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Wildlife Linkages Working Group

Minutes of June 12, 2009, Meeting

Committee Members

Rick Ellis, Pima County, Chair
Phil Trenary, Town of Oro Valley
Charles Barclay, Arizona Dept of Transportation (ADOT)
Carolyn Campbell, Coalition for Sonoran Desert Preservation (CSDP)
Ann Audrey, City of Tucson
Rafael Cancino, Town of Sahuarita
Janice Przybyl, Sky Island Alliance
Tim Snow, Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD)
Jennifer Christelman, Town of Marana

Public/Agencies

Geoffrey Soroka, SWCA
Chris Haas, SWCA

Staff

Jim DeGrood
Steve Matthews
Joan Reedy
Teresa Ruiz

Jurisdiction Representatives

Michael Ingraldi, AZGFD
Shawn Lowery, AZGFD
M.J. Dillard, City of Tucson
Janine Spencer, Town of Marana

1. Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Rick Ellis at 9:06 a.m. Introductions were made.

2. Approval of Minutes of Feb. 13, 2009

Motion was made by Jennifer Christelman, seconded by Janice Przybyl, to approve the minutes of Feb. 13, 2009. Approved.

3. In-Kind Contribution Form

Teresa Ruiz, Senior Transportation Planner, passed around the in-kind form for member participation.

4. RTA Board Update

Jim DeGrood, Director of Transportation Services, announced that Teresa Ruiz is going to be the new liaison to the RTA Wildlife Linkages Working Group.

Mr. DeGroot reported the Dennis Dickerson has left the organization and is now working in the Phoenix metro area. His position may be filled, as we are all watching budgets at this point.

The RTA Board has met a number of times since the last Wildlife Linkages Working Group meeting. Primarily the Board is dealing with the IGA's and the approval of project agreements. Also they have looked at HELP loans. A budget has been approved for the upcoming year. The RTA had an account balance peak of \$123 million; it has declined to \$107 million as of May 31, 2009. Further declines are expected this month and approximate \$16.5 million has been expended to-date.

Projects underway or about to be underway are:

Twin Peaks Interchange (Town of Marana)
Houghton and Old Vail Intersection (first of the Houghton Road Projects)
I-19 Frontage Road project bids have been received project should be underway this summer (Green Valley)
Wednesday a bid opened for the Town of Sahuarita,
Camino de Manana project (Town of Marana); this is the first bricks and mortar Wildlife Linkages Working Group project.

The Board's focus is the declining fund balance followed by projects starting to get underway, with the concern that the RTA will rapidly move through the balance. Bonding may occur later this year. In addition, the RTA is changing its mode of thinking; projects no longer need to be accelerated. The focus is a matter of managing the cash flow. There may even be a slow down of projects that people wish to accelerate. Mr. DeGroot said because RTA has funding and other jurisdictions are really suffering, there's a fear that it may be seen as the only game in town. There have been a lot of requests received for funding found to be inconsistent with the RTA's mission and the RTA is having to say "no" more frequently.

At the May, meeting the Board approved the Tangerine Road and La Cholla Boulevard Wildlife Crossing Studies. To-date, 264 projects are approved, programming \$448 million, 99 projects completed and 32 projects about under construction.

The most controversial RTA project, at the moment, is La Canada Drive. In the media, this week Metro Water approved a water rate hike that they attributed to the RTA. In addition, the residents along La Canada have taken issue with the noise walls/sound mitigation walls. The Technical Management Committee will convene to weigh in on this issue.

The RTA is looking at policy issues; it has been operating as a solely a reimbursement organization. Since the jurisdictions are having trouble with their finances; the RTA may be looking at some changes in our policies relating to funding. There may be a move to assist the jurisdictions with the front end costs of the RTA projects.

5. Proposal Review

Proposal #1 & 2 – Town of Sahuarita

Rafael Cancino, Town of Sahuarita, along with SWCA Environmental Consultants, Geoffrey Soroka, Biologist/Project Manager and Chris Haas presented three proposals for wildlife linkages. The three proposals are:

- 1) Construction on Sahuarita Road (La Villita Road to Country Club),
- 2) Post-construction monitoring for Sahuarita Road (La Villita Road to Country Club)

3) Initial assessment study for (Pima Mine Road, Old Nogales Highway, Nogales Highways and Quail Creek Crossing extension).

