Arizona Rt. 179

Valuing a Unique "Sense of Place"

Ernie Strauch
Citizen Stakeholder
Former Vice Mayor, City of Sedona
My Stakeholder Perspective:

- Board Member & Vice-President, Voice of Choice for 179, (A Group Opposing the 1996 DCR that Recommended the SR 179 Reconstruction as a 4-5 Lane Highway). July, 2000 to Present.


- Appointed by City Council to Negotiating Team with ADOT. Nov., 2002.

- Member of Stakeholder Process Development Team, ADOT’s Scope Development Committee, RFP Response Presentation Team, ADOT’s Consultant Selection Committee, ADOT/Stakeholder’s Executive Team.

- Enthusiastically Committed Disciple of Context Sensitive Design/Solutions since the year 2000
1.3 Purpose

“The corporation shall work to ensure that any and all improvements to SR 179 achieve a satisfactory level of safety and efficiency, while retaining and promoting its irreplaceable natural landscape and protecting the existing environmentally sensitive, unique, visual driving experience”
The Conclusion First:

• **ALL Objectives Reached**
  - All Voices Were Heard
  - All Choices Were Explored
  - An Acknowledgement… Debra R. Brisk

• **IDEAL Citizen Participation**
  - Process Design Participation
  - Scope Development Committee
  - Consultant Selection Involvement
  - Public Outreach Team
  - 4-Segment Design Advisory Panels
  - Executive (Oversight) Team

• **CSS Worked as Advertised!**
My Position:

It would have been difficult, if not impossible, to design a more comprehensive and inclusive process to resolve this critical, yet Context-Sensitive highway issue.
Why I’m a Stakeholder:

Sedona – Experience a world surrounded by scenic beauty, apart from the mainstream….and altogether extraordinary.

*Sedona Chamber of Commerce Website*
Why I’m a Stakeholder:

“The winding road that leads into the heart of Sedona establishes a certain provocative rhythm captured in the cliffs of soaring sandstone, stands of pine, and distant mountains that greet every visitor. Awakened by the desert light, the intense color evokes a visceral response as your senses open to the sheer beauty and serenity of Sedona.”

- Sedona Chamber of Commerce Website
CSS Approach

What makes this a CSS project as opposed to the traditional format?

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION!

Or

Valuing a Unique “Sense of Place”
What is Sedona looking for in a Corridor Development Consultant?
Sedona is looking for...

An Appreciation and Respect for our Community Values
Sedona is looking for...

An Appreciation and Respect for our Community Values

Innovative Solutions which are Created in Strict Harmony with Nature
Sedona’s Primary Value

Maintaining our Small Town Character
Community Plan
Vision Statements:

“To be a city that is constantly vigilant over the preservation of its natural beauty, scenic vistas, pristine environment and cultural heritage.”
Community Plan
Vision Statements:

“To be a city that retains its small-town character and creates its manmade improvements in strict harmony with nature.”
Community Plan
Vision Statements:

“To be a city that lives up to the challenge of proper stewardship of one of the earth’s great treasures.”
From 2002 Community Plan:

SR 179:

“The design of the highway is also important relative to the small-town character of the community. Within the city, the highway should have the effect of a “context-sensitive” street rather than a high speed thoroughfare. A 2-3 lane highway with the amenities and considerations mentioned above, provides the best opportunity to maintain a small-town character and be sensitive to the context in which it operates.”
“I recognize both the community's concern with the scope of the existing plan, as well as the City Council's findings that it is inconsistent with Sedona’s Community Plan.”

- Janet Napolitano, Governor
Innovative, Context-Sensitive Solutions:

Bend, Oregon - Roundabouts
Innovative, Context-Sensitive Solutions:

Springdale, Utah - Colored Pavement
Innovative, Context-Sensitive Solutions:

Springdale, Utah - Traffic Calmed Crosswalks
Innovative, Context-Sensitive Solutions:

Springdale, Utah - Integrated Shuttle-Stops
“SR179 passes through country which is among Arizona's greatest scenic assets. Its preservation is of critical concern to the entire state.”

- Terry Goddard, Attorney General
Are You Up to the Task?
Pre-CSS Approach

CONCERNS:

• “INDUSTRIAL LOOKING”
• NO “SMALL-TOWN” OR ANY CHARM
• NO DISTINCTION FROM ELSEWHERE
• LIKELY INCREASED ACTUAL SPEED
• CONDUCIVE TO “STRIP” DEVELOPMENT, NOT RESIDENTIAL
• NO SIDEWALKS, BIKE-LANES OR MULTI-MODAL INTEGRATION
• LIKELY TO INDUCE INCREASED TRAFFIC
• ANATHEMA TO REASONS VISITORS COME TO SEDONA
• “INDUSTRIAL LOOKING”
CSS Transition Approach

“A transportation facility is an integral part of the community’s fabric and it can help define the character of the community or it can destroy it.”

