

Idalia Road Public Meeting

December 16, 2021, 6:00 pm, Zoom Online Meeting

Twenty-five participants online.

The meeting announcements was mailed to 120 stakeholders twice. The meeting notice published in the Rio Rancho Observer on November 28, 2021 and December 12, 2021

Presentation

Mikaela Buscher, of NV5, served as moderator. Arnell Friedt, of the City of Rio Rancho, introduced the project and the City of Rio Rancho project team. Andrew Gallegos, of WHP NV5, introduced consultant team.

Andrew Gallegos described the NMDOT study procedures, Idalia Road project area, project needs, purpose and need statement, existing roadway typical sections, roadway characteristics, intersection deficiencies, intersection sight-distance evaluation, access control evaluation, roadway deficiencies, and existing utilities.

Sheila Johnson, of WHP NV5, discussed watershed basins, existing drainage conditions, and areas of scouring. Adam Miera, of WHP NV5, presented information on traffic analysis, level of service, intersection capacity, and crash history. Eric Johnson, of NV5, described the environment along Idalia Road including physical environment, biological environment, cultural resources, and human environment. Andrew Gallegos reviewed the project study process.

Comments and Questions

(Project team responses are italicized)

Will this become a 3-lane or 4-lane?

That is a good question. We are not at the point where we can make those kind of decisions. We are going to look at alternatives. Based on what Adam Miera went over in his presentation, this corridor is not hurting for capacity. It is operating at acceptable levels right now. The typical section that I just showed is going to be one of the alternatives that we will look at with two lanes, one lane in each direction. Of course, we are going to look at other alternatives for what makes sense on this corridor.

Could you show us Barranca Arroyo again?

It is in this area here (shown on presentation map).

Will there be water and sewer installed with the road construction?

We will install sewer and water of the project. It will be dependent on funding, or course. It will be included in the preliminary design.

Will there be turn-lanes into the neighborhoods, for example at La Barranca?

That is the intention. We are going to be looking at ways to get the turning traffic out of the main line. We are implementing this type of typical section that the City likes to have on this type of roadway.

Idalia Road

There is going to be room in the median for a turn-lane. It is going to add safety, and it is going to provide a turning-lane for these side roads.

Will there be bike lanes?

Bike lanes are going to be part of what we look at. We are hoping to have bike lanes that are striped and labeled.

Is a roundabout planned for the Idalia at Loma Colorado intersection?

It is one of the alternatives that we will be reviewing. We are going to look at different alternatives that would address the safety and pedestrian crossings. Traffic operations is something that we have to look at and the overall cost. Roundabouts take up a little more room than signalized intersections. That will be something that we will need to evaluate as well. Roundabouts are definitely one of the alternatives that is on the table.

I have a question about Idalia deadheading into Northern Boulevard. Is there any proposal in the future for bridging the arroyo and continuing Idalia to Unser?

There are no future plans for bridging the arroyo.

Thank you. That is my backyard.

I live in the Inca Hills subdivision, 26th and Inca. I have lived here since 2002. Obviously, this area has grown immensely. East of Iris was the section that you did includes the three lanes, turn lanes, and median. Between Iris and Loma Colorado, are your intentions to do three, four, five lanes? Or you don't know that quite yet?

We are going to go through the process. I don't want to speculate on exactly what we are going to do. The intention is to look at the traffic operations and see how this overall corridor operates, what the level of service is. If it needs four lanes, then we are going to look at it, but the overall traffic does not appear high enough for a 4-lane roadway. We are going to confirm that and go through the process and see if that is the way to go.

That is very encouraging to me. When I moved here, Paseo del Volcan did not exist. It was a dirt road that I rode my ATV on. Paseo del Volcan took a lot of traffic from Northern Meadows to 550 to get across the river. So, what I'm seeing since 2002, in the last 2 years, since they built those subdivisions beyond Loma Colorado, traffic has really increased as well as the noise. Several of us in the Inca Hills dirt subdivision live on the edge of Idalia. We've all notice the increase in noise. Would you be able to build those sound walls? The subdivision beyond Loma Colorado has built sound walls along Idalia. Our subdivision has been very fortunate. I am so grateful to live here and have this wonderful view. What we don't want to have is the noise nor the traffic; however, I know that we need turn-lanes. Because there are several nights where I am sitting on my porch, people are passing on the road at high rates of speed, and I am just waiting for the crash. I am relaying some issues that some of my neighbors in my subdivision who have noticed over just the last two years, especially after those subdivisions were built up beyond Loma Colorado.