Mr. Cancino gave a brief overview.

The construction bid for Sahuarita Road was received Wednesday for the first phase from I-19 to La Villita Road, a mile one corridor. La Villita Road to Country Club will go into design in the spring.

The project increases the width of the 2.5 mile portion of Sahuarita Road from La Villita Road to Country Club Road, from a two-lane road to a four-lane road. The Town is acquiring a 150 foot right-of-way; to plan ahead for a 2030 expansion of Sahuarita Road to six lanes. This stretch of Sahuarita Road is going to become a major east/west corridor linking I-19 to SR-83 and I-10 eastbound. Allowing, traffic going north on I-19 avoid going into the Tucson area.

Proposal I – Construction: Sahuarita is expanding the bridge over the Santa Cruz River, adding four additional culverts (accidentally deleted from this presentation). The existing two lane road box culverts are approximately 40 feet these will demolished and new box culverts will be built 150 feet in width, and increased in height to avoid the “tunnel effect”. Sahuarita will also replace an existing 36” diameter corrugate metal pipe (CMP) with a 42” diameter CMP pipe culvert, for the same purpose, to enhance the openness and usability for wildlife recommended by SWCA

Mr. Cancino said that one of the current problems identified is a lot of erosion which prevents the small mammals from crossing through the box culvert. A suggested solution is to provide ramps along side of the walls of the box culverts to the ground and concrete aprons. This would also assist if there is any water or ponding of water as the ramps would allow smaller animals to cross the along on the side of the culverts

The design time table for the roadways should be completed in early spring 2010, with an anticipated construction start date a year after that lasting 18 to 24 months.

PSOMAS provided the budget cost estimate summary. Included in the cost of \$705,000.00 are:

- (3) 10 by 5 Box Culverts, demolition and replacing with new ones
- concrete aprons
- CMP pipes, ramps
- Road improvements to increase the profile of the road, since the adjoining road elevation would have to be adjusted (including additional design costs).

Proposal II – Post Monitoring: The Post-Monitoring Funding Proposal for Sahuarita Road (La Vallita Road to Country Club) will request baseline monitoring of Sahuarita Road lasting for one year.

SWCA recommends establishing database monitoring of animal/vehicle collisions and the type of animals. Chris Haas stated the monitoring is to identify future long term planning efforts and commitments of the Town to preserve corridors. SWCA recommends appropriate design structures based on these locations. The base line monitoring would establish initial rates of culvert use, road kill rates and at grade crossings which would in turn identify additional mitigation measures that could facilitate and maximize the use of these structures. One of the issues is whether additional fencing is needed since a large portion of this corridor is slated for development. Since the Town defines land use; fencing and vegetation management or other infrastructure may need to be added.

Mr. Cancino said that the post construction monitoring on Sahuarita Road, would begin 2012, or when the construction is completed. The post monitoring contract is \$134,524.00 which he rounded to \$135,000.00.

Proposal III – Initial Assessment: The roads to be assessed are Nogales Highway, Old Nogales Highway and Pima Mine Road. These roads currently have a high level of traffic and have not been studied. Quail Creek Crossing is a completely new road.

Mr. Haas said they have amended the road kill collection methodology to be consistent with what Game and Fish has been proposing.

The initial studies for the new roads would begin the fall of 2009 or spring of 2010 and completed by 2010. The initial studies cost is roughly about \$100,000.00.

Rick Ellis asked about the first line item, does that include baseline and post construction monitoring? So it is a 2 – 2 ½ year study for data collection.