“Our State departments of transportation partners and we in the FHWA should view CSD as an opportunity to connect with the communities and the constituents that we serve. We should seek to institutionalize CSD…”

January 24, 2002
(Signed) Mary Peters, FHWA Administrator

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration MEMORANDUM
Subject: ACTION: Context-Sensitive Design Date: January 24, 2002
From: /s original signed by Mary E. Peters
Administrator
Reply to: Attn of: HPAP-20
Seppo Sillan
336-1327
To: Directors of Field Services
Resource Center Managers
Division Administrators

As you know, I believe it is important for FHWA to identify the most critical areas where we can make a difference. So that we can all concentrate our effort on the critical areas, we jointly selected the “Vital Few,” which are: Safety, Environmental Stewardship and Streamlining, and Congestion Mitigation.

Context-Sensitive Design (CSD) is an approach that places preservation of historic, scenic, natural environment, and other community values on an equal basis with mobility, safety and economics. I am asking for your support and assistance in advancing CSD as an element of our Environmental Stewardship and Streamlining efforts.

“A transportation facility is an integral part of the community’s fabric and it can help define the character of the community or it can destroy it. A context-sensitive approach to planning and designing transportation facilities will help us to better understand that role and properly address it.

Our State departments of transportation (State DOT) partners and we in the FHWA should view CSD as an opportunity to connect with the communities and the constituents that we serve. We should seek to institutionalize the principles of CSD with the same commitment that drove the implementation of the Interstate Highway System. We are in an era that calls for innovative thinking, improved coordination, cooperation, interdisciplinary decision-making, streamlined implementation, and community acceptance. These are lofty but necessary goals. I encourage each of you to work tirelessly in partnership with your State DOT and other partners toward initiating CSD concepts where they do not exist, and toward sustaining them where they do.

If you have questions, we are prepared to offer technical assistance to your staff and the State DOT, you may contact Seppo Sillan, (202) 366-1127, seppo.sillan@fhwa.dot.gov or Harold Peaks, (202) 366-1958, harold.peaks@fhwa.dot.gov.
CSS Approach

“In 2002, ADOT engineers sincerely thought they were being context-sensitive… Then at a fateful meeting, Sedona residents ‘ripped into me’, recalls Debra Brisk, former ADOT Deputy Director… ‘They were right’, she says, ‘We were just looking at it as mitigation. But it’s beyond that.’”

“So ADOT started over. A panel with citizens and federal officials helped choose a consultant team… The process included simulation models, setting Core Values and gaining suggestions, not just soliciting comments.”

“The extent of the process may not be appropriate for every project, but I’d hope that in some form it becomes a standard for the way we engineers do things,’ says O’Brien.” (Corridor Mgr., lead consultant DMJM-Harris).
CSS Approach

Theme:
“Connecting Communities”
Core Values

At the first planning charrette held as part of the SR 179 Corridor Project in November 2003, members of the Greater Sedona/Red Rock community established a set of core values for the corridor. Core values are defined as:

“...the reasons we live and do business in the area, and without [which], it would not be the place we care about. Values are things that are so important to the community that, no matter what, the community will not compromise. The values of the community are attributes that must be preserved.”
Core Values

1. **Character** (the unique “look and feel” of the corridor)

2. **Context Sensitivity** (compatibility with the unique context of the SR 179 corridor)

3. **Economic Sustainability** (contribution of the corridor to the continuing economic vitality of the area)

4. **Environmental Preservation** (maintaining the natural and physical environment)

5. **Mobility** (the ability to provide efficient and reliable transportation service)

6. **Multi-Modal** (provisions for “alternative” forms or modes of transportation, such as bicycles and public transit)

7. **Multiple Purposes** (e.g., commuting, tourism, commercial traffic, shopping and social trips)

8. **Public Safety** (preventing crashes, reducing their severity and providing efficient emergency services)

9. **Regional Coordination** (involving ADOT, federal and local agencies, and other stakeholding organizations throughout the Greater Sedona area and the larger Verde Valley)
Core Values

10. *Roadway Footprint* (the width and cross-section of transportation facilities in the corridor)

11. *Scenic Beauty* (preserving scenic features of the corridor and opportunities to enjoy them)

12. *Walkability* (ability of pedestrians to circulate in the corridor and reach points within it)
Core Value Visions

Example of Vision Component from the Core Value - “Character”

