of left turns. He emphasized that the road design will evolve over the years in response to needs. Currently, the favored plan is a hybrid of Alternative A and B. Joe, Mario and Carlos Padilla agreed to talk during the break to ensure that there will be a turnoff that works for Mario’s needs.

Carlos Padilla said that the road planners and the PVPC should coordinate on this plan, to provide setbacks for businesses.

Joe Garcia said that the speed limit for this area will probably be reduced to 35 mph.

David D commented that even though some people are not happy with the new frontage road design on 84/285 between Santa Fe and Pojoaque, there are fewer “speed differential” accidents now – those caused by people getting on or off the highway driving slower than cars driving through the area. David also added that he thinks it will be important to address ingress and egress to properties and for potential businesses off of this mile stretch.

Joe commented that changes can be made in response to new businesses on the .8 mile section. A “live-access review committee” is created when improvements or adjustments need to be made for future growth and development on a road. Joe added that they prefer to lag not lead the land use objectives of a community. He also said that he is from this community and takes a personal interest in the design and safety of the project. Carlos added that the medians can be attractive and enhance the appearance of the road.

Longino Vigil stated that part of the problem with the roads is the bad drivers that do not pay attention to their driving. He said that it should be required that all licensed drivers take a defensive driving class every 10 years, maybe even 5 years.

Chuck commented that the striping is sometimes hard to see at night, and it is possible to get into the wrong lane when turning left. Joe said that they are working on this problem, that there is new material for the stripes that may help.

Don asked about lighting. Joe said that they would try to minimize lighting to keep the night sky visible. There will be lighting only at intersections, and 80% of it will be aimed down.

Joe said that a draft document for the design will be available in June. He said that construction will probably begin in late summer or early fall. He offered us an opportunity to get on the mailing list for notification about plans for the road. Joe's phone number is 827-5489.

Pojoaque Valley Performance District Use Table

After a break we began work on the document that will list what uses will, or will not be, permitted in the Pojoaque Valley for Residential and Non-Residential Districts. The working document has been distributed at several meetings.

There are four categories of uses:

Permitted Uses (P): Only need approval from the Land Use Administrator.

Conditional Uses (C): Must be approved by the Local Development Review Committee or LDRC (or Valley Council in our case). The LDRC or Valley Council decisions on land use projects and issues could be appealed to the Board of County Commissioners if needed.

Special Uses (S): Needs to be heard first by the LDRC or Valley Council, which would then make a recommendation. The project will then need approval by the Board of County Commissioners.

Uses not allowed: Those uses not allowed are left blank on the land use table.

We began by noting that Home Occupations and Home Businesses are still allowed in the traditional community, and that this land use table covers uses with higher impacts.

We worked through the first page and made some adjustments to the table. The committee had questions how the code defines duplexes, upper floor residential, community residential, and family compounds before deciding on the appropriate use. Renee said she would get definitions for these categories. We decided to add an entry for "home schooling" under the educational facilities among other changes.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Thursday, March 9th. Because it is taking so long to finish the Performance District Use Table, we will devote the next meeting entirely to this work. We agreed to read the remainder of the table carefully, and email any questions about the meaning of the entries to David D. or Renee in advance, so that they can research the definitions ahead of time.

Notes by E.B. and R.V.