Questions from the audience:

Written questions and concerns were submitted and distributed to the committee from Siobhan Nordhaugen from the ADOT, Tim Snow and Michael Ingraldi. The complete documents are referenced below and are available. The issue raised related to the:

- Determination of corridor width evaluation
- No pre-construction monitoring data for comparison
- Skylights or an opening in the median
- Providing crucial wildlife connectivity
- Reduction in the openness index, local fauna and herpeto-fauna
- Ramps
- Bobcat as the focal species to design underpass structures, and fencing

The Committee questions:

Jennifer Christelman asked about the construction budget summary the demolition of the culvert including disposal and traffic control. She asked if that demolition would be part of the construction anyway and it appears the crossings are where there are existing drainage facilities. Mr. Cancino said correct; however, there is an additional cost that Sahuarita is incurring for specifically wildlife linkages. Mr. Cancino said initially the Town was going to expand the existing one and were not going to demolish the old ones. Now, they have to raise the height and it is costing to demolish the existing ones and build new ones.

Ms. Christelman said so in case of the aprons, because the aprons may not necessarily be beneficial to wildlife; are aprons were needed because of the incorporation of the wildlife crossing. Mr. Cancino said normally when you build box culverts they don't install them, the existing ones don't have them and initially they were not included. It is something that would be installed so that we can prevent the erosion from happening and enhance the crossing abilities of animals. Ms. Christelman asked if the Town looked at the cost differences for box culverts, as opposed to con-spans, that would span it entirely distance. Mr. Cancino said he would have to check on that with the project manager. Ms. Christelman also asked about the replacement of the CMP pipe; was that something the Town was going to do anyway? Mr. Cancino said it is the same as the RCPC's; they were just going to be extended. Now we have to demolish, remove the existing ones and replace it with a larger diameter pipe.

Rick Ellis said then these are sized adequate for hydraulic purposes? The answer was, yes.

Tim Snow asked, so the cost you have in the proposal is additional beyond what would have already been included in the cost of the roadway? Mr. Cancino replied, correct, the cost estimate credits the work that would be done anyway. It is the additional work the Town would like to get funding for.

Ms. Christelman asked to make a recommendation, that the proposal specify that Sahuarita would not have paid for this size of culverts and pipe for the roadway; however due to the wildlife crossings there is an additional cost. She asks that the Town indicate what you are asking for is above and beyond such as the demolition costs are additional costs and specify everything that you would have to have done anyway.

Phil Trenary noted the cost of the ramps/ledges is a small amount of money, but he questions the need them inside culvert. Mr. Haas noted that when they went out there they did see a high amount of undercutting on the down slope side. Mr. Trenary said if he understands correctly that this is a ramp inside the culvert. Mr. Haas said it starts outside on the outer bank. The apron was something that was added; SWCA did not recommend those as specific to wildlife but to erosion. It's possible that could serve a dual function for wildlife. Mr. Trenary said if you did a small ramp you wouldn't need the apron? Mr. Haas said again SWCA did not recommend the apron. Mr. Cancino noted if the Committee wishes not to have something included it can be deleted.

Mr. Trenary said he was not trying to design the project; he is just trying to understand. If we are trying to get the animals up into the culvert and if a small ramp on the side could do it for \$25,000 that would make more sense than spending \$280,000 or whatever it was to build the ramp. Mr. Cancino explained why he had them include these ramps for undercutting. Mr. Trenary said he would agree that happens but doesn't think that's a wildlife problem, and feels that it is a design problem with your hydrologist and your engineer that design your culverts.

Jim DeGrood interjected that, one isn't obligated in the design of a hydraulic structure to put in grade control facilities and energy dissipation facilities at the outlets side where you would see the head cutting occur. That would be a customary expectation.

Mr. Ternary also asked if, with respect to the post monitoring is there baseline road kill data for this area. Mr. Cancino and Mr. Haas answered, no data was found. Tim Snow noted there would only be data on larger animals. Mr. DeGrood noted that an item later in the meeting would be the distribution of a map derived from the accident crash database which causes property damage or injury.

Mr. Ternary said he supports the studies beforehand, if we had the money it would be great, but right now with the economy as it is, we need to be fiscally minded. The other question is the time table. If it is two years out before it's built; so why can't we wait a little longer to see where are our finances. Janice Przybyl said she thinks the value is there, especially when we don't have this data. If we are going to continue with this type of project, post monitoring is really important. It's going to help designers and engineers whether these projects are working or not. She thinks this is what the public is going to want to know too.