For the noise walls, we follow the Federal Highway Administration and New Mexico Department of Transportation guidelines. We are doing a noise study. We will go out and take noise measurements.

Measure existing traffic volumes. We have a noise model, and we estimate noise levels for future traffic. There is a formula used and that determines whether noise walls are considered feasible noise mitigation along the corridor. We have not done the noise study yet. The noise study will meet state and federal criteria.

That answers part of my question. We may need to talk off-line. I very much appreciate you involving us in this as I speak for some of my neighbors who do not want to disturb what we have invested in over the years. We understand that we need to progress. Idalia needs to be improved. The road is horrible as you all know. You showed that. I appreciate that you are involving us in this. I very much appreciate that.

We can look at it from an engineering perspective. You guys live here. We appreciate any comments, any clarification you can give to us. It will only help the process.

Thanks so much.

I encourage you to provide written comments, and your neighbors to provide written comments. We accept email and written comments by mail. That helps get it in the record. We will produce a Phase A/B study report. We can acknowledge the comments we received at the meeting as well as any written comments.

We have until January 14th when the comment period ends for this portion of the project, and then we will move into the next.

I would like to thank everyone for showing up and participating. The earlier you participate the better we are when we come to construction. Thank you very much. Please look for future project meeting notices and please attend.

I did not receive a letter. Those of us who are on Idalia through Inca NE. My neighbor was very upset that she received this letter and couldn't make this meeting. Who determines who actually gets the letter from the City? If I had not heard from her, I would not have been able to answer my questions as well as her questions. Just a curiosity.

I apologize if you did not receive a letter. So, please send me an email so I can put you on our list. I went on the internet through the Sandoval County Assessor's database, and I tried to get the address of every house that was along Idalia, not literally on it, but facing Idalia Road. So, I might have missed a few. There are a lot of houses along Idalia Road. If you know people who didn't get a notice, I apologize. We did put the notice in the Rio Rancho Observer on Sunday, but it is hard to reach everybody. Send me addresses of other people who want to be on the address list. The more the merrier. We want everybody to be contacted who wants to be contacted.

There is also project website on the City website that gives updates. These notices will be there. These slides will be uploaded there if someone wants to take a look at them some other time. I would encourage you to check out the City website.

Again, I really appreciate you guys for sending out any letters. There is so much growth in Rio Rancho. I understand why you can't reach everybody. The Idalia project is huge. Every time I go down Idalia I think my gosh are they ever going to improve this road. It was just two days ago that my neighbor dropped off this letter. I can speak for all my neighbors who live in the Inca Hills Subdivision, which is the dirt subdivision. We understand that there needs to be improvements, but we are all hoping that is a

continuation of Idalia from 528 to wherever it goes. Not like a 4-lane highway. Volcan is unique in when they developed Volcan there were not many houses in the way. My house abuts Idalia. I appreciate that you guys think about that. We all understand that our city is growing.

We definitely appreciate you weighing in on this project. The more folks, your neighbors, that can weigh, it is going to be even better for our information. That is why we go through the process.

I very much appreciate you guys reaching out to us.

You are talking about growth and traffic volumes. We grow the volumes to the project growth rate up to the year 2040. We grow it by getting information from the local planning MPO, which is really the Mid Region Council of Governments. They have some planning models for the year 2040. That model really incorporates growth for the whole area. We are trying to make sure we have a solid approach on this. We are looking at volume 20 years from now and designing to those expected volumes. Ideally, we should be picking up and taking care of any of those concerns you may have in terms of the growth.