“The roadway is ‘easy on the land’ and transparent, providing a respite as you leave I-17, allowing the unique character of the communities and the natural environment to be showcased. The lines, forms, colors and material textures of the transportation facilities have been drawn from those in the natural environment. The small town character of the region is a ‘state of mind’ and way of life reflected in the natural vegetation, meandering movements, and ‘national park-like feel’ of the corridor.”
## Stakeholder Involvement

### Participating Stakeholders
- ADOT
- FHWA
- US Forest Service
- Yavapai County
- Coconino County
- City of Sedona
- Village of Big Park

### Solicited Stakeholders
- Tourists
- Trucking Firms
- V.V. Cycling Coalition
- High School Students
- Emergency Services
- Non-Gov Service Orgs
- Pedestrians/Elderly
Stakeholder Involvement

• The Participating 7 Stakeholders had 2 representatives each, resulting in an Executive Team of 14 members. In nearly 3 years, ALL decisions were achieved with 100% consensus!

• Garnering & Incorporating their Inputs: At Monthly, then Quarterly Meetings

• Consensus building approaches: “Is there anyone who cannot live with this?”

• Unique Approaches: Must have a 3rd party facilitator chair each meeting, with an earned respect and reputation for fairness.

• Lessons worth Sharing: Mutual Trust Development is the KEY!
One Disgruntled Stakeholder:

The Sedona, Oak Creek Fire District

• Believes they should have been given personally delivered invitations to meetings, rather than relying on radio, television, newspapers and mailings.

• They dislike Roundabouts and Medians of any nationality, religion, color, sex, age or political affiliation.
Community Preferences:

12.8 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF COMPLETED PRIORITIZATION WORKSHEETS

"First Blush" Prioritization

Table 12.6 shows the percentage of respondents who preferred each planning concept, by corridor segment. Copper was preferred by a plurality of respondents throughout the corridor, and by an absolute majority for segments 1A, 1B, 3A and 3B. Turquoise consistently ranked second and Quartz last.

Table 12.6: Planning Concept Preferences by Corridor Segment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Segment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copper</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turquoise</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quartz</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SR 179 Public Outreach Consultant

"Across the Board" Preferences for a Single Concept

Three-fifths of those who completed worksheets (509 of 855) chose a single planning concept for all six segments. Some 50% of these selected copper, 36% Turquoise and 14% Quartz. This result, combined with Table 12.7, indicates that Copper was by far the more widely preferred of the two-lane planning concepts.
## Community Preferences:

**Table 12.7: Questionnaire Responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>All Respondents</th>
<th>Copper*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which means of traffic control do you prefer at major intersections?</td>
<td>Roundabouts 66%</td>
<td>Roundabouts 90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Signals 34%</td>
<td>Signals 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should the bridge at Oak Creek be realigned?</td>
<td>Yes 62%</td>
<td>Yes 56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No 38%</td>
<td>No 44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Segment 3A, where should sidewalks be located?</td>
<td>One side 55%</td>
<td>One side 58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two sides 45%</td>
<td>Two sides 42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Segment 3B, where should sidewalks be located?</td>
<td>Two sides 62%</td>
<td>Two sides 57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One side 38%</td>
<td>One side 43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should Morgan Road and Arrow Drive be realigned to meet?</td>
<td>Yes 79%</td>
<td>Yes 82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No 21%</td>
<td>No 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should Wild Horse Mesa Drive and Rojo Drive be realigned to meet?</td>
<td>Yes 75%</td>
<td>Yes 76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No 25%</td>
<td>No 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should Highland Drive be realigned to better intersect with SR 179?</td>
<td>Yes 75%</td>
<td>Yes 71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No 25%</td>
<td>No 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should passing lanes be included in Segment 2 (Coconino National Forest)?</td>
<td>Yes 72%</td>
<td>Yes 76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No 28%</td>
<td>No 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should passing lanes be included in Segment 3A (Sedona)?</td>
<td>Yes 57%</td>
<td>Yes 52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No 43%</td>
<td>No 48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which median type do you prefer in Segment 1B (the Village)?</td>
<td>Raised 75%</td>
<td>Flush 82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flush 25%</td>
<td>Raised 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which median type do you prefer in Segment 3B (Canyon Drive to Schnebly Hill Road)?</td>
<td>Raised 70%</td>
<td>Flush 76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flush 30%</td>
<td>Raised 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which median type do you prefer in Segment 4 (north of the creek)?</td>
<td>Raised 62%</td>
<td>Flush 67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flush 38%</td>
<td>Raised 33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Responses from people who preferred Copper for the majority of corridor segments. (See the next subsection.)

Source: SR 179 Public Outreach Consultant
Thank you, I need to SOPT?
Contact Information

For further Information please contact:

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928-282-6666

www.sr179.com