Ann Audrey noted that since it takes six months to get it through the RTA process and wildlife monitoring is a calendar specific activity, you are trying to catch certain seasons, etc.; therefore, the lead time sounds OK.

Jim DeGrood offered on this proposal, there is a need to carve out the \$100,000 for other routes because it's not for Sahuarita Road. Rick Ellis noted he sees the proposals as three separate items, the construction element, the monitoring element and the initial roadway assessment. Mr. DeGrood expressed his concern about how the Working Group is representing itself to the public, what this project is for, should it just shows up as La Villita Road to Country Club Sahuarita Road improvement. Is the Working Group going well beyond the description?

In terms of the timing, the RTA is in the process of backing away from the accelerating projects and in the upcoming TIP cycle the RTA is looking for programming a three year period, rather than fiscal year 2010. The RTA is looking at putting in projects that have longer durations within the budget. For this particular project, Mr. DeGrood noted he would have no problem at this point committing funds for the fiscal year 2010 budget with the understanding that we would probably adjust in the TIP process overtime to make it conform to when the construction phases will actually occur.

Carolyn Campbell asked Mr. Cancino if he had see ADOT's comments beforehand. He said no. Ms. Campbell noted that Ms. Nordhaugen has some of the same concerns as ADGF. Such as, the openness ratio and use by mule deer.

Ms. Campbell reminded the Working Group that she had questions before concerning the "bigger picture" such as, what are you trying to hook-up? The region has the forest area on the south, the Tucson Mountain Park; are you trying to hook-up populations of animals too, which is related to future work you are doing. What are we, as a group, trying to do in the bigger picture? Chris Haas replied the idea of the Phase I assessment was to complement existing open space identified by the Town. The Santa Cruz River has been identified as a landscape linkage by AZGF and ADOT study. There are two smaller drainages that the Town has set aside as conservation areas. These areas are for the purposes of local movement and to reduce road kill on a local level by providing structures and as the baseline monitoring dictates developing additional measures to maximize that linkage. They rely on a network of open space areas for various species. Ms. Campbell asked if the bigger picture is getting to the Santa Cruz River. Mr. Haas said the one linkage just west of Country Club Road does link to the Santa Cruz River.

Mr. Ellis ask to interject, that Phase I seems to look at Town set asides, what existing movements are going on, and then evaluate the sizing of the potential barriers in the form of the culverts making sure those were appropriate for the widened roadway. It's not necessarily facilitating a movement as much as where to move the potential barrier. Mr. Haas said the focus is on the areas that are being protected that the Town has identified, put the recommendations in so that they can start moving forward with the project.

Ms. Campbell noted that the purpose of critical wildlife linkages element is not just for reducing road kill, or moving road kill somewhere else. The intent was the bigger picture of preserving areas and insuring we have wildlife moving through there. So, when Sahuarita states it is just going to be built out, the question is where we are going to put these wildlife populations.

One of the questions the Group wanted answered was there commitment from the Town leadership, do they realize that what happens here will help inform and facilitate open spaces. Ms Campbell noted Sahuarita is doing a lot of work but there has not been any information coming back on whether the Town's land use planner or officials are responding. The proposals are a lot of money for these crossings. She wants to see that the Group' concerns it's not falling on deaf ears or going into little parks that have already been planned. The two questions are: linking with land use planning and what is the bigger picture that we are trying to pull off here.

Not just making people feel better that they are not looking at dead animals on the road. Moving animals further into an urban area isn't solving anything.

Ann Audrey said the animals at least need a way out, which the washes provide.

Mr. Ellis asked for agreement from Mr. Cancino and the SWCA representatives that they don't want Sahuarita Road to act as a barrier to the localized movements as described here. The Town is asking for millions of dollars to eliminate a barrier.

Mr. Trenary said he feels this falls within the scope of what we are trying to do. The dollar figure is what it is; however, the Town needs to do a better job of tightening up by noting what the RTA is paying for.