My neighbor and I who are on 26th and Inca. We are in the cul-de-sac and beyond the cul-de-sac, beyond the arroyo, from 26th to Iris, we already know there is going to be a subdivision built between Iris and 26th. We know there will be traffic volume on Idalia because I have already spoken to the owner of the land who has talked about building a subdivision where they bought the land east of 26th. That won't affect the traffic between Iris and Northern, but how will that affect our neighborhoods?

The Mid Region Council of Governments traffic model looks into the expected growth. Those number should include that growth. That development also has to perform a traffic analysis separately. Any additional needs at that point would be implemented by the developer.

When they do the traffic analysis what does that entail? I have been over many strips where you think you are being analyzed for how fast you are going. What is it doing?

Those strips are tubes that we place in the road, spacing them out a certain distance. The vehicle hits one tube and then a second tube. We can identify speed. We can identify the length of the vehicle and classify it, and ultimately, we collect volumes along the roadway with that information. That as well as actual turning movement counts at intersections, identifying which direction vehicles are traveling and the heavier movements. All of that goes back into the level of service, and identifying congestion, delays. All of that is what is graded between level of service A down to level of service F. All of that is what is looked at and what we are doing there. Of course, it is all per standards. We follow the Highway Capacity Manual. Definitely, we can get into a lot more detail there. Maybe off-line I would be happy to discuss any of that with you.

Love to discuss that. Thank you so much. I appreciate all of you for allowing us to ask questions. I know I represent a few of my neighbors who could not make it, and I appreciate you very much.

For the next meeting, you got to tell them to come by.

You got it.

Are there any other questions.

Look for the next advertisement in the spring for the next public meeting. Thank you so much. Have a good evening.

Comments After Meeting

Comment 1: Karen Payson

Karen Payson offered the following additional comments on December 29, 2021 by phone:

- There is concern in her Inca Hills subdivision about widening Idalia Road.
- Drivers like to pass around 26th Street creating a crash risk. A median would help prevent passing.
- Speeding is a problem.
- She would like noise walls along Idalia Road by the Inca Hills subdivision (Barranca to 26th).
- Noise is getting worse.
- A new development is going in at Idalia Crossing.

Comment 2: Patricia Messier

I have several concerns surrounding the Idalia Road Project. Before I begin, I would like to say that Idalia Road does need paving as it is currently spotted with many pot holes, and it desperately needs drainage improvements. My concerns are as follows:

Over the years, I have noticed a high level of speeders. I like to say people are using Idalia Road as a "mini freeway" as I have noticed & heard high speeds way above 45 mph. I would like to see the speed limit lowered to 40 mph & some type of deterrent i.e. more speed van placement near Barranca Rd. since the road lowers downhill from Kim Road. People just don't slow down going down the hill & I hear it every single day & especially at night. So with this in mind as the projection states more traffic. I also highly request some type of NOISE BARRIER beams or walls. At the back of my property between the utility road/easement is a mound that I do not want disturbed since it buffers my property against excessive noise/vibration from the traffic which is caused by speeding. I will conclude that I strongly hope Idalia Rd. will not turn into a 3 or 4 lane as this will cause expansion into easements & bring the noise level closer to properties. This area has strong wind that blows northward & together with the vibration of the road traffic from vehicles and especially semi & large trucks, I have noticed the sounds hitting my windows & walls. I notice & feel the vibration from the vehicles coming downhill & it has gotten worse as more people speed. The stretch of road is long.

There are no stops & people just keep speeding along with nothing to stop them half way through. It's not so much as there is more traffic, but more vehicles speeding. Just as a side note, the easement/utility dirt road between Idalia Rd. & the properties within the stretch between Barranca Rd. & 26th Ave. has attracted a lot of ATV offroad & dirt bikes which is cause for concern & have led to some close calls when residents either enter Barranca or 26th ave. as it is hard to see if one of those ATV/dirt bikes are exiting. I highly advise the short utility/easement stretch of road to be sealed off at either end as I project an accident, since I have witnessed close calls as they speed across the road.

I am hoping that this email will be shared with all departments concerned; and I will close by requesting that you keep me posted on future meetings & letters.