Mr. Ellis asked if this is in alignment with what we are after. Ms. Campbell said I'm not sure. Ms. Przybyl said it is, because we have to look at landscape permeability on two levels, one that Ms. Campbell noted which is region wide in huge habitat blocks; however, there is a lot about landscape permeability in the local level that we need to be concerned with and she think that's in line with what we do here. Those little small pieces fit into the larger context. What's happening in Sahuarita is going to be happening in Marana, in Oro Valley and on the outside of Tucson. Those are the areas we need to be concerned about and we have the opportunity now to preserve that landscape permeability. Sahuarita is next to a huge habitat block which is the Santa Rita Mountains which may serve as a safety valve.

Carolyn Campbell said she agreed with Janice to a certain extent but there is another issue which is, that some of the areas are large enough for the smaller animals. Landscape permeability isn't just roads and even though the RTA is, she still would like to get some feedback from Sahuarita. If the Town going to be building out, She does not have much hope that all of this money isn't just going to be moving the barrier, a half mile north. For example, does the road lead into a subdivision or a Wal-mart. Ms. Campbell said agreed those are the questions, we need to see the regional level and inter-jurisdictional cooperation that regional linkages are going to be able to stay or permeable. She wonders if the follow-up work is going to answer the questions.

Rick Ellis asked Chris Haas about the baseline of the monitoring aspect that would be going on the year prior to the construction. Could that information feed into the design of the existing features or new features? Mr. Haas said that they are basically supporting features that maximize the use of those structures. Mr. Ellis asked if that timing is going to be disconnected from the design with both occurring over the same year; will that be out of sync. Mr. Haas said it is not our understanding that it would conflict because the whole purpose of Phase I was to identify where the structures would go, how do those look, and get those into the design. As they are designing those and we are gathering information you can provide additional supporting vegetation treatments or certain fencing types if warranted from the road kill surveys. There a lot of animals already using the current structures absent of fencing but everyone has agreed that is an important component. It's just where to put that and the baseline information would do that. Rick Ellis said then that \$700,000.00 would likely not be the final amount; more money would be needed for supplementary features. Mr. Haas said that is the intent, if data indicates the need.

Ann Audrey said if they are going to be doing revisions; the cost proposal for the monitoring doesn't have any breakdown involved or billing rates or any detail. So if you are going to revise it anyway, it would be helpful to have more detail on that. What are your monitoring goals, objectives and products; it would be easier if they were pulled out, making it easier to track?

Rick Ellis summarized: If Mr. Cancino is OK with revising the proposals and that the Working Group agrees that they are worth evaluating further. As to Ms. Campbell's bigger issue, if something could be brought in to show how these proposals tie in with the Town's land use planning, set asides or commitments. The cost estimates need to be re-evaluated as to the necessary features. Some of the things you were recommending did get in or did not get listed and need to be re-evaluated. In addition, we need to see a single price tag on those complementary features required for wildlife.

Mr. Cancino said based on Phase I they will not be able to know where to install fencing until the post-monitoring is conducted. Mr. Haas agreed. Mr. Ellis asked for rough calculations at least, at least how big this is, even rough guesses. On Camino de Manana project in Marana but they had an approximation. Mr. Cancino said as far as the planning and zoning question he asked; if it would be alright with Ms. Campbell for Orlanthia Henderson, Assistant P&Z Director, talk to her directly. Mr. Ellis noted that the Working Group agrees there is a roadway piece and a land use piece that needs discussion.

Mr. DeGroot commented that at this point specific discrete improvements are identified in this request, and we may not want to tie the hands of the designers on those. Giving it a budget and a direction and allowing a professional design team to work out the details would be the way to go. He suggested the Working Group members not focus on whether there are aprons or not, but make sure the designers understand the intent and a budget to do the work needed. Have the staff work with RTA so that the dollars are appropriately justified.

Mr. Ellis referring to back to Mr. Ternary's comment we want to make sure the features are appropriate and that they are there for wildlife mobility not dual purpose fixing a deficiency.

Chris Haas was directed to submit his comments to the ADOT and AZGFD questions through Ms. Ruiz, as well as other comments from the Working Group. Teresa Ruiz will collate those comments and distribute them a week before the next meeting. Rick Ellis said if Mr. Cancino will be prepared with everything he needs to bring back and ready to answer questions, we'll be ready to act on it next month.

PowerPoint: RTA Wildlife Linkages, Construction Funding/Post-Monitoring Proposal: Sahuarita Road (La Villita Road to Country Club Road), Town of Sahuarita, June 12, 2009.

Handout: Sahuarita Road Phase II (La Villita Road to Country Club) Wildlife Linkages Structure Construction.

Assessment: Phase I, SWCA Environmental Consultants, Sept. 2008.

Sahuarita Road Phase II, (La Villita Road to Country Club) Post-Monitoring of Construction.

Phase II, Baseline Monitoring, Post-Construction Monitoring and Adaptive Management, SWCA Environmental Consultants, Dec. 2, 2008.

Related Materials:

Questions and requests to proceed with the Town of Sahuarita proposals were made and recorded in the RTA Wildlife Linkages Working Group minutes of February 13, 2009, reference pages 3 through 5, Item #7, Proposal Review.

Written Comments (2):

Sahuarita Road, Construction and Post-Monitoring Proposal, Siobhan E. Nordhaugen, Arizona Department of Transportation, Office of Environmental Services, Natural Resources Management Group.

Sahuarita Road, Construction and Post-Monitoring Proposal, Tim Snow, Nongame Specialist and Michael Ingraldi, Research Supervisor, Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Proposal #3 – City of Tucson

Ann Audrey, Mike Ingraldi and M.J. Dillard, the Project Manager for the Houghton Road widening project presented the proposal. Ms. Audrey distributed copies of the PowerPoint presentation along with information provided by Mr. Ingraldi.

The project title is Houghton Road Corridor Wildlife Deflection, Funneling and Crossing Design Study. The area to be studied is along Houghton Road between Sky Castle Way (north) and Rita Road (south), approximately 5.25 miles of roadway. This proposal is requesting funding to:

- 1) Determine wildlife crossing activity along the Houghton Road widening project using data from wildlife-vehicle collisions and wildlife tracks,
- 2) Locate appropriate wildlife crossing locations from among planned culvert sites along the road, and
- 3) Determine methods and designs to deflect wildlife from the roadway, funnel wildlife toward these crossing locations, and facilitate their use of crossing sites, as appropriate.

Ms. Audrey said Houghton Road has had three wildlife inputs provided already, two by Logan Simpson and one by Eco-Plan Associates. They both reached the same conclusion as AZGFD which was with the exception of Pantano, Houghton Road in general be seen as a deflection device for anything bigger than javelina.

The proposal for this study is due to the upcoming expansion of Houghton Road from two lanes into a six-lane divided highway from Interstate I-10, on the south to Speedway Boulevard on the north. Houghton Road crosses a number of washes and associated upland habitat. Due to the close proximity of existing open space to the Houghton Road corridor, the high speed and volume of roadway traffic, and anticipated extensive development along the roadway, wildlife is at risk along Houghton Road.

The total RTA funding requested is \$33,725.00 with in-kind funds provided in the form of City staff time, AZGF Equipment i.e. all terrain vehicles (ATV) in the amount of \$9,690.00. The time line is spring, summer, fall sampling; starting in whatever the next season is; the report will be submitted three months after the final sampling. They will come back to this committee after the report for funding for barriers, funneling and enhancements.

Call to the audience, none heard.

Committee questions:

Janice Przybyl asked how do you make sure Houghton Road stops being a barrier for large animals. Michael Ingraldi replied that larger animals moving through the landscape tend to follow structure which in a desert landscape is the washes. Ms. Audrey noted Houghton Road isn't just a physical barrier it's more of a philosophical barrier; it represents of decision making process that we're not helping larger wildlife to facilitate their crossing and they end up at a school and are eliminated. There is a need for a vision of long term land use patterns, some have been established and some have not. In general, east of Houghton Road is less dense than west

of Houghton Road. Everything that stated about pulling wildlife into an urban environment is a bad idea.

Carolyn Campbell asked if all the personnel listed are full time (8 or 9 weeks); is that full time job for each of them for that amount of time? Mr. Ingraldi replied, correct it is cumulative and what each person is doing written up.

MOTION was made by Phil Trenary to accept the proposal as written, seconded by Rafael Cancino and unanimously approved.

PowerPoint: Wildlife Linkages Research, RTA Wildlife Linkages Project Funding Proposal, Houghton Road Corridor Wildlife Deflection, Funneling and Crossing Design Study, City of Tucson, Department of Transportation, Office of Conservation and Sustainable Development, June 12, 2009.

Handout: Houghton Road Corridor Wildlife Deflection, Funneling and Crossing Design Study, Wildlife Linkages Research, by Ann Audrey, June 9, 2009.

Handout: Frequency of Road Kill along Ajo Way (SR86) in 0.1 mile segments (Reptiles & Mammals) by Michael Ingraldi.

6. Updates and Announcements

Jim DeGroot distributed a copy of the accident related data that Gabe Thum, PAG Sr. Transportation Planner has been putting together. It shows the locations of property value or injury accidents geo-coded by year. It also shows some relative densities. He noted it appears we have some real hot spots around the Corona de Tucson area a location where there is property damage and injury accidents associated with wildlife. Similarly, in the I-10 Vail area and to a lesser degree SR-86 west of Three Points, in the Oro Valley area and Tucson Mountain area. Mr. DeGroot asked that the City consider looking at doing studies for wildlife movement, associated with anticipated RTA road projects, which are getting underway such as the Silverbell Road project. He would encourage the City to look at doing a wildlife work-up early on in the process. Ann Audrey noted Mr. Ingradi was going to commence work on that scope.

Ms. Ruiz distributed a handout from the formation of the Working Group which classified road projects as they were likely to encounter wildlife. From the monthly RTA reports she has indicated the current status of the road project.

Jennifer Christelman gave a brief update on Camino de Manana. The project is ready to go to construction. The design elements approved by the Working Group have been incorporated. The Town is negotiating with contractor right now. As to the time line, they are looking at nine months but that depends on Twin Peaks. Janice Przybyl noted this is the first construction project approved and suggested that there should be some kind of publicity associated with it. Ms. Christelman said as they do all of their public meetings for the project, their public relations (PR) firm is up-to-date. The Town is also doing a large plant rescue and relocation of the native plant species as well. They have been trying to get all of that out in their PR. Nothing has been done by the RTA perspective. Janice Przybyl suggested we get the Wildlife Linkages members out to the project.

Handout: Wildlife Crash Data 2004 – 2008, Gabe Thum, PAG Sr. Transportation Planner.

Handout: Wildlife Priority Corridors List: RTA Roadway Improvement Projects, Status of Project

7. Future Agenda Items

The next scheduled meeting is Friday, July 10, 2009.

Follow-up and updates to the Proposal from the Town of Sahuarita and SWCA –

- a. Construction Proposal Sahuarita Road (LaVillita Road to Country Club)
- b. Post Monitoring Proposal, Sahuarita Road (LaVillita Road to Country Club)
- c. Initial Studies Proposal, (Pima Mine Road, Old Nogales, Nogales Hwy., & Quail Creek Crossing Extension)

Rick Ellis asked in relation to getting the City of Tucson Houghton Road Proposal moving; when the next TIP/TPC meetings will be held. Jim DeGrood said he doesn't know when it is. PAG/RTA is moving toward quarterly meetings as opposed to monthly meetings due to jurisdictional staff time involved. There is a RTA Board meeting planned for July; however, there will not be one in August. Mr. Ellis asked if there would be a way to by-pass the other committees and go directly to the Board. Mr. DeGrood said the TIP Subcommittee might be willing to move this forward given the relatively small size of it; however, there is no TPC meeting in July. He suggested they might be able to do polling on the project and get it before the Board.

8. Call to the Audience

Janine Spencer, Town of Marana, ask for clarification on the accident data.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Rick Ellis, at 11:03 a